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Modelling the Interaction Between Serious Leisure, Self-Perceived Employability, Stress, and Workplace Well-being: Empirical Insights from Graduates in India

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Abstract

Purpose: Drawing on a framework of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R), the purpose of this paper is to conceptually develop and empirically validate a moderated mediation model of serious leisure and workplace well-being.

Design/methodology/approach: The data was collected between December 2020 and March 2021 using an online questionnaire. A total of 225 completed questionnaires were received from employees in India who graduated between 2018 and 2020.

Findings: Our findings indicate that serious leisure is positively associated with workplace well-being and that the relationship is mediated by self-perceived employability. Stress moderates the relationship between serious leisure and self-perceived employability in such a way that the association is stronger when levels of stress are higher. Stress also moderates the mediating effect of self-perceived employability on the relationship between serious leisure and workplace well-being such that the indirect effect of serious leisure on workplace well-being is stronger when levels of stress are higher.

Originality/value: Theoretical implications come from drawing on leisure studies literature to differentiate casual leisure and serious leisure. The concept of serious leisure is subsequently integrated into the human resource management literature to explore the relationship between serious leisure, self-perceived employability, stress, and workplace well-being. Practical and policy implications suggest how universities and organisations can support their students and early careers talent by encouraging them to participate in serious leisure activities.

Keywords: Serious Leisure, Self-Perceived Employability, Stress, Workplace Well-being

Paper Type: Research Paper

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Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) teams in organisations as part of a talent management strategy have recognised the need to foster Workplace Well-being (WWB) in their employees by enabling them to cope with high levels of job demands via the acquisition of resources (Black, 2008). Increased levels of WWB in employees offers a means for navigating changes in the workplace including new technologies, globally dispersed teams, and reduced levels of job security (Standing, 2011). Such an approach can increase resilience in the workforce, improve health outcomes, and lead to increased productivity, competitive advantage, and profitability as indicators of organisational sustainability (Donald et al., 2020). An emerging topic within the HRM literature is the role of participation in leisure activities as a means for avoiding physical and mental restlessness and associated risks of burnout (Santosh, 2020). This acknowledges that our work and home lives are interdependent and have the potential to influence each other (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014).

The leisure studies literature characterises two distinct types of leisure termed 'Casual Leisure' and 'Serious Leisure' (Stebbins, 1992). Casual Leisure (CL) encompasses opportunities for creativity and play, building networks, replenishing resources via rest and recovery, and the temporary prevention of further resource depletion due to workplace demands (Stebbins, 2006). This type of leisure is fundamentally hedonic, intrinsically rewarding, short-lived and undertaken with the main purpose of enjoyment and pleasure (Stebbins, 1997). For example, watching television, having social conversations, reading books, and listening to music are all types of CL. The second type of leisure is termed Serious Leisure (SL) and is defined as:

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> *the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge and experience* (Stebbins, 1992, p.3).

The six characteristics that differentiate SL from CL are (i) a need to preserve at an activity, (ii) the availability of a leisure career, (iii) the need to put in the effort to gain skills and knowledge, (iv) the realisation of various special benefits, (v) a unique ethos and social world, and (vi) an attractive personal and social identity (Stebbins, 2006). Examples of SL include participation in hobbies or volunteering activities (Stebbins, 1996).

Yet, the Human Resource Management (HRM) literature lacks representation of empirical studies addressing the association between SL and WWB. Our paper addresses this research gap and also explores the intervening role of Self-Perceived Employability (PE) and Stress. We explore this emerging issue through the application of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as a theoretical framework (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Our paper also responds to calls by Hong et al. (2020) to address the underrepresentation of non-Western cultures, particularly India, in the empirical HRM literature. Furthermore, practical and policy implications suggest how universities and organisations can support their students and early careers talent by encouraging them to participate in SL activities. Therefore, by drawing on a framework of J-DR theory, the purpose of this paper is to conceptually develop and empirically validate a moderated mediation model of SL and WWB.

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Overview of Concepts

Serious Leisure (SL)

The theory of SL highlights how an individual can acquire additional resources, leading to personal and social benefits that can remain over time (Elkington and Stebbins, 2014; Stebbins, 2001) and give meaning and purpose to life (Ho et al., 2010; Lee and Hwang, 2018). The personal rewards from participation in SL are (i) personal enrichment, (ii) self-actualization, (iii) self-expression, (iv) self-image, (v) self-gratification, (vi) regeneration, and (vii) the potential for financial returns (Stebbins, 1992). The social rewards from participation in SL are (i) social attraction, (ii) group accomplishment, and (iii) contribution to the maintenance of a group (Stebbins, 1992). The theory of SL also states that SL can help an individual to restore personal resources whilst simultaneously guarding against further depletion of resources caused by active participation in the workplace (Sonnentag et al., 2017). For example, Bunea (2020) via a qualitative study of interviews with sixteen CEOs of American companies found that participation in SL helped them to manage their workplace demands. Furthermore, Wu et al. (2020) found SL to increase perceived well-being in individuals over the age of 60 in China. Our study explores the role of SL in graduates in India as empirical research in this context remains lacking. We position SL as requiring sustained and committed involvement in a substantial way to develop personal resources that can lead to career development and advancement in ways that CL might not. However, despite having benefits to one's career, SL is still classified as a form of leisure because it shares the characteristic of CL of helping to restore personal resources and temporarily preventing further depletion from workplace demands (Sonnentag et al., 2017; Stebbins, 2006).

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Self-Perceived Employability (PE)

Self-Perceived Employability is defined by Forrier et al. (2015, p.57) as '*the individual's perception of available employment opportunities*', which builds on Rothwell and Arnold's (2007, p.25) definition of employability as '*the individual's ability to keep the job one has, or to get the job one desires*'. The unpredictable and unstable nature of contemporary careers places increased importance on the role of PE in HRM and career theory literature (Fugate et al., 2004). Thus, the acquisition of resources can lead to enhanced PE, whilst the loss of resources can lead to reduced PE (Hobfoll et al., 2018). At the individual level, studies have indicated that PE can be enhanced through social capital, cultural capital, psychological capital, and movement capital (Donald et al., 2019; Peeters et al., 2020). Furthermore, PE is determined via personal initiatives such as career self-management and career proactivity as intrinsic motivational mechanisms (Coetzee and Engelbrecht, 2020; Nimmi et al., 2020). Organisations should also help their employees to develop resources as a means of enhancing PE via a psychological contract (Baruch and Rousseau, 2019; Dries et al., 2014) as part of an interactionist perspective (Veld et al., 2015). This is because external factors such as workplace context also influence PE, particularly for graduates in the years immediately following entry into the labour market (Donald et al., 2018). Thus, individuals can accumulate resources to enhance their PE as a mechanism for career and organisational sustainability (De Vos et al., 2020).

Workplace Well-being (WWB)

Warr (1987, cited in Grant et al., 2007, p.52) offered a broad and holistic definition of WWB as *'the overall quality of an employee's experience and functioning at work'*. This advanced previous work by Diener (1984) addressing subjective wellbeing. Christensen et al. (2021) via a study of 1,499 academics at universities in Norway found that WWB was linked to an

individual believing that they had sufficient resources to carry out their job. The same study highlighted the role of positive psychology and the importance of developing social resources. This links to the role of SL in acquiring resources, replenishing depleted resources, and guarding against further loss of resources (Elkington and Stebbins, 2014) to reduce the risk of burnout (Hobfoll, 1989; Santosh, 2020). It also advances WWB beyond purely a psychological perspective to encompass how exposure to different contexts can help an individual to find meaning in their life. The benefits of WWB have been linked to sustainable careers at the individual level and sustainable organisations at the organisational level (Donald et al., 2020). This captures the employee and organisational dyadic relationship within the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Stress

Harré and Lamb (1988, in Butler, 1993, p.5) present Stress as a dynamic process defined as:

> *the way in which people realize and identify their problems, and how they react to them and attempt to cope with them.*

Butler (1993) acknowledges that Stress has the potential to have either negative or positive effects. On the one hand, Stress at the individual level can serve as a threat to health, finance, and well-being (Lloyd and Hicks, 2021). The negative effects of Stress occur when perceived environmental demands exceed perceived resource levels in such a way that the individual does not know how to respond (Avey et al., 2009). These effects at the individual level also impact organisations via absenteeism, presenteeism, reduced levels of productivity, and increased turnover of employees (Cooper and Marshall, 1975). Therefore, Darling and Whitty (2020) call on organisations to find ways in which to help their employees manage stress as a way to maintain WWB and protect the sustainable performance of the organisation. One such way is to facilitate employees to acquire psychological resources that can enable a range of coping

mechanisms to manage stress positively and lead to increased levels of creativity (Le Fevre et al., 2003), and performance (Avey et al., 2009). We now explore the JD-R model as the theoretical framework for this paper.

Theoretical Framework

The JD-R model captures the interplay between the demands of the job and the resources that a person requires to perform the role (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands represent physical or emotional stressors that occur as part of doing the job and examples include time-sensitive deadlines, a high volume of work, and unclear job specifications (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Job resources represent the aspects that facilitate the achievement of job-related tasks and include opportunities for learning and development, career progression, and positive relationships with co-workers (Demerouti et al., 2001). The JD-R model suggests that when high job demands are coupled with low levels of resources the individual experiences high levels of stress and low levels of motivation (Bakker et al., 2004). Individuals and organisations benefit the most when high levels of job demands and high levels of resources lead to a manageable degree of eustress and high motivation for performing the tasks (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

At the individual level, the JD-R model incorporates the Conservation of Resources (CoR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), stating that an individual seeks to acquire resources and subsequently retain, protect, and build additional resources whilst safeguarding against the potential or actual loss of existing resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Furthermore, the phenomenon of resource caravans suggests that the acquisition of resources aggregates or fails to do so in clusters (Hobfoll, 2012). The framework enables us to understand how SL, PE, and Stress can facilitate WWB by allowing individuals to take ownership of their careers (Baruch et al., 2019; Donald et al. 2019). Finally, resource passageways capture how the external environment can

help or hinder the progress of an individual (Hobfoll et al., 2018) reflecting the interlink between job demands and resources in the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Thus, the findings at the individual employee level also provide insights into how organisations can best support their employees through organisational behaviour and human resource management policies so that both parties benefit as part of a psychological contract (Baruch and Rousseau, 2019).

Development of Hypotheses

Serious Leisure (SL) and Self-Perceived Employability (PE)

Serious Leisure requires sustained and committed involvement that offers durable benefits (Veal, 2017). The individual is more obliged to engage in SL than in other leisure pursuits (Stebbins, 2001). Such participation in SL enables the individual to acquire new resources offering benefits to the individual over time (Elkington and Stebbins, 2014). These benefits include self-enrichment, self-actualisation, self-expression, renewal of self, a feeling of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, and enhanced social interactions (Stebbins, 1992). Furthermore, participation in SL has been shown to lead to the acquisition of new information as well as the development of personal awareness (Demasson et al., 2016). The acquisition of personal resources has been linked to enhanced levels of PE (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Furthermore, volunteering as a form of SL has been shown to enhance levels of confidence, altruism, and ownership of one's life and career choices (Stebbins, 1996). Therefore, we propose that participation in SL enhances social capital, cultural capital, and psychological capital, which are indicators of PE (Donald et al., 2019; Peeters et al., 2020). It also enhances career self-management and intrinsic motivational mechanisms, which are determinants of PE (Coetzee and Engelbrecht, 2020; Nimmi et al., 2020).

Hypothesis 1 (H1): SL is positively associated with PE.

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Self-Perceived Employability (PE) and Workplace Well-being (WWB)

Self-Perceived Employability (PE) as a psychological resource can influence an individual's judgement of an occurring event (Vanhercke et al., 2015). For example, an individual who perceives themself as highly employable views the same situation to be less challenging compared to a person with low levels of PE (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This can be useful either in finding a job or avoiding feeling 'locked-in' to an existing job (Berntson, 2008) Therefore, increased levels of PE can help an individual to guard against loss cycles, enhance the benefits of gain cycles, and enable the individual to cope with higher levels of job demands (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Vanhercke et al., 2015). This view is supported by Kirves et al. (2014) who position PE as a personal resource. Furthermore, positive associations between PE and WWB have been reported in previous studies (e.g. Bernston and Marklund, 2007; Kirves, 2014). However, a study of employees in South Africa reported no significant relationship between PE and WWB (van der Vaart et al., 2015). We seek to explore the potential impact of cultural variation by focusing on a sample of graduates in India. We propose a positive relationship between PE and WWB in keeping with the dominant view reported in the literature.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): PE is positively associated with WWB.

Serious Leisure (SL) and Workplace Well-being (WWB)

Social-psychological studies adopting a symbolic interactionist approach have identified that the subjective and complex nature of SL enables individuals to gain many health and work benefits (Baldwin and Norris, 1999). When people engage in SL, the interplay between leisure and wellbeing has been variously expressed as life satisfaction, meaning and purpose, happiness, quality of life, wellness, and as a whole host of positive emotional experiences (Mansfield et al., 2020). Studies have also reported the interconnect between leisure and wellbeing regarding one's quality of life through illustrating the way leisure experiences evoke

intrinsic positive feelings of motivation, enjoyment, and freedom (e.g. Haworth and Lewis, 2005; Iso-Ahola and Mannel, 2004). Participation in SL is also associated with mastery experiences which have been shown to increase mood and subjective well-being (Sonnentag et al., 2017). Skill progression and knowledge development associated with SL provide a sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy, two important antecedents of perceived well-being (Iwasaki, 2007). Researchers also noted that striving for a specific personal goal can provide meaning and a purpose to life, and in turn, positively affect perceived levels of well-being (Ho et al., 2010; Iwasaki, 2007). Additionally, SL offers an opportunity for individuals to engage with like-minded individuals, leading to a sense of belonging which is positively associated with well-being (Thin, 2020). Furthermore, the continued investment of time and energy into SL develops a sense of perseverance, which overlaps with theoretical determinants of well-being (Lee and Hwang, 2018). We, therefore, propose that the acquisition of resources through participation in SL leads to increased levels of well-being, which translate into the workplace in the form of WWB (Christensen et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 3 (H3): SL is positively associated with WWB.

The Mediating Role of Self-Perceived Employability (PE)

Drawing on the empirical evidence that developed **H1 (**SL is positively associated with PE), **H2** (PE is positively associated with WWB), and **H3** (SL is positively associated with WWB), we now propose that PE plays a mediating role in the SL-WWB relationship.

From the perspective of WWB, PE represents a psychological resource (Vanhercke et al., 2015), which can be enhanced via participation in SL (Eakman et al., 2010). Increased levels of PE are associated with career self-management, intrinsic motivational mechanisms, social capital, cultural capital, and psychological capital (Coetzee and Engelbrecht, 2020; Donald et al., 2019; Nimmi et al., 2020; Peeters et al., 2020). Participation in SL develops these resources,

which aggregate in a resource caravan (Hobfoll, 2012; Kelly, 2020). This subsequently translates into increased levels of WWB (Bernston and Marklund, 2007; Kirves, 2014). We, therefore, propose:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): PE mediates the relationship between SL and WWB.

The Moderating Role of Stress

The J-DR theory captures how levels of Stress are determined by the interplay between job demands and resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). For example, increased levels of job demands lead to increased levels of Stress (Chen et al., 2017). Negative Stress can be detrimental to one's health whereas eustress can be beneficial to job performance and career satisfaction (Le Fevre et al., 2003). Moreover, the expectations of employees to be continually connected and respond to emails even outside of work hours makes it difficult for individuals to detach themselves from the world of work and reduces the opportunities for recovery and the replenishment of their resources (Barber and Santuzzi, 2015). Organisations may consider attempts to discourage such practices since the opportunity for detachment and recovery offers short-term and long-term ways for employees to overcome the cumulative exposure to work-based demands and stressors thus protecting their well-being and reducing the risk of burnout and absenteeism (Fritz et al., 2010; Kuykendall et al., 2018).

One such way is to facilitate employees to acquire psychological resources that can enable a range of coping mechanisms to manage Stress positively (Nimmi et al., 2021a). Pursuing leisure, especially SL provides an opportunity for employees to detach themselves from stressful conditions and recharge themselves. Participation in SL can help an individual to restore personal resources whilst simultaneously guarding against further depletion of resources caused by workplace participation (Sonnentag et al., 2017). Furthermore, we previously proposed that participation in SL enables an individual to increase their personal

resources, leading to enhanced levels of PE (Hobfoll et al., 2018). It, therefore, seems reasonable that as the level of Stress experienced by an individual increases, the association between SL and PE will become stronger as there will be greater opportunity for individuals to benefit from the participation in SL compared to those experiencing lower levels of Stress. Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Stress moderates the positive relationship between SL and PE in such a way that the association is stronger when levels of Stress are higher.

Thus far we have proposed that PE mediates the relationship between SL and WWB (**H4**) and that Stress moderates the positive relationship between SL and PE (**H5**). We now propose that Stress also moderates the strength of the mediating mechanism of PE on the SL-WWB relationship to offer a moderated mediation model (Edwards and Lambert 2007). This is because the time, energy, and commitment involved in the participation in SL are offset by the personal and social rewards (Elkington and Stebbins, 2014). The offset is greater when levels of Stress are higher as the replenishment and acquisition of personal resources has a greater opportunity to enhance one's well-being and WWB (Nimmi et al., 2021a). Participation in SL also provides the individual with additional support from being part of a community (Stebbins, 1992), which helps to manage Stress (Cristensen et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Stress moderates the mediating effect of PE on the relationship between SL and WWB in such a way that the indirect effect of SL on WWB is stronger when levels of Stress are higher.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The participants for this study were employees in India who graduated between 2018 and 2020. The data was collected between December 2020 and March 2021 using an online questionnaire.

Multi-stage random sampling was applied to determine the sample for the study. A total of 225 participants completed the questionnaire of which 118 (52.4%) were female and 107 (47.5%) were male. The age range of participants was 22 to 35, with a mean age of 23.33 (SD=2.99).

Measures

Serious Leisure (SL) was assessed via 18-items adapted from Gould et al. (2011) and based on Gould et al.'s (2008) Serious Leisure Inventory and Measure (SLIM). A sample item was "*My hobby has helped me improve how I think about myself*". The scale employed a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Cronbach's α was 0.91.

Self-Perceived Employability (PE) was measured using 3-items adopted from a self-perceived employability scale by De Vos and Soens (2008). A sample item was "*I believe I could easily obtain another job that is in line with my level of education and experience*". The scale employed a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Cronbach's α was 0.81.

Workplace Well-being (WWB) was measured using a 6-item scale developed by Zheng et al. (2015). A sample item was "*In general, I feel fairly satisfied with my present job*". The scale employed a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Cronbach's Alpha was 0.87.

Stress was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Cohen et al. (1983). A sample item was "*In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?*" The scale employed a five-point Likert scale (0=never, 4=very often). Cronbach's Alpha was 0.82.

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Control Variables

Control variables for this study were gender, age, and place of domicile as these variables have been shown to have potential impacts on WWB (Song et al., 2015).

Strategy of Analysis

IBM SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 24.0 were used to perform data analysis. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was conducted to explore path coefficients of direct hypotheses. Mediation, moderation and moderated mediation tests were carried out with the MODMED macro developed by Preacher et al. (2007).

Results and Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Table I shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations indicating significant correlations between the variables.

* INSERT TABLE I HERE *

Assessment of Measurement Model

To assess the fit of our data to the proposed measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. To confirm the best measurement model CFA was conducted to compare the four-factor structure to several other competing measurement models.

* INSERT TABLE II HERE *

From the values given in Table II, it seems that the four-factor model has the best goodness of fit. In the four-factor model all items loaded significantly and in expected direction on their respective latent factors at the 0.001 level ($x^2 = 1980.58$, d.f. = 623, $p < 0.001$, Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMSR) = 0.06, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.92, Tucker-

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Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.91 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06 [90% CI = 0.043:0.069]). The measurement model had good validity and convergent validity (average variance extracted >0.50) and discriminatory validity as evidenced in Table III. All standardised paths were significant, with paths having a value above 0.50.

* INSERT TABLE III HERE *

After confirming the fit of the measurement model, we tested the structural model with the proposed mediator using Amos software. We conducted full SEM, which showed goodness of fit (x^2 = 2002.12, d.f. = 622, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.900, TLI = 0.900 and RMSEA = 0.068 [90% CI = 0.068:0.085]).

Hypothesis Testing

From the path analysis, the results of direct relationships were assessed. The results showed a positive and significant association for **H1** SL-PE (Beta = 0.37**), **H2** PE-WWB (Beta = 0.51**), and **H3** SL-WWB (Beta =0.44**), thus accepting **H1-H3**.

Mediation analysis was conducted using the Hayes Process Macro using the Model 4 template. The indirect effect coefficient was significant and positive (Beta = 0.20**, SE = 0.074, CI[0.070 - 0.369]), indicating a mediating effect of PE on SL-WWB, thus supporting **H4**. The moderating effect of Stress was confirmed using the Hayes Process Macro Model 1 template. The results showed that Stress moderates the positive relationship between SL and PE in such a way that the association is stronger when Stress is high (Beta = 0.63**, SE = 0.161, CI[0.313 - 0.962]), thus supporting **H5**. The moderation graph (Figure I) visualises the positive moderating role of Stress.

* INSERT FIGURE I HERE*

The final step of our analysis was to test whether Stress moderates the mediating effect of PE on the relationship between SL and WWB such that the indirect effect of SL on WWB is

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stronger when Stress is high. We used the MODMED macro developed by Preacher et al. (2007). This macro enabled us to assess whether the mediation effect of PE is contingent upon the level of the moderating variable (Stress) by providing coefficients for both the mediator and the dependent variable models. Table IV shows the estimates and test statistics for the various paths, including the interaction effect.

* INSERT TABLE IV HERE *

The path coefficient for graduates with Stress levels lower than 1 standard deviation from the average was 0.22, while for graduates with Stress levels higher than 1 standard deviation it was 0.86. The index of moderated mediation is also positive and significant (beta = 0.23**). Therefore, our findings support **H6**.

Validation of the Moderated Mediation Model

Figure II shows the validation of the moderated mediation model.

* INSERT FIGURE II HERE *

Discussion

We have developed and validated a new moderated mediation model of SL and WWB. Stress moderates the mediating role of PE on the SL-WWB relationship in such a way that the indirect effect of SL on WWB is stronger when levels of Stress are higher. Stress also moderates the SL-PE relationship in such a way that the relationship is stronger when levels of Stress are higher. One might question if SL can still be considered a form of leisure if it leads to improved WWB or careers. We argue that SL is still a form of leisure because whilst it requires effort and time investment to participate in SL, the benefits to WWB and careers can be considered secondary to the personal and social benefits that classify SL as a type of leisure in the leisure studies literature (Elkington and Stebbins, 2014, Stebbins, 2001).

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A limitation of our study was the cross-sectional approach using self-reporting questionnaires as the single data source [n=225, employees in India]. However, we ruled out common method bias and found evidence of a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. This is in keeping with previous cross-sectional, signal-source published manuscripts with a similar population count (e.g. Ab Wahab and Tatoglu, 2020 [n=213]).

The theoretical contribution comes from drawing on leisure studies literature to differentiate between CL and SL (Stebbins, 1992). The concept of SL is subsequently integrated into the HRM literature to explore the relationship between SL, PE, Stress, and WWB. The introduction of SL to the HRM literature extends the JD-R model as a theoretical framework by understanding the role that participation in SL, as opposed to CL, can play in acquiring and replenishing resources. Our study is one of the first to explore the relationship between SL and PE, and our focus on the role of PE and Stress in graduates in India also responds to requests for empirical studies to explore the relationship between these variables in populations in Asia (Ma and Bennet, 2021). Moreover, the empirical validation of our model on graduate employees in India addresses the underrepresentation of non-Western cultures by focusing on participants in Asia, specifically India (Hong et al., 2020).

We identify that stress is a moderator whereby higher levels of stress experienced by an individual leads to an increase in the relationship between SL-PE-WWB. The strengthening of the relationship during times of high stress indicates that SL may have a valuable role to play in enabling an individual to build resources that can subsequently be deployed within a workplace. This further extends the JD-R model by acknowledging that resources can accumulate from experiences that occur within the workplace and external to the workplace with emphasis that a blend of such experiences may enable an individual to cope with more stressful settings and increased job demands. This advances the findings of Nimmi et al. (2021a)

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whereby levels of psychological capital are related to well-being and career sustainability by capturing the SL-PE-WWB interaction.

The practical contribution comes from helping university careers advisors to prepare their students for entry into the graduate labour market. University careers advisors should help students to distinguish between CL and SL and provide opportunities for engagement in SL including university societies and volunteering opportunities. This builds on previous studies indicating that careers advice is associated with increased levels of PE (Donald et al., 2019), and that robust empirical evidence can aid careers advisors to support their students to plan their careers (Baruch et al., 2019). Students should be encouraged to opt for SL activities as they offer the ability to build skills, abilities, knowledge, and social networks whilst also replenishing the depletion of existing resources from university studies. This is despite participation in SL being considered as less restful than passive activities associated with CL which may seem more appealing in the short term. Focusing on the long term may also be beneficial since fostering a lifelong learning approach has also been associated with increased levels of PE (Nimmi et al., 2021b).

Additionally, practical implications apply to organisations in the context of talent management strategies for graduate employees. Organisations should consider ways to encourage their employees to engage in SL activities and highlight the associations between SL and increased levels of PE and WWB. Additional benefits include the ability to cope in stressful situations by accumulating resources over time to meet job demands and benefit from eustress (Black, 2008). This includes creating an environment that provides employees with the time and opportunity to pursue SL activities. Organisations may also consider encouraging their employees to make a regular commitment to volunteering to support specific causes (Stebbins, 1996), which can also help to enhance internal and external perceptions of social corporate responsibility. Our study suggests that organisations should help their employees to reframe

their views on leisure time as the opportunity to participate in SL rather than succumbing to the fundamentally hedonic, intrinsically rewarding, short-lived aspects of CL undertaken with the main purpose of enjoyment and pleasure (Stebbins, 1997). We believe that such an approach can increase resilience in the workforce, improve health outcomes, and lead to increased productivity, competitive advantage, and profitability as indicators of organisational sustainability (Donald et al., 2020). However, this also relies on the organisation providing clear opportunities for career progression which combined with increased levels of WWB can help to retain talent and reduce the occurrences of employees moving to competitor organisations.

Future research should look to apply qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the interaction between SL and WWB. The stressor conditions placed on individuals by the COVID-19 pandemic suggest that additional ways for managing stress and promoting WWB will be needed (Freire and Bettencourt, 2021). Yet, COVID-19 could also act as a catalyst for healthy lifestyle choices (Donald, 2020), driven by threats to health and the opportunity for individuals to reflect on life priorities during the pandemic (Lloyd and Hicks, 2021). Quantitative approaches could be used to investigate how participation in different types of SL might influence workplace resources (Sonnentag et al., 2017). For example, can participation in specific types of SL enhance one's resource caravan leading to higher levels of WWB and an increased capacity to manage job demands? Furthermore, longitudinal studies may also be of interest to see if the relationships identified within our moderated mediation model fluctuate over time. It would also be valuable to explore whether the relationship between SL and PE is mediated or moderated by resource development. Finally, future empirical research should continue to address the underrepresentation of Asian countries within the HRM literature and integrate the leisure studies and HRM research.

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Conclusion

This study draws on the concept of SL from leisure studies literature and applies it to the HRM literature to develop and validate a model of SL and WWB. The positive association between SL and WWB is mediated by PE. Stress moderates the relationship between SL and PE in such a way that the association is stronger when levels of stress are higher. Stress also moderates the mediating effect of PE on the relationship between SL and WWB such that the indirect effect of SL on WWB is stronger when levels of stress are higher. Our study contributes by extending the JD-R model and highlighting the opportunities that participation in SL can offer in managing stressful situations and enhancing WWB. This offers practical applications to universities and organisations as they prepare students for entry into the labour market and manage the development of early careers talent respectively. We hope that this study leads to further research within the Vocational Behaviour and HRM literature to explore the concept and role of SL within global, national, and sector-specific contexts.

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Table I: Means, Standard deviations and correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	S.D
1. Stress	1							3.37	0.64
2. WWB	.18*	1						3.98	0.78
3. PE	.29**	.55**	1					3.83	0.93
4. SL	.27**	.44**	.38**	1				3.90	0.64
5. Gender	-0.07	-.010	-.030	-.020	1			n/a	n/a
6. Age	.22**	.20**	.050	.140	-.053	1		23.33	2.99
7. Place of Domicile	-0.03	.002	-.050	-.100	-.162*	-.072	1	n/a	n/a

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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Table II: Fit Indices of Measurement Model

Measurement Model	df	Chi-Square	CFI	RMSEA
Single Factor[a]	756	3006.89	0.65	0.13
Two Factor[b]	721	2968.33	0.71	0.10
Three Factor[3a]	698	2896.22	0.80	0.08
Three Factor[3b]	658	2012.23	0.84	0.06
Four Factor[c]	623	1980.58	0.92	0.06

Notes
n = 225.
CFI = Comparative Fit Index.
RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, 90% confidence interval.
[a]Single Factor: All indicators loaded on a single factor.
[b]Two Factor: Serious Leisure and Self-Perceived Employability loaded on one factor and Workplace Well-being and Stress loaded on another factor.
[3a]Three Factor: Self-Perceived Employability and Stress loaded on one factor and Workplace Well-being and Serious Leisure loaded on another factor.
[3b]Three Factor: Serious Leisure and Workplace Well-being loaded on to one factor and Self Perceived Employability and Stress loaded on to another factor.
[c]Four Factor: Serious Leisure, Self-Perceived Employability, Workplace Well-being, and Stress all loaded on to separate factors.

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Table III: Reliability and Validity Statistics

Variable	No. of items	CR	AVE	VIF	Cron-Bach
SL	18	0.92	0.53	1.43	0.91
PE	5	0.89	0.72	1.66	0.81
WWB	6	0.91	0.61	1.63	0.87
Stress	10	0.86	0.62	1.66	0.82

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Table IV: Moderated Mediation Analysis - Stress as a Moderator on the Mediation Role of PE on the Relationship Between SL and WWB

Conditional effects of Stress +/- SD			
	beta	SE	p
Stress			
-1	0.08	0.07	0.05
0	0.17	0.06	0.00
1	0.32	0.08	0.00

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Figure I: Moderating Role of Stress

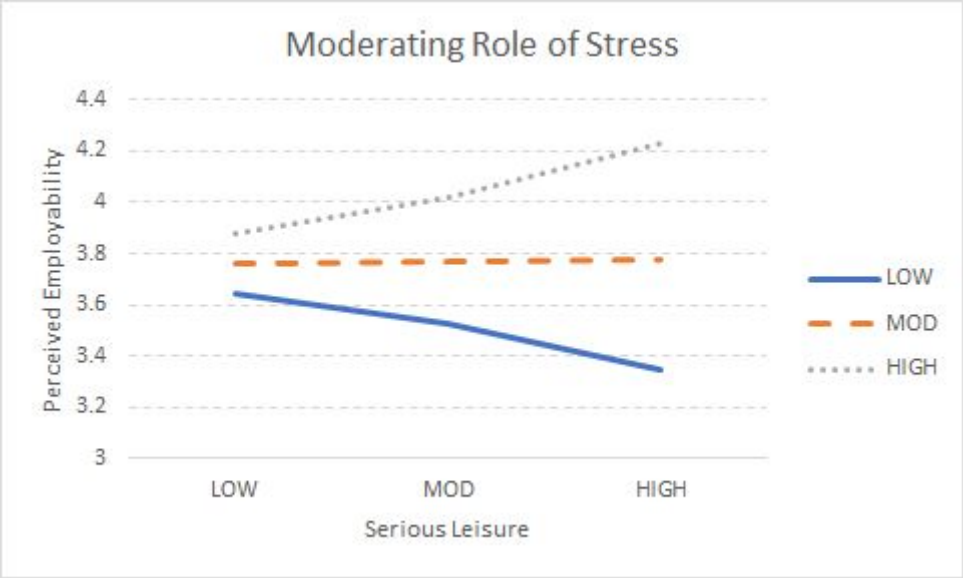

Figure I evidences the moderating role of stress on the relationship between SL and PE.

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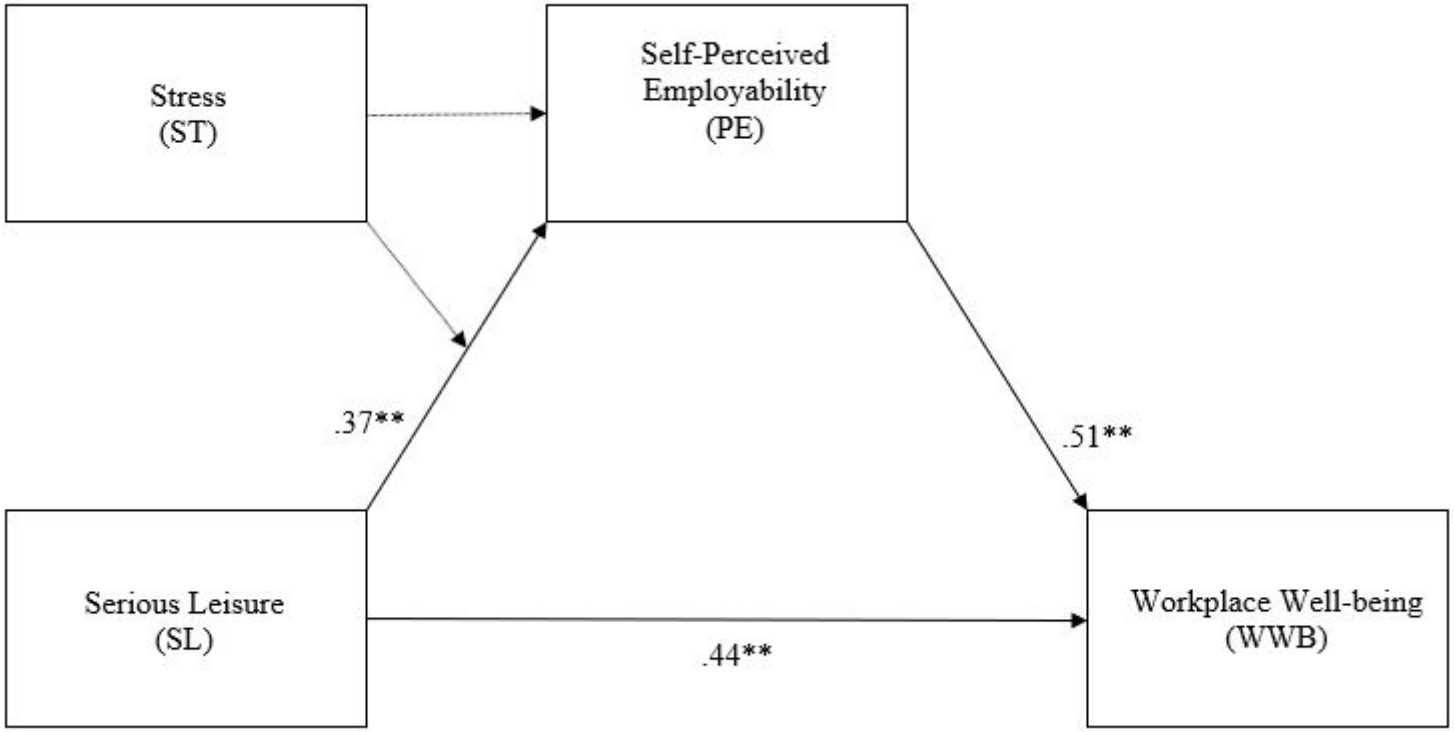
Figure II: Moderated Mediation Model



Notes: Dashed line indicates moderation. **. Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure II shows the validation of the moderated mediation model.