



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Hospitality Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijhm

Role stress and alcohol use on restaurant server's job satisfaction: Which comes first?

S. Kyle Hight, Jeong-Yeol Park*

Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, 9907 Universal Blvd., Orlando, FL 32819, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Role stress
Alcohol use
Restaurant frontline employees
SRD premise
SIS premise

ABSTRACT

The relationship between work stressors and alcohol consumption has been extensively researched, and two premises have emerged: (1) work stressors precede employee alcohol use and (2) alcohol use precedes work stressors. Despite the continuous call for a paper to address hospitality employees' alcohol use, no study in hospitality has compared these two premises. Using role stress, a specific type of work stressor commonly found among frontline employees, this study was designed to confirm which of the two premises best encompasses the role stress-alcohol use relationship among front-of-house restaurant servers in the United States. Using structural equation modeling, it was found that role ambiguity had a significant positive impact on alcohol use and a negative impact on job satisfaction. Alcohol use significantly increased job satisfaction, and had a positive indirect effect on the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction had a significant negative impact on turnover intentions.

1. Introduction

Alcohol use in the hospitality industry has remained an unsolved paradox. The hospitality literature has reported a pervasiveness of alcohol-related behaviors among hospitality employees (e.g., [Kjærheim et al., 1995](#); [Moore et al., 2009, 2012](#)). Consequently, there have been repeated calls for research that identifies antecedents, consequences, and prevention measures of hospitality employees' alcohol use ([Kitterlin et al., 2015](#); [Pizam, 2010](#); [Shani, 2016](#)). In line with this, some studies have identified antecedents such as work stress, workplace culture, and organizational norms like alcohol-drinking subcultures ([Kim et al., 2009](#); [Moore et al., 2012](#); [Nusbaumer and Reiling, 2002](#)), while others have explored the consequences of alcohol use, such as job dissatisfaction ([Deery and Jago, 2015](#); [Hight and Park, 2018](#)). Despite continuous efforts to address the alcohol use problem, the hospitality industry is still ranked the highest among all industries when it comes to employees' alcohol use ([Bush and Lipari, 2015](#)).

In the United States, the high rate of turnover in the restaurant industry has historically been as troublesome of an area as employees' alcohol use. In 2016, the restaurant industry in the U.S. showcased a 72.9% turnover rate ([National Restaurant Association, 2017a](#)). This turnover rate has increased year-over-year for the past six consecutive years and has resulted in one of the highest turnover rates across all industries ([National Restaurant Association, 2017b](#)). Indeed, turnover is costly for restaurants because turnover of a foodservice employee can

cost a firm anywhere from \$3500 to \$7000 ([Teubert, 2013](#)). Given the high turnover rate of U.S. restaurant employees and its impact on the industry ([National Restaurant Association, 2017a](#)), it is imperative that restaurants should address the high turnover rates alongside employee alcohol use.

Among various types of restaurant employees, frontline restaurant employees in the U.S. are to be spotlighted because frontline restaurant employment is considered to be highly stressful ([Gatta, 2009](#)). This is mostly due to the boundary-spanning role, which requires employees to maintain the standards of their employer and to serve as the face of the company when interacting with customers ([Papadopoulou-Bayliss et al., 2001](#)). Boundary-spanning employees often find themselves in a state of dissonance between the expectations of their employer and the demands of clientele ([Hartline and Ferrell, 1996](#)). Thus, frontline restaurant servers must simultaneously satisfy their managers (job provider) and their customers (income provider), which is stressful when the two party's expectations are not congruent. A construct that encompasses this state of dissonance is role stress, which refers to a specific type of work stressor derived from one's unique role in his or her job ([Jackson and Schuler, 1985](#)).

Initiated by [Kahn et al. \(1964\)](#), role stress has been considered as a major antecedent of employees' work distress ([Jackson and Schuler, 1985](#)) and their mental/physical health problems ([Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1991](#)). Specifically, role stress is categorized as two dimensions – role conflict and role ambiguity ([Tubre and Collins, 2000](#)).

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: stephen.hight@ucf.edu (S.K. Hight), jeong-yeol.park@ucf.edu (J.-Y. Park).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.05.012>

Received 1 January 2018; Received in revised form 30 March 2018; Accepted 10 May 2018
0278-4319/ © 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

The former refers to the incompatible expectations from multiple parties, and the latter refers to a lack of knowledge about how to effectively complete one's job tasks (Rizzo et al., 1970). Prior research has identified that boundary-spanning frontline restaurant employees experience extensive levels of role stress (Boles and Babin, 1996; Papadopoulou-Bayliss et al., 2001; Ross and Boles, 1994).

Employee work stress and alcohol use has received considerable attention in the literature (i.e., Armeli et al., 2003; Frone, 1999; Sayette, 1999). Based upon prior findings, two general themes have emerged: (1) employee alcohol use precedes work stress and (2) work stress precedes employee alcohol use. Studies concerning the former premise argue that employees use alcohol to cope with anticipated stressors from work (Sayette, 1999). The latter premise postulates that employees use alcohol to alleviate tension or stress incurred from work (Frone, 1999). Although academics in other disciplines have postulated about the two, work stress-alcohol use premises, the hospitality industry, which has been suffering from employees' alcohol use and high turnover rate, has neglected to identify which theoretical framework can better explain the nature of restaurant frontline employees. Further, considering the fact that employees' role stress explains a large proportion of work stress (Jackson and Schuler, 1985), and since frontline restaurant servers experience a high level of role stress (Boles and Babin, 1996; Papadopoulou-Bayliss et al., 2001; Ross and Boles, 1994), this study aims to provide answers to two questions:

- (1) Which work stress-alcohol use model is best suited to describe the work stress-alcohol use relationship among front-of-house restaurant servers?
- (2) What would be the conceptual relationships among role stress, alcohol use, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions?

By collecting data from frontline, tipped, foodservice employees in the United States and providing answers to the above questions, this study would provide significant implications for the existing literature and empirical suggestions for restaurant practitioners. Specifically, by identifying a 'better' premise in suggesting a causal relationship between role stress and alcohol use, this study would fill a current research gap that examines which premise is best applicable in the hospitality industry. Also, by identifying this relationship, restaurant practitioners will be better informed as to potential drivers of role stress and alcohol use, and can thus implement strategies and tactics to reduce these areas. This, in turn, will enable a firm to increase employee job satisfaction and accordingly reduce turnover intention.

2. Theoretical foundation

2.1. Work-stress-alcohol-use paradigms

Prior research has analyzed the effects of alcohol consumption upon the cognitive processes of individuals. Levenson and colleagues (1980) found that individuals who consumed alcohol reported increased feelings of cheerfulness and reduced feelings of anxiousness. This indicates that the intoxicating effects from alcohol consumption can decrease awareness and increase the distractibility of an individual, which thereby reduces the severity of stressors (Levenson et al., 1980). By applying the previously established tension reduction model (Conger, 1956), researchers have extended their focus to other substances (e.g., drugs), and developed a work-stress-substance use model (Frone, 2008). From a series of research, two general themes have developed: the stress-response dampening (SRD) premise and stress-induced substance use (SIS) premise (Armeli et al., 2003; Sayette, 1999).

2.2. Stress-response dampening premise

The first theme in the work-stress-substance use model is the stress-response dampening premise, which posits that an individual's alcohol use precedes job-related stressors (Armeli et al., 2003). According to this premise, various substances are used as a way of proactive coping in anticipation of stressors (Armeli et al., 2003) because an individual's intoxicated state may provide protection from the stressor (Sayette, 1993). Recent theoretical models testing the SRD premise found that the magnitude of SRD effects can vary based on individual and situational factors (Sayette, 1999). For example, if the practice of drinking alcohol before a stressful work shift is considered an accepted form of practice among organization members, as is the case among front-of-house restaurant servers (Moore et al., 2009), individuals are more likely to utilize the SRD premise and consume alcohol before beginning the work shift.

Furthermore, spillover theory posits that stressors from an individual's home life can spill over into their work life, or vice-versa (Ragland and Ames, 1996). This implies that an employees' preference for alcohol consumption could continue into their work lives. Also, prior research has found that intrinsic motivations could lead individuals to seek employment within a firm that fits their personal preferences (Edwards, 1996). Similarly, the attraction-selection-attrition model stipulates that individuals choose an employer that matches said individual's personality, attitudes, and values (Schneider, 1987). Thus, an individual who prefers to regularly consume alcohol may self-select into an employment opportunity that allows them to satisfy their drinking habits. Based on these rationales, the following conceptual

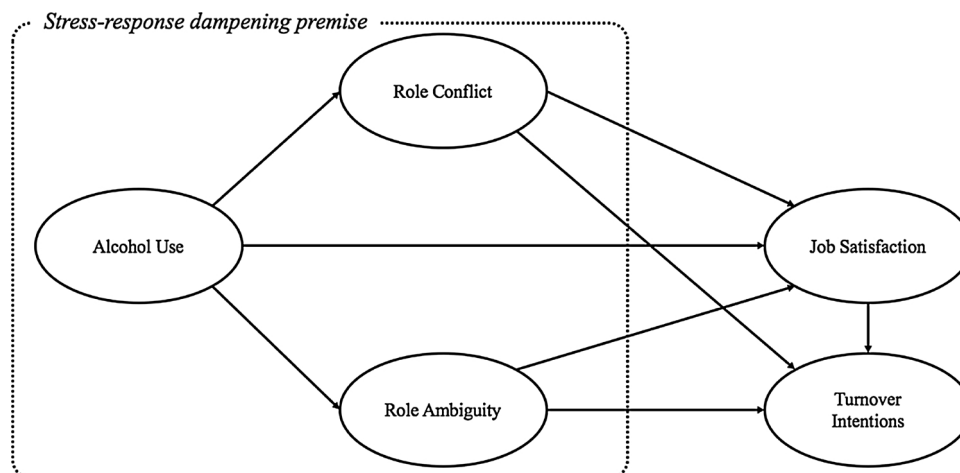


Fig. 1. Model A (Stress-response dampening premise).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11005005>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11005005>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)