

EXPLORING HOBBIES AS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE: PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR INFLUENCE ON JOB SATISFACTION AND  
JOB PERFORMANCE

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## ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is an ongoing challenge for many individuals, as they seek to harmonize their personal and professional lives. In this study, I explored hobbies as a critical component of work-life balance and their influence on job satisfaction and job performance. I strived to fill a gap in the existing literature by shedding light on the influence of hobbies on work-life balance, job performance, and job satisfaction. Using qualitative methodology, I investigated how individuals perceive and explain the interconnection of their hobbies with their work responsibilities, examining the possible impact of hobbies on job performance and job satisfaction. Through 15 semi-structured interviews, I addressed three research questions: (1) How do working adults describe their experience with the interaction of their hobbies and their work? (2) How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job performance? (3) How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job satisfaction? Assumptions and limitations were considered for this research methodology, including the potential biases in participant responses and the constraints of a convenience sample. The results of this study suggest there are far more advantages to participating in hobbies than disadvantages and showcases hobbies as a significant contributing factor to work-life balance. Uncovered through these interviews, hobbies also have a perceived influence on job performance and job satisfaction. These findings not only aid in deepening the knowledge on hobbies, work-life balance, job performance, and job satisfaction, there are also practical implications for organizations to support their employee's well-being.

*Keywords:* Work-Life Balance, job performance, job satisfaction, hobbies

### Dedication

To Mom and Dad who are no longer here to see me fulfill this milestone. Your love, support, and encouragement were with me every step of the way.

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“Hey look Ma, I made it!”

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### **Introduction**

Most people divide their lives into two sectors: professional and personal, with some people experiencing difficulty finding a healthy balance between these two aspects. The balance between the professional and personal aspects of life is called work-life balance (WLB; Kelliher et al., 2018). WLB is an important topic for employers because the stress from work-life imbalance can interfere with job performance (Binnewies et al., 2009), and job satisfaction (Wang et al. 2022, Young et al. 2018). The relationship between job performance and job satisfaction has been studied numerous times—with job satisfaction typically serving as a predictor of job performance (Judge et al., 2001; Judge et al., 2010; Judge et al., 2017). Job performance and job satisfaction are both of vital importance to employers because they can influence whether a person keeps their job, succeeds within their position, declines in performance, or decides to seek employment elsewhere (Judge et al., 2001).

Many factors play a role in whether a person achieves WLB, which influences both job performance and job satisfaction. People spend anywhere from 10, 20, to 40 or more hours a week at work—depending on their profession, their motivation, the organization, and the current societal factors (Fasbender et al., 2018). Whether people feel stressed and burned out or motivated and excited depend on whether individuals find pleasure in their job, have a demanding workload, enjoy a sense of accomplishment, and/or feel appreciated by the organization (Fasbender et al., 2018). Factors, such as high workload, technology advancements, lack of flexibility, all play a role in these outcomes (Fasbender et al., 2018; Floch et al., 2019). For example, technological advancements

have allowed people to work remotely, which have both positive and negative contributions to WLB (Chung and van der Lippe, 2018). Whereas, working remotely has afforded workers added flexibility, employees may have more difficulty finding WLB because the divide between their workday and their home lives may be more difficult to establish (Floch et al., 2019).

WLB may be difficult to find when stress interferes with homelife or work life. Personal lives can be just as stressful or enjoyable as their professional lives due to family dynamics, financial security, and medical care. Stressors could include lack of time to devote to their family, insufficient flexibility in scheduling, financial insecurity, or health issues. Stress from one sphere can often influence the other. Therefore, reducing stress from one's personal life can lead to greater satisfaction at work (Chowhan & Pike, 2022).

An often-overlooked factor in achieving WLB, and thus influencing job performance and job satisfaction, are hobbies (Li et al., 2019). Hobbies can serve a variety of purposes, including relieving stress (Young et al. 2018). Many people enjoy the challenge of learning and attempting to master a new skill; some people use hobbies to explore their creative nature, to cognitively or physically test their bodies, and for the purposes of social interaction (Bredland et al., 2018). People also find enjoyment in their hobbies after work during the week and on weekends, and hobbies give them something to look forward to (Rosen, 2018). Hobbies require attention to detail, practice, and dedication to become more skilled in the specific hobby, which could reduce focus on the work and life stressors (Li et al., 2019).

It seems likely that engaging in hobbies could improve WLB, by reducing the stress created by both work and home life and providing an enriching source of pleasure and accomplishment (Young et al. 2018; Wang et al. 2022). By reducing stressors and by contributing to one's pleasure in life, job satisfaction and job performance could be improved as well. However, research has not yet investigated the contribution of hobbies to all these important factors. Researching the influence of hobbies, as an important contributor to WLB (Lu et al., 2019), on job performance and job satisfaction, could improve our knowledge of ways to improve individuals' wellbeing. This chapter will briefly provide a background, as well as present the gap in the research that this study will address. Furthermore, the purpose of the proposed study and research questions are presented.

### **Background**

The foundation of this study emerged from WLB and the individual differences theory (Wang & Brower, 2018; Leaver & Oxford, 2001). These two theories help explain why hobbies influence WLB, job performance, and job satisfaction. For employees and employers, WLB is a wide and encompassing topic. WLB can greatly influence both the individual and the organization. The roles the individual takes on during their personal life and professional life influence the interaction of those responsibilities and how they balance (Dex and Bond, 2016). WLB has been directly linked to turnover, absenteeism, and decreased organizational commitment (Nitzsche et al., 2014). Therefore, not only can WLB influence job satisfaction, because of the different aspects (i.e., employee stress) that create work-life imbalance, but WLB can also affect the workplace (Lee & Sirgy,

2017). Employees and employers alike could both benefit from a greater understanding of what it takes to achieve a healthy WLB.

Job satisfaction plays a critical role in attaining WLB (Wang et al. 2022, Young et al. 2018). However, job satisfaction can differ from employee to employee (Wang & Brower, 2018). Individual difference theory postulates that job satisfaction can vary due to a person's positive or negative tendencies reflected in different situations (Leaver & Oxford, 2001). Some people are more satisfied with their job than others, no matter the task (Aamodt, 2016). While some people are not always satisfied (Aamodt, 2016). Core self-evaluations are connected to the individual differences theory because self-evaluation takes into account self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control and neuroticism (Judge et al., 1998). Those concepts influence how an individual perceives their job, work characteristics, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Each person is different, meaning each of those personal characteristics will influence the core self-evaluation differently (Judge et al., 1998). Therefore, job satisfaction can vary from person to person. As job satisfaction influences job performance (Judge, 2001; Stringer et al., 2011), job performance also is subject to personal characteristics.

Another source of guidance for this research was the Bible. The Bible provides some cautions against not establishing a healthy balance between work and personal life. For example, the Bible advises against anxious overworking: "It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat, for God gives rest to his loved ones" (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Psalm 127:2). Likewise, workers are encouraged to know their stopping point. "Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit" (*Holman Christian Standard*

*Bible*, 2010, Proverbs 23:4). Finding balance between the things people want and the things people need can be challenging. Sacrificing mental and physical health for their job is something many individuals do or believe they should do to provide for themselves, their families, and the organizations they work for. However, this is a dangerous way of thinking because it often leads to work-life imbalance, which contributes to ill health and dissatisfaction in multiple life arenas.

Unfortunately, WLB can be difficult to achieve due to many factors, such as family dynamic and work demands (Barrett et al., 2016). Work-life conflict, which is an aspect of WLB, has been consistently tied to mental and physical coping mechanisms (Kossek et al., 2014). Work-life conflict is influential on productivity, wellbeing, absenteeism, and turnover (Kossek et al., 2014). Work-life conflict influences WLB, as well as employee mental health. Moreover, as mentioned previously, hobbies can have a positive influence on WLB (Li et al., 2019).

Li et al. (2019) examined the effect of leisure activities (hobbies, cultural activities, exercise, and sports) on the relationship between working long hours with depression and negative well-being. Li et al.'s cross-sectional study used the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) to assess depression levels and the World Health Organization 5-item Well-Being Index (WHO-5) to assess mental well-being. They used a multistage random sampling scheme. Participant work types included white-collar workers, blue-collar workers, service personnel, and self-employed individuals. The participants were also categorized based on their weekly working hours, which were less than 40 hours a week, 40 to 50 hours a week, 50 to 60 hours a week, and then more than

60 hours a week. Li et al. (2019) found the employees who had hobbies had significantly better mental health, including lower depression, and greater levels of overall well-being.

Similarly, Young et al. (2018) and Wang et al. (2022) have shown hobbies to be important to mitigating stress from workload, managers, and colleagues. Hobbies also helped alleviate stress from personal health conditions and family concerns (Young et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2022). Exercise, outdoor activities, and hobbies were seen as effective coping strategies. Along with mitigating stress, voluntary frequent hobby participation has been shown to increase physical and mental health of the participants (Tomioka et al., 2017).

The connection of hobbies and mental state can have both a positive and negative impact on WLB depending on one's perspective and the nature of participation. Obligatory hobby participation versus voluntary hobby participation can influence the mental state of the individual resulting in different mental responses (Tomioka et al. 2017). Obligatory hobby participation could increase job performance and job satisfaction if the employee finds value in the fact that their job is paying for their hobby they are willingly participating in or if they are working harder to finish tasks earlier in an effort to leave and enjoy their hobby (Ko et al., 2020). Conversely, hobby participation could actually decrease job performance and job satisfaction if the person would rather be off work practicing their hobby, causing them to be disgruntled about needing to be at work (Tomioka et al. 2017). Moreover, hobbies may decrease job performance if the hobby is an obligation, and the individual does not truly want to participate in the organization's hobby (Tomioka et al. 2017). The positive or negative impact could also depend on the type of leisurely activity. Leisure time is defined differently by everyone

because it depends on personal preferences and life requirements. For example, some may consider household chores a leisurely activity while others do not (Binnewies et al., 2009). However, leisurely activities are meant to help recharge and regenerate energy and prepare for the next task or workday (Binnewies et al., 2009). This recharge is what connects WLB to job performance.

The struggle to achieve work-life balance has become a growing issue. To combat this issue, some people are finding balance through hobbies (Li et al., 2019). The purpose of this research is to explore the how hobbies, as a positive contributor to WLB, influence job performance and job satisfaction. In this study, hobbies are considered in terms of the person's time commitment, level of enjoyment, and meaningfulness of their hobby. Their job satisfaction and job performance with their current job will be the other two focus areas of this study.

### **Problem Statement**

Many people struggle with balancing their professional lives and their personal lives (Fasbender et al., 2018). A number of factors, which can include family or personal struggles, stress, and job satisfaction, contribute to the challenge of stabilizing the facets of day-to-day life (Fasbender et al. 2018; Wattis et al., 2013). Not only are employees affected by the challenge of attaining a healthy work-life balance, but employers are also experiencing high turnover rates that are influenced by burnout and low job satisfaction (Wnuk, 2017), which may be outcomes of work-life imbalance. People may have higher levels of stress, struggle against reduced focus, and put in longer working hours than before, which could be due to remote access, fewer employees in the workplace, or



advanced technology that impacts how they work in and out of the office (Floch et al., 2019).

These factors influence job satisfaction and job performance and do not take into account stressors people encounter when they get home (Wattis et al., 2013). Research conducted by Judge (2001) shows there is a known relationship between job performance and job satisfaction. Unfortunately, the influence of hobbies on job performance, and job satisfaction has not been extensively studied (Judge, 2001). A gap exists in the research as hobbies have not been reviewed in depth to determine their influence on job performance or job satisfaction. Whereas it is understood that hobbies are linked to reduced stress (Fasbender et al., 2018), some gaps need to be filled in order to further the knowledge regarding how hobbies may influence job performance and job satisfaction. Hobbies could have either a positive or negative effect on job performance and job satisfaction. For example, if someone has a job that allows them to do a task and go home when they are finished, having hobbies may encourage them to finish the work task quicker. In fact, many people have reported looking forward to their time spent performing their hobbies after working hours—whether during the week or on the weekends—to reduce stress, increase job satisfaction, and find WLB (Rosen, 2018). However, the opposite could be true as well. Having hobbies could reduce focus on work tasks, resulting in poor quality of work or absenteeism (Volpone et al., 2012).

The problem this study addresses is the lack of research on the influence of hobbies, as a positive contributor to WLB (Lu et al., 2016), on these crucial areas: job performance and job satisfaction. Understanding the relationship between hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction has the potential to help reduce employee turnover,

increase employee morale, and increase employee engagement due to the fact that WLB, job performance, and job satisfaction play a role in turnover, morale, and engagement (Lu et al., 2016).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this qualitative case study was to explore how individuals in the workforce perceive and articulate the interconnection of their hobbies and work. Specifically, this study focused on examining and exploring how working adults characterize the interconnectivity between their hobbies, as part of WLB, job performance, and overall satisfaction in their employment.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: How do working adults describe their experience with the interaction of their hobbies and their work?

RQ2: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job performance?

RQ3: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job satisfaction?

### **Assumptions and Limitations of the Study**

#### **Assumptions**

One set of assumptions involved the expectation that the participants are self-aware of how they feel during their hobbies, how well they perform at work, and how satisfied they are with their jobs. Another assumption was that the participants would take the appropriate amount of time to answer the interview items thoroughly and honestly—

without bias—without providing answers they believed are desired by me or are socially acceptable.

### **Limitations**

The first limitation of this study could have been the demographics of sample, if there is a larger skew for male to female participants. A convenience sample of 10-15 participants was recruited from social media, as well as a mid-sized local organization, which employs approximately 80 employees, including myself, to try to get a variety of career paths, employment status, longevity within the organization, and choices of hobby. These individuals are busy with their careers and personal lives, possibly causing them to not have enough time to participate. The second limitation could have been the quality of responses from the participants. Depending on the participant, the length of the overall interview could discourage participation or interfere with the participant's willingness to provide in-depth responses. There was another limitation of a convenience sample. The third limitation could have been lack of compensation. Participants may also be reluctant to contribute because they would not be compensated with anything other than an offering of the results of the study once the study is complete via email communication. If the sample is significantly influenced by poor quality due to the issues mentioned above, the quality and significance of the overall results would have been hindered.

### **Theoretical Foundations of the Study**

WLB and the individual differences theory jointly serve as the theoretical foundation of this study. WLB has been studied in various nations and in various settings (Althammer et al., 2021; Bansal & Argawal, 2017; Beham et al., 2012; Chiang et al., 2010; Gálvez et al., 2020; Gawlil & Jacobsen, 2016; Warren, 2021). WLB is achieved

when there is a successful equilibrium achieved between one's personal life and the aspects of one's professional life (Kelliher et al., 2018). Additional definitions needed to be understood regarding what is considered "personal" versus "professional" and what is regarded as "life" versus "work." According to Kelliher et al. (2018) "personal" or "life" relate to the responsibilities an individual has within their home or family setting, whether that is taking care of themselves, spouse, children, and/or parents. Kelliher et al. (2018) described "professional" or "work" as the tasks or duties performed for a paying job or career. Therefore, WLB involves an individual's attempt to establish a healthy, stable relationship between work and home.

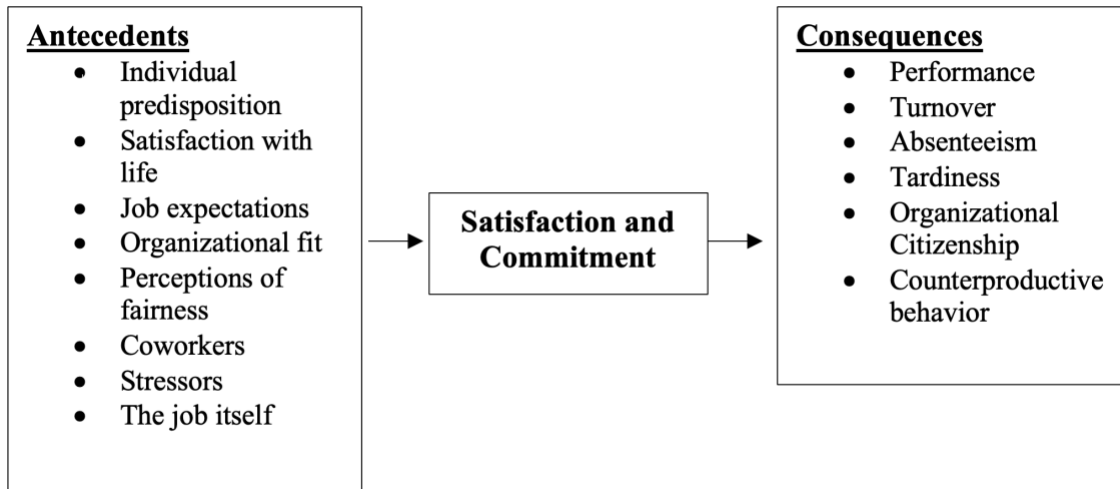
Individual differences theory postulates that job satisfaction can vary due to a person's positive or negative tendencies reflected in different situations (Leaver & Oxford, 2001). Job satisfaction is one of the main discussion topics when people self-report or even publicly report about their position. Satisfaction influences job commitment, performance, and turnover reasons (Wnuk, 2017). Some people will be satisfied with their job, no matter the task, while others will be dissatisfied no matter the task (Aamodt, 2016). The disposition of an individual, whether positive or negative, influences many aspects of their personal and professional lives, as well as overall satisfaction.

Core self-evaluations are connected to the individual differences theory because self-evaluation considers self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism (Judge et al., 1998). Those concepts influence a person's disposition and personality. Each person is different, meaning each of those personal characteristics will influence the core self-evaluation differently (Judge et al., 1998). The individual differences theory

sheds light on how those concepts of self-esteem, core self-evaluation, self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism influence an individual's perception of their job, work characteristics, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life (Judge, 1998). People relate to one another differently, acquire, learn, and understand information differently (Leaver & Oxford, 2001).

Job performance can also be influenced by individual differences theory. A person's job performance is behavioral, multidimensional, and able to be evaluated (Motowildo et al., 2009). Individual difference theory suggests that a person's personality, characteristics, and knowledge influence their behavior, learning capabilities, and the outcomes from those combinations (Motowildo et al., 2009). Differences in a person's learning capabilities, work ethic, and personality can help explain or provide reasoning regarding a person's job performance, further showing that everyone is different. A number of factors contribute to an individual's job satisfaction and, subsequently, job performance.

As shown in Figure 1 from Aamodt (2016, p. 361), antecedents influence levels of job satisfaction, which in turn produces consequences. Satisfaction with work and life are both currently within the antecedents list. Likewise, job performance is within the list of consequences. This figure expresses individual differences theory and supports the purpose of this study, which is to attempt to add hobbies to the list of antecedents because of the influence hobbies on job satisfaction and job performance (Judge, 2001).

**Figure 1***Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction and Commitment*

*Note.* Adapted from Industrial/Organizational Psychology: An Applied Approach,” by M. B. Aamodt, 2016. Copyright 2016 by the Cengage Learning.

### Definition of Terms

The following is a list of definitions of terms that are used in this study.

**Hobbies** are extra-curricular activities that people participate in outside of work or school that require focus and practice to gain skill. These can include sports, arts, crafts, and others (Li et al., 2019).

**Job performance** is the work completed by the employee, which is assessed based on the quality of the work (Altunova & Kalmany, 2020).

**Job satisfaction** is described as the combination of emotions, fairness of compensation, purpose of the work tasks, coworker relationships, autonomy, and balance when evaluating one’s occupation (Fasbender et al., 2018; Wang & Brower, 2018).

**Work-life balance (WLB)** is the need for harmony between time and focus on one’s personal life and professional work life (Kelliher et al., 2018; Watts, 2009).

### **Significance of the Study**

The main significance of this research was exploring perceptions of how engagement in hobbies influence job satisfaction and job performance. Whereas hobbies are known to contribute to WLB (Lu et al., 2016), there has not been a great deal of research performed on hobbies specifically. An in-depth exploration of hobbies was necessary to increase researchers' overall knowledge of hobbies and the role they may play in contributing to WLB, job performance, and job satisfaction. This study's findings have the potential to help the business world by strengthening employer understanding of their employees, encouraging new employee reward systems and programs, and inspiring employees to find relaxation through hobbies. The information from this study may help individuals by deepening their understanding of hobbies and how they may influence WLB. Employees could learn how to focus their energy into something that is not family- or work-related and discover a source of balance in their lives. The results of this study could also influence awareness of the role job satisfaction plays in the relationship between hobbies and job performance. Additionally, the findings of this study could help employers gain knowledge about their employees and how to foster better WLB. Employers may be motivated to find new ways to relieve personal and professional stress, because hobbies are one way many people unwind (Beham et al., 2012). These findings could improve employers' awareness of how cultivating their employees' level of enthusiasm and enjoyment via hobbies may contribute to job performance.

### **Summary**

Overall, there is a lot to be learned about hobbies. While hobbies are seen as a contributor to WLB (Lu et al., 2016), there is not a lot of research on hobbies specifically.

Developing a greater understanding could increase our overall knowledge of hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction. WLB and individual differences theory are the overall influencing theories that serve as a guide to understanding how hobbies, including aspects of time, meaningfulness, and enjoyment, may influence job satisfaction and job performance.



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Overview**

In this chapter, I review the research on job satisfaction, job performance, and hobbies—all within the context of WLB, as well as the research showing the known relationship between job satisfaction and job performance (Judge, 2001). To provide additional support, I also touch on real life implications of WLB, job performance, and job satisfaction to gain a deeper understanding of current changes that are occurring within the workforce. In this chapter, I reveal the existing gap in knowledge regarding the relationship between hobbies, job satisfaction, and job performance and also explore the depth of knowledge that could be gained about WLB and the importance of it within individual daily lives. I review the biblical foundation of this study showing the connection Christianity has to the professional field by using multiple scripture passages that could be referenced to support WLB, job satisfaction, and job performance in daily life.

### **Description of Search Strategy**

Liberty University's Jerry Falwell library database was used to find the articles used in this study. The database provided articles from JSTOR, ProQuest, Wiley Online Library, and Elsevier. The search terms "job satisfaction," "job performance," "hobbies," and "work-life balance" were used to find relevant articles. To find additional articles, these key words were combined together. Most articles were published within the last 5 years, but—due to the long history of these terms—some of the articles are older. Relevant scripture was found using a biblical app to search for keywords in scripture.

Keywords searched for within scripture were “job satisfaction,” “satisfaction,” “job performance,” “balance,” “gifts,” “talents,” and “skills.”

## **Review of Literature**

### **Work-Life Balance**

Work-Life balance (WLB) is the balance between an individual’s professional and personal lives (Kelliher et al., 2018). Gálvez et al. (2020) regarded WLB as being more than simply an individual’s ability to juggle family and work. Research on WLB has encompassed both work-life conflict and work-life enrichment. Research on WLB has included research to define the construct, factors that contribute to work-life conflict/balance/enrichment, as well as ways to improve WLB. Carlson et al. (2009) suggests there is difference among WLB, work-life conflict, and work-life enrichment and has offered unique definitions of each. Whereas work-life conflict is the result of incompatibility between the demands of home and the demands of work, WLB is a maintained harmony between the two (Carlson et al., 2009). Work life enrichment occurs when both experiences at work and home come together to create overall satisfaction and joy (Carlson et al., 2009). Carlson et al. (2009) suggests there is a flow from negative imbalance, to balance, to positive imbalance when reviewing the three concepts. Isaacs (2016) suggested a sense of control over one’s work and life aspects provides feelings that contribute to WLB. Concepts, such as job satisfaction, job performance, mental wellbeing, personal influences, organizational constructs, and even hobbies can influence WLB.

## **Effects of Work-Life Balance**

### ***Job Satisfaction***

One of the effects of WLB is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is described as the emotions felt when evaluating one's occupation (Fasbender et al., 2018; Wang & Brower, 2018). Job satisfaction can influence WLB, in the same way that WLB can influence job satisfaction. Moreover, job satisfaction can be influenced by and also influence organizational culture, job performance, and turnover, not to mention the mental implications that are involved in each of those aspects (Fasbender et al., 2018). The research reviewed in this section examines the findings related to WLB's effect on job satisfaction, as well as other influences on job satisfaction.

Many factors can influence job satisfaction. As an illustration, Floch et al. (2019) conducted a research study involving general practitioners to shed light on factors that are most influential on job satisfaction. Five major themes were found to influence job satisfaction, including the general practitioner as a person, special skills needed in practice, doctor-patient relationship, freedom in the practice, and supportive factors for WLB (Floch et al., 2019). As noted in these themes, being treated like a person, being supported, and being well-trained for the job all help an employee succeed in the position, which consequently helps them enjoy their job more. Likewise, employees who feel they are well paid for the work they complete and who are well supported also have higher levels of job satisfaction (Stringer et al., 2011). Whereas there are many factors that play into job satisfaction, the overall outcomes of those factors also influence WLB.

The first factor contributing to both WLB and job satisfaction is mental mindset satisfaction (Judge et al., 1998). An individual's mindset plays a critical role in the

outcomes of both WLB and job satisfaction. Core self-evaluations, which are the subconscious evaluations people make about themselves, influence self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism, and have direct and indirect effects on job and life satisfaction (Judge et al., 1998). Not surprisingly, these concepts influence a person's job satisfaction, life satisfaction, work characteristics, and disposition. Judge et al. (1998) suggested that self-evaluations consistently influence job satisfaction, independently of work characteristics. Therefore, since locus of control and neuroticism influence a person's self-worth perception and ability to cope with situations, employees with higher self-worth and stronger coping skills would have a positive influence on their self-evaluations and on their personal tendencies. The opposite is true as well. If the individuals have low self-worth and weak coping abilities, they will experience lower self-evaluation and generate negative personal tendencies. Likewise, maintaining a belief in one's abilities, or self-efficacy, can contribute to job satisfaction. In fact, a study involving educators determined that self-efficacy influenced teachers' ability to handle work stressors, and their job satisfaction depending on the level of stress and level of self-efficacy (Klassen & Chiu, 2010).

A negative mental mindset can influence job satisfaction through burnout, which in turn influences WLB. Krantz et al., (2021) discussed burnout syndrome in great depth, claiming that burnout influences how individuals cope in all aspects of their lives, including their work and personal lives. Burnout can present in different ways depending on the person. Burnout outcomes include emotional exhaustion, physical exhaustion, emotional outbursts, illnesses, and even alienation. Additionally, different professions can increase the risk of burnout as well, depending on the demands of the position. Leong

et al. (2022) focused on the influencing factors of job satisfaction and burnout in 345 randomly selected nurses. Their research showed that age, income, educational level, organization, and role influenced job satisfaction, whereas marital status influenced burnout. Professional development and childcare support were major areas of concern, causing dissatisfaction, along with lack of coping strategies, causing burnout.

While burnout, and, in turn, job satisfaction is influenced by the personal aspects of individuals, the elements of an individual's organization have an impact as well. Unsurprisingly, the leadership of an organization can influence job satisfaction and burnout (Benoliel & Brath, 2017). Leadership has been suggested to influence occupational and mental health of employees. In fact, the behavior, characteristics, and mental state of leaders have an impact on their followers or employees (Montano et al. 2016). However, the relationship is not one sided; it is actually reciprocal. In the same way as the culture and leadership can lead to satisfaction or burnout in the employees, in turn, satisfaction or burnout felt by employees can influence the culture and leadership within the organization.

Aside from affording freedom in decision making, organizations can affect job satisfaction through the company culture. Sledge et al. (2008) focused on job satisfaction and the influence of motivation and organizational culture. Culture was touched on by Benoliel and Brath (2019) with leadership, but motivation is also an influencing factor of job satisfaction. The aspect of motivation used by Sledge et al (2008) was Herzberg two-factor model of motivation. This model splits motivating factors into those that increase satisfaction or decrease satisfaction, and employers attempt to increase motivators that increase satisfaction and reduce factors that decrease satisfaction. There are aspects of

culture that fall on both sides of this motivation model. Seldge et al. (2008) suggested that culture can influence job satisfaction from motivational factors, such as the work itself, achievement, tasks, relationships, security, and salary.

Another example of culture and organizational climate influence is from Fu and Deshpande (2014) who researched the impact of a caring climate on job satisfaction and job performance. Caring climate was defined within the research as a culture that had major consideration for what overall benefited the employees. They found caring climate had a significant direct impact on job satisfaction through the means of organizational commitment. They also found that caring climate also had a significant impact on job performance with job satisfaction and organizational commitment as mediating variables. These findings also support the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance, which will be elaborated on later.

Fortunately, burnout can be remedied in a number of ways. Krantz et al. (2021) offers remedies, including therapy or other professional support, engagement activities or leisure activities, and possibly finding a new employer. Certainly, most organizations would prefer to avoid the latter, and, therefore, should educate themselves regarding ways to alleviate burnout. When employers are able to help their employees find happiness or support in their jobs, the employees are more likely to perform well and stay in their position, which supports the company in being more profitable.

Pro-social service behavior within a person's occupation can be influenced by mental wellbeing and job satisfaction, which are relationships that are moderated by WLB. Jung et al. (2023) reviewed hotel employee's perception of their wellbeing and the impact it has on their job satisfaction and behaviors. The questionnaire was distributed to

275 hotel employees, and positive relationships were found between satisfaction, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery. Results also showed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and prosocial behaviors, and when WLB scores were high, the relationship between mental wellbeing and job satisfaction were stronger. This research supports the idea job satisfaction can be a result of WLB.

Freedom in decision making can help create conditions for job satisfaction. In the same way as Floch et al. (2019) noticed that freedom in their practice was important for practitioners, Benoliel and Brath (2017) posited that freedom to help with decision making influences satisfaction for teachers. This decision making was in the form of participative leadership, which is collaboration between supervisor and employee to make decisions together, so it is somewhat different from having autonomy in one's position. Unfortunately, participative leadership did not influence job satisfaction for teachers, but it did have an impact on levels of burnout (Benoliel & Brath (2017)). The difference may be in the degree of freedom. For example, further studies have shown that authentic leaders were perceived to have higher job satisfaction and higher WLB than leaders who had less authentic leadership styles (Braun & Peus, 2018).

Another type of freedom, which is closer to autonomy, is job control. WLB plays a role in job satisfaction in the form of job control. Chiang et al. (2010) interviewed 238 employees to discuss psychological reactions and observe physiological reactions to perceived job control in the food service industry. Employees with less perceived job control and higher job demands believed they had lower WLB and higher levels of work stress. Employees stated that when they felt they had control over their responsibilities and sufficient support from the organization, they were less stressed. This contention

supports the idea that when employees are empowered with the skills and tools to successfully do their job, they will successfully perform.

An example of Google's policies provide testimony to the power of job control, support, freedom, and flexibility. Murphy (2020) wrote about Google's 20% rule, allowing employees to spend 20% of their work week dedicated to pursuing ideas, training, and learning because Google believes this will help its employees grow individually and help the organization to grow as well. By providing employees the ability to think creatively, be innovative, and free to expand beyond their specific tasks, Google has provided their employees with a sense of empowerment for not only themselves professionally but also as a stakeholder within Google. Google has attributed this policy as one of the new ways the company has grown over the years, crediting it with ideas like AdSense and Google News.

Carlson et al (2009) suggested that WLB explains some variance in job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment, along with job satisfaction, can be influenced by compensation. People work for money, which in turn helps support their existence. Therefore, compensation can influence their job satisfaction and their job performance. Moreover, employees are concerned with the pay difference between themselves and other coworkers (Kuhn, 2013). To reduce issues that could arise from discrepancies between employee pay, organizations tend to allocate pay in secrecy where the salary or hourly rate that an employee makes is not public knowledge within the organization (Neale, 2020). Comparisons among employees can product conflict between the coworkers along with management for creating these differences and being



secretive. This policy not only influences satisfaction with their position and the organization, but it can also influence performance (Yulius & Yulius, 2019).

In further research on work conflict, job satisfaction, and performance, Ye et al. (2019) discussed the negative impact work conflict has on job satisfaction and an individual's emotional state, which can impact job performance. Additionally, company culture and individual personal characteristics were also discussed with regard to how they influence a person's ability to cope with situations and how that impacts a person's attitude and behaviors. Ye et al. examined job satisfaction as a mediating variable and collectivism as a moderating variable in the relationship between work conflict and job performance based on the two impacts previously discussed. Job satisfaction was found to be a mediating variable for the relationship between work conflict and job performance. Collectivism was found to be a moderating variable on the relationship between work conflict and job satisfaction. Ye et al. (2019) conducted this study in China, and because it was a cross-sectional study, the causality of the relationships could not be determined. However, the results do provide valuable insight into the overall relationship between work conflict and job satisfaction.

Organizations see the repercussions of WLB and lack of job satisfaction through higher stress, anxiety, burnout and turnover in their employees. Depending on how people decide to cope with the imbalance, their job performance and job satisfaction can be influenced as well. Because of the conjoined nature of the relationship, employees and employers alike must work together to promote job satisfaction and WLB.

### ***Job Performance***

Another effect of WLB is job performance. Job performance involves the work completed by the employee, which is assessed based on the quality of the work, and how that work influences the organization (Binnewies et al., 2009). There are many factors that contribute to job performance, including knowledge, motivation, skills, training, ability, and resources provided (Altunova & Kalman, 2020). These qualities and resources help employees perform their job, which will be later be “graded” by themselves and/or their supervisor. Many organizations have procedures that require employees to evaluate themselves, or self-report, and then their supervisor will also evaluate the employee. A discussion will be held over the two sets of results to determine if they are both seeing the same quality of work and are in agreement regarding expectations. This may be in the form of a monthly, quarterly, bi-yearly, or yearly review. Here, job performance is discussed as overall performance, but it can also be viewed as daily performance. Smaller factors can influence the daily work that ultimately leads to the overall job performance that is reviewed for compensation, promotion, and termination (Binnewies et al., 2009). Many factors play a role in job performance with day-to-day habits influencing the overall quality of the work.

Job performance has been studied for some time in relation to job satisfaction and WLB. Many people may state that if they do not like their job, they are less likely to want to go to work and/or they are less likely to want to put in effort to get the job done (Judge et al., 2001). If they are less likely to want to get the job done, then the quality of work they produce may be lower. Low job performance also has the chance of turning into a higher probability of turnover (Stringer et al., 2011). This relationship has been studied in

general and in industry-specific situations. Focusing on specific industry norms can influence how job satisfaction and job performance relate to one another. Valaei and Jiroudi (2016) focused on the media industry specifically for their research. Within this industry, these aspects of job satisfaction—compensation, promotion, supervision, coworkers, and the work itself—had a relationship with job performance. General studies compared to industry-specific studies could explain why some research supports a relationship between job satisfaction and job performance and some research does not support the relationship.

Before an employee is even hired, an organization can influence the job performance and satisfaction of that employee. Hiring practices are typically centered around qualifications and person-job fit. Life satisfaction can also be a predictor of how the employee will perform and contribute to the organization. Aldasem et al. (2022) aimed to develop a structural model focusing on the relationships between qualifications and person-job fit, which also included other factors—overqualification, life satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment can be influenced by job satisfaction and job performance. Data were collected from 275 public sector, educational healthcare employees in Kuwait. Results showed a significant and direct impact between job performance, overqualifications, and life satisfaction. Job performance was a mediating factor between organizational commitment, life satisfaction, and overqualifications. Results also showed person-job fit positively influenced job performance. These findings show modern hiring practices may influence job performance and job satisfaction before the employee even starts the job.

Organizations can have an impact on job performance through work dynamics, proper training, and fair compensation. Typically, organizations control the work dynamic, determining whether their employees operate with a team or work individually. Many people find themselves working in team settings at their organization, and many others find themselves working in multiple teams within their organization (van de Brake et al., 2018). Whether an employee works individually or within a team can influence job performance and can change over the duration of their career. The research by van de Brake et al., (2018) suggests that job performance decreases at first for individual employees when placed into a team or when new team members join the team with that individual. However, in the long run, productivity and performance of the individual actually increases. The dynamic of the relationships built in the team setting influence individual team member's performance over time.

Training and compensation are two of the managerial practices that can specifically influence job satisfaction and job performance (Yulius & Yulius, 2019). Training influences the learned behaviors practiced by the organization and the capabilities of the employee to effectively perform their job tasks. Training influences the success of the employee (Yulius & Yulius, 2019). If an employee does not feel they have been properly trained or sufficiently trained to succeed in their position, they are likely to become disgruntled.

The second managerial practice that has a direct influence on job performance is compensation, the reward for the work the employee produces. Compensation can influence job performance in a positive or negative way (Stringer et al., 2011). It can negatively influence performance if the employee does not feel they are compensated

enough or similar to coworkers in the same position. It can positively influence performance if the employee feels valued by the organization through the amount they are compensated (Stringer et al., 2011).

In this way, managerial practices, in the form of training and tools, can influence job satisfaction and job performance. If an organization does not provide managers with the right tools to see what motivates their employees, they will see a decline in productivity and an increase in turnover rate (Aung et al., 2023).

Job performance can also be affected by personal and mental factors. To examine this further, Baranik et al. (2016) focused on customer service employees and the aspects of customer mistreatment (which is the negative treatment customer service employees receive from customers), employee health, and job performance. For the study, 1,013 customer service reps were surveyed twice over the course of 3 months. Scales were used to determine the level of customer mistreatment, emotional labor, wellbeing, emotional exhaustion, customer sabotage, and job performance, resulting in 46-items being answered over the course of the two surveys. Results showed that customer mistreatment was positively correlated with cognitive rumination and social sharing of negative work events. Alternatively, cognitive rumination was negatively correlated to job performance so that when individuals increased their focus on the negative, their performance at work declined. Ostensibly, cognitive rumination influences wellbeing, emotional exhaustion, and supervisor-rated job performance.

Another study conducted by Nodee et al. (2021) examined mental factors to identify the predictive factors of job performance in nurses with an emphasis on moral distress. Nurses ( $N = 256$ ) who participated in this descriptive cross-sectional study were

ICU nurses for private and public hospitals in Qazvin province. The quality of healthcare provided by the nurses is how job performance was reviewed because this quality influences the treatment process and overall recovery of the patients. ICU nurses deal with a lot of tough decisions and a lot of stress due to the nature of the illnesses patients typically have when admitted to the ICU. Those tough decisions can cause moral distress if the decisions do not align with the nurse's beliefs. Moral distress can threaten a person's core values and has been shown to be a strong influencer on job performance for nurses. Results showed there was an educational dimension of job performance that influenced moral distress. More focus is needed during clinical training, and after, surrounding moral distress and ethical decisions, to reduce the negative impact moral distress has on job performance.

These are not the only psychological aspects impacting performance. Personal motivation, social influence with others, ability to handle stress, and psychological capital are also mental factors that can play a role in job performance (Paliga et al., 2022). If an individual is not motivated to go to work, due to a mental illness, such as depression, is unable to socialize well within the workplace, or encounters difficulty handling personal stress, their in-role performance will decrease, and the chances of turnover will increase (Paliga et al., 2022). Personal and mental factors must be considered when examining job performance.

In the same way as job satisfaction, job performance, and WLB can influence one another, one's work will either be balanced or imbalanced depending on one's performance. Similarly, depending on whether the individual's work-life is balanced or imbalanced, their job performance could either excel or suffer due to distractions

(Altunova Kalman, 2020). Chowhan and Pike (2022) researched workload, work-life interface, stress, job satisfaction, and job performance for a job-demands-resource model in relation to working remotely during the timeframe of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their approach included a cross-sectional sample of employees at seven universities ( $N = 4,497$ ) and structural equation path analysis regression models. Their results yielded a partial mediation job demands-resources model. Workload and time spent working, along with job expectations, job support, and job security, showed interconnected relationships with work life, which influenced personal life; personal life also influenced work life. These relationships can have a negative influential relationship with personal and work-related stress that together negatively influence job satisfaction and job performance.

Suggestions from Chowhan and Pike (2022) on implications include creating a balance of job demands with demands from personal lives. Binnewies et al. (2019) supported these findings in a slightly different way by recommending rest and finding ways to reenergize. Needing rest can influence job performance as well, because without rest and energy, people are unable to mentally process and physically perform at their best. Binnewies et al. (2019) supported the need for leisurely activities that take the mind and body away from job demands. Overall, we have seen how there is a positive and negative pull between job satisfaction, job performance, and WLB.

### **Predictors of Work-Life Balance**

The previous section reviewed the effects of WLB. Predictors of WLB also need to be discussed. The main predictors reviewed for this study are personal, organizational, and technological factors, COVID-19, and hobbies.

### *Personal Factors*

WLB has been shown to differ by gender (Emslie & Hunt, 2009). In fact, gender inequalities both in the workplace and outside of the workplace are more prevalent when discussing WLB (Warren, 2021). Within the work environment, research typically focuses on the influence of stress or burnout (Witzig & Smith, 2019) due to the fact that employee burnout often leads to dissatisfaction, increased absence, and lower productivity. Nevertheless, stress and burnout manifest differently for women than for men. This variance is a consequence of societal norms, or role expectations, for each gender (Ko et al., 2020). For example, most WLB research has shown that females encounter greater imbalance due to the responsibilities of working and raising a family; in contrast, research shows that men tend to experience more balance due to carrying a less demanding role in raising the family (Wattis et al., 2013). Interestingly, educational attainment also plays a role in the gender differences (Kromydas, 2020). Educational attainment is related to the jobs a person is able to attain, along with the wages the person is able to make at the job. Women, depending on the country, are found to experience conflict when pursuing education and fulfilling household expectations (Kromydas, 2020). Gender influences both the perception and experience of WLB.

Family dynamics and structure can also influence WLB. The influence family has on WLB has raised a debate on the varying needs regarding WLB and how these needs fluctuate from person to person and lifestyle to lifestyle (Warren, 2021). For example, work-life conflict looks different in dual-working families compared to single-working parent families (Bansal & Agarwal, 2017). Dual-working families have more responsibilities and more schedules, which require more communication and better time-



management. Moreover, families with members who have special needs or disabilities may experience difficulty in achieving WLB due to the additional responsibilities demanded of them (Sałkowska, 2020).

Sałkowska (2020) studies families with persons with disabilities and found there are two ways of dealing with WLB. The first way is working-mode-related strategies, which is adjusting their working habits and schedules around the need to take care of the person with disabilities. Typically, this mode is seen in parents with younger children with disabilities who try to work around rehabilitation schedules for the child. This means work can either be a main priority or a secondary priority to the child's needs. The second way involves value-related strategies, which focus on what the family values and even what society expects the family to value. This can cause families to be torn between being solely focused on the child's needs and living a "normal life." Within Sałkowska's (2020) research, mothers and fathers reported they focused on their child's care because society expected them to value the care of their child more and present it to society in that manner. These conflicts tend to cause more strain on families than is necessary. Families come in all shapes and sizes now, resulting in multiple types of responsibilities, different sources of stress, and varying opportunities for miscommunication.

Whereas these types of work-family conflicts may occur for men and women who have families, this is not true for older adults no longer taking care of children or younger adults who have yet to start a family. Likewise, younger adults who have yet to start a family would not experience the same challenges to WLB. According to Wattis et al.'s (2013) research, when comparing younger adults starting families compared to individuals who have not started a family yet, a young couple starting a family may

believe they deserve more WLB than a young adult who does not have the stress, time commitment, or added responsibility of a family. It is clear that WLB is subjective in nature because people have different levels of stress and conflict they can handle.

Accordingly, people will also have different ways of coping with stress and finding their sense of balance and what is right for them. As a result, a subjective debate exists between individuals regarding how much WLB a person should have compared to another when their lifestyles are not the same (Wattis et al. 2013).

In addition to the aforementioned influences, there are generational differences within WLB. Emslie and Hunt (2009) extended the research on differences between genders (male versus female) by interviewing older individuals. They learned that typical gender roles influence the mindset of participants. Older females discussed current problems with balancing multiple personal and professional roles with or without children, and men focused on the past when discussing their balancing of multiple personal and professional roles when their children were younger. Older individuals either “work to live” or “live to work,” which can be influenced by whether they have children or not, and this provides a glimpse into demographic differences for aging men and women when discussing their primary focus surrounding WLB. Participants were either working to afford daily necessities when stating they “work to live” or they were living for their job, meaning they were fully enjoying their job or striving for the fulfillment of their job. Whereas these findings are aligned with previous research, this insight gives a voice to the older generation that was originally masked over. This research also supports the idea WLB is especially important for younger generations. Social norms, time requirements, and level of pay at different stages of life all contribute

to work-life imbalances and can contribute to the “work to live” or “live to work” mentalities.

### ***Organizational Factors***

Along with personal factors influencing WLB, there are also organizational factors. The first organizational influence on WLB to consider is stakeholders. There are three main stakeholders involved in creating WLB, the government, the organization, and the individual. Assessing WLB for people tends to focus heavily on the working hours for the organization (Warren, 2021). Young et al. (2018) identified a few stressors that lead to work-life imbalance: workload, managers, and colleagues. When organizations believe they are helping with WLB, they are typically reducing working hours, reducing work pressure, or creating flexibility for the position or individual. Identifying these measures makes WLB seem primarily like the organization’s responsibility (Warren, 2021). However, whereas the organization can influence WLB, the other two stakeholders must also play a role. The individual needs to be able to assess for themselves how their personal life is influencing the work, and also the government must responsibly consider what they are suggesting is normal (Warren, 2021).

Young et al. (2018) supported the idea of finding additional avenues, such as outdoor activities and hobbies, to help working individuals find coping mechanisms to encourage a healthy WLB. Instead of WLB being only a personal issue, the quest for a healthy WLB must be a joint effort, transforming it into a public issue. According to Warren (2021), other countries like Northern Ireland and Australia have policies in place to start this transition to becoming a public issue.

## ***Technology***

Along with the influence of stakeholders within the organization, technological advancements—resulting in flexibility for working locations and times—also influences WLB. Chung and van der Lippe (2018) focused their research on part-time working, full-time working, flexible working, and remote working. Many people reported that remote working led to them feeling obligated to work longer hours. Others felt they were unable to separate work from home, because they are working from their homes. Their sense of obligation came from their impression that it was a privilege to be able to stay home and not come to the office. Alsulami et al (2022) reviewed women's views in the academic sector of flexible working post-COVID 19 and found women believe flexible working improves mental wellbeing and ensures social development and sustainability. When women were polled whether the location or time flexibility was more appealing, location was listed as more important.

In addition to location-related influences, cell phone technology has also advanced, providing opportunities for people to respond to emails, phone calls, and texts from employers or clients at any time of the day from any location, even while on vacation. This advancement can lead to the inability to disconnect from the office because there is no clear office space when one can work from home. Moreover, there is no clear office hours now that employees can be contacted anywhere at any time.

Technology has blurred the lines between work and life, creating an ambiguous challenge for those seeking to achieve a healthy WLB. This *gray area* of space was researched by Richardson and McKenna (2013). Richard and McKenna proposed two forms of space within the organization: the physical location of the employee and the

space to grow and produce. This growing space is influenced by social abilities and WLB and requires the ability to organize and reorganize one's "space" to encourage change and progression. This research helps to show that different positions have different levels of WLB, and organizational influence changes based on one's position and location. Given the fact that technology can also be a distraction or disturbance during the work hours, it is vital to define the parameters of this "space."

### ***COVID-19***

A possibly unexpected organizational influencing factor on WLB is COVID-19. Due to COVID-19, many organizations had to resort to fully remote working conditions. This need for fully remote working conditions created a whole new learning process for many. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, many organizations hosted solely in-office staffing. During COVID-19, the workforce witnessed a dramatic change and an increase in technology influence in the workplace. In addition to the onset of several new concerns, COVID-19 added a unique hindrance to WLB.

Flexible or hybrid workspaces are becoming more and more studied over the recent years due to technology advancements and societal issues (Petani & Mengis, 2021). Jennifer Robinson with Gallup wrote an article in December 2020 about the emotional state of remote workers, saying "it's complicated." Gallup believed there would be generational differences in the handling of fully remote work when COVID-19 started. Their contention was that Gen Xers and Baby Boomers would struggle and Millennials would be excited with thoughts of more WLB and flexibility. However, what they found was the opposite. Gallup had not considered that older generations have a need to feel security in their careers compared to Millennials.

Older generations tend to have financial security because of time spent in the workforce. They have worked towards building a career and enjoy showing higher levels of engagement. Millennials have not spent the same amount of time in the workforce. Therefore, many may not be satisfied with where they are within the organization or in the direction of their career path yet. Millennials want to “work and live.” To achieve that desire, they believe high levels of flexibility and WLB are needed, and they believe this can be found in remote work. Robinson’s (2020) research found that while remote Millennials may continue to be satisfied with their remote work, they showed more signs of being emotionally stressed with worry, anxiety, and loneliness. These interesting results are what drove Google to create hybrid work in 2021, attempting to bring employees back into the office. In this manner, employers are still providing flexibility for their employees; employees are able to work from anywhere, but Google is also providing a space to collaborate and ease some emotional stress.

Since the original outbreak of the pandemic, restrictions surrounding COVID-19 have relaxed, and many organizations have been faced with the decision to either stay fully remote, transition back into the workplace, or find a middle ground of the two. Some organizations have decided to keep the fully remote structure, some have moved to hybrid situations, and some have pronounced a return to fully in-office staffing. Google was one large organization pushing for in-office work to support collaboration between colleagues. However, the transition proved to be arduous. To meet the requests of employees, they are now following a hybrid model, requiring employees to come into the office 3 days a week. Even in the aftermath of COVID-19, employers and employees are experiencing trouble navigating the path to WLB.

## ***Hobbies***

WLB by definition is an attempt to find the harmony between the factors of work and personal life and avoid work-life conflict (Carlson et al., 2009). People attempt to reduce the imbalance of work-life conflict in many ways. Some ways are unhealthy, such as extra sleep or overeating (Kossek et al., 2014), and some ways are healthy, such as outdoor activities and hobbies (Young et al., 2018). The term *hobby* is such a broad term that almost anything can be considered a hobby, as long as it requires spending time learning and practicing a skill (Rosen, 2018). Because of their natural conformability, hobbies have the potential to offer a plethora of benefits.

One example of a healthy way to reduce psychological stress caused by work-life conflict is mindfulness training (Althammer et al., 2021). Althammer et al. (2021) conducted a study by which mindfulness classes were taught and then participants were interviewed daily for 3 weeks to see if they believed there was a change in their psychological state of mind and feelings towards their work-life conflict. Participants who received training were shown to have received the most benefit in reducing the negative effects of stress and increasing wellbeing and WLB. The researchers concluded that some of the participants were benefiting from the training of mindfulness, and some were not experiencing changes from the training of mindfulness. The participants were self-selected and self-reporting; therefore, there could have been some bias influencing participants' responses on the daily assessment. It is important to note, however, that none of the participants mentioned they were experiencing more psychological stress.

People use hobbies as a way to handle the imbalance between professional and personal life to create WLB (Li et al., 2019). Hobbies can be enjoyed individually or with

others, at home or at a specific location, indoors or outdoors. Cagirtekin and Tanriverdi (2022) researched the influence social hobbies can have on self-esteem and quality of life for women battling breast cancer. The results found social hobbies, which encourage social interactions and communication, can have positive effects on self-esteem and quality of life for breast cancer patients. Also, hobbies can be completed multiple times a week or much less frequently outside of work hours. Sometimes, depending on the amount of time spent participating in the hobby and how long the hobby is a part of a person's life, the hobby could be considered a lifestyle and not just a hobby (Janeczko et al. 2021). Ultimately a hobby that is part of a person's life would have more meaning to the person than just a causal hobby.

Individuals participate in hobbies because of the level of meaningfulness the hobby may bring them. Engaging in activities that hold such significance may help them fulfill a goal or a purpose in their lives. Goldberg et al. (2002) researched the relationship between participating in a meaningful activity and quality of life. The study was specifically conducted with people who were considered disabled by mental illness. They found that participation in meaningful activities was significantly correlated with satisfaction in life. Goldberg et al. (2002) discussed the psychological aspects hobbies can influence by an individual learning a new skill. Those factors include self-efficacy, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, which in turn can increase quality of life. When individuals master their hobbies, self-efficacy improves as they find confidence in their own abilities. Self-esteem also increases, as well as skill set development, achievement of goals, pride, and self-confidence. As morale and satisfaction increase, individuals experience a higher quality of life.



Matsumura et al. (2023) and Wang et al. (2021) provided two examples of hobbies positively influencing the progression of the mind and body for all ages. The research by Matsumura et al. (2023) focused on hobby engagement and the risk of dementia. In 1993-1994, 22,377 participants completed a self-assessment describing their participation in hobbies, if any at all. From 2006 to 2016, a follow up was conducted to assess for disabling dementia. Ultimately, it was determined that participation in hobbies in mid-life and late-life resulted in lower associations with disabling dementia without a history of stroke. While Matsumura focused on the mind, Wang et al. (2021) focused on the body. The research conducted by Wang et al. (2021) concentrated on the association between hobbies and the risk of cardiovascular disease. A total of 56,381 participants were divided into three groups: no hobbies, one hobby, or multiple hobbies. The results showed participants with a hobby or multiple hobbies had a 10% to 20% reduced risk of developing cardiovascular issues. Similar percentages were seen for reduced risk of stroke within the groups of participants that had one hobby or many hobbies. The implications of Wang et al. were similar to Matsumura et al.'s, showing the positive influence of hobbies on ill health; in Matsumura et al.'s study, the risk of cardiovascular disease was reduced for participants. These results help support the idea that hobbies throughout a person's life have the potential to help overall quality life in more ways than one.

Another benefit of engaging in hobbies is the mental release hobbies afford to individuals (Young et al. 2018). By way of illustration, consider the rewards reaped by an individual who has chosen to pursue archery as a hobby. Because archery is a detailed sport, with many different facets and rules, it requires a lot of focus. Such intense focus

allows the individual to forget about both work and their personal life stressors and provides the opportunity to relax. The individual may choose to participate competitively, which would require them to practice multiple times a week—sometimes every day in peak season. For some, such intense commitment to a hobby could cause burnout, but the glory of hobbies is why some people participate. If the achievement of accolades is not as motivating, an individual may choose to practice less often for enjoyment purposes only. In fact, some people who participate in their hobby at least once a week find that it still brings them just as much enjoyment as individuals who practice multiple times a week. This flexibility to engage as much or as little as one desires is one reason why many people participate in hobbies (Beham et al., 2012). Hobbies are not only adaptable to individual preferences, but they also provide an alternative outlet for mental concentration.

WLB can be positively impacted by an individual's involvement in hobbies. Indeed, the research of Li et al. (2019) supports the idea of hobbies having an influencing factor on mental health and wellbeing. The PHQ-9 was used to assess overall levels of depression and the WHO-5 was used to assess levels of mental wellbeing. A logistic regression model was used to interpret the data collected from participants. Participants' results were split into four groups: less than 40 hours a week, less than 50 hours a week, between 50 and 60 hours a week, and more than 60 hours a week. Of the participants, 69.3% of participants worked more than 40 hours a week. Participants who worked over 60 hours a week had significant results for high depression and low mental wellbeing. Interestingly, Li et al. (2019) found significantly lower levels of depression on the PHQ-9 and higher levels of mental wellbeing on the WHO-5 for all four participant groups who

had hobbies. While working long hours could have a negative impact on an employee's mental health, participating in hobbies could alleviate those negative impacts. Thus, the inclusion of hobbies may counteract the threat to mental health caused from working long hours.

With studying long hours, working long hours, or family stressors taking up most of a person's time, finding time for hobbies tends to be the biggest threat to a person's engagement in hobbies. Scroggie (2020) found a few techniques that helped make time for hobbies. Those steps included detailed planning of how often to partake in the hobby, talking about the hobby to others as a sense of accountability, making it easily accessible, which means having the gear needed set aside ready to go, and lastly, knowing when to take a break. Hobbies are not meant to provide unhealthy pressure or negative self-views. In contrast, hobbies are meant to provide value, relief, and passion to a person's life.

There is limited research on the relationship between participation in hobbies and job performance. One informal article was found from a study performed at San Francisco State University by psychologist Kevin Eschleman et al. (2014). In this research, they were seeking to understand whether participation in creative activities outside the workplace influenced job performance. They reviewed 241 employees with a large survey focused on their creative activities and downtime in their schedules, rating how the creative activity influenced their job and how they were supported by their organization and coworkers. Eschleman et al. (2014)'s findings suggested creative activities seem to improve job performance as well as positively influence the mental state of the individual. It was interesting that people reported having a feeling of control

over their activities and life choices. The authors were surprised to see how those feelings were reflected in the employees' workdays.

### **Biblical Foundations of the Study**

For nearly every challenge individuals face in life, a biblical reference can be found. How often and to what extent such Christian concepts are explored and applied vary from person to person. Many people go about their daily lives not considering how faith plays a role in their lives. Still others find strength, support, or relief from scripture and religion (Jacobs & van Niekerk, 2017). How often a person seeks Christian guidance depends on many factors, such as the strength of their faith or the depth of immersion in religious studies. Regardless of a person's investment in the scriptures, the Word of God still applies and offers wisdom regarding hobbies, job satisfaction, and job performance, as well as the pursuit of a healthy WLB.

### **Work and Scripture**

Scripture provides clear direction regarding the topic of work. Proverbs 14:23 advises, "There is profit in all hard work, but endless talk leads only to poverty" (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010). Work is rewarding—not only in this life but also in the next. "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Colossians 3:23-24). Certainly, people should work for God, but scripture also compels workers to use that same passion for work in daily responsibilities, whether at home or for the organization that employs them. Hard work is necessary and should be performed to the best of our abilities.

In the same way as the Bible directs its reader to work hard, workers are also implored to embrace rest and renewal. For people to perform their best, they must also have rest. “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint. Jesus is our hope. When we hope and have faith in Him, He renews our strength” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Isaiah 40:31). This verse focuses on hope and gaining strength from God and can also support the need to recharge and rest to help further their performance and stamina. Even during the act of creation, a time was set aside for rest—demonstrating how important rejuvenation is when it comes to work.

### **Job Satisfaction and Scripture**

While people must have a job to earn a living, they must also find some enjoyment in their job or see some value in the work they are doing. It is the Lord’s desire that workers experience joy, peace, and hope in their lives. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may be abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Roman 15:13). Certainly, individuals are advised to find joy in their personal lives. “Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Ecclesiastes 9:7). Likewise, people are instructed to find joy and satisfaction in the work that they perform. “I know there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Ecclesiastes 3:12-13). These verses support finding joy and satisfaction in work.

The Bible's emphasis on a deliberate pursuit of job satisfaction has been supported by science. Without experiencing enjoyment in work, people become worn down and develop emotions of anguish and frustration, which can allow evil thoughts to enter the mind. The connection between religious faith in general and job satisfaction has been studied and findings show that the presence or absence of religion could be the missing link for many as it positively impacted job satisfaction within their research (Ghazzawi et al., 2016). Therefore, it can be determined that the asset of faith plays an important role in the attainment of job satisfaction.

### **Talents, Gifts, and Skills**

Each person is uniquely different, making the aspects of life distinctly varied for individual. This differentiation is God's design. "For I know the plans I have for you—this is the Lord's declaration—plans for welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Jeremiah 29:11). Those plans are not only for the church as a whole, but God's plans are also specific to each individual. "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, 1 Corinthians 12:27). Whereas we are all part of one body, both of these verses support how we are all different and that God has a plan for each of us. His plan outlines all aspects of people's lives, their work and personal lives.

With regard to work, the scriptures state that all individuals have been equipped with their own gifts and talents. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, James 1:17). By bestowing these gifts and talents, the Lord brings honor and glory to Himself. "In the same way, let your light shine

before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Matthew 5:16). Each person has a passion, a gift, and a purpose. Each gift is unique to the individual and is meant to be fostered, because it is a gift from God. That light should certainly be seen in the work performed, but it can also be shown through involvement in hobbies or extracurricular activities.

### **Work-Life Balance and Scripture**

While the Bible instructs us to effectively use the talents we are given, it also implores us to do so in a healthy and responsible way. When the scriptures regarding gifts and individuality are examined within the full context of the Bible, it helps shed light into how WLB should operate in a Christian lifestyle. Specifically, people are admonished to avoid working too hard without rest. Psalm 127:2 supports this by saying, “It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat, for God gives rest to his loved ones” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Psalm 127:2). Additionally, overworking for material things is discouraged. Proverbs 23:4 says, “Don’t wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Proverbs 23:4). It is critical to recognize when to step back and rest or when to quit striving for material possessions. After all, there is “a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance” (*Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 2010, Ecclesiastes 3:3-4). This verse supports the idea that there is a time for everything and a place for everything—further stressing the importance of a healthy WLB.

For the guidance in these verses to be followed, the person must be deliberate in their pursuit of balance and have the support necessary to achieve equilibrium. The imbalance comes from needing a job for living and needing a purpose to have a fulfilled life. Hobbies can provide the missing piece of this equation. Hobbies can improve skills, thereby encouraging responsible use of the talents we are given. Hobbies can provide relief from a stressful job, thereby providing an avenue for rest and rejuvenation. Hobbies can foster relationships with others, thereby allowing an opportunity to shine a light in the darkness. In fact, these types of relationships can be mutually beneficial, as it is important to have family or friends support one, to push for wellbeing and balance (Matsveru & Meylahn, 2018). By adhering to the direction provided by the Word of God, WLB can and should be achieved in the life of a Christian believer.

### **Summary**

This chapter reviewed the research that has been conducted on job performance, job satisfaction, and WLB to show the history of the terms, to support the study moving forward, and to continue filling gaps within this research. The information discussed in this chapter supports the need for further research regarding the relationship between hobbies, as a facet of WLB, job performance, and job satisfaction. By diving deeper into the already established relationship between job performance and job satisfaction, one can easily see the need for the expansion of knowledge concerning WLB with a focus specifically on hobbies. Hobbies are an extension to WLB. Further study would provide greater insight to individuals and entities seeking to better understand the intricate aspects of WLB and the efforts necessary to achieve greater job satisfaction and, consequently, improved job performance. This section also discussed biblical direction with regard to



WLB, job satisfaction, and job performance. Chapter three focuses on the research design, participants, and data collection and analysis procedures for this study.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

### **Overview**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the perceived connection hobbies have to job satisfaction and job performance. The methodology, participant selection, tools of measurement, data analysis procedures, and delimitations are outlined. Likewise, the assumptions and limitations made about the participants of this proposed study are presented.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: How do working adults describe their experience with the interaction of their hobbies and their work?

RQ2: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job performance?

RQ 3: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job satisfaction?

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to explore perceptions of the influence of engagement in hobbies on individuals' job satisfaction and job performance. A case study was chosen due to a lack of fit between what needs to be examined and the ability to quantify measurements. This case study allows for an in-depth exploration regarding a holistic view of hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction. There is a gap in knowledge concerning hobbies as a contributor to WLB and the influence hobbies may have on job satisfaction and job performance. There is a lack of instruments quantifying information that can measure hobbies as a construct. The complexity of this study

requires an understanding of how people view hobbies and what aspects of hobbies appear to influence job performance and job satisfaction. Relying on the human experience allowed participants to define the roles hobbies play in their lives and create more information about hobbies that will be useful for future research.

Another factor contributing to the determination of a qualitative study was understanding contexts. Very similar to the complexity of this study, this naturalistic inquiry considers participation in hobbies in a new light and possibly in ways that have not been considered previously. Through interviews, participants shared their experiences and perceptions regarding hobbies, WLB, job satisfaction, and job performance, which could have influenced the comprehension of the relationships of the three variables. Determining the impact participants feel hobbies have on these crucial aspects of their lives will allow for quantifying information in the future. Given the study's aim to gain a holistic view of how participants experience satisfaction, improve job performance, and achieve WLB through participation in hobbies, a case study approach was deemed the most appropriate study design. Through analysis of emerging processes and patterns, this study is a steppingstone for a deepening knowledge of WLB, job satisfaction, and job performance.

### **Participants**

The target sample size for this study was 10 to 15 participants and recruitment of participants would continue until saturation of themes is met. The participant recruitment was conducted via a social media post and email with my workplace, which is a mid-to-large size marketing and advertising agency. This allowed for a mix of industries and ages of participants. Inclusion criteria for participants included being 18 years of age or

older and employed full time (at least 40 hours per week). Participants needed to have held their current full-time employment for at least 6 months and participate in at least one hobby (any hobby and participate at least once a week in that hobby). This was a convenience sample.

### **Study Procedures**

Participants were recruited through the Human Resources department of my organization, as well as through my personal social media. Permission to communicate with employees at my organization was gained via email (see Appendix A), and Human Resources sent the email to their employees requesting participation (see Appendix B). Participants who received an invitation to participate via Human Resources or social media (see Appendix C) contacted me via email and I scheduled a phone call to determine whether the potential participant was eligible to participate. They were asked the eligibility questions in Appendix D. Participants who were not over the age of 18, had not worked for the employer for at least 6 months, were not employed full time, did not participate in hobbies, and did not participate regularly were thanked for their interest in the study but were told that unfortunately, they did not meet the eligibility requirements for the study. They were asked if they would be interested in receiving a summary of the results for showing interest in participating. If a participant qualified for the Teams interview and had consented to recording the interview, he or she were provided with a date and time for the Teams interview. The participant also received a Consent Form (see Appendix E) detailing the voluntary state of their participation. They were required to sign the Consent Form, stating they had an understanding of the nature of the study and their participation before they were interviewed.

Demographic information was also collected to gain more insight into the sample. These data included gender, race, age, marital status, spousal work status, children, and their time spent with the organization (see Appendix F for interview questions). Demographic information was used to describe participant characteristics. Demographic questions were asked prior to inviting participants to respond to the interview questions (Appendix F).

Interview questions revolved around hobby participation, including time spent participating, meaningfulness of hobby, and enjoyment of hobby participation, perceived job performance, and perceived job satisfaction (see Appendix F for interview questions). Participants began by answering questions about their relationship between work and life, their hobbies, and the influence their hobbies have on their personal and work lives. They were also asked to reflect on how hobbies may affect their job performance and job satisfaction. To reduce the likelihood of influencing participants to respond in a specific way, open-ended questions were asked. Participants were reminded before and after the interview that their responses would not influence any actual performance reviews for their current employers. Prompts for more information were used during the interviewing process depending on the responses provided by the participants. Follow-up interviews were not required, but if they had been required participants had the choice to accept or decline participation after the first interview. Participants were also asked to review a transcript of the interview, which is referred to as member checking, for any clarification or changes they would have liked to make to their responses (Appendix G).

## **Instrumentation and Measurement**

### **Eligibility Questionnaire**

Work-life balance, hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction were discussed in a recorded semi-structured interview with each participant. Each participant had completed the 5 eligibility questions, meaning they were at least 18 years old, had been employed for at least 6 months with their company, were a full-time employee, and participated in hobbies at least once a week. These eligibility questions are in Appendix C. Participants needed to meet these requirements to have experiences with working and hobbies to provide information on the benefits of hobbies and the relationships between the concepts. There would have been very little dependability with the interviews if the participants did not meet these requirements.

### **Interview**

The first portion of the interview included demographic information regarding gender, race, age, relationship status, spousal work status, family structure, time with the company, and hobby participation. This allowed for comparisons to be made between different demographics. The rest of the interview consisted of open-ended questions that were more in-depth surrounding the topics of work-life balance, hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction. Example prompts included “what benefits do you experience by participating in hobbies,” “Talk about how your hobbies and work intersect,” “Do you think there is any relationship between your hobbies and job performance,” “Do you think there is any relationship between your hobbies and job satisfaction.” These questions were designed to draw on experiences from the participants while not guiding them to specific responses. The creation of conversation allowed for saturation of themes. Knowing my role as the researcher was to listen and prompt conversation from the participants provided credibility and confirmability through

reflexivity. Reflexivity is the examining of and learning from one's beliefs and biases to find new insights when reviewing research (Alley et al., 2015). Through reflexivity, I also sorted through my own preconceptions about work-life balance, and the influence my own hobbies had on my job performance and job satisfaction to support credibility. This helped me not sway the conversations one way or another. I took notes of my own thoughts and the participants comments throughout the interview to help me guide the conversation and ask follow-up questions to support confirmability. These conversations had limited transferability due to a small number of participants as this was an exploration of topics. Transferability was be found through the different ranges of work experience and time spent participating in hobbies.

### **Transcripts**

Following each interview, the recording was listened to, and the conversations were transcribed in its entirety by myself. This allowed me to become more familiar with the information gained from the interviews, reducing time between interviews and transcribing, and helped me better prepare for the next interview. Any details that could influence the interpretation of the data were noted to support accuracy. Participants member checked their transcript for any corrections or additional input. This provided dependability, confirmability, and credibility, by providing rich documentation, unbiased interpretations, and the ability to accurately highlight key themes. This also allowed me to use the participants' words in the report when discussing the key themes, while not providing participant information, adding to the credibility of the study.

## **Data Analysis**

Interviews were recorded to allow for accurate transcription of the conversation. Notes were taken during the interview, as well to allow for follow-up questions to specific answers while on the call. Transcripts were then sent to participants for review to see if there were any necessary clarification or additional information they wanted to provide. Once finalized, the transcripts and notes were used to highlight significant statements about the participants' experiences (Braun & Clark, 2006). Themes were developed from these highlighted statements. Structural descriptions were developed from the participants' experiences and were used to create a composition description. Transcriptions of the interviews and manually pulling themes helped reduce the chances of researcher bias supporting confirmability.

## **Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations**

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations of this study were the time period employee needed to be with the company, the employee being full time, the requirement of participating in hobbies regularly, and the age of the participant. Participants needed to be 18 years or older to participate, for consent reasons. The participant needed to be full time and have held their current job for at least 6 months to reduce the "new hire high," or new job employment feelings and mental state, which may affect job performance or job satisfaction levels. Participants were allowed to define what a hobby is to them. However, participants needed to participate in hobbies regularly to be able to confidently comment on the possible relationship between their hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction.



## **Assumptions**

Assumptions for this study included contextual understanding and emergent design, meaning new concepts and or findings arise while conducting the interviews. I acknowledged the different cultural, social, and historical contexts that may be present within the individuals participating in this study and in the general population. The emergent design of this study was also an assumption for being adaptable and fluid within the interviewing process, allowing conversation to drift and flow as necessary to uncover new information about the relationship between hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction. Included in the assumptions of this research was that participants were self-aware of how they feel during their hobbies, how well they perform at work, and how satisfied they are with their jobs. Another assumption was that the participants would be honest in responding to the interview questions.

## **Limitations**

This research has a qualitative case study design, which limited the number of participants that could be included in the sample. This may influence generalizability to the larger population; however, transferability, the extent to which readers can judge the applicability of the findings to another population (Morrow, 2005), may still apply. Moreover, participants could have possibly answered in a biased way, due to believing I would want specific answers to interview questions or not knowing the true answer. These responses could hinder the depth of knowledge available within the results of this study. Participants could have also still been nervous their current employer could hear

about their responses and put their job in jeopardy. This would have also hindered the results of this study due to a lack of quality of responses.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the methodology for this qualitative case study. The complexity and lack of research on hobbies drives the need for interviews. This approach was being used to help shed light on how hobbies, as a contributor to WLB, influences job performance and job satisfaction—through the lens of participants’ experiences. This chapter also outlined the procedures, assumptions, delimitations, data analysis, and participant selection, which included recording interviews, transcription, convenience sampling, and inclusion criteria for participation. The next chapter reports the results of the data collection and analysis procedures.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### Overview

The aim of this qualitative case study was to explore how individuals in the workforce perceive and articulate the interconnection of their hobbies and work. Specifically, this study focused on how working adults characterize the interconnectivity between their hobbies, as part of WLB, job performance, and overall satisfaction in their employment.

The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: How do working adults describe their experience with the interaction of their hobbies and their work?

RQ2: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job performance?

RQ 3: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job satisfaction?

I conducted 15 audio-recorded interviews. This allowed for an in-depth exploration regarding a holistic view of hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction. The participants were recruited from my workplace and social media allowing for a mix of industries and ages. Participants had to be over the age of 18, employed full time (at least 40 hours per week), employed for at least 6 months at their current employer, and participate in at least one hobby (any hobby and participate at least once a week in that hobby). Once these requirements were met, a 30-to-45-minute recording interview was conducted. The interviews were semi-structured, starting with demographic questions regarding age, gender, race, marital status, spousal work status, children, and time spent

with their organization. Other interview questions then revolved around hobby participation, including time spent participating, meaningfulness of hobby, and enjoyment of hobby participation, perceived job performance with any influence from hobbies, and perceived job satisfaction with any influence from hobbies. Due to the open-ended nature of the questions, participants were able to respond however they felt lead, and opened the conversation to other topics of discussion relating to work and their personal lives, along with work-life balance and stress. After the interview was complete, I transcribed the conversations and sent the transcripts to the participants for review. This allowed the participant to make changes, adding, deleting, or clarifying anything they said during the interview. These transcripts were then reviewed by me to pull any key themes or content providing insight to the overall topic.

### **Descriptive Results**

For this study, 15 semi-structured, recorded interviews were conducted. Table 1 below lists the demographic information for the participants.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Time in Position	Hours participating per week	Hobbies
P1	24	M	Hispanic	3 years	10+ hours	Cycling, running, golf
P2	25	F	Caucasian	11 months	10+ hours	Golf, cooking
P3	28	M	African American	5 years	10+ hours	Reading, video games
P4	29	F	Caucasian	3 years	10+ hours	reading
P5	29	M	Caucasian	4 years	5+ hours	Volleyball, pickleball
P6	29	F	Caucasian	5 years	8+ hours	Running, reading
P7	43	F	Caucasian	1 year	10+ hours	Reading, Photography
P8	45	M	Caucasian	15 years	10+ hours	Reading, Cooking, Sports, Golf

P9	27	M	Caucasian	1 year	10+ hours	Frisbee, Chess, Video Games
P10	45	M	Caucasian	12 years	12+ hours	Music, Coaching
P11	34	F	Caucasian	10 years	3+ hours	Volleyball, Pickleball
P12	53	F	Caucasian	30 years	10+ hours	Music, Working out
P13	44	F	Caucasian	2 years	5+ hours	Working out
P14	32	M	Caucasian	9 years	5+ hours	Running, Hunting, Fishing
P15	44	F	Caucasian	9 years	10+ hours	Crafting, Hiking

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The participant list included eight females and seven males. The age of the sample ranged from 24-53 years old. The sample consisted of 86% Caucasian, 6% African American, and 6% Hispanic people. Participants were also asked their marital status, their spouse's working status, and if they had children. Sixty-six percent of the participants stated they were married, 26.6% were dating, and 6.6% were single. Of the participants who were married or dating, 86% of their spouses or significant others

worked full time with 79% of them working outside the home, meaning not fully remote. Of the overall sample, 53% mentioned having children, and 46% of the sample did not have children. Fifty-three percent of the sample is from the same marketing agency as me, and 46% of the sample worked for other companies in a multitude of fields. Years of service at their respective companies ranged from a little less than a year to upwards of 30 years with the company. All participants worked at least 40 hours a week, 46% of the sample stated working over 40 hours a week. There was a mix of participants who worked remote, in office, and hybrid. Twenty percent of the participants worked fully remote, 33% of the sample worked solely in office, and 46% of the sample worked a combination of in office and remotely. There was a wide variety of hobbies mentioned from reading, chess, photography, to running, cycling, and volleyball. Majority of the participants stated participating in more than one hobby and spending at least 5 hours a week participating in their hobbies. Sixty percent of participants stated spending 10 or more hours a week participating in their hobbies.

### **Study Findings**

Each interview was recorded and then transcribed after the interview was completed. I sent the transcript to the participant for their review of the content. Once the participant had stated their interview transcript was correct, the interview was reviewed for key themes and coded manually. Inductive coding was used, and each interview was coded manually. Twenty-seven codes emerged from the data. The codes are described below.

**Code 1: Stress Relief**

Stress relief emerged as one of the many positive reasons why participants chose to participate in their hobbies. Participants stated participating in hobbies as a way to cope with stressors from work and personal life.

**Code 2: Depression Relief**

Depression relief emerged as one of the many positive reasons why participants chose to participate in their hobbies. Work and personal life can influence depression for some participants and hobbies counteract the depression feelings.

**Code 3: Anxiety Relief**

Anxiety relief emerged as one of the many positive reasons why participants chose to participate in their hobbies. Hobbies help participants cope with anxiety from work and personal life.

**Code 4: Burnout Coping**

Burnout coping emerged as one of the many positive reasons why participants chose to participate in their hobbies. Participants stated at times feeling burned out from work and/or life and hobbies provided an outlet and a way to cope with burnout.

**Code 5: Increased Happiness**

Increased happiness emerged as one of the many positive reasons why participants chose to participate in their hobbies. Increasing overall happiness helps the participant deal with any negative influences from work and personal life.

**Code 6: Connection with Oneself**

Connecting with oneself emerged as a code because a couple participants discussed how their job requires a lot from them personally resulting in them needing to



find time for themselves and to participate in hobbies that make them feel good and learn more about themselves.

#### **Code 7: Connecting with Others**

Connecting with others included connecting with new people, coworkers, family, spouses, children, and friends. A few participants mentioned participating in their hobby with their spouses or children. A few participants even mentioned participating in their hobbies as a form of networking due to meeting new people and other coworkers.

#### **Code 8: Sense of Belonging**

The sense of belonging was added to the list of benefits of hobbies and determined to be its own code. A sense of belonging was discussed when participating in hobbies with others and finding a sense of fitting into society. Finding others to participate in hobbies with and a place to participate in hobbies gives participants a sense of belonging.

#### **Code 9: Purpose**

An underlying factor for why people participate in hobbies, which was mentioned in a few interviews, is that hobbies give an additional sense of purpose to one's life. It was stated in one interview "I work to live, I do not live to work" and a few participants

referenced that if they did not have their hobbies, their lives would be consumed with work making it harder to cope with negative work and life situations.

#### **Code 10: Accomplishment**

Multiple participants mentioned a sense of accomplishment when completing a milestone in their hobby and/or participating in a specific hobby because it was challenging. This included mental and physical achievements.

#### **Code 11: Challenge**

The challenging nature of a hobby is another reason participants choose to participate in specific hobbies making it a code of its own. A few participants mentioned participating in a hobby because it challenged them mentally or physically.

#### **Code 12: Physical Benefits**

Another grouping of benefits from hobbies includes physical benefits. Many participants mentioned their hobbies encourage bodily movement, which counteracts having a desk job or a high stress/emotionally draining job and influences physical health. The physical activities positively influence how they feel mentally and physically and in turn influences how they react to situations and interact with others.

#### **Code 13: Life Lessons**

Many participants mentioned learning life lessons that transfer to other areas of their life and their work from their hobbies. These lessons ranged from having grace, patience, and understanding with themselves and others, to self-reflection to help through

bad situations, along with discipline, communication skills and teamwork. These lessons were derived from practicing their hobby.

**Code 14: Skill Development**

Many participants mentioned developing skills throughout their time participating in their hobbies. Skill development can be understood as skills to perform better in their hobbies, but also skills that are transferable to other aspects of life as well.

**Code 15: Phases of Life**

This code emerged as people mentioned having children or transitioning throughout their life. Life goes through cycles as we age, and those phases of life have impact on the time commitment that can be dedicated to hobbies and WLB overall.

**Code 16: Career Development**

A code that could fall under phase of life but provides enough distinction to be its own code is career development. A few participants mentioned chasing promotions or moving up the corporate ladder and changes in their career over the years in general. When they were working on securing those promotions, they were more likely to spend

more hours at work resulting in less time to spend on hobbies or personal life aspects outside of the office.

**Code 17: Choice**

Interestingly, the choice of a person's hobbies came up when discussing how the participant's work and hobbies intersect. Many participants noted they have a specific hobby due to their likes and dislikes, their personalities, their job type, and stage of life.

**Code 18: Passion**

Passion was a strong factor of choice that is distinct enough to be its own code. Many participants mentioned their hobbies being an extension of themselves and pursued those hobbies because of the passion they have for that specific hobby.

**Code 19: Balance**

Balance developed as a theme while discussing how participants juggle their desire to participate in their hobbies and still perform their personal and professional duties. Many participants mentioned there is a push and pull relationship between work and personal life and realize that there will be times when work requires more time than just a typical 40-hour work week and vice versa for personal life, so sometimes not leaving room for hobbies.

**Code 20: Boundaries**

A common response to finding balance was setting boundaries. A few participants mentioned having a specific personality type, being a hard worker, wanting to make people proud as a reason for setting boundaries between work and personal situations, and between work and hobbies. A supporting boundary that was mentioned was setting a strict boundary for not participating in hobbies or work on the weekends, so that they are

able to spend time with family. Others mentioned sticking to specific work hours during the week so that their evenings and weekends were open for personal projects, family time, and hobbies.

### **Code 21: Compartmentalizing**

Another common response to finding that balance was compartmentalizing. Compartmentalizing was a mature response, with a few participants mentioning that they must have a job to pay their bills and to support their hobbies, therefore being the more important aspect when deciding how to juggle work, personal life, and hobbies. This then intertwined with scheduling.

### **Code 22: Scheduling**

Another form of balance was scheduling. A few participants mentioned being reasonable with the time they spend on their hobby in a given week. Having a realistic number of hours scheduled for their hobbies, that way they are still able to dedicate hours to work, personal commitments, and family.

### **Code 23: Technology**

One of the two main concepts that came up while discussing lack of balance was technology. Technology not only mentioned time spent on social media in the office and at home, but it also included how connected individuals are to work. Having email and other work messaging platforms on their phones makes it easy to be contacted and distracted by work-related issues outside of working hours. Many mentioned this as an example of when work and home life are blurred. This technological connection influences their ability to focus on family and hobbies outside of work hours. With the increase of technology, it is easier for individuals to work remote. Remote work and even

hybrid work is another example of where increased technological advancement is influencing the blurred lines between work and home life.

**Code 24: Guilt**

The other concept that came up while discussing the lack of balance was guilt from perceived expectations. Guilt from perceived expectations include not only fulfilling their job requirements, but also their perceived ability to take PTO. Many participants mentioned having a strong sense of obligation to their work, therefore taking PTO is harder for them. For both in office and remote employees, while they are not physically working outside of working hours, they are thinking about work. A few others mentioned being unable to stop worrying about deadlines and the success of projects after hours or while on PTO.

**Code 25: PTO**

PTO emerged as a code, because of how it influences WLB, performance, and satisfaction. There is a sense of guilt for some of the participants surrounding PTO. PTO also acts as a motivator when discussing job performance, and job satisfaction.

**Code 26: Corporate Support**

Corporate Support developed as a theme because some participants would mention the company policies that influenced the flexibility or lack of flexibility of their working hours, being able to work remotely or not, team support, and companies implementing challenges, respecting boundaries, and encouraging time off work. Corporate support also includes assessing when departments need extra help to handle the

workload, along with respecting boundaries and encouraging physical activities and time off.

### **Code 27: Flexibility**

Flexibility was mentioned most under the corporate support code. Depending on the industry, some individuals can adjust their working hours within a given day to make space for their hobbies. Being remote allows for some flexibility and reduced travel time to be in the office for those individuals, potentially freeing up some time during their day. PTO restrictions were mentioned to influence flexibility as well.

## **Research Findings**

### **Research Question 1**

RQ1: How do working adults describe their experience with the interaction of their hobbies and their work?

Five themes emerged when participants described their interaction with their hobbies and work. They were benefits of hobbies, balance, purpose, connecting, and lessons or skills developed. Results of interview questions relating to work and hobbies revolved around work-life balance. Work is a large factor in everyone's lives, which influences their mental and physical health. While complete balance may not always be achievable due to how life fluctuates and societal norms, many participants had positive things to say about the interactions between their hobbies and their work. "I'm of the opinion that your work really does play a pivotal point in your personal life, because of how much it seeps over into the rest of your life, whether you want it to or not. I think they definitely have an impact on one another, your personal life and professional life."

### ***Benefits***

The mental and physical benefits of hobbies were mentioned quite a bit when discussing the relationship between hobbies and work. Many participants referenced hobbies being beneficial to their mental health and specifically referenced relieving stress, reducing anxiety, boosting mood, increasing happiness, and reducing depression. One participant even compared participating in their hobby to going to therapy, “going to the gym is my stress reliever. Honestly, it is therapy.” Those who had a “desk job” are more likely to have a physically active hobby. Some participants who had a job that requires them to be social and extroverted, were more likely to have an introverted hobby as a way to unwind and decompress. Some who have fewer social positions at work were more likely to choose a social hobby allowing them time to connect with others.

### ***Balance***

The balance theme includes the balance code, along with the boundaries and compartmentalize code. Many participants have had a mind shift over the years, from being solely focused on work to creating boundaries to allow for more personal time. One participant stated, “I work to live, I don’t live to work” showcasing boundaries and commitment to a fulfilled life. Now many of those participants were able to say they have a healthy relationship between work and life. Some attributed have things outside of work like hobbies to participate in along with having relationships with other people (in the office and out of the office) to support their balance. “The different things I enjoy all play a part of how well I do my job. It is a very intricate, interrelated part of my life that my hobbies just became a part of who I am and how I do my job.” Many participants have developed the mindset that they need to “leave work at work,” or “not everything has to be done today” relieving the pressure to work overtime all the time. There were still



participants who stated, “because of my hobbies, I end up taking work home quite a lot” or “I am the type of person that takes work home a lot, but I really enjoy my work,” or “it is hard to find a clear line between work and not work.”

### ***Purpose***

Another theme discussed while people described the relationship between their hobbies and work was their sense of purpose and belonging. Participants discussed joining hobbies as a way of developing themselves outside of their work and seeing the need to find their place in society.

“Hobbies are an outlet, but also give me another sense of purpose.”

“Ultimately, you’re probably going to have to work for most of your life, but you should still enjoy your life. You shouldn’t just be a robot that only works. I always encourage people, including myself, to really try and find a hobby or a sport or something that you really look forward to doing whether it be once a week or twice a week or so on.”

“You can have a great job. You can work with people you like. You can have tasks that bring you fulfillment, but you have to be more than that. You have to be something outside of work just to keep yourself defined, happy, and fulfilled.”

### ***Connection***

The hobbies participants have created or strengthened personal and professional relationships. A few participants mentioned using hobbies as a way of networking professionally, which has led to a few professional opportunities over the years. Many participants discussed the personal connections and bonds developed with family and

friends through hobbies. Interestingly, these hobbies typically revolved around physical activity, like cooking, hiking, golf, volleyball, and even hunting/fishing.

“I have relationships with coworkers because of these hobbies, and without these hobbies, those relationships might not have developed.”

“I spend a lot of time cooking with my partner and my family, which kind of creates bonds socially outside of my everyday activities.

“Sports is a combination of enjoyment and the family connection, being with the boys, teaching them, being outside, being involved in competition, all of those things.”

### ***Lessons and Skill Development***

Many participants talked about incorporating the skills or lessons they have learned through their hobbies into their work. They also mentioned using the life lessons they have learned to help navigate their personal and professional life.

“What do I want from life? Is that next promotion truly necessary? What is worth sacrificing for that next promotion?”

“I have learned to understand not everything will be perfect and sometimes if a work task or a craft doesn't go right it could open doors for other opportunities and new learning/experiences.”

“Practicing and being comfortable with not being good or always successful at something has transferred to other aspects of life and work.”

“I think my work requires me to think ahead, think logically and try to think critically and find problems that arise. I very much have to do that while playing chess or some video games.”

“The development of knowledge or vocabulary through reading influences my ability to do my job well.”

## **Research Question 2**

RQ2: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job performance?

Six themes emerged when participants described the relationship between hobbies and job performance. These themes were influenced by the codes: mental and physical benefits, skill development, lessons learned, accomplishments, balance, flexibility, and PTO. There were more positive influential moments than negative moments. “I know being fulfilled outside of work; I feel really does help you do your job better. When your life is balanced, your mind is less flustered and less distracted, and I feel like you are able to focus more.”

### ***Positive Influence of Mental Benefits***

Many of the positive moments revolved around how hobbies helped them mentally. Many participants mentioned how their hobbies help them decompress, clear their mind, reenergize, and relax. This shift in mindset helps motivate them to return back to work, create a positive work environment, and do good work. One participant discussed how when they get a mental block, they will go for a run to help clear their mind and then will feel better, reattempting the task they were struggling with before.

“I think because I delve into my hobbies more now, I think I'm happier and less stressed and able to come into work and present those attributes.”

“I hike and work out a lot to get that anxiety to go away so that I can make sure I come into work and kept my mental health at an even keel so that I can get the project done on time.”

“My hobbies put me in a better mood and make me more attentive at work.”

### ***Positive Influence of Accomplishment***

A few participants mentioned feeling a sense of accomplishment during their hobbies and that spills over into their work driving them to have accomplishments with their work tasks.

“I feel a sense of accomplishment every time I finish a book. That accomplishment encourages me to accomplish something at work.”

“Sometimes I go out for a morning throwing session for frisbee and that helps me get up and hit the ground running. Especially when it is a good session, it helps put me in a good mood and helps me focus my energy and time to accomplish whatever task I might have at work.”

### ***Positive Influence of Developmental Learning***

Skills and lessons learned play a role in how hobbies influence job performance. One participant mentioned “to succeed in a hobby, it requires focus. To succeed in work, it requires focus. Transferrable skills from hobbies can positively influence work.”

Another participant mentioned learning how to work as a team from their hobby and that as positively influenced their work. Incorporating their hobby into their work also helps them perform well in their job. One participant discussed how music helps them learn new material, and as a way of helping students connect with the new content, they will incorporate music into their lesson plans. In that same conversation, this participant

discussed how they are incorporating new coaching techniques learned from coaching sports into teaching students in the classroom.

### ***Positive Influence of PTO***

PTO is a positive motivator for job performance. When participants know they are able to take time off, they are more willing to get their tasks done. Whether they have a set number of paid time off or unlimited paid time off, participants are more willing to complete tasks to get to take time off.

“With the unlimited PTO policy, I don’t mind staying late to get a project done knowing that if I wanted to take time off later, I totally could.”

### ***Negative Influence of Time Management***

The negative influences of time management focused on how it can be hard to go to work, get to work on time, or back on time due to participating in their hobbies late in the evening, before work, and over lunch breaks. Some mentioned that waking up early for their hobby can influence their attentiveness to their afternoon meetings or tasks because they tend to get tired or be mentally groggy earlier in the day.

“Sometimes it is hard to get to work on time in the mornings if I want to finish a chapter I am reading, or if I stayed up late the night before reading.”

“If I go for a run and it takes a little over an hour, then boom, there goes your lunch break. Then you have to stay a little longer in the office than what you would have liked. If you want to work from 8am to 5pm, you might then be working 8am to 5:30pm, because you took a long lunch.”

“If I do a long run in the morning before work, I will notice that it is more difficult to essentially deal with like late afternoon meetings.”

### *Negative Influence of Commitment*

One participant mentioned, “Too much of a good thing becomes a little bit of a burden” when discussing how their hobby can negatively influence their job performance. This particular participant was discussing how spending too many hours in a given week on their hobby has had a tendency to take time away from work both physically and mentally, resulting in some decline in performance. One participant mentioned how they will continue to do good work on the work that is required for their job, but the timing of when that work is completed can be influenced by their hobbies, depending on when they participate in their hobby and if the task can be flexible. This plays into some of the flexible schedules and work discussed earlier around time management.

### **Research Question 3**

RQ 3: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job satisfaction?

First, these interviews pointed out a blurred line between what people believe job performance and job satisfaction to be. Many participants would start talking about satisfaction, and then transition into performance mid-conversation when discussing how hobbies influenced their job satisfaction and vice versa. This is perceived to be an indicator to how strong of an influence job performance and job satisfaction have on one another. There were five themes that emerged when participants described the relationship between their hobbies and job satisfaction. Those themes were passion and purpose, level of influence, need for an outlet, accessibility, and PTO.

### *Passion and Purpose*

Passion and purpose are ways people describe aspects of themselves as individuals. One participant stated job satisfaction is influenced by having a passion for the role they perform whether in their hobby or their work. Therefore, the passion one feels for their work influences their job performance and job satisfaction.

“I feel like most of my hobbies are just natural extensions of things I am passionate about.”

Many people talk about having a purpose in life. Many participants mentioned that hobbies give them another sense of purpose, instead of most of their life being focused on working. One participant stated, “I do not feel like it is healthy to work and nothing else. It strips you of all those beautiful, intricate things that make you a human.” This supports the idea of people “working to live” and not “living to work.”

### ***Level of Influence***

Secondly, a few participants mentioned there could be a direct or indirect relationship between job satisfaction and hobbies depending on the situation and the hobby. When one participant focused on each hobby individually, they noted some hobbies influenced job satisfaction and job performance, while others did not. One participant mentioned participating in hobbies because he enjoys those hobbies, and that enjoyment increases overall life satisfaction which influences job satisfaction. Again, this supports the idea of hobbies influencing job satisfaction, but not necessarily directly influencing.

### ***Need for an Outlet***

Many participants mentioned their job satisfaction would decrease without hobbies because there would not be an outlet. Many of those participants discussed how

the lack of having an outlet, due to injury or time away from their hobby, resulted in decreased job satisfaction. They discussed how they felt when they did not have their time away from work, resulting in a perceived increase in work pressure and decreased job satisfaction and job performance. Hobbies were seen as a buffer to the negative aspects of life and work, to help mitigate the negative feelings and allow the individual to not feel like they have a “horrible life.” One participant stated, “If I didn’t have my hobby as an outlet, I would experience burnout at work and at home and that would influence the other aspects of life.”

### ***Accessibility***

Another aspect of decreased job satisfaction being influenced by hobbies is when age and location are involved. One participant talked about seeing friends being retired and able to participate in hobbies whenever they wanted, resulting in decreased job satisfaction and decreased life satisfaction since they were not also at retirement age yet. Another participant mentioned decreased job satisfaction and life satisfaction when they lived in an area that did not have access to their hobbies, making them long for another job in a location where their hobby was more popular.

### ***PTO***

Some participants mentioned how their job satisfaction decreases because they are unable to take off work to participate in their hobbies. Many mentioned being unable to have flexibility with their schedules due to the lack of PTO or the strict time requirements of the job itself.



“I might get invited by a family member or friend to participate in a fundraiser tournament and I am always likely to have to say no because of my job. I can’t just take three days off every other month.”

“Teachers work specific hours, making sure there is coverage for when I take PTO can be hard.”

### **Summary**

The main two points that sum up this overall study: there are far more positives to participating in hobbies than negatives, and hobbies are a significant contributing factor to work-life balance. Overall, every participant in this study mentioned at least one positive influence their hobbies have on their life. The list of benefits associated with hobbies was extensive and encompassing from mental to physical health, to networking and overall enjoyment.

With a wide range of participants from age to career choice, there were many interesting takes on why certain hobbies were chosen and how their lives intermingle between work, life, and hobbies. Work-life balance may not be achievable all the time, but hobbies do have an impact on work-life balance. Hobbies also have an influence on job performance and job satisfaction, directly and indirectly. It was interesting to hear how participants would describe the relationship, whether negative or positive. It seemed to depend on the person, the hobby, the stage of life, and the situation the individual was in for if it was a positive or negative moment.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### Overview

The study's purpose was to explore how individuals in the workforce perceive and articulate the interconnection of their hobbies and work. Specifically, this study focused on how working adults characterize the interconnectivity between their hobbies, as part of WLB, job performance, and overall satisfaction in their employment. The research questions for this study were:

RQ1: How do working adults describe their experience with the interaction of their hobbies and their work?

RQ2: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job performance?

RQ 3: How do working adults describe how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job satisfaction?

This chapter includes a brief review of the findings from this study, discusses implications of those findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

### Summary of Findings

Three research questions were examined during the interview process, focused on how working adults described their experience with the interaction of their hobbies and their work, how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job performance, and how their hobbies are related, if at all, to their job satisfaction. Twenty-seven codes emerged from the interviews, resulting in 16 themes emerging when answering those research questions. Interestingly, there were two main takeaway points for this study; there are far

more positive attributes to participating in hobbies than negative attributes, and hobbies are a significant contributing factor to work-life balance.

When focusing on the first research question, the five themes that emerged were the benefits of hobbies, balance, purpose, connecting, and lessons or skills developed. Every participant mentioned at least one positive factor about their hobby and how it interacted with their job either directly or indirectly. The biggest positive influence hobbies had on a participant's life and work was the mental health benefits of combatting stress, depression, anxiety, and overall mood. The next largest positive influence hobbies had been purpose and connections. Hobbies provided people another aspect to life to give them more purpose and gave them opportunities for deeper connections with themselves, family, and friends. The last overall positive influence hobbies had on work was the lessons and skills developed from participating in hobbies. Participants would state they learned something from their hobby that they were then able to incorporate into their jobs.

When focusing on the second research question, the six themes that emerged were positive influence of mental benefits, positive influence of accomplishment, positive influence of developmental learning, positive influence of PTO, negative influence of time management, and negative influence of commitment. Similarly to above, the positive mental health benefits of hobbies influenced the participant's job performance. Providing participants with an outlet to deal with stress, burnout, and negative situations that arise from their jobs. Hobbies have a way of motivating participants through achievements and accomplishments which was mentioned to spill over into their jobs encouraging them to accomplish more at work. The lessons learned and skills developed

during hobbies that was mentioned earlier is mentioned again here as a way of positively influencing job performance. PTO was a concept discussed throughout the interview process due to different policies and was mentioned as a motivator to help encourage job performance. Hobbies didn't have a complete positive influence on job performance though, and were negatively mentioned when discussing time management, and commitment because participants would be late to work or tired due to the amount of time committed to their hobbies or the time-of-day hobbies were performed.

When focusing on the final research question, five themes emerged, but interestingly this is where job performance and job satisfaction terms were used interchangeably. Those five themes were passion, level of influence, need for an outlet, accessibility, and PTO. Passion and purpose overlapped when people discussed the enjoyment they received from their hobbies, which influences the enjoyment they get out of other aspects of their lives. Participants also stated viewing hobbies as an extension of themselves, therefore, the passion they believe similarly about their job. Participants discussed here how their hobbies have different levels of influence, indirect influence or direct influence on their job and job satisfaction. The type of hobby and the person influenced the impact it had on their satisfaction. The need for an outlet came up again here, and hobbies were described as the outlet for dealing with work, allowing for more stability in job satisfaction. Accessibility was viewed as a negative influence that hobbies had on job satisfaction because a participant could dream of moving jobs or to a new city to pursue more hobby-related dreams. PTO also took on a more negative connotation due to the PTO policy most had, which limited the amount of time off a person could take to participate in their hobbies and still have PTO for other aspects of life.

## Discussion of Findings

Overall, these findings show a strong positive connection between hobbies and both work-life balance and job performance. While the connection between hobbies and job satisfaction is positive, it appears to depend on the hobby. The connection between hobbies and job satisfaction seems contingent upon whether the hobby is directly or indirectly related to their job.

Work-life balance was the first of two theories used to set the foundation of this study. Participants had their own definitions of “personal,” “professional,” “life,” and “work.” Participants categorized their time into work, personal life (which influenced family time, events, appointments, and housework), and hobbies. This highlights the distinct role hobbies play in their overall commitments. Throughout the interviews, participants would frequently identify hobbies as an outlet for coping with job-related and personal stress. While work-life balance is believed to be unachievable due to the ebb and flow of daily life, many participants mentioned their hobbies help them achieve moments of work-life balance due to the many positive benefits. The importance of hobbies helps further deepen our knowledge of work-life balance and what influences work-life balance.

The second theory used to set the foundation of this study was individual differences theory. The unique aspects of each individual influences how the individual will react in situations, what they will enjoy, what they will not enjoy, and how they will find balance in their life. Individual differences theory, which includes the concepts of self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism (Judge et al., 1998) impacts how individuals perceive their job, work characteristics, job satisfaction, and life

satisfaction. These differences explain the variance in how people choose and benefit from hobbies, ultimately influencing their job performance and job satisfaction.

This research supports Aamodt's (2016, p. 361) model regarding antecedents influencing satisfaction and commitment, leading toward various consequences. The study's findings suggest that hobbies should be considered an influential antecedent, influencing satisfaction and commitment. The results also support the idea of hobbies acting as a prequel to the antecedents due to their influence on an individual's predisposition, satisfaction with life, and others on the list, therefore, influencing satisfaction and consequences, like performance, absenteeism, and tardiness.

The findings of this study align with existing literature reviewed reinforcing the point that hobbies positively impact job performance and job satisfaction, in turn enhancing work-life balance. These results support the idea that when a person has a hobby that they regularly participate in, they are likely to report having higher job satisfaction and job performance resulting in higher work-life balance.

Participants stated during times when they were unable to participate in their hobbies, whether before adopting their hobbies or due to injury, they were more likely to have lower job satisfaction and job performance, which they attributed to more work-life imbalance. This aligns with literature indicating lower job satisfaction and job performance were accredited to stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout which were all negative mental mindsets (Krantz et al., 2021; Leong et al., 2022; Benoliel & Brath, 2017) that can be remedied with hobbies. Krantz et al. (2021) offered remedies to burnout which included engagement in leisure activities. Freedom of decision-making was used as a way to increase job satisfaction and job performance, which is supported by this

research as well (Floch et al. 2019; Benoliel & Brath 2017; Braun & Peus, 2018; Altunova & Kalman, 2020; Murphy 2020).

When participants discussed being able to have flexibility with schedules to participate in their hobbies, they were more likely to be motivated to stay late or work more to get their projects completed knowing they had the flexibility for time off later. Interestingly, the phrases “work to live” and “live to work” were mentioned during one specific interview. This could have led to more generational conversations and even gender differences like the research by Emslie and Hunt (2009), however, this conversation was focused on being able to support themselves while still enjoying their lives. Pushing the idea that humans are meant to be more than just employees and have more purpose in life.

It was previously discussed that personal factors, organizational factors, technology, COVID-19, and hobbies were predictors of work-life balance. These findings align with this research and seem to be accurate with all of these factors being discussed by participants, except COVID-19. Participants discussed how personal factors like gender, family dynamics, societal norms, and role expectations (Emslie & Hunt, 2009; Warren, 2021; Ko et al., 2020) influenced their work-life balance, along with long working hours and heavy workload (Warren, 2021, Young et al. 2018). Access to technology was discussed by participants as an influencing factor for work-life balance and access to their hobbies both positively and negatively. Hobbies were discussed as a positive influencer for achieving work-life balance supporting research by Matsumura et al. (2023), Wang (2021), Young et al. (2018) Li et al. (2019), and Beham et al., (2012).

Finally, it does appear that these findings support a biblical discussion of hobbies. The biblical foundation of this study focused on how individuals need rest from work, need to find joy in their work and life, need to pursue talents, gifts, and skills, and find the balance between work and life. The study's findings show how hobbies can be a part of each of those principles. Hobbies can be the avenue used to find rest and joy, and develop or strengthen talents, gifts, and skills. Hobbies were described as an extension of the individual, believing that hobbies are a part of one's personal identity, similarly, being a Christian is a part of who a person is internally.

### **Implications**

This study helps bridge the gap in knowledge regarding the relationship between hobbies, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and job performance. This study adds depth to the existing work-life balance theories by specifically focusing on how hobbies are perceived to play a role in achieving that balance. These results provide support for models that link employee well-being with job performance and job satisfaction, suggesting hobbies as a tool for enhancing work quality and retention. This also reinforces the idea of employee holistic experiences within the workforce. Therefore, these results could support future employee holistic experience research, along with job satisfaction and job performance model research focused on the impact of hobbies and personal interests.

These results develop the overall knowledge of hobbies and how engagement in hobbies is significant in achieving a better work-life balance. Practical implications for this can be organizations encouraging employees to pursue personal interests and hobbies



outside of work because the employee could see a positive change in their work-life balance and more fulfillment in life.

Based on these results, there is evidence to suggest there is increased job performance due to the positive effects of hobbies. Employers could consider integrating wellness programs into their culture and benefit packages that encourage employees to participate in hobbies and other creative activities to support employee development. This supports the employees' mental and physical well-being, ultimately increasing the chances of the employee providing more in their performance output.

With the results from this study indicating there could be a positive increase in job satisfaction if employees participate in hobbies, companies could foster a culture that values and supports employee's personal interests to boost morale and job satisfaction. A simple way to build that culture is to develop PTO policies and flexible work schedules to allow employees the ability to participate in their hobbies more often.

There are also biblical principles that can be implemented thanks to this research. These findings support the importance of rest and fulfillment. The bible encourages people to rest, find joy, and develop or strengthen their talents, gifts, and skills. All of which are encouraged by hobbies. Companies could implement the concept of stewardship, unity, and community by encouraging hobbies and relationships developed during and through hobbies. Ultimately, these actions could promote a balanced and enriched life for their employees.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to this study. First, the limited number of participants could have limited the ability to generalize this to the larger population. Within that

limited number of participants, these participants volunteered their time with no reward for participating. Due to the nature of volunteers, this could have resulted in pulling a specific type of person, which would also limit the generalizability of this sample.

Another limitation, discovered during the interview process, was participants had to be full time employees, meaning working for a company. This limited the scope of importance of hobbies and even the strength of relationship between hobbies, work life balance, job performance and job satisfaction, because I did not speak with individuals who are self-employed or part-time employees. Their employment status could have influenced how they responded to these interview questions. This also could influence the generalizability.

An additional limitation discovered during the interview process was participants understanding of the terms: hobbies, work-life balance, job performance, and job satisfaction. These terms were not described by me with an operation definition at any point during the interview process, therefore leaving participants to create and use their own definitions. This resulted in hobbies having a wide variety of meaning, job performance and job satisfaction being used interchangeably, and even work-life balance being described differently depending on the person and their current life situation. Due to the wide variety of definitions, this could indicate the results have lack of breadth of what is influential for their work-life balance, job performance, and job satisfaction.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Since this study shows that hobbies play an important role for people in their quest for work-life balance and life satisfaction, a quantitative study could be the next step of this research. Focusing on time spent participating on hobbies, or meaningfulness

of hobbies, and how that could specifically influence work-life balance, job performance, and job satisfaction. One would have to focus on a specific aspect of hobbies to find a scale useable for testing.

I also think this study could take a different approach to see more gender and generational differences when choosing hobbies and a deeper dive into why people chose the hobbies they chose. When critically thinking about men making time for hobbies while their children are younger and females putting a hold on their hobbies at that time, is this a common gender difference and is that specific for certain generations or not as times change and societal norms change. Similarly, a study could be conducted to see if there is more personality factors or job factors that influences the choice of hobbies as well. This study briefly touched on gender differences with the participants who had children, and briefly discussed the personality type or job type of the participant to see if they believed there was any influence of their personality or job when choosing the hobbies they had chosen to participate in.

This study could be replicated but instead of using full-time employees who are employed by an employer, focus on self-employed individuals and/or part-time employees. This could allow for more insight into how important hobbies are to individuals who lives are shaped differently by their work. This could provide more information on how the relationship between hobbies and work-life balance, job performance and job satisfaction.

### **Summary**

This research set out to start to fill the gap on our knowledge of the influence hobbies have work-life balance, job satisfaction, and job performance. Through the

course of 15 semi-structured interviews, the positive influence hobbies have on each participant's life show bright. Hobbies were described to have many benefits for each participant and was seen to enhance each of their personal and professional lives through the sheer enjoyment of participating, the mental release, the skill development, and personal relationships developed. Hobbies were described to help achieve work-life balance, increase job performance, and job satisfaction in varying degrees from participant to participant and from situation to situation throughout the participant's life.

The results from this study help deepen our knowledge on these constructs, while also providing a practical implication as well; recommending people to find a hobby and participate in that hobby regularly. Business executives can use this knowledge to help develop their organization, their culture, and policies to encourage employees to find a hobby as an outlet to help enrich their life and in turn enrich their work performance and satisfaction.

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## APPENDIX A: Email to HR

Dear HR,

As a doctoral candidate in the Psychology Department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Industrial/Organizational Psychology degree. The purpose of my research is to gain a greater understanding of how engagement in hobbies may influence job satisfaction and job performance and I am writing to invite your employees to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, a full-time employee, employed with your company for at least 6 months, participate in at least one hobby, and participate in said hobby at least once a week. Participants will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview that will last no longer than 45 minutes. Participants will also be asked to review a transcript of the interview for any clarification or changes they would like to make to their responses. This should take no longer than 30 minutes depending on the length of their interview and the changes they are requesting to make. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed in the results of the research.

To participate, participants are asked to please contact me at [researcher's email] to schedule an interview. I have attached an email script for you to send to employees. If the employees meet my participant criteria, I will work with them to schedule a time for an interview. A consent document will be given to your employee at the time of the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If your employee chooses to participate, they will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Maigon Campbell-Nowlin  
Doctoral Candidate at Liberty University  
[researcher's email]

## APPENDIX B: Email to Participants

Dear Potential Participants,

As a doctoral candidate in the Psychology Department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Industrial/Organizational Psychology degree. The purpose of my research is to gain a greater understanding of how engagement in hobbies may influence job satisfaction and job performance and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, a full-time employee, employed with your company for at least 6 months, participate in at least one hobby, and participate in said hobby at least once a week. Participants will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview that will last no longer than 45 minutes. Participants will also be asked to review a transcript of the interview for any clarification or changes they would like to make to their responses. This should take no longer than 30 minutes depending on the length of their interview and the changes they are requesting to make. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed in the results of the research.

To participate, please contact me at [researcher's email] to schedule an interview. If you meet my participant criteria, I will work with you to schedule a time for an interview.

A consent document will be emailed to you after your eligibility has been confirmed. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me prior to the interview.

Sincerely,

Maigon Campbell-Nowlin  
Doctoral Candidate at Liberty University  
[researcher's email]

## APPENDIX C: Social Media Post

ATTENTION FACEBOOK FRIENDS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to understand if there is a relationship between hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, full-time employee, employed with your current employer for at least 6 months, participate in at least one hobby, and participate in said hobby at least once a week. Participants will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview lasting no longer than 45 minutes, then asked to review the transcript of the interview for any clarification or changes which should take at most 30 minutes to complete. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please direct message me or contact me at [researcher's email] to schedule an interview. A consent document will be emailed to you prior to the interview.

## APPENDIX D: Eligibility Questions

1. Are you over the age of 18? (If no, disqualified)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Have you worked for this company for the past 6 months? (If no, disqualified)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Are you a full-time employee for this company? (If no, disqualified)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Do you participate in hobbies? (If no, disqualified)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Do you participate in your hobbies regularly (at least once a week). (If no, disqualified)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

## APPENDIX E: Consent Form

**Title of the Project:** EXPLORING HOBBIES AS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE: PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR INFLUENCE ON JOB SATISFACTION AND JOB PERFORMANCE

**Principal Investigator:** Maigon Campbell-Nowlin. Doctoral Candidate. Psychology Department. Liberty University.

**Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, full-time employee, worked for the company at least 6 months, participate in at least one hobby, and participate in said hobby at least once a week. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

**What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this research is to gain a greater understanding of how engagement in hobbies may influence job satisfaction and job performance.

**What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an audio-recorded interview that will take no longer than 45 minutes.
2. Review the transcript of the audio-recorded interview for any changes or additions you may want to make about the information you said during the interview. Depending on length of interview, this could take you 30 minutes.

**How could you or others benefit from this study?**

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include providing deeper insight into work-life balance, hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction and if there is a relationship amongst these constructs. This could be a benefit to society by providing employers new information about understanding their employees.

**What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

**How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and faculty sponsor will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After five years, all electronic records will be deleted. Physical data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be shredded after five years.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for five years. The researcher and faculty sponsor will have access to these recordings.

**How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or [researcher's employer]. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study is Maigon Campbell-Nowlin. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [researcher's phone number] and/or [researcher's email]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Rachel Piferi, at [faculty sponsor's email].

**Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**



If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date

## APPENDIX F: Interview Questions

1. What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Other
  - Prefer not to answer
  
2. What is your race?
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Prefer not to answer
  
1. How old are you?
2. What is your relationship status: Married or live in a martial-like relationship, Single, Divorced, Separated, Widowed
3. If married/marital-like relationship: does your significant other work outside the home (no, part-time, full-time)?
4. Do you have children?
5. How long have you worked for your company?
6. On average, how many hours per week do you work?
7. Do you work remotely, in person, or a combination?
8. Describe the relationship between your work and your life.
9. Outside of work, what hobbies do you engage in the most?
10. How much time do you spend participating in your hobbies? Describe what you do during the time spent participating in your hobbies.

11. What benefits do you experience by participating in your hobbies? This might include things such as meaning, joy, social connection, physical exercise, the chance to compete, be creative, recharge, etc.
12. Can you talk about how your hobbies and your work intersect, if at all?
13. When you think about your hobbies, do you think there is any relationship between your hobbies and job performance?
14. Can you describe a time that your hobbies impacted your job performance?
15. When you think about your hobbies, do you think there is any relationship between your hobbies and job satisfaction?
16. Can you describe a time that your hobbies impacted your job satisfaction?
17. How do you balance your work commitments with your desire to participate in your hobby?
18. Do you have anything else to add about your hobbies, and job performance and job satisfaction?

## APPENDIX G: Member Checking

Hello,

Thank you for participating in the recent interview. Your insights and feedback are valuable to me as I continue my research. Here is the copy of the transcript from our interview for review. I invite you to provide me with any clarification or changes you would like to make to your responses to any of the questions asked during the interview. I will make your changes before moving forward with my data review.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. I genuinely appreciate your participation in this research initiative. Your contributions are instrumental in advancing our knowledge in hobbies, job performance, and job satisfaction.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Maigon Campbell-Nowlin