

A Positive Valence of Role-sustainment in the Relationship between Active-life and Successful-life

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ABSTRACT--- *Actualization of the developmental needs into practice of the behaviors enacted during the daily living is desirable for human beings from all over the world. In this study, we focus the examination on the conditions that may significantly contribute to this desiderate. Precisely, we construct the hypotheses model according to which role-sustainment, more than leisure-ethics, has a positive mediator role in the relationship between active-life, a composite-variable of socio-demographic indicators and successful-life, a back-translated, scalar measure. The multi-cultural, convenient sample had 261 participants, aged between 18 to 78 years old, having an almost symmetrical distribution of gender. The values of the paths obtained from structural equations proved full support of the hypotheses. Furthermore, the properties of this model had a satisfactory fit into the data (AGFI = .99; CMIN = .26, p =.61, RMSEA = .000). We consider that these results are important for the social organization struggling for the maintenance of well-being of young and elder populations.*

Keywords--- life engagement, health condition, success, needs, environmental supplies

1. INTRODUCTION

The attainment of the mental state of preparedness for a creative living, known under the name of “work-life balance” implies a series of daily attempts of self-control of emotions and effective time-management. Even in the presence of an adequate support from the environment, these remain an ideal rather than an actualized behavior in the case of a precarious health condition to which a daily hassles is a main contributor. In the theory of stress that Selye (1973) elaborated, the author proofs the positive and negative valence of stress for the every-day life. A successful attainment of goals implies more than commitment of the self, but also adequacy of resources. Nevertheless, this may constitute an attempt that consequents into a state of mind of depletion. For this reason, the society regulates the collective and individual efforts toward the realization of purposes, through various formally, and non-formally acknowledged principles, such are those of leisure ethics. In previous studies, there is proof according to which the actualization of health policies comprise stipulations about the ethics of leisure, which, once adopted into the practical behavior have an enhancing function for the well-being (e.g. Fullagar and Brown, 2003; Furnhaml and Rose, 1987). Therefore, we believe that it has a “refreshing” value for the mental state of the people.

In this study, we refer to role-sustainment through the metaphor of an inner “compass” that indicates, in a three-folded manner, to those paying attention to, so that to add to their awareness, the most stringent to fulfill need, placed in the hierarchy, as described in Maslow (1943), the environmental possibilities available and the modalities to access these in following the ultimate purpose of transgressing to an upper or next, life-stage.

While leisure is a counterpart of a clearly settled context (e.g. Kleiber, Larson and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), we believe that role sustainment may add quality to relationships and to products in work-organizations and in educational environments.

2. HYPOTHESES MODEL

On a hand, we assume that spending quality of leisure is an ethics hard to fulfill in the condition of illness; nevertheless, attention paid to the environment so that to supply the needs of self and of significant-others is an important factor for the maintenance of quality of life, even in the condition of diseases. On another hand, empirical evidence proves that especially people benefiting from a good functioning tend to accumulate high loads of stress due to engagement in multiple tasks throughout a long period of time may encounter difficulties in the time allotted to them for vacation. Therefore, we construct the following hypotheses of this study:

H1: A precarious health status, especially if associated to an active-life will constitute into determinant factors that are likely to have a negative effect on leisure ethics.

H2: Health status and active-life are factors likely to have a negative effect on role-sustainment.

A consequence of lowered ethical principles applied in the practice of leisure may refer to the continuance of accumulation of stress, a fact that will trigger depletion of resources that are usually necessary to be put an act to the attainment of goals and, therefore, to success. In counterpart, similar to the function of the social support, but more an individual-related factor, is an increased role-sustainment. We assume that, through awareness of needs and of the proper modalities to pursuit the fulfillment of this, the role-sustainment will have the function of alleviating, or diminishing to a certain level, the accumulated stress and to maximize the chances of success for the people previously exposed to opportunities. Thus, the following further hypotheses appear logic:

H3: Low levels of leisure ethics will have a positive impact on stress, increasing it and a negative impact on successful-life.

H4: Role-sustainment will have a positive effect on successful-life, enhancing it, and it will contribute to diminishing of stress.

3. PROCEDURE, SAMPLE AND MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS OF THIS STUDY

We gathered a convenience sample of 261 participants, 42.9 % of whom had Asian-Japanese background, 42.1 %, American background and 14.9 %, East European, Romansh background. A large part of them (85.1%) answered a web-based survey and another part of them (14.9 %) responded to the same, yet paper-pencil, back-translated questionnaire, initially developed into English language. We observed the existence of an almost equal percentage of people preferring to respond during morning, during afternoon and during evening, to the questionnaire. The mean of completion time necessary for the participants was registered to almost 15 minutes. More than half of this sample (62.5%) had a working time higher than five hours a day. The mean of balancing of needs was higher than the standard value, equal to 4.57. In average, along a day, this sample engaged in the behavior of driving of a car on a distance of 17.94 kilometers.

In the following, we present in brief the self-report type of instruments used in this study to measure the variable-characteristics.

Health status and *active-life* were composite indicators of the two dichotomized in the answer, variables, in the formerly mentioned case, and of five such characteristics, in the latter case. We obtained each of these variables through simple addition. Thus, for measuring health status, we considered the presence versus absence of worries during a previous week, related to health and advice for overcoming a suffering type of experience. We added without division, employment and driving statuses, presence versus absence of intermediate communication (e.g. phone) during a day, weekly time spent with family and with friends.

All of the below mentioned measurements had options for choosing of the answer on a seven-point Likert type of scale, ranging from “0”, “I totally disagree” to 7, “I totally agree”.

Leisure ethics was a measure of three items derived from the previous study of Meriac, Woehr, Gorman and Thomas (2013). We found for it a value of the reliability coefficient for it equal to .81. An example of item is “I think that people should spent more time relaxing”.

Role-sustainment was a newly developed instrument of four items measuring the degree of engagement in the sustainment of role-developing across life. The value of Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for it was equal to .82. The content of the items referred to acknowledging the modalities to confer to people resources (e.g. information) corresponding to their needs; belief in self-offering support to others` strengths of character, awareness of environmental supplies, and segregation among the life-roles with the purpose of dealing honorably with each.

Stress was also a four-item instrument, with a value of the Cronbach alpha equal to .70. “At the end of the day, I have difficulties to stop thinking about my preoccupations”, derived from Meriac et.al. (2013) and “I feel a lot of mental strain” are examples of items loaded at the Exploratory Factor Analysis, on this characteristic and constituting, therefore, in this study, the measure of it.

Successful-life was a six-item measure, with a value of the Cronbach alpha of .90. The content of the items referred to overall feelings of success and happiness, smoothness of adaptation to enactment of roles, superior performance in rapport to those of same generation, gratefulness feeling toward environment.

Before the construction of the structural equation model, we replaced all the cases that we identified to be missing, by the sample-mean correspondent to each variable.

4. RESULTS

As we may notice in Table 1, the association between leisure ethics and active life, successful life, respectively health status are all three negative, but not significant for the considered probability levels; yet, in the case of role-sustainment, we observe that only the relationship with active life is not significant, nevertheless, positive. Furthermore, we also observe that the association between active-life and stress, although positive in sign, to be not significant. It is interesting that, in rounding at two-decimals, the values of the correlation coefficient of health status with role-sustainment and with successful-life are equal. In a similar manner, the values of the correlations between role sustainment and active-life, respectively stress.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's Coefficients` Correlation Matrix for the Main Variables of this Study

	<i>M (SD)</i>	AL	LE	RS	STR	SL
Health Status (HS)	0.99 (.70)	-.01	-.04	.26**	.18*	.26**
Active Life (AL)	2.69 (.99)		-.07	.11	.11	.10
Leisure Ethics (LE)	5.10 (1.16)			.25**	.20**	-.03
Role-Sustainment (RS)	4.57 (1.05)				.25**	.55**
Stress (STR)	4.01 (1.15)					-.15*
Successful Life (SL)	4.66 (1.17)					

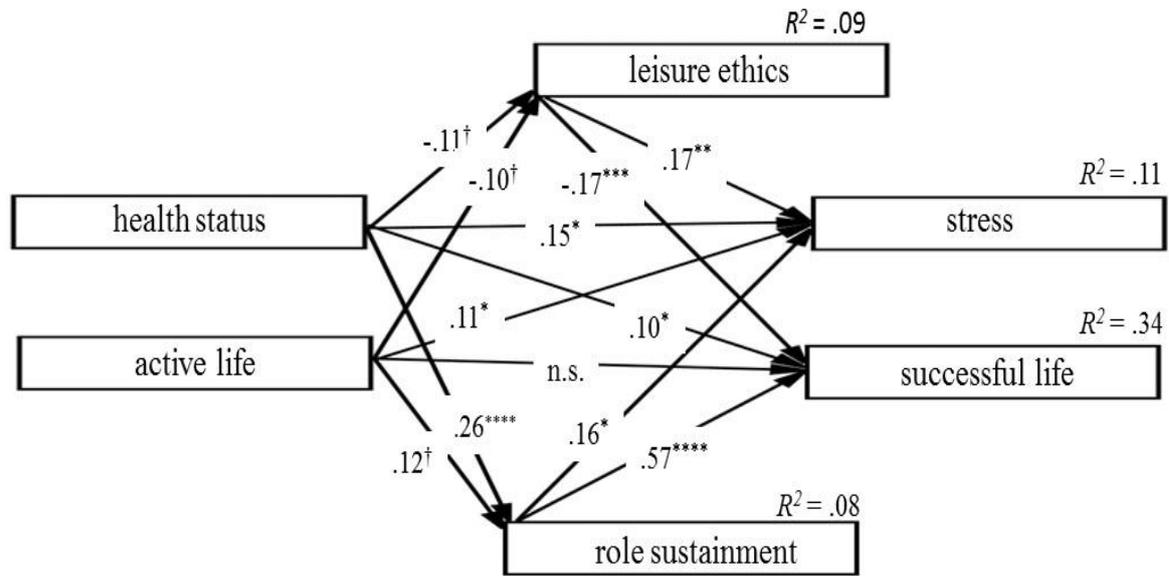
Note. $N = 261$, due to replacement of occasional missing data with characteristic`s correspondent mean.

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

The first two hypotheses, H1 and, respectively H2, stating a negative effect of health status and of active life on leisure ethics and, respectively, a positive effect of these, on role sustainment was almost integrally supported through the examined structural equation model (see Figure 1). For each of the two variables, both paths proved to be significant; yet, the value of the correlation coefficient between health status and role sustainment is positive and equal with that of the standardized estimate (.26).

The following hypothesis, H3 referred to an inhibitory role of leisure ethics in relationship to successful-life and an enhancing role of it, in relationship to stress. The path model that is in Figure 1 supported almost fully this hypothesis, as well. We may observe that the association between leisure ethics and successful life, negative in sign (see Table 1), becomes a significant path in the structural model (see Figure 1). Nevertheless, in both cases of the considered mediator-variables, we may observe positive and significant path-associations with stress. Therefore, the last hypothesis, H4, according to which role-sustainment will enhance successful life and it will diminish stress is integrally supported. If we consider to compare the value of the associations ($r = .55$, $p < .01$; respectively, $r = .25$, $p < .01$) with that obtained from path analysis ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$, respectively, $\beta = .16$, $p < .05$). From these evidence-based findings we may preliminarily conclude that in certain cases, leisure ethics may have a preventive value for the accumulation of stress. Yet, the comparison between the values of the path from leisure ethics to stress, with that from role-sustainment to stress, indicated that although both positive in sign, the people benefiting from role-sustainment are more empowered to combat efficiently the depletion of resources.

In summarizing the above, we may affirm the existence of a full, positive mediation relationship from the considered precursor-determinants to role-sustainment and, further on, to successful life. In addition, there is a counterpart type of relationship in the case of considering, at the same time, within the same model, leisure ethics to have a mediator function.



Note. In this figure, n.s. is for not significant relationship; $**** p < .001$; $*** p < .005$; $** p < .01$; $* p < .05$. The numbers on arrows-paths are values of the standardized beta estimates. R^2 represents the observed changed effect. This model proved the following fit properties: $\chi^2(1, N = 261) = .26, p = .61, GFI = 1.00, AGFI = .99, CFI = 1.00, FMIN = .001, RMSEA < .001, Hoelter CN = 6759, p = .01$. There is a significant covariance between errors of stress and successful life, equal to a value of $-.37$, for a probability level of the confidence interval higher than 99.99%, $p < .001$.

Figure 1. A path model evidencing a positive mediation effect of role-sustainment on the relationship between precursor characteristics and the outcome of successful life, and an inhibitory function of leisure ethics

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As revealed in the precedent section, if we confront to the dilemma between following the prescripts stipulated within the adherents of leisure ethics and searching for meaning in the proximal experiences, the answer formulated in terms of “the most efficient way” to benefit from a satisfactory attainment of goals is the latter rather than the former mentioned. Role-sustainment modulates the stress that accumulates, either due to a precarious health status, or, due to engagement in multiple activities that solicit resources to be “put at stake”, in a short-time interval.

A main difference that we depict and proof to exist refers to leisure ethics to represent a concept derived from “oughts” and “musts”, having a cognitive-rational basis and implying an urge to fulfill; in counterpart, role sustainment has an affective-motivational base, developing on a continuous, between the necessary breaks and the actions toward engagement in the fulfillment of purposes. Role-sustainment may meet the needs of the people more than leisure ethics, since the latter is punctual on a time continuum. Also, since people enacting it orient themselves after sensing and communicating adequately, to the understanding of their co-partners, we believe that the role-sustainment comprises in it the concept developed by Hochschild (2003), “the feeling rule”; therefore, these people are prone to an effective self-management of emotions, in and outside of the work-context. Moreover, since emotions are an intrinsic component to every human being encounter, a reciprocal identification of clues signaling the state of mind of the communicators contributes to progress toward the accomplishment of mutually desirable goals (Fineman, 2000). A limitation of this study refers to that it is cross-sectional. Also, it fails to demonstrate if competition-cooperation based environments account for the existence of significant changes within the evidenced relationships among the variables of study.

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