The Impacts of the Work-Family Interface and Coping Strategy on the Relationship between Workaholism and Burnout in Collegiate Recreation Employees

Colin Lopez, Temple University
Elizabeth Taylor (Advisor), Temple University
Matt Huml (Advisor), University of Cincinnati

Management - Human Resource Management (Other)  
virtual asynchronous  
20-minute oral presentation (including questions)  
Abstract 2020-128  
Session: Work-Life Balance

Greater concern has been placed on experiences of employees within the workplace and the effect of challenging work environments (Schaufeli, Bakker, van der Heijden, & Prins, 2009). In response, scholars have increased examination into vocational behavior and effects on employee, employer, family, and social outcomes (Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014). This has led to increased understanding of concepts such as employee engagement, work-family interface, and burnout. Beyond that, there has been a call to examine more mediating variables within employee behavior (Byron, 2005). Such research is important theoretically, providing insight into variables that influence vocational behavior, whether reducing the influence of bad employee behaviors or preventing the spread of negative consequences from the workplace into the employee’s non-work life.

Application within a recreational sport context is important. Unlike those working within traditional sport organizations, recreation employees have a different set of job expectations and organizational goals, such as increasing participation, increasing program efficiency, managing recreation facilities, and monitoring professional/student staff members (Zhang, DeMichele, & Connaughton, 2004). Student wellness has also become a more important topic in recent years, charging recreation employees with creating a healthy environment to improve student wellness (Doerksen, Elavsky, Rebar, & Conroy, 2014). Lastly, recreation employees are more likely to be dependent on students or low-training employees to maintain their operations, creating unique difficulties (Johnson, Kaiser, & Bell, 2012).

Therefore, the current study used SEM to examine the key concepts of workaholism, burnout, work-family interface, and coping strategies within the context of campus recreation employees. Specifically, the relationship between workaholism and burnout, as potentially mediated by the work-family interface and type of coping strategy utilized was examined. Results indicate a significant, positive relationship between workaholism and burnout ($\beta = 0.47, p < .001$), which aligns with previous research in the sport industry. The positive, indirect relationship between workaholism and burnout through work-family conflict and emotion-focused coping ($\beta = 0.078, LLCI = .046, ULCI = .12$) as well as through family-work conflict and emotion-focused coping ($\beta = 0.012, LLCI = .003, ULCI = .022$) was statistically significant. The indirect relationships through the work-family interface and task-focused coping were not significant.

The direct positive relationship between workaholism and burnout suggests workaholism is problematic for recreation employees, regardless of their work-family/family-work conflict. Additionally, the positive, indirect relationship between workaholism and burnout through the work-family interface and emotion-focused coping suggest work-family/family-work conflict and emotion-focused help explain the positive relationship between workaholism and burnout. Both relationships highlight the negative consequences of employees who are overcommitted to work, and the significant indirect relationship suggests those employees who experience work-family or family-work conflict and use emotion-focused coping strategies may experience higher levels of burnout. This examination allows recreation managers to better understand the challenges faced by their employees, while providing an opportunity to more effectively design human resources strategies for retention and improved employee wellness. Theoretically, an understanding of the relationship between workaholism and burnout, the influence of coping strategies, and how recreational employees can stem the negative consequences of workaholism are provided.