



Relationships between digital nativity, value orientation, and motivational interference among college students



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ABSTRACT

Motivational interference is a prevalent phenomenon among students at different levels. In this study, we examined university students' motivational interference after making a decision in school-digital leisure conflict and its relationships with two antecedents, i.e., digital nativity and value orientation. Participants were Taiwanese university students ($N = 1201$) who responded to a questionnaire. The data showed support for a positive path between digital nativity and motivational interference after a school decision, but not for the path between digital nativity and motivational interference after a leisure decision. In addition, achievement value orientation showed a negative effect on motivational interference after a school decision and a positive effect on motivational interference after a leisure decision. In contrast, well-being value orientation had a positive effect on motivational interference after a school decision but no significant effect on motivational interference after a leisure decision.

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1. Introduction

Students often face school-leisure conflicts when they want to engage in both academic and leisure activities that cannot be realized simultaneously; a choice for one activity needs to be made (Fries, Schmid, Dietz, & Hofer, 2005; Hofer and Fries, 2016; Hofer, Kuhnle, Kilian, Marta, & Fries, 2011; Hofer et al., 2007; Hofer, Schmid, Fries, Kilian, & Kuhnle, 2010; Hofer, Schmid, Fries, Zivkovic, & Dietz, 2009; Kilian, Hofer, & Kuhnle, 2010; Lens, Lacante, Vansteenkiste, & Herrera, 2005; Schmid, Hofer, Dietz, Reinder, & Fries, 2005; Senecal, Julien, & Guay, 2003). Studies have shown that when students face such school-leisure conflicts, their decisions not only relate to the fulfilment of either academic or leisure activities but also result in motivational interference caused by the incentive influences of the unchosen activities, which affects the progress of the chosen activity (Hofer, 2007; Hofer et al., 2010, 2011). It has also been shown that motivational interference in students is related to their value orientations. Students who place higher value on success, future goals, and hard work exhibit less motivational interference after a school decision and more motivational interference after a leisure decision. Conversely, students who place higher value on leisure and social activities exhibit more motivational

interference after a school decision and less motivational interference after a leisure decision (Fries et al., 2005; Hofer et al., 2007, 2009, 2011).

Most motivational interference studies have focused on high school students (Fries et al., 2005; Hofer et al., 2007, 2009, 2011). In fact, compared to high school students, college students have greater liberty in living arrangements, community participation, and social interaction and face more leisure activity choices; thus, they are more likely to encounter school-leisure conflicts. Moreover, it is worth noting that digital technology is inextricably linked to the life of current college students. They can use mobile devices to send out or accept invitations for leisure activities at all times in all places. Many leisure activities can be performed online, such as chatting with friends, watching movies, listening to music, and playing games, necessitating research into school-'digital leisure' conflict.

Digital nativity, derived from the concept of digital natives (Prensky, 2001), is a psychological construct that represents individual differences in the use of technologies, comfortability with multitasking, use of graphic elements to communicate, and the tendency to thrive on instant gratification and rewards (Teo, 2013, online). Previous studies have found that multitasking is unfavorable to students' academic learning (Barak, Lipson, & Lerman, 2006; Kraushaar & Novak, 2010; Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013). Moreover, studies have shown that students' delay of gratification correlates positively with their academic self-regulation (Bembenutty & Karabenick, 1998, 2013). These findings indicate that digital nativity is another possible antecedent of motivational interference in school-digital leisure conflicts.

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In this study, we are interested in college students' motivational interference in school-digital leisure conflicts and will focus on the examination of its relationships with digital nativity and value orientation. Hereafter, we will explore the relevant literature, propose a hypothetical relational model, and collect self-reported data for model validation.

1.1. School-leisure conflicts and motivational interference

The life goals of students include not only academics, but also a sense of belonging, entertainment, and well-being (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005; Fries, Dietz, & Schmid, 2008). Conflicts between academic and non-academic activities, also known as school-leisure conflicts, are among the most common motivational conflicts (Hofer et al., 2009). Motivational conflict refers to a situation with two or more activities in which the goals linked to each activity are negatively related, thus requiring an individual to decide immediately which goal will be pursued (Hofer, 2007; Hofer et al., 2007). Hofer et al. (2007, 2009) have suggested that, regardless of goal type, individuals need to invest time and effort in actions to reach the goal. Since the resources available to an individual are limited, striving for a certain goal will reduce the time and effort available to invest in other competing goals, resulting in motivational conflict. In addition to conflicting goals, motivational conflict also involves competing actions. Kilian et al. proposed the concept of motivational action conflicts, which describes situations with two or more available action alternatives that offer positive incentives, but that cannot be realized at the same time; individuals must choose one of these actions (Kilian, Hofer, Fries, & Kuhnle, 2010; Kuhnle, Hofer, & Kilian, 2010).

Studies have shown that school-leisure conflict may result in adverse consequences for academics, including reduced academic time, academic procrastination, poor academic adaptation, low academic satisfaction, poor academic performance, and a sense of academic helplessness (Hofer, 2007; Grund, Brassler, & Fries, 2014; Pluut, Curseu, and Ilies, 2015; Ratelle, Vallerand, Senecal, & Provencher, 2005). The question of why school-leisure conflict results in adverse consequences is particularly noteworthy. One reason is that some students make a leisure decision during the conflict; motivational interference resulting from making a school decision is another reason.

Motivational interference refers to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral impairment of a chosen activity resulting from the motivational properties of a non-chosen alternative. It displays itself in phenomena such as reduced persistence, switching activities, superficial learning, and bad mood (Hofer, 2007). Gollwitzer (1990) suggested that actional mind-set appears after a decision for a specific action has been made and protects individuals from the effects of competing goals and interfering environmental stimuli, thus helping them to invest completely in the current activity. However, once the actional mind-set is lost, the motivational characteristics of other activities will interfere with the current ongoing activity, leading to motivational interference (Fries & Dietz, 2007; Fries et al., 2008). In fact, students may experience motivational interference when engaged in either academic or leisure activities. Thus, there are two types of motivational interference resulting from school-leisure conflict. One occurs during academic learning activities, whereby the students are affected by the incentives of leisure activities and are easily distracted or in a bad mood, have difficulties in continued learning, and study superficially. The other occurs during leisure activities, whereby the students are affected by the incentives of academic learning activities and have difficulty concentrating on the leisure activities, contradictory feelings, and fear of being blamed (Hofer, 2007; Hofer and Fries, 2016; Hofer et al., 2011; Kilian, Hofer, Fries et al., 2010; Kilian, Hofer and Kuhnle, 2010). Studies have found that students who have greater motivational interference after a school decision demonstrate worse academic performance (Hofer et al., 2011; Kilian, Hofer, Fries et al., 2010; Kilian, Hofer and Kuhnle, 2010) and that students who have greater motivational interference after a school or

leisure decision have more unbalanced lives (Kuhnle, Hofer, & Killan, 2010).

1.2. Value orientations and motivational interference

Values are beliefs about the desirability of behaviors and events (Fries, Schmid, & Hofer, 2007). Unlike goals, values are not an end state individuals try to achieve. However, values can be used as standards for goal evaluation; therefore, they can influence motivation (Hofer et al., 2007). It is necessary to understand students' personal values in studies on academic learning because personal values affect not only academic task value, but also the selection of and participation in academic activities (Boekaerts, de Koning, & Vedder, 2006; Fries et al., 2007).

Personal values are affected by culture, with individual differences within the same culture (Kilian, Hofer, Fries et al., 2010; Kilian, Hofer and Kuhnle, 2010). Inglehart (1997) distinguished the difference between modern values and post-modern values. Modern values are values like hard work, security, and prosperity with an emphasis on achievement, determination, conservation, and responsibility. Post-modern values are values like tolerance, being with friends, and self-actualization with an emphasis on self-selection, friends, satisfaction, and recreation. Fries et al. (2005) suggested that achievement and well-being are the cores of modern and post-modern values, respectively. Hofer et al. (2007) proposed two types of personal value orientations in students: achievement value orientation and well-being value orientation. With achievement value orientation, students value success, future goals, and hard work; with well-being value orientation, students value leisure and social activities. Since modern and post-modern values can co-exist (Inglehart, 1997), achievement value orientation and well-being value orientation are conceptualized as two co-existing and independent dimensions; that is, students can simultaneously value both achievement and well-being (Hofer et al., 2007; Kilian, Hofer, Fries et al., 2010; Kilian, Hofer and Kuhnle, 2010).

Personal value orientation in students is related to motivational interference. Since achievement value orientation and well-being value orientation reflect the two main areas of students' lives—that is, academic learning in school (mainly providing achievement incentives) and leisure activity (mainly providing well-being incentives; Schmid et al., 2005)—motivational interference after a conflict decision varies depending on value orientation (Hofer and Fries, 2016; Kilian, Hofer, Fries et al., 2010; Kilian, Hofer and Kuhnle, 2010). Hofer et al. (2007) studied German high school students and found that students who had higher achievement value orientations had less motivational interference after a school decision and more motivational interference after a leisure decision. Conversely, students who had higher well-being value orientations had more motivational interference after a school decision and less motivational interference after a leisure decision. Studies with high school students in Bosnia, India, Paraguay, Spain, the United States (Hofer et al., 2009), and Italy (Hofer et al., 2011) also verified the aforementioned relationships between value orientation and motivational interference.

1.3. Digital nativity and its consequences

Digital nativity is a psychological construct derived from the concept of digital natives. Because of their access to computers and the Internet since childhood, individuals born after 1980 have grown up alongside technology and are called digital natives (Prensky, 2001), the Net Generation (Tapscott, 1998, 1999, 2008), or millennials (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Prensky (2001) suggested that, compared to digital immigrants born before 1980, digital natives take digital technology for granted and are familiar with, and proficient in using computers, mobile phones, video games, and Internet digital language. Because of the effects of digital technology, they are also accustomed to quick access to information and multitasking, favor graphics for communication, prefer

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