

2020-07-24

A two model approach to understanding the effects of psychological work environm...

This work was made openly accessible by BU Faculty. Please [share](#) how this access benefits you. Your story matters.

Version	Accepted manuscript
Citation (published version):	M. Pittman, S. Jung, S. Gordon. 2020. "A Two Model Approach to Understanding the Effects of Psychological Work Environment and Personal-Work Conflict on Turnover intention: A Generational Analysis." international council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Educators. 2020 Annual International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE). Virtual, 2021-07-22 - 2020-07-24.

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/43317>

Boston University

A Two Model Approach to Understanding the Effects of Psychological Work Environment and Personal-Work Conflict on Turnover intention: A Generational Analysis

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to further understand the effects of personal-work conflict and work environment on turnover intention with a focus on generational differences. Data was collected from a total of 922 respondents from U.S. casual-dining restaurant employees. The results supported the proposed relationship with work environment mediating the relationship between personal-work conflict and turnover intention. It was determined in this model that the newer generations were more effected by these relationships. This study demonstrates an important understanding in the directional analysis of personal-work conflict and the work environment on turnover intent.

Keywords: restaurant employees; turnover intention; personal-work conflict; work environment; generations

Introduction

Work is commonly conveyed as a focal point of life, as the average full-time job consumes 40 hours per week of a person's time and often more in the hospitality industry. The work-life balance dilemma is a frequently researched topic (Deery & Jago, 2015). Researchers have assessed how work-personal conflicts (WPC, PWC) and work-family conflicts (WFC, FWC) affect turnover, job satisfaction, personal lives, and other variables (Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Chan & Ao, 2019; Chelariu and Stump, 2011; McGinley & Martinez, 2018). The four interrole conflict constructs referred to here as the work conflict (WC) constructs define a conflict created by work on a person's life or a conflict from life on a person's career. (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Wilson & Baumann, 2015). Such intentions—to leave industries entirely—highlight how severe work environments can dramatically influence employees' thinking.

Within this context, generation Z's emerging prominence in the labor market calls for attention. Goh and Lee (2018) identify some of the challenges that generation Z employees may find challenging in hospitality, identifying abnormal and long work hours and guest interactions as potential problems for generation Z workers. This can be amplified in restaurant management, as restaurants deal with high volumes of guests in short periods of time and are known for high stress environments, which directly relate to WC.

While WC, work environment (WE), and industry turnover have been measured individually, no articles in hospitality have measured all within a generational setting. The studying of generational differences in this relationship model among WE, WC and industry turnover is strategic as generations have been proven to have vastly different needs in the work

environment (Tsaur & Yen, 2018; Twenge, 2010). Ultimately answering how WE will impact the WC and industry turnover relationship amongst the various generations will build upon generational theory and provide industry professionals with the tools to properly manage these employees and decrease industry turnover intention. Thus, the purpose of this study is clarify whether relationships between WC and industry turnover are moderated by work environment (WE), focusing on generation Z, about whom relatively little is known.

Literature Review

Burke, Koyuncu, and Fiksenb (2013) excavate information on Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict and how this affects a congregation of factors including organizational commitment, organizational outcomes (profit/performance), engagement, support and behavior. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) treat the various WC as separate, work that affects family and family that affects work, and work that affects personal life and personal life that affects work. The WFC is shown as a significant influencer of employee turnover intention over FWC and thus leaders and academics now understand that they must find a balance in order to reduce turnover intention, especially amongst managers (Yunita and Kismono, 2014).

The hospitality industry is generally known for high levels of turnover, and with the emerging of generation Z in the workplace, the hospitality industry must adapt and provide clear strategies to maintain this new generation and help encourage them to work within the hospitality industry (Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010; Postolov, Sopova, & Iliev, 2017). Furthermore, the hospitality industry tends to lean towards long work hours, poor job security and high demand, thus generation Z will experience high levels of WC (Blomme et al., 2010b; Yunita & Kismono, 2014). Wilson and Baumann (2015) developed the four “interrole” conflict constructs widely used in the WFC/FWC and PWC/WPC literature. These constructs are unique as they

analyze structure and conditions, attitudes and reactions, and behaviors. The interrole conflicts are used to analyze the three items by participants filling out a questionnaire designed to test their work to personal conflict and personal to work conflict. Through the participant results, researchers have determined a connection between personal (family) life and work life increasing likelihood for turnover, stress and job burnout (Blomme et al., 2010b; Karakas and Tezcan, 2019; Lin et al., 2014).

The notability and importance in creating job satisfaction among employees is repeatedly studied as it can lead to improved turnover intention, performance and other factors; however, Herzberg (1959) highlights the gravity of understanding how to properly motivate employees and create satisfaction. Herzberg's two factor theory, also known as the motivator-hygiene theory underlines the pivotal wisdom that extrinsic factors such as salary, time-off, benefits and workplace conditions can only prevent dissatisfaction rather than being used to create satisfaction (Herzberg, 1959; Herzberg & Hamlin, 1961; Herzberg & Hamlin, 1963). Furthermore, Herzberg's two-factor theory outlines the need for greater psychological practices in order to increase motivation; including recognition, employee empowerment, development and culture of the workplace (Herzberg, 1959; Herzberg & Hamlin, 1961; Herzberg & Hamlin, 1963).

Work environment (WE) can be defined as a factor that positively or negatively affects employees including items resembling the physical environment, and psychological factors which has been studied across a multitude of industries including health, clinical psychological, business and minor research in hospitality (Fletcher et al., 2010; Holston-Okae; Lee et al., 2016; Yeh & Huan, 2017). Examples of the physical environment include the office space or restaurant, safety and anything related to how the restaurant functions; while psychological

environment pertains to nervousness, rewards, recognition, coworkers and status (title/position; Fletcher and Nusbaum, 2010). The four factors within the psychological WE provided by Rossberg et al. (2004) include self-realization, conflict, workload and nervousness. These factors operate and are analyzed within the actual working environment and the employee's perceptions of the WE (Rossberg et al., 2004). Rossberg et al. (2004) provides an adapted WE scale that is beneficial when applied to the hospitality industry. Supplemental studies have also taken place in which human resource managers listed what activities managers utilize to create a fun work environment in order to boost organizational outcome goals (Ford et al., 2005). Kurniawaty et al. (2019) found that turnover intention may be mitigated by a positive work environment. This creates the connection that work environment may be able to reduce WC in the relationship between turnover intention. A review of work environment literature in the hospitality industry shows a clear gap with WE as a significant moderator in the WC to turnover relationship.

Hypothesis 1: As work-personal conflict increases, there will be a negative impact on the work environment.

Hypothesis 2: As a negative work environment increases the employee's turnover intention will increase.

In Solnet et al.'s (2012) article, the authors determined key differences in millennials' work attitudes towards previous generations. The authors utilized a 7-point Likert scale along with validated quantitative scales from previous research to understand the generation Y work attitude (Solnet et al., 2012). These differences include scoring low on job satisfaction and commitment and scoring higher on turnover intention creating a need for industry leaders to create a more positive work environment for employees (Solnet et al., 2012). This provides a

strong foundation for studies on future generations and their workplace attitudes which ultimately helps distinguish crucial factors that improve low scores in the negative categories, for instance organizational commitment (turnover). Additionally, Maria-Cristina (2016) established that generation Z needs to develop relationships, generous salaries and strong benefits for their work environment to prevent turnover intention and increase job satisfaction. Generation Z also exhibited a desire for advancement opportunities and a creative work environment (Maria-Cristina, 2016). This research does not conduct a direct comparison of prior generations, however utilizing literature the author finds that generation Z has much higher standards and requirements for work than previous generations (Maria-Cristina, 2016). Lanier (2017) emphasizes the cultural needs of generation Z and the industry as a workforce must learn to blend the needs of each generation collectively. Research shows that generation Z is not only interested in tangible rewards such as salary and bonuses, but values diversity, technology, and creativity through entrepreneurship and workplace opportunities (Lanier, 2017). Thus, indicating that professionals should utilize intrinsic aspects when seeking to employ human resource practices that target generation Z in the workplace. Therefore, the following are proposed:

Hypothesis 3-1: Generation will moderate the relationship between WPC and WE.

Hypothesis 3-2: Generation will moderate the relationship between WE and TI.

Hypothesis 4-1: The amount of training an employee receives will moderate the relationship between WC and WE.

Hypothesis 4-2: The amount of training an employee receives will moderate the relationship between WE and TI.

Hypothesis 5-1: Gender will moderate the relationship between WPC and WE.

Hypothesis 5-2: Gender will moderate the relationship between WE and TI.

Much research has been conducted into the understanding of work-life balance, job performance, turnover intention and job satisfaction. Generation Z's characteristics are not simply related to these employees' age range, but involve persistent cohort effects related to communication, technology, and attitudes (Barron et al., 2014). Fundamentally Twenge (2010) established that there are core generational differences that affect work attitudes and values including work-life balance issues in newer generations (Gen Y versus previous generations). This generational research solidifies the need to now examine how generation Z, a new workforce joining millennials in the labor market, will be affected as generation X and baby boomers climb quickly towards retirement (Twenge, 2010). Twenge (2010) creates the theoretical framework for generational research and this paper seeks to build upon that literature to include generation Z. Moreover, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) encompasses job empowerment, which despite actual control, the perception of behavioral control plays an immense role in the achievement of desired behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, a positive WE (one that the employee has a perceived control over the environment) may lead to a decrease in turnover intention (Ajzen, 1991). There is clearly a research gap presented that should focus on generation Z as a large labor force entering the restaurant market with current employees between the ages of 18 to 24 and future employees closely following. Thus, the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6: The WE will have a negative impact on WPC.

Hypothesis 7: WPC will have a negative impact on turnover intention.

Hypothesis 8-1: Generation will moderate the relationship between the WE and WPC.

Hypothesis 8-2: Generation will moderate the relationship between WPC and TI.

Hypothesis 9-1: Training will moderate the relationship between WE and WPC.

Hypothesis 9-2: Training will moderate the relationship between WPC and TI.

Hypothesis 10-1: Gender will moderate the relationship between WE and WPC.

Hypothesis 10-2: Gender will moderate the relationship between WPC and TI.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual models for this study.

Methodology

A web-based questionnaire was utilized for data collection to reach a large group of participants in the casual-dining restaurant segment. Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was used for data collection at six different points in time. This allowed the researchers to collect roughly equal size (n) groups in terms of generation Z, Y and X (three sets for each of the two models). A total of 922 responses were collected with a total of 685 (74%) usable responses after data cleaning (missed attention check, too fast response time, unqualified/wrong group etc.). Participants were further disqualified from participating in additional sections of data collection if their worker ID had already been used, this resulted in 253 usable responses for model two while model one had 432 usable responses.

The 12-item work-personal conflict scale was adapted and validated by Podratz (2004) from a work-family conflict scale created by Netemeyer, boles, and McMurrin (1996). Turnover intention was measured using Colarelli and Guion's (1984) three-item scale. A 10-item scale adapted by Holston-Okae (2017) and originally created by Røssberg, Eiring and Friis (2004) was used to measure work environment. All measurements utilized a 5-point Likert style scale. In addition to the measurements, demographic data were also collected including generation, training, education, gender, etc. Moreover, the mediation variables were applied in this study as a scenario and asked participants to answer questions about their work environment or work-personal conflict based on their previous answers of the independent variable.

To test the hypotheses, this study used the moderated mediator model by Rucker and Hayes (2007) and later revised by Hayes (2013). The model was used to observe how the indirect effect in the model interacts with the study's moderators which are generation, length of training, and gender. The method is also known as conditional indirect effect which the indirect effect can be quantified using the equation stated below where W is the moderator effect. Finally, to test the results, standard errors and confidence intervals (*hereafter*, CI) for the indirect effect were obtained using bootstrapping

$$f(\hat{\theta}|W) = (\hat{a}_1 + \hat{a}_3W)(\hat{b}_1 + \hat{b}_2W)$$

Results

As hypothesized, the relationships between WPC, WE and TI were proven to be true in both models as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Both models indicate that both work environment and work personal conflict affects each other in explaining turnover intentions. However, only model one showed the significance when analyzing important moderators such as generational difference and training, which shown significance in both H3-1 and H4-1/H4-2. As proposed by this study, model one shows that WPC effects WE stronger for newer generations. Furthermore, when training is analyzed in model one, the longer period of training, the more likely the employee is to be less effected by the overall model and turnover intention will be moderated by training (H4-2). Controversially, when an employee has higher quantities of training, the WPC to WE relationship increases (H4-1) which requires further investigation. These findings suggest that a more complex relationship exists between WPC and WE from Twenge (2010) generational theory when moderators such as generation and training is considered in the model. Gender

differences also showed in H5-2 that men are more susceptible to a negative work environment leading to turnover intention.

Discussion

This study provides strong implications for managers and executives that there are clear differences in each generational group and thus individual groups require different special attention. For example, industry leaders should worry less about the work environment with older generations and focus more on work-personal conflicts the employees may be facing; solutions such as additional paid or unpaid time off, company held events and other practices could potentially reduce the WPC. Whereas younger generations are also significantly affected by the work environment due to the relationship between WPC and WE leading to turnover intention. This helps to create a precedent for organizations to have specific programs that can be tailored for each employees' needs rather than a simple streamlined schedule, benefit package etc. Training is overall positive, and a majority of respondents indicated they received only one to six weeks of training showing a major area for improvement in most restaurants.

The theoretical contributions of this study enhance generation theory set by Twenge (2010) and showcase that newer generations are having seemingly more complex need than their predecessors. Furthermore, it is evident additional research is required to understand the complex relationships each generation is having with these models and exact solutions that will be most beneficial for the newest generations. This is also the first study to do a two-model comparison with the psychological work environment and work-personal conflict variables to determine which model is more significant. Future research should reference this literature as this proves model one to be the more significant of the two.

Word Count: 2499

References

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211.
- Baral, R., & Bhargava, S. (2010). Work-family enrichment as a mediator between organizational interventions for work-life balance and job outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(3), 274-300.
- Blomme, R. J., Van Rheede, A., & Tromp, D. M. (2010). Work-family conflict as a cause for turnover intentions in the hospitality industry. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 10(4), 269-285.
- Chan, S., & Ao, C. (2019). The Mediating Effects of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment on Turnover Intention, in the Relationships Between Pay Satisfaction and Work-Family Conflict of Casino Employees. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism: JQAHT.*, 20(2), 206-229.
- Chelariu, C., & Stump, R. (2011). A study of work-family conflict, family-work conflict and the contingent effect of self-efficacy of retail salespeople in a transitional economy. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(11/12), 1660-1679.
- Colarelli, S., & Guion, Robert. (1984). Methods of communication and mediating processes in realistic job previews. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(4), 633-642.
- Deery, M., & Jago, L. (2015). Revisiting talent management, work-life balance and retention strategies. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 453–472.
- Goh, E., & Kong, S. (2018). Theft in the hotel workplace: Exploring frontline employees' perceptions towards hotel employee theft. *Tourism and Hospitality Research.*, 185(4), 442-455.

- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell N. J. (1985). Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 76-88.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach.
- Herzberg, F., & Hamlin, R. (1961). A motivation-hygiene concept of mental health. *Mental Hygiene*, 45, 394-401.
- Holston-Okae, Bettye L. (n.d.). Employee Turnover Intentions in the Hospitality Industry.
- McGinley, S. P., & Martinez, L. (2018). The Moderating Role of Career Progression on Job Mobility: A Study of Work–Life Conflict. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 42(7), 1106–1129.
- Preacher, K. J., Rucker, D. D., & Hayes, A. F. (2007). Addressing moderated mediation hypotheses: Theory, methods, and prescriptions. *Multivariate behavioral research*, 42(1), 185-227.
- Røssberg, J., Eiring, &., & Friis, S. (2004). Work environment and job satisfaction. A psychometric evaluation of the Working Environment Scale-10. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 39(7), 576-80.
- Solnet, D., Kralj, A., & Kandampully, J. (2012). Generation Y employees: An examination of work attitude differences. *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, 17(3), 36-54.
- Twenge, J. (2010). A Review of the Empirical Evidence on Generational Differences in Work Attitudes. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), 201-210.

Wilson, K. S., & Baumann, H. M. (2015). Capturing a More Complete View of Employees' Lives Outside of Work: The Introduction and Development of New Interrole Conflict Constructs. *Personnel Psychology*, 68(2), 235-282.

Table 1

Moderator mediation effect using work environment as mediator ($N = 432$)

	Work Environment (Mediator) <i>B (SE B)</i>	Turnover Intention (DV) <i>B (SE B)</i>
<i>Generation as moderator</i>		
Work Conflict	.87(.11)**	.20(.17)
Generation	.67(.32)**	.22(.44)
Work Environment		.74(.16)**
Work Conflict x Generation	-.16(.09)*	-.04(.12)
Work Environment x Generation		-.01(.12)
Indirect effect of Work Conflict:		
Generation X		.55(.08)**
95% CI		.40 – .71
Generation Y		.49(.05)**
95% CI		.39 – .58
Generation Z		.43(.06)**
95% CI		.32 – .56
<i>Training years as moderator</i>		
Work Conflict	.48(.12)**	-.24(.17)
Training	-.30(.11)**	-.24(.14)**
Work Environment		.96(.14)**
Work Conflict x Generation	.06(.03)**	.14(.05)**
Work Environment x Generation		-.09(.04)**
Indirect effect of Work Conflict:		
Short years of training		.47(.07)**
95% CI		.35 – .61
Long years of training		.42(.09)**
95% CI		.24 – .60
<i>Gender as moderator</i>		
Work Conflict	.71(.13)**	.27(.19)
Gender	.14(.32)	.09(.39)
Work Environment		.60(.18)**
Work Conflict x Generation	-.03(.09)	-.07(.13)
Work Environment x Generation		.09(.11)
Indirect effect of Work Conflict:		
Male		.46(.08)**
95% CI		.32 – .62
Female		.49(.07)**
95% CI		.36 – .64

** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$

Note. Bootstrap resamples = 10,000.

Table 2
Moderator mediation effect using work conflict as mediator ($N = 253$)

	Work Conflict (Mediator) <i>B (SE B)</i>	Turnover Intention (DV) <i>B (SE B)</i>
<i>Generation as moderator</i>		
Work Environment	.89(.14)**	.41(.29)
Generation	.28(.22)	.53(.32)*
Work Conflict		.70(.24)**
Work Environment x Generation	-.06(.06)	-.09(.11)
Work Conflict x Generation		-.02(.10)
Indirect effect of Work Environment:		
Generation X		.54(.15)**
95% CI		.22 – .83
Generation Y		.49(.10)**
95% CI		.31 – .71
Generation Z		.45(.13)**
95% CI		.20 – .74
<i>Training years as moderator</i>		
Work Environment	.62(.11)**	-.06(.24)
Training	-.13(.13)	-.27(.21)
Work Conflict		.75(.28)**
Work Environment x Training	.04(.03)	.08(.07)
Work Conflict x Training		-.02(.08)
Indirect effect of Work Environment:		
Short years of training		.49(.13)**
95% CI		.22 – .75
Long years of training		.51(.17)**
95% CI		.24 – .93
<i>Gender as moderator</i>		
Work Environment	.62(.13)**	.63(.28)**
Gender	-.44(.36)	.28(.53)
Work Conflict		.20(.27)
Work Environment x Gender	.10(.09)	-.33(.20)*
Work Conflict x Gender		.36(.19)*
Indirect effect of Work Environment:		
Male		.35(.14)**
95% CI		.06 – .62
Female		.63(.13)**
95% CI		.36 – .88

** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$

Note. Bootstrap resamples = 10,000.

Figure 1
Conceptual model

