



Quality Assessment of Work Recovery Activities: Guidance for Recovering from Work-Related Demands

Emily Nixon, Christopher J. L. Cunningham, Brian J. O'Leary, Kristen Jennings Black
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga



INTRODUCTION

Work-related demands are the most common and chronic general form of stressor to which workers are exposed. Their persistent impacts on stress and strain experiences pose significant health risks. Chronically high levels of work-related demands (e.g., work pressure, frequent new tasks) not only negatively impact worker well-being; they can also reduce job performance and increase worker intentions to quit.

Job demands are met through the expenditure or depletion of available psychological, social, and energy-related personal resources (e.g., optimism, support, cognitive/physical energy). Resources expended to meet work-related demands must be regularly replenished or recovered to respond to future demands.

Four general types of recovery experiences exist: psychological detachment, mastery, control, and relaxation. It is generally best to engage in activities that fully detach the mind from work. Mastery experiences provide challenges and learning opportunities outside of work. A sense of control is a general human desire and having the choice to pick what one does in their spare time fulfills this desire. Relaxation has been seen as a process by which the body and mind are restored.

Recovery experiences can be either active or passive in nature. Existing research along these lines suggests that active recovery, although more difficult to pursue, is more effective at resource replenishment than passive recovery.

HYPOTHESES

Work-related demands are positively associated with need for recovery.

Work-related demands are negatively associated with:

- psychological well-being
- average amount of hours spent on recovery
- days per week engaged in the activity
- energy and effort put forth
- quality of recovery

Nonwork demands moderate the relationship between work-related demands and recovery.

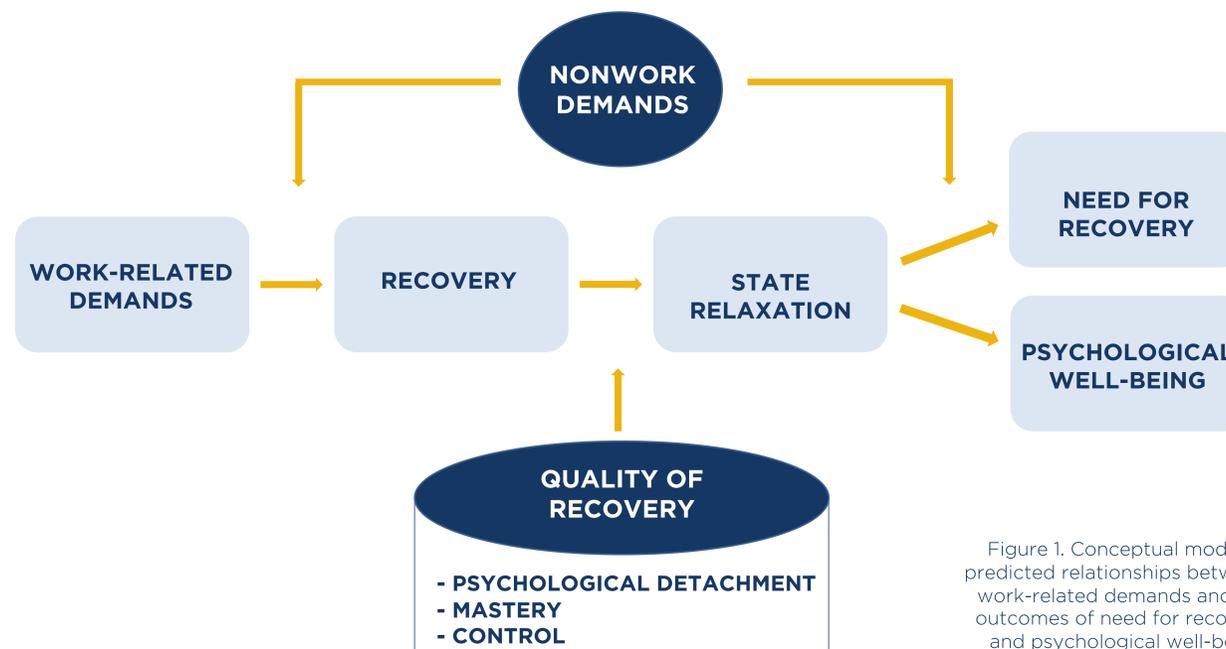
Quality of recovery moderates the relationship between work-related demands and recovery outcomes.

State relaxation further mediates the relationship between work-related demands and recovery outcomes, as a sequential mediator following recovery actions.

STUDY OVERVIEW

A mixed-method approach is used to develop a taxonomy of recovery strategies and provide guidance for work recovery activities based on their recovery quality value. Although past research suggests that active forms of recovery in natural environments hold the greatest potential for work recovery, research has been limited to broad activity categorization. A more holistic approach is taken to identify specific recovery activities and their associated recovery experience quality through an integrated and modified stress-recovery process model.

PROPOSED MODEL



METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

500 working adult participants recruited through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) crowdsourcing platform.

Participants are American citizens who work full-time (at least 35 hours a week) and are at least 18 years old.

MEASURES

- **Recovery Experiences Questionnaire** (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007)
- **Smith Relaxation States Inventory 3** (Smith, 2007)
- **Flourishing Scale** (Diener et al., 2010)
- **Quantitative Workload Inventory** (Spector & Jex, 1998)
- **Perceived Work and Family Demands Scale** (Boyar et al., 2007)
- **Need for Resource Recovery Scale** (Cunningham, 2008)
- **Core Self-Evaluation Scale** (Judge et al., 2013)
- **Recovery Remorse Scale** (Jennings, 2017)
- **Positive and Negative Affective Scales** (Watson & Clark, 1994)
- **Perceived Income Adequacy Scale** (Sears, 2008)
- **Demographics** (e.g., age, occupation, industry)
- **Various activity-related quantitative and qualitative questions**

PROCEDURE

- ▶ All participants are asked to complete an internet-based, anonymous survey using the QuestionPro survey system.
- ▶ Participants will receive \$1.00 for completing HIT through MTurk.
- ▶ The survey contains approximately 200 questions.

CONCLUSIONS

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The data gathered for the present study will enable us to begin addressing the question of how workers can be optimally engaged in activities that replenish needed resources. Ensuring that individuals are adequately recovering from each work day will help them to thrive while on the job, which in turn, can help to promote better psychological well-being and enhance experiences in nonwork roles.

LIMITATIONS

- ▶ Self-reports and common method
- ▶ Recruiting/sampling concerns (potential "bots" and/or insufficient effort responding on MTurk)

KEY REFERENCES

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