



National culture, work-life balance and employee well-being in European tourism firms: the moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance values

Cultura nacional, conciliación vida laboral-familiar y bienestar laboral en empresas turísticas europeas: el efecto moderador de los valores de evasión a la incertidumbre

Ana M. Lucia-Casademunt

University Loyola Andalucía, Department of Business Administration, C/ Escritor Castilla Aguayo, 4, 14004 Córdoba, Spain, alucia@uloyola.es

Antonia M. García-Cabrera

University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Faculty of Economics, Management and Tourism, Department of Business Administration, 35017 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, antonia.garcia@ulpgc.es

Deybbi G. Cuéllar-Molina

University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, School of Tourism of Lanzarote, Department of Business Administration, 35507 Tahíche-Lanzarote, Spain, dcuellar@dede.ulpgc.es

Abstract

The competitive advantage of companies rests upon work attitudes and the behavior of their employees. Work-life balance initiatives are considered to be an important antecedent of employees' well-being, and thus a factor that highly conditions employees' work attitudes and behavior. This study explores these relationships in the tourism industry, where hotels and restaurants offer day and night services that could harm work-life balance. Also, in the tourism industry, the national diversity of employees is continuously rising as a result of the increasing movement of people across borders. According to cross-cultural studies, differences in cultural dimensions (e.g., uncertainty avoidance) cause an impact on work-related variables. Thus, people's need for work-life balance may depend on their national cultures, which is why the moderating effect of national culture is under study. The empirical analysis carried out on a sample of 745 employees in tourism firms located in 17 European countries confirms the moderating role of national culture on the effect that human resource practices regarding work-life balance have on employees' well-being at work.

Keywords: Work-life balance, employee well-being, national culture, human resource practices, tourism industry.

Resumen

La ventaja competitiva de las empresas recae sobre las actitudes laborales y el comportamiento de sus empleados. Las iniciativas de conciliación vida laboral-familiar se consideran un antecedente importante del bienestar de los empleados y por tanto un factor que condiciona en gran medida las actitudes y comportamientos en el trabajo. El presente estudio explora estas relaciones en la industria turística, donde hoteles y restaurantes ofrecen servicios día y noche que podrían vulnerar la conciliación. Así mismo, en la industria turística la diversidad de las nacionalidades de los empleados está continuamente aumentando como resultado del creciente movimiento de las personas a través de las fronteras. De acuerdo a los estudios transculturales, las diferencias en dimensiones culturales (por ejemplo evasión a la incertidumbre) causan un impacto en las variables relacionadas con el trabajo. Por tanto, la necesidad de las personas de mantener un equilibrio entre trabajo y vida personal podría depender de sus culturas nacionales, de ahí el efecto moderador de la cultura nacional en el presente estudio. El análisis empírico desarrollado con la muestra de 745 empleados de empresas turísticas localizadas en 17 países europeos confirma el rol moderador de la cultura nacional en el sentido que las prácticas de recursos humanos relacionadas con la conciliación tiene sobre el bienestar de los empleados en el trabajo.

Palabras claves: Conciliación vida laboral-familiar, bienestar laboral, cultura nacional, prácticas de recursos humanos, industria turística.

1. Introduction

In the face of increased global competition, economic crisis and changes in the nature of work, organizations are more dependent upon positive employee work attitudes and behavior since these are sources of competitive advantage. These positive work attitudes and types of behavior typically emanate from employee well-being (Boyd, 1997). Although there is no general consensus on the definition of well-being (Paschoal et al., 2013), in the current paper well-being is understood as the set of employees' attitudes and feelings developed at the workplace, as Diener (2000) states. Thus we consider it as a multidimensional and complex construct, which comprises more than just an employee's satisfaction with the job as it includes

satisfaction with different aspects in the work context (Brunetto, Shacklock, Teo & Farr-Wharton, 2014).

Given the positive consequences of a workforce whose welfare is taken into account, it is relevant to study and have a deep understanding of the factors that condition employee well-being. Work environment –e.g., working hours, working conditions, workplace design–, may have both positive and negative impacts on individuals' well-being by affecting them in social, personal and family contexts, so these conditions ultimately determine firms' competitiveness (Wilson, Dejoy, Vandenberg, Richardson & Mcgrath, 2010).

The extant literature on human resource practices (HRPs) and employee well-being provides evidence of positive correlations between several practices (e.g.,



communication, participation, health promotion, training practices, reconciliatory practices of work and family), and indicators of well-being (Gonçalves & Neves, 2012; Noor, 2004). Among these practices, the present paper concentrates on work-life balance, as its aim is to help employees balance personal and professional contexts (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2005; Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007). The effects surrounding work-life balance could be particularly relevant when analyzing the context of the tourism industry, which is a labor-intensive area that is currently undergoing a severe labor shortage. National culture may condition the intensity to which employees suffer from the conflict between work roles and family roles (Lu et al., 2010). For this reason, authors have warned about the need for new research to discover if the knowledge about work-family balance can be generalized throughout different cultures or if it is specific to particular cultures (Lu et al., 2010).

Specifically, the relevance of the lack of balance between the two vital roles may differ according to employees' cultural values. Hofstede (1984) identifies four types of cultural values that can be differentiated: Power distance refers to interpersonal power between the boss and the subordinate as perceived by the less powerful of the two; Individualism refers to differences in the relationship between the individual and the collective and the dependence of the individual on the group; Masculinity refers to individuals' aggressiveness and competitiveness in the firm, as well as their determination in the pursuit of economic success. And finally, uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede, 1984). The value of uncertainty avoidance is chosen in this research for two reasons: first, due to the relevance of this value for studying the circumstances –e.g., preference for explicit rules and clear instructions, rule-oriented behavior, etc.– in which work-life balance influences employee well-being; second, because this value is included within the traditional framework proposed by Hofstede (1984), and thus is used extensively in publications which discuss its foundations and repercussions in the context of the firm (e.g., García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2011).

Based on these premises, this research attempts to analyze the moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance values on the influence exerted by work-life balance HRP on employee well-being in the tourism industry. With this aim in mind, an empirical analysis is carried out using data from 17 European countries. The use of the European cross-national sample is highly suitable for studying if the effect of work-life balance on employee well-being is moderated by national culture. Certainly, several factors generate differences between European countries in terms of culture and HRPs. For example, a relevant factor is the different sociocultural traditions and legislative frameworks, as these can play a relevant role in defending employee interests with respect to, among other aspects, work conditions and social benefits (Brewster, 2007).

This research potentially offers two main contributions to the literature. First, it can advance our understanding of the

consequences of work-life balance because we examine the conditions under which such HRP affects employees' well-being. We specifically study cultural values as a moderator using the Globe project. To be more specific, this study analyses the moderating role of uncertainty avoidance. Second, although work-life balance has been studied as an antecedent of employee well-being, no research has been found that analyses this relationship in the tourism industry where day and night services may harm employees' possibilities of attaining work-life balance. It is possible that this line of enquiry may provide new evidence, thus permitting a clearer understanding of the real influence of this HRP on the individual in this industry.

2. Theoretical background and research hypotheses

2.1 Employees' perception of HRP: work-life balance

Work and family are two central domains in most adults' lives, therefore research into the links between these two domains has greatly intensified due to changes in the demographic composition of the workforce (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), such as the entry of women, dual-earner couples, and single parents (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1997). Accordingly, there has been an evolution in human resource research. Academics have assumed that work conditions affect employees in their domestic context, but the reverse also happens (Clark, 2000; Frone, 2003). Moreover, employers require high employee commitment and they often assume that employees should give priority to their professional life instead of their personal life (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007).

The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978) proposes that individuals build different identities based on their interactions as members of specific social groups. As organizations are relevant social groups that condition an individual's personal identity, this identity is likely to relate to work-life issues (Frone, 2003) and work-family role conflicts (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Therefore much of the literature on work-life issues draws on role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964). Specifically, work-life conflict is "a form of inter-role conflict in which role-pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Thus, the term work-life balance emerged to indicate employees' needs to balance their work and life domains.

The work-life balance is defined as the balance between work and family demands, as well as the balance between work and other role expectations and responsibilities in private life –e.g., sport, charity, education, etc.– (Hämmig, Gutzwiller & Bauer 2009). According to Frone (2003), work interferes with family more than the opposite. Thus research stated the need to create and implement HRPs that let employees balance personal and professional domains. These HRPs are thought to benefit employees and organizations (e.g., Aryee et al., 2005; Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007) and are termed work-life balance. They are based on the recognition of the relevance of both domains for employees and on the relevance of reaching a suitable "balance" (Hämmig et al., 2009) that minimizes the conflicts between them (Clark, 2000; Lin, Wong & Ho, 2013).

Work-life balance has taken on great relevance in human resource management literature (McCarthy, Darcy & Grady, 2010) and the practices focused on this balance are considered the most relevant in organizations at present (Fleetwood, 2007). Specifically, authors highlight the need for managing working hours to let employees fulfill their professional and family responsibilities. This may be particularly relevant in the tourism sector where employees face long hours in rotating shifts and night shifts, which also extend to weekends and holidays (Harris, O'Neill, Cleveland & Crouter, 2007). The negative effect of these working conditions on work-family balance has been extensively documented by previous research (e.g., Keith & Schafer, 1980). Thus, when hotels offer work conditions to guarantee employees' work and family needs, their employees experiment increased life satisfaction (Zhao, Qu, & Ghiselli, 2011). However, the practices implemented by managers do not always attain the desired effect. When observing the organization, it is possible to find that managers and employees have different perspectives on HRP applications (e.g., Khilji & Wang, 2006) because managers' opinions on the practices being implemented can be quite different from the experience of employees with respect to such practices. So, individual differences do matter and can be relevant when studying the reasons behind employees' well-being. In this respect, Samnani & Singh (2013) warn researchers about the need to gather information from those bearing the brunt of HRPs, that is, the employees. Based on the above, our research analyzes the HRP of work-life balance implemented by organizations from their employees' point of view.

2.2 HRP regarding work-life balance and the effect on employee well-being

Over the past few years, employee well-being has occupied an increasingly prominent place in organizational psychology. Managers can influence their employees' well-being by changing such dimensions of organizational contexts as working hours, tasks or rewards (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Both employees and employers may benefit from increased occupational well-being (Paschoal et al., 2013). Specifically, companies with employees that experience poor well-being, and are thus less productive, make worse quality decisions and are more prone to absenteeism (Boyd, 1997), and suffering from decreased performance.

At the same time scientific literature has advanced with the emergence of different theoretical models, which focus on individual well-being. One of the models with the highest acceptance is that of mental health by Warr (1987). According to this author, mental health is a multidimensional and complex construct conditioned in a determined way by a series of environmental factors and one of its components is that of well-being. When these factors are job features, people's feelings of well-being are affected and are referred to as job-specific well-being or employee well-being (Warr, 1987, 1999).

Traditionally, well-being has been evaluated as a bipolar continuum constituted by feelings ranging from comfort to discomfort. However, some researchers defend a

bidimensional focus with two basic dimensions conceptualized as "pleasure" and "activation or arousal" (Warr, 1987). A particular degree of pleasure or displeasure may be accompanied by a high or low level of arousal and viceversa, or a certain degree of mental activation can be pleasurable or disagreeable. Warr (1987) suggests that three main axes should be considered for measuring how well-being is affected: (1) *Displeased-Pleased* (e.g., fulfillment) that corresponds to the first dimension; (2) *Anxiety or Discomfort-Comfort* (e.g., positive and negative feelings of pleasure); and (3) *Depression-Enthusiasm* (e.g., positive and negative feelings of arousal). Warr (1987) suggests that these three main axes should be considered for measuring what affects well-being.

According to Gröpel and Kuhl (2009), the balance between work and personal roles contributes to helping employees feel better. These authors state that the main justification for their study is based on the fact that there will be more well-being if their goals are achieved and, to that end, resources such as time or energy are required. Therefore, when employees perceive that they have sufficient time available both for work life and social life, it positively affects well-being if personal desires and needs are satisfied within that time; on the contrary, a lack of balance between work and social life impacts negatively on well-being because it results in feelings of frustration (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009; Noor, 2004). As result of all the above, it can be expected that:

H1: The more that organizations use HRP for work-life balance, the greater the employees' perception of well-being.

2.3 National values as moderators of work-life balance and employees' well-being at work

According to the "values as moderators" framework (Oishi, Diener, Suh & Lucas, 1999), Chen, Tsui and Zhong (2008) have asserted that not all employees react to the same incentive in the same way, since there are different values which impact on employees' work behavior (Hofstede, 1984). So, research based on the values-as-moderators framework has helped reach a better understanding of different employees' attitudes and behavior –e.g., subjective well-being (Oishi et al., 1999). So, it may be expected that the use of this framework could provide new conclusions regarding the effects of specific HRPs, such as work-life balance, on employees' well-being in the tourism industry. In order to study these values, we use the cultural values framework because cultural values differ from one society to another (Hofstede, 1984; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). Specifically, culture can be considered to be those values shared by the individual members of a human group (e.g., societies, nations, ethnic groups, etc.) that influence the perceptions, understanding and behavior of those individuals and the social relations established between them in organizations (Hofstede, 1984). Researchers have traditionally studied cultural values using Hofstede's (1984) framework, as it is particularly useful for understanding behavior and attitudes at work (Fullagar, Sumer, Sverke & Slick, 2003). This framework distinguishes between the values of individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and



masculinity. The GLOBE project (House et al., 2004) takes Hofstede's framework as the foundation for developing a subsequent and more evolved model (Blyton, 2001). Based on those two approaches, the value of uncertainty avoidance is chosen in this research.

Uncertainty avoidance measures the individual's tolerance of uncertain situations, as well as his fear of the unknown (Hofstede, 1984). When individuals have high uncertainty avoidance, the stress caused by uncertainty makes them avoid risks, thus making them seek stability; staying in the firm is important because it provides security (Hofstede, 1984). In this context, the stress resulting from uncertainty leads to the necessity to adopt formal rules (Hofstede, 1984). Norms reduce uncertainty by regulating individuals' behavior and generating predictability in the short term, so norms generate security and stability in relationships. In the business context, when individuals have high uncertainty avoidance values, they show a greater need for these norms that regulate the behavior and the relationships taking place in the firm (Hofstede, 1984). For example, common job schedules (e.g., employees do not work the same number of hours every day; they work nights, weekends, etc.) may harm job-family balance in the tourism industry and negatively affect employees' well-being. But the desire to avoid taking risks prevents employees from carrying out actions to reach short-term benefits in case they could lead to risky situations in the future (García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2011). They will not freely miss work to solve personal and family issues if such an absence is not formally accepted by the HRP of work-life balance, and so employee well-being will decline. Instead, they need norms formally provided by work-life balance HRP to be able to take this time off during work hours to resolve or care for personal or family issues. So, in the cases of cultural values of high uncertainty avoidance that condition employees' desires to avoid risks and remain in the firm, the influence that work-life balance HRP may have on employee well-being increases in importance.

On the other hand, when uncertainty avoidance values are low, uncertain situations do not cause employees any anxiety so that their need for avoiding risks drops (Hofstede, 1984). In this case, the rules and norms of the authority in the firm are of minor importance for regulating and formalizing employees' actions (García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2011) and employees could use their personal self-control and discretionary behavior to undertake actions to balance work and family, thus increasing their perception of well-being. This is so because of the fact that their low uncertainty avoidance values would make them comfortable with adopting a risk approach (García-Cabrera & García-Soto, 2011). Thus for those individuals with low uncertainty avoidance, the positive influence of the tourism firm's use of work-life balance HRP on employee well-being would become less noticeable. Then, drawing on the values-as-moderators framework, we state the following hypotheses:

H2: Human resource practice of work-life balance will have a stronger influence on employee well-being in those countries with higher levels of uncertainty avoidance.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Data sources and study context

To test the hypothesis, individual-level data is combined with country data at an international level. We focus on the relationship between aspects of the working conditions of European employees directly linked to the HRP of work-life balance, and the national values that characterize the countries in which tourism organizations create added value and carry out their service processes. So, for each respondent who was born in a particular country, territorial data at national level is aggregated in order to make it possible to analyze whether or not the effect of work-life balance HRP on employees' well-being is conditioned by their country's cultural values.

Individual-level data is obtained from Eurofound (2010), in particular the 5th European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) carried out in 2010 (quinquennial survey) by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Among other aspects, this survey addresses issues in the general job context, working conditions and practices associated with HRM throughout the 27 EU Member States as well as in Turkey, Croatia, Norway, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. The target population under study involves workers aged 15 years and over (16 and over in Spain, the UK and Norway) who are employed in the country being surveyed. Country-level data is obtained from the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004) that includes, among other indexes, those related to 9 cultural values at national level. GLOBE uses statistical data obtained from 17,300 middle managers in 951 organizations. The Globe project offers data from 62 societies, counting among them 20 European ones although only 17 of them are also included in the EWCS (2010). These 17 countries are analyzed in the present study because they coincide in both databases. We also test the aptness of this study by analyzing whether significant differences exist among countries with respect to employees' perceptions of the work-life balance HRPs applied in their organizations for their well-being. The ANOVA test was used for a mean comparison. Significant differences are found between mean values for all the variables under study when comparing these countries: *"Employee well-being"* (4.110***), *"Times a month the employee works more than 10 hours a day"* (8.975***), *"Working hours fit in with family or social commitments outside work"* (4.075***), *"Easy to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family affairs"* (4.263***) and *"How working time arrangements are set"* (5.576***). Therefore these results justify the convenience of studying the moderating effect of national culture in the potential effect that work-life balance exerts on employees' well-being.

3.2 Sample and research procedures

The total number of interviews in EWCS (2010) was 43,816. In light of our objective in this research, we obtained a subsample of 745 employees in 17 European countries –mainly countries belonging to the European Union, except Turkey and Albania. This sizeable reduction is the result of

disregarding the self-employed, industries other than tourism, first and second generation immigrants in case they have not assimilated the national culture of the country, and of choosing countries also analyzed in the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004). Later, the information regarding the country's national value of uncertainty avoidance from the GLOBE project was aggregated to each participant in the EWCS (2010).

The sub-sample consists of individuals who are, on average, female (55.8%) and 35.06 years of age or younger (57.4%). With regard to their educational level, more than half of the respondents had completed secondary education (49%), and only 11.8% had reached the 'first stage of tertiary education'. The employees' current job tenure was 5.16 years on average; the largest percentage of employees (19.1%) was concentrated in the range of less than one year's job tenure; the largest percentage of employees (33.3%) was concentrated in medium-sized organizations with 10 to 49 employees, closely followed by micro-enterprises (5 to 9 employees).

3.3 Measures

Independent variable:

The HRP of work-life balance. A list of four items was chosen from the 5th EWCS in order to measure the independent variables. The specific measurement of each independent variable is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - The measurement of independent variables: Work-life balance HRP

Item	Codes
How many times a month do you work more than 10 hours a day?	Open answer
In general, do your working hours fit in with your family or social commitments outside work...?	Not at all well (1) Not very well (2) Well (3) Very well (4)
Would you say that for you arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters is...?	Very difficult (1) Somewhat difficult (2) Not too difficult (3) Not difficult at all (4)
How are your working time arrangements set?	They are set by the company/organization with no possibility for changes (1) You can choose between several fixed working schedules determined by the company/organization (2)

Source: Authors.

Moderator variable:

Cultural value of uncertainty avoidance. The scores of the cultural value of uncertainty avoidance that correspond to each country in the sample were taken from the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004 which analyzes culture by focusing

on the values to which employees aspire («should be»). This means that, faced with an uncertain future, human beings take a position in a continuum that ranges from full acceptance of that uncertainty to intolerable anxiety about it (Hofstede, 1984). Thus, higher scores indicate greater uncertainty avoidance (House et al., 2004).

Dependent variable:

Employee well-being. The dependent variables of the factor analysis, which was carried out (principal components estimation) with varimax rotation included the following questions: a) How you have been feeling over the last two weeks - I have felt cheerful and in good spirits; b) How you have been feeling over the last two weeks - I have felt calm and relaxed; and c) How you have been feeling over the last two weeks - I have felt active and vigorous. The results show that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (χ^2) both offer satisfactory levels (KMO=0.736; $\chi^2=1210.585^{***}$). The variance explained rises to 80.868%. The Cronbach alpha coefficients indicate that the scales used to measure employee well-being have internal consistency (0.881).

Control variables:

The present study included two groups of control variables. At the organizational level, size is introduced and measured through the total number of employees, and has been used in several studies –e.g., Noor, 2002. At the individual level, the following variables were included (e.g., Wright & Cropanzano, 2000): Job tenure (measured by the age of the interviewee in their organization) and Level of education (which has been grouped into six categories, from the first Pre-primary education: 0 to the last Second stage of tertiary education: 6).

3.4 Data analysis

A correlation analysis was carried out between the independent variables in order to examine the possibility of bias due to multicollinearity in coefficient significance tests. Multiple linear regressions were used to test the hypotheses. First, the full sample was used and later on separate equations were generated for countries with high and low uncertainty avoidance values (below and above the mean score for the full sample). To assess the potential for regression coefficient instability, collinearity diagnostics were also conducted in linear regressions –i.e., variance inflation factor (VIF) and condition number.

4. Results

Table 2 shows correlations between the variables, the means and the standard deviations. Regarding multicollinearity in the data, the general rule of thumb is that the correlation between the independent variables should not exceed 0.75. In our sample, the highest correlation is between two control variables, the *Level of education* and *Job tenure* at 0.183^{***}, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a problem.

**Table 2 - Correlations, means and standard deviations**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Uncertainty avoidance	1							
2. Organization size	-.130***	1						
3. Job tenure	-.059	.145***	1					
4. Level of education	-.044	.183***	-.137***	1				
5. Times a month working more than 10 hours a day	.068†	-.067†	-.007	-.014	1			
6. Working hours fit in with your family or social commitments	-.209***	.034	.000	.058	-.134***	1		
7. Easy to take hours during working to take care of personal of family issues	-.023	.006	.054	-.034	-.077*	.134***	1	
8. How working time arrangements are set	-.160***	.034	.051	.138***	-.024	.076*	.119**	1
Mean	4.3938	3.35	5.16	2.83	2.87	1.92	1.52	1.47
Standard deviation	.47386	1.179	6.413	1.078	6.519	1.212	1.207	.871

Source: Authors.

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

In addition, our tests for linear regressions (Table 3) show that the variance inflation factor values (VIF) range from 1.022 to 1.141, much lower than the recommended cutoff threshold of. The highest condition number for all the

regressions is 12.618, lower than the recommended cutoff of 20. All these statistics suggest that multicollinearity is not a problem in the data.

Table 3 - The moderating effect of cultural values in the consequences of work-life balance HRP on employee well-being

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Full sample (n=745)		Low uncertainty avoidance (n=350)		High uncertainty avoidance (n=395)	
	β	VIF	β	VIF	β	VIF
Step 1: Controls						
Organization size	.030	1.075	.065	1.046	-.034	1.091
Job tenure	-.029	1.051	-.054	1.024	-.008	1.096
Level of education	.095*	1.065	.043	1.022	.106†	1.113
Step 2: Controls + Main effects						
Organization size	.022	1.080	.060	1.054	-.027	1.106
Job tenure	-.038	1.060	-.052	1.051	-.031	1.106
Level of education	.088*	1.098	.027	1.072	.124*	1.141
Times a month working more than 10 hours a day	-.102**	1.030	.039	1.045	-.142**	1.031
Working hours fit in with your family or social commitments	.135***	1.043	.105†	1.060	.124*	1.063
Easy to take off hours during working day to take care of personal of family issues	.066†	1.039	.030	1.036	.105*	1.053
How working time arrangements are set	.027	1.049	.014	1.080	.011	1.028
ΔR^2	4.2%		1.3%		5.8%	
ΔF	7.373		1.016		5.509***	
F	5.454***		.968		3.779**	
Final adjusted R^2	4.4%		-.01%		5.1%	
Condition number	12.128		12.618		12.564	

Source: Authors.

Note: Levels of significance: † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

With Model 1 in Table 3 we can confirm hypothesis H1 and verify the relevance that work-life balance HRP exert on employees' well-being. Specifically, this positive and significant effect is identified for Working hours fit in with your family or social commitments ($\beta=.135***$) and slightly for Easy to take time off during working hours to take care of personal or family issues ($\beta=.066†$). Also a negative influence is found; Times a month working more than 10

hours a day ($-.102**$). Finally, How working time arrangements are set has no influence on employees' job well-being ($\beta=.027$), thus showing that is the content of the HRP rather than the procedure followed to define it that positively affects job well-being.

Table 3 also presents the separate regressions for each of the cultural groups (Models 2 to 3). Specifically, the low

uncertainty avoidance countries are Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom while those that rank high in this value are Greece, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Turkey and Albania. When contemplating this uncertainty avoidance value, a different effect was detected for the HRP of work-life balance. To be precise, it was possible to observe the moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance in the influence exerted on employees' well-being by Times a month working more than 10 hours a day, Working hours fit in with your family or social commitments and Easy to take time during working hours to take care of personal or family issues. The estimated regressions confirm that the first variable has a negative effect on the dependent variable only in Model 3. Also the two practices of work-life balance only have a positive effect on employees' well-being when individuals have high uncertainty avoidance values (model 3). Authors failed to find this effect in a low uncertainty avoidance sub-sample. These results allow us to confirm hypothesis H2.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The growing amount of literature on work-family conflict shows us clearly ample evidence of strong interdependence between the two roles in the lives of the individual. Notwithstanding, further investigations are required to analyze if Work-Life Balance HRP are specific to the culture of each country or can be generalized across borders (Poelmans, O'Driscoll & Beham 2005). This is relevant, as it represents an important condition in order to properly apply work-life balance HRP in organizations in different countries.

Our study confirms the causal and positive relationship between the use of HRP of work-life balance by the organization and the employee's well-being in the tourism industry. This suggests the convenience of supporting employees by making the family and work roles compatible. This may be particularly relevant in this industry as employees usually face long hours in rotating shifts, and night weekends and holidays shifts (Harris et al., 2007); they also deal with no job security, labor intrusion and low qualification jobs. So, providing employees with flexibility to balance their schedules and family responsibilities can be a prerequisite for tourism firms to benefit from the positive work attitudes and behaviors that emanate from employee well-being (Boyd, 1997). However, work conditions in the tourism industry could harm the use of work-life balance HRP as staffs are frequently subjected to employee turnover. Thus, our work suggests that tourist managers should be encouraged to use work-life balance HRP, since they have positive effects on employees and consequently could be positive for organizational performance.

Additionally, our results suggest that the way work-life balance is experienced by employees differs from one country to another and the cultural group to which the employees belong (low or high uncertainty avoidance). When considering this value, a different effect of work-life balance HRP on employee well-being was discovered. This new effect is the result of the different degrees to which individuals tolerate uncertain situations, as well as their

fear of the unknown –e.g., uncertainty avoidance values Hofstede (1984). This may be particularly relevant in the tourism industry where employees are usually from different countries. So it can be expected that the same HRP have a different influence on the employees according to their national cultural values. It seems to follow that those tourism firms in countries where uncertainty avoidance values are high may obtain greater benefits from the use of effective work-family conciliation policies, as in these cultures employee well-being will increase as a result of those policies. This positive effect can not be expected in cultures with low uncertainty-avoidance values.

Although the data used in this research is related to a great number of countries and employees, it was compiled from 17 European countries. Thus, our results cannot be fully generalized without first determining if the geographical context –i.e., Western region–, which characterizes the organizations and countries concerned, contributes to understanding the role of cultural values as moderating variables of the influence that the HRP of work-life balance exert on employee well-being. Consequently we recommend examining these results in comparison to other geographic locations –e.g., the Arabic world, Asian cultures. Finally, although the present study disregarded first and second generation immigrants in case they had not assimilated the national culture of the country, there could be potential cultural clashes between foreign organizations (employers) established in a country and local employees. The information available in datasets did not allow us to take these circumstances into consideration or to remove them from the analysis. So, future research could benefit from the inclusion of a firm's nationality, as this could conceivably affect employee well-being.

References

- Aryee, S., Srinivas, E.S., & Tan, H.H. (2005). Rhythms of Life: Antecedents and Outcomes of Work Family Balance in Employed Parents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(1), 132–146.
- Blyton, P. (2001). The general and the particular in cross-national comparative research. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 50(4), 590–595.
- Boyd, A. (1997). Employee trapscorruption in the workplace. *Management Review*, 86(8), 9–9.
- Brewster, C. (2007). A European perspective on HRM. *European Journal of International Management*, 1(3) 239–259.
- Brunetto, Y., Shacklock, K., Teo, S., & Farr-Wharton, R. (2014). The impact of management on the engagement and well-being of high emotional labour employees. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 25(17), 2345–2363.
- Chen, Z.X., Tsui, A.S., & Zhong, L. (2008). Reactions to psychological contract breach: a dual perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29, 527–548.
- Clark, S.C. (2000). Work-Family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work-Life Balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747–770.
- Danna, K., & Griffin, R.W. (1999). Health and well-being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Management*, 25(3), 357–384.
- Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a national index. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 34–37.
- Edwards, J.R., & Rothbard, N.P. (2000). Mechanisms linking work and family: Clarifying the relationship between work and family constructs. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1) 178–199.
- Eurofound. (2010). *Sampling 5th European working conditions survey, 2010. Sampling implementation report*. Dublin, Ireland.



- Fleetwood, S. (2007). Re-thinking work life balance: editor's introduction. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(3), 351-359.
- Frone, M.R. (2003). Work-family balance, In: J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* (pp. 143-162). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Fullagar, C.J., Sumer, H. C., Sverke, M., & Slick, R. (2003). Managerial sex-role stereotyping a cross cultural analysis. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 3(1), 93-107.
- García-Cabrera, A.M., & García-Soto, M.G. (2011). MNC commitment, OCB role definition and intent to leave in subsidiary top managers: The moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance values. *International Journal of Intercultural Relation*, 35, 641-657.
- Gonçalves, S.P., & Neves, J. (2012). The link between perceptions of human resource management practices and employee well-being at work. *Advances in Psychology Study*, 1(1), 31-38.
- Greenhaus, J.H., & Beutell, N.J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *The Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76-88.
- Gröpel, P., & Kuhl, J. (2009). Work-life balance and subjective well-being: the mediating role of need fulfilment. *British Journal of Psychology*, 100(2), 365-375.
- Hämmig, O., Gutzwiller, F., & Bauer, G. (2009). Work-life conflict and associations with work-and nonwork-related factors and with physical and mental health outcomes: a nationally representative cross-sectional study in Switzerland. *BMC Public Health*, 9(1), 435-439.
- Harris, R.R., O'Neill, J. W., Cleveland, J.N., & Crouter, A.C. (2007). A model of workfamily dynamics of hotel managers. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(1), 66-87.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W. & Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, leadership and organizations: the GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hughes, J., & Bozionelos, N. (2007). Work life balance as source of job dissatisfaction and withdrawal attitudes. An exploratory study on the views of male workers. *Personnel Review*, 36(1), 145-154.
- Kahn, R.L., Wolfe, D.M., Quinn, R. P., Snoek, J.D., & Rosenthal, R.A. (1964). *Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. New York: Wiley.
- Keith, P.M., & Schafer, R.B. (1980). Role strain and depression in two job families. *Family Relations*, 29, 483-488.
- Khilji, S.E., & Wang, X. (2006). Intended and implemented HRM: the missing linchpin in strategic human resource management research. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(7), 1171-1189.
- Lin, J.H., Wong, J.Y., & Ho, C.H. (2013). Promoting frontline employees' quality of life: leisure benefit systems and work-to-leisure conflicts. *Tourism Management*, 36, 178-187.
- Lu, L., Cooper, C.L., Kao, S-H., Chang, T-T., Allen, T.D., Lapierre, L.M., et al. (2010). Cross cultural differences on work to family conflict and role satisfaction: a Taiwanese-British comparison. *Human Resource Management*, 49(1), 67-85.
- McCarthy, A., Darcy, C., & Grady, G. (2010). Work-life balance policy and practice: understanding line manager attitudes and behaviors. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(2), 158-167.
- Noor, N.M. (2002). Work-family conflict, locus of control, and women's well-being: tests of alternative pathways. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 142(5), 645-662.
- Noor, N.M. (2004). Work-family conflict, work-and family-role salience, and women's well-being. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144(4), 389-406.
- Oishi, S., Diener, E., Suh, E., & Lucas, R. (1999). Values as a moderator in subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality*, 67(1), 158-184.
- Parasuraman, S., & Greenhaus, J.H. (1997). The changing world of work and family. In: S. Parasurama & J. H. (Eds.), *Integrating work and family: Challenges and choices for a changing World* (pp. 3-14). Westport, CN: Quorum Books.
- Paschoal, T., Demo, G., Fogaça, N., Ponte, V., Edrei, L., Francischeto, L., & Albuquerque, G. (2013). Well-being at work: Scenario of Brazilian studies published in the first decade of the new millennium. *Tourism & Management Studies*, 2, 383-395.
- Poelmans, S., O'Driscoll, M., & Beham, B. (2005). An overview of international research on the work- family interface, In: S. Poelmans (Eds.), *Work and family: An international research perspective* (pp. 3-46). Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate.
- Samnani, A.K., & Singh, P. (2013). Exploring the fit perspective: an ethnographic approach. *Human Resource Management*, 52(1), 123-144.
- Tajfel, H. (1978). *Differentiation between social groups: studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. London: Academic Press.
- Warr, P. (1987). *Work, unemployment and mental health*. Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press.
- Warr, P. (1999). Well-being and the workplace, In: D. Kahneman, E. Diener & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 392-412). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Wilson, M.G., Dejoy, M.D., Vandenberg, R.J., Richardson, H.A., & Mcgrath, A.L. (2010). Work characteristics and employee health and well-being: test of a model of healthy work organization. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77(4), 565-588.
- Wright, T.A., & Cropanzano, R. (2000). Psychological well-being and job satisfaction as predictors of job performance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5(1), 84-94.
- Zhao, X.R., Qu, H., & Ghiselli, R. (2011). Examining the relationship of work-family conflict to job and life satisfaction: a case of hotel sales managers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 46-54.

Article history:

Received: 13 May 2014

Accepted: 19 November 2014