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ORIGINAL

How passion and workplace incivility impact job performance in China: the role of work-life balance

Cómo la pasión y la falta de respeto en el lugar de trabajo afectan el desempeño laboral en China: el papel del equilibrio entre el trabajo y la vida

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: private universities now face multiple pressing challenges, one of the reasons is the low job performance of academic staff. In order to solve the problem, this study considered the factors that affect job performance.
Objective: building on the Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) Theory, this study explored the underlying association between passion, workplace incivility, work-life balance and job performance of academic staff in China. Specifically, we tested the mediating mechanism of work-life balance that has received less consideration in the former literature.
Method: a sample of 385 private university academic staff from 21470 was selected. Questionnaires were distributed to them. Statistical techniques such as SPSS 27 and Smart-PLS 4 were applied for analysis.
Results: the results revealed a positive relationship between passion and job performance and a negative relationship between workplace incivility and job performance. In addition, work-life balance mediated the relationship between passion, workplace incivility and job performance.
Conclusions: this study contributed to the literature on work-life balance and job performance by stating how work-life balance could play a mediator role between the path of job resources and of job demands to job performance.

Keywords: Passion; Workplace Incivility; Job Performance; Work-Life Balance; Academic Staff.

RESUMEN

Introducción: en la actualidad, las universidades privadas se enfrentan a múltiples retos acuciantes, uno de cuyos motivos es el bajo rendimiento laboral del personal académico. Para resolver el problema, este estudio consideró los factores que afectan al rendimiento laboral.
Objetivo: sobre la base de la Teoría de la Demanda y los Recursos Laborales (JD-R), este estudio explora la asociación subyacente entre la pasión, la incivilidad en el lugar de trabajo, el equilibrio entre la vida laboral y personal y el rendimiento laboral del personal académico en China. En concreto, se analizó el mecanismo mediador del equilibrio entre la vida laboral y personal, que ha recibido menos atención en la bibliografía anterior.
Método: se seleccionó una muestra de 385 miembros del personal académico de 21470 universidades privadas. Se les distribuyeron cuestionarios. Para el análisis se aplicaron técnicas estadísticas como SPSS 27 y Smart-PLS 4.
Resultados: los resultados revelaron una relación positiva entre la pasión y el rendimiento laboral y una relación negativa entre la incivilidad en el lugar de trabajo y el rendimiento laboral. Además, la conciliación

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de la vida laboral y familiar medió en la relación entre la pasión, la incivilidad en el trabajo y el rendimiento laboral.
Conclusiones: este estudio contribuye a la literatura sobre el equilibrio entre la vida personal y profesional y el rendimiento en el trabajo, al afirmar que el equilibrio entre la vida personal y profesional puede desempeñar un papel mediador entre el camino de los recursos y las exigencias del trabajo y el rendimiento en el trabajo.

Palabras clave: Pasión; Incivilidad en el Trabajo; Rendimiento Laboral; Equilibrio Vida-Trabajo; Personal Académico.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, enrollment in Chinese private universities has surged by more than nine times, from 0,66 million to 9,94 million, making private university an essential part of higher education as they address the growing demand for educational opportunities.[1] However, now they face multiple pressing challenges.[2] One of the critical issues is the job performance of academic staff. Job performance is the degree and result of employees performing their duties.[3] If the university performance does not fit the current era, the education sector will keep lagging behind.[4] Previous studies have proved that workplace incivility can affect work through negative mood.[5,6,7,8] Conversely, people with harmonious passion will generate positive outcomes,[9] because they have a strong attachment to the event in which they participate.[10] Work-life balance highlights the harmonious situation between the personal and professional lives.[11] However, work-life balance is not seen optimistically in China,[12] which will lead to weak employee productivity, bad well-being and poor performance.[13,14,15] Some researchers suggested that actions should be implemented to increase the work-life balance of university academic staff.[16,17] Eventually, few studies have focused on academic staff from private universities in China.

What factor will result in the variety of job performance? Hence, the objective of this study is to identify the effects of passion, workplace incivility, and work-life balance on job performance, as well as examine the mediating effect of work-life balance between passion, workplace incivility, and job performance.

Literature Review

The Job Demand-Resource Theory

According to the theory, Job demand is regarded as the work's related bodily, mental, social, or organizational characteristics associated with physical or psychological costs.[18] Job resources are factors which have function at work to achieve work goals, reduce associated psychological and physical costs, and stimulate individual development.[19] Moreover, job resources can mediate the effect of job demands on stress.[18] The Job Demand-Resource Theory provides a conceptual framework for proposing the links of this study.

Passion

Different scholars have defined passion as "enthusiasm, joy, energy and pursuit even in the face of challenging and exciting goals".[20] There are two main sorts of passion: harmonic passion and obsessive passion.[21] The former acts as a beneficial motivator, enabling the individual to indulge and focus on the current activity or task.[22] In this way, employees invest time and energy and are able to control tasks to achieve the taste they want.[23] Workers who have a harmonious passion operate better at work. Based on the statement the hypothesis could be proposed.

H1: passion has a positive effect on job performance.

People with harmonious passion are more adaptable to the resources they have.[24] In addition, teachers' harmonious passion can more effectively combine family and work life to reach a work-life balance.[25] Based on the above discussion we have hypothesized that.

H2: passion has a positive effect on work-life balance.

Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility frequently occurs as a set of subtle forms of interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace.[26] For example, these behaviors such as displaying disregard for others and giving curt responses, have been shown to higher incidence than 'real' physical violence.[27] Such seemingly trivial behavior may lead to employee dissatisfaction and then influence target outcomes.[28] In this way, everything makes a negative spiral and brings serious effects on job performance.[29,30] Therefore, we have hypothesized the following relationship.

H3: workplace incivility has a negative effect on job performance.

Former research suggests that experiencing workplace incivility can lead to significant investment in work,[31] which can have a negative impact on personal life. This is also consistent with the fact that people

may experience a blurring of work-family boundaries can have an impact in the family domain.[32] In all, the hypothesis could be proposed.

H4: workplace incivility has a negative effect on work-life balance.

The mediating role of Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is considered an understanding of the interaction between work and life roles and how well they fit together.[33,34] Research on work-life balance shows that the idea of work-life balance is subjectively exclusive to the individual, depending on the individual's job performance.[35] Based on the statement it has been hypothesized that.

H5: work-life balance has a positive effect on job performance.

The existence of work-life balance could link work-related factors to work outcomes. Teachers who are too passionate will spend more time at work, which plays a part in how they view the tension between job and family life and affects their work results.[36] Employees with harmonious passion can experience a better balance of work-life, so they perform better at work.[37] Therefore, the hypothesis can be proposed.

H6: work-life balance mediates the relationship between passion and job performance.

There is less direct research regarding work-life balance as a mediator between workplace incivility and job performance, but we can infer that workplace incivility is the antecedent of employees' behavior orientation in the workplace.[38] Scholars believe that employees who have experienced workplace incivility will lead to personal consumption of resources in the family field, and they need to consider the efforts to reconnect their families, which will affect the work-life balance and thus damage their ability to perform their duties.[39] Therefore, we have hypothesized the following relationship of work-life balance.

H7: work-life balance mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and job performance.

Conceptual research model

Based on a careful literature review and theories detailed, the framework has been raised (figure 1).

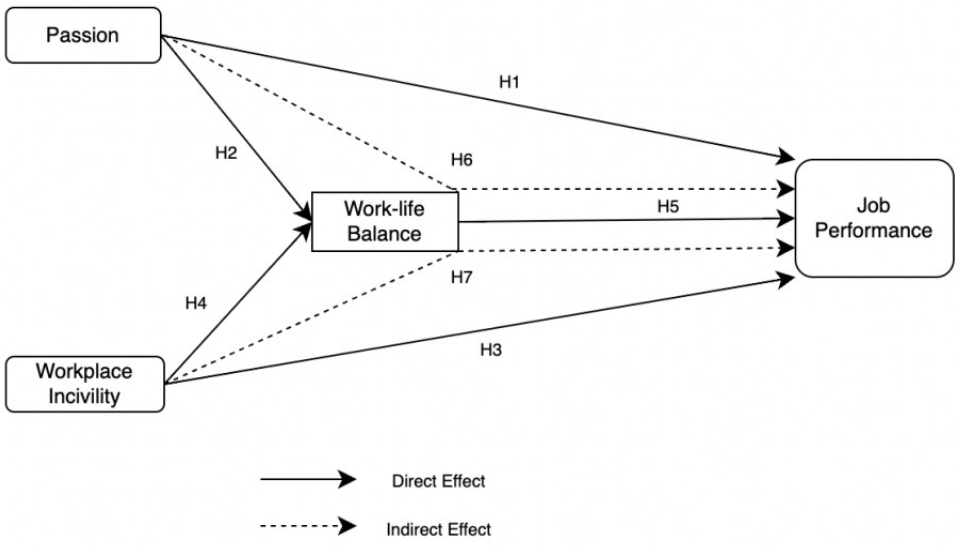


Figure 1. Research Model

METHOD

Measurement

In this study, the research survey questionnaire was used to collect the data among academic staff from private universities in the Guangdong province of China. According to the record of Guangdong Provincial Bureau of Statistics, there are 21470 academic staff in private universities. (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2023). Based on Krejcie & Morgan table,[40] the sample size for the targeted population is 377 full-time academic staff in private universities in Guangdong Province, China. Therefore, 450 questionnaires were distributed out of 385 were returned and usable.

There are four variables involved in this study. 94 items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly disagree" to measure job performance, passion, workplace incivility and work-life balance.

Sample and data collection

Explanatory research using a quantitative approach was used in this study. We tested our above-formulated

model by collecting data from academic staff from private universities in China Guangdong province, which owned 23 private universities, much more than the national norm in China and attached great importance to education due to the first-ranking GDP in China. At the time, 450 questionnaires were circulated, out of which 385 questionnaires were collected back, which resulted in an 85,55 % response rate. All the scales were self-rated.

Statistical analysis and methods

Different analyses will be used for data analysis, deviation test, descriptive analysis, factor analysis, simple regression model and structural equation modeling. The data received from the respondents will be coded into SPSS. After that, analyzing the data to make sure that can represent the situation investigated for the study. Later, loaded the data into Smart-PLS to examine the direct relation relationship between passion, workplace incivility, and job performance variables, as well as mediating role of work-life balance.

RESULTS

Construct Reliability and Validity

The measurement model is used to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. For indicator reliability, Cronbach Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) were evaluated and shown in table 1. The results from this study revealed the Composite Reliability (CR) are 0,952 (Passion), 0,946 (Workplace Incivility), 0,938 (Work-life Balance) and 0,96 (Job Performance). The Cronbach Alpha values are 0,941 (Passion),0,935 (Workplace Incivility), 0,928 (Work-life Balance) and 0,957 (Job Performance).

Table 1. Evaluation of Cronbach Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR)

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
PS	0,941	0,952	0,737
WI	0,935	0,946	0,687
WLB	0,928	0,938	0,523
JP	0,957	0,96	0,524

Note: PS=Passion; WI=Workplace incivility; WLB=Work-life Balance; JP=Job Performance

For validity, convergent validity (AVE) was proposed in table 1. Convergent validity is assessed by AVE which values are 0,737 (Passion), 0,687 (Workplace Incivility) 0,523 (Work-life Balance) and 0,524 (Job Performance). Discriminant validity for this model is measured by Fornell-Larcker Criterion. It indicates that the square root of AVE is higher than the correlations.

Analysis of the structural model and hypothesis verification

The coefficient of determination R^2

The hypothesized model explains 42,8 % of the total variance contributed to job performance, which indicates that passion, workplace incivility and work-life balance as exogenous latent variables jointly explain 42,8 % variance in job performance. Passion and workplace incivility jointly explain 26,7 % variance in work-life balance.

The effect size f^2

According to table 2, one of the endogenous variables (Job Performance) was explained by passion, workplace incivility and work-life balance with effect size of 0,039, 0,035 and 0,297 respectively. Work-life balance was explained by passion and workplace incivility with the effect size of 0,075 and 0,185 respectively.

Table 2. Effect size

Exogenous construct	f^2	Effect size
PS -> JP	0,039	Small
PS -> WLB	0,075	Small
WI -> JP	0,035	Small
WI -> WLB	0,185	Medium
WLB -> JP	0,297	Medium

Evaluation of the Q^2

The values of 0,480 and 0,453 show adequate levels of predictive abilities. This result provided clear support

for the model's predictive relevance.

Testing the research hypotheses

For evaluating the path coefficient, we ran the bootstrapping (N=5000) in Smart-PLS. Table 3 and figure 2 show that passion has a significant positive effect on job performance (ß= 0,164, t=3,746, p<0,001), H1 was proved to be supportive. As for the second hypothesis (H2) i.e., passion has a significant positive effect on work-life balance, it was proved to be supportive (ß=0,246, t=5,547, p<0,001). Likewise, hypotheses three and four were proved to be supported according to the result as workplace incivility has a significant negative effect on job performance. (ß=-0,162, t=3,527, p<0,001) and workplace incivility has a significant negative effect on work-life balance (ß=-0,387, t=10,216, p<0,001) respectively. Lastly, Work-life balance has a significant positive effect on job performance (ß=0,481, t=10,664, p<0,001) (H5).

Table 3. Results of the direct path

Hyp.	Relationships	ß	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Decision
H1	PS -> JP	0,164	0,165	0,044	3,746	0	supported
H2	PS -> WLB	0,246	0,247	0,044	5,547	0	supported
H3	WI -> JP	-0,162	-0,163	0,046	3,527	0	supported
H4	WI -> WLB	-0,387	-0,388	0,038	10,216	0	supported
H5	WLB -> JP	0,481	0,48	0,045	10,664	0	supported

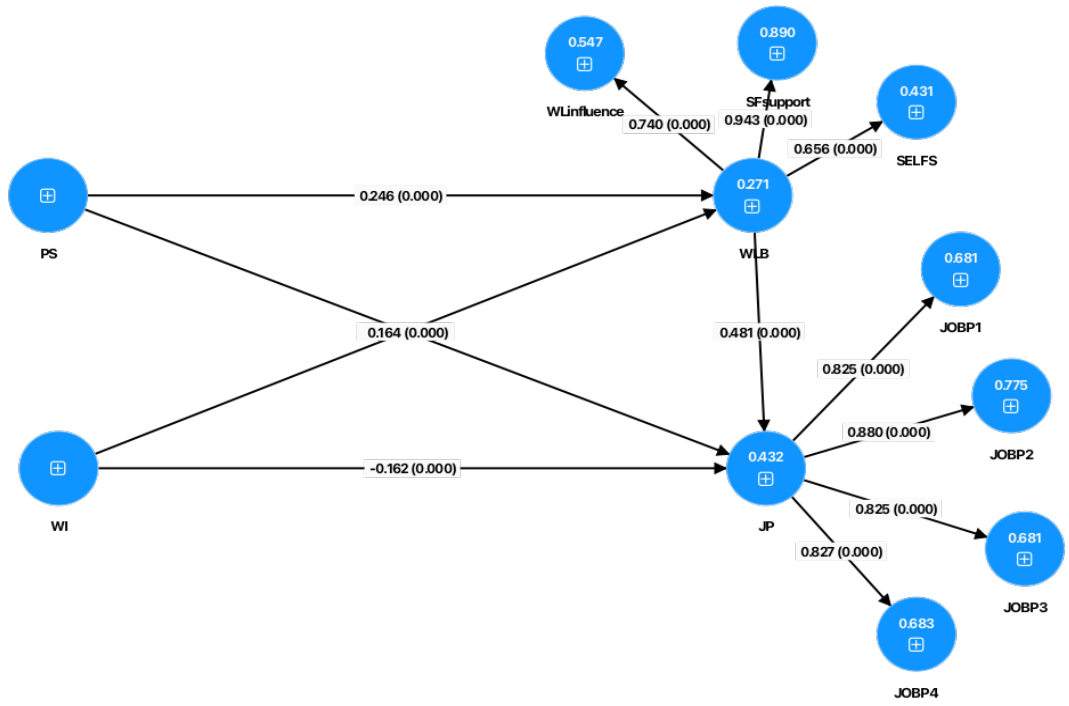


Figure 2. PLS Bootstrapping for hypotheses testing

The table 4 signifies that mediating role of work-life balance between passion and job performance. (β=0,118, t=14,779, p<0,001), as well as workplace incivility and job performance. (β=-0,186, t=7,097, p<0,001). Thus, H6 and H7 were supported.

Table 4. Results of Mediating Test

Hyp.	Relationships	ß	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values	Decision
H6	PS -> WLB -> JP	0,118	0,119	0,025	4,779	0	supported
H7	WI -> WLB -> JP	-0,186	-0,186	0,026	7,097	0	supported

DISCUSSION

This study empirically validated an underlying mechanism among passion, workplace incivility, work-life balance and job performance by building on JD-R theory. In addition, this study highlights that passion

appears to be significantly positive to job performance, which indicates that academic staff with a high level of passion have better job performance. The same as academic staff, academic staff 's passion is the core of continuous commitment and participation in the profession.[41] In this study we tested that job performance can be negatively influenced by workplace incivility. This result provides the support for the conclusion that job performance can be decreased by the lower organizational conduct and higher emotional tiredness from workplace incivility. The result is aligned with the studies that job performance can be negatively influenced by the lower organizational conduct and higher emotional tiredness from workplace incivility.[5,42,43,44,45] This study concluded that work-life balance positively influences job performance. As mentioned before, work-life balance means personal available resources, with sufficient resource devoted to work and family, work-life balance achieved, then better job performance achieved. That indicates that work-life balance motivates the job performance, for handling the responsibilities of each role well. The result of this study is in line with prior researchers.[46] Lastly, the proposed research framework further posits that work-life balance mediates the relationships between passion, workplace incivility and job performance respectively. Academic staff who have a high level of passion can improve their job performance by enhancing their work-life balance. The current result is in line with prior researchers who conducted studies on mediating effects of work-life balance in different context.[47] However, academic staff who suffer workplace incivility can lower their job performance by reducing their work-life balance. The finding is in line with the theoretical literature concerning the mediating role of work-life balance on the relationship amid workplace incivility and job performance.[48]

Limitations and Research Perspectives

There are several limitations that need to be identified in this study. Firstly, the questionnaire is the only instrument used in gathering the data in this study. Further study can combine both. Moreover, this study highlights the mediating role of work-life balance, however, other potential mechanisms can be examined. Hence, exploring the effect of other factors on the relationship between passion, work incivility, and job performance can be beneficial.

CONCLUSIONS

This study emphasizes the key roles of passion, workplace incivility, and work-life balance in driving job performance of academic staff in private universities, by testing the direct effects and mediating effects of work-life balance. The research results provide empirical evidence for managers who aim to improve job performance, at the same time, these results also contribute to the influence of academic knowledge on the interaction of the four factors mentioned above.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Conceptualization: Zou Wenyi.
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