

Chapter 61

Leisure and Wellness Perceptions of Tourism Workers in Work–Life Balance

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the concepts related to leisure and wellness perceptions will be discussed in order to provide the work-life balance of tourism workers. With a descriptive analysis, it will be discussed how leisure time evaluation and wellness perception contribute to the work-life balance of tourism employees as strategies to cope with work and non-work problems. The fact that the work-life balance of tourism employees is at an optimum level is of great importance for the tourism industry where business factor and service quality are critical. Factors such as uncertainty environment, low labor morale, and high turnover rate constitute the general business life characteristics of tourism employees. As a result, the effect of leisure and wellness perceptions of tourism employees on coping with these factors and establishing work-life balance will be discussed in the light of related literature.

INTRODUCTION

The low level of well-being of tourism employees in business and non-business life is an important factor that will adversely affect business performance. Difficult working conditions brought about by intense and uncertain competition environment in tourism enterprises, stress and similar negative emotions caused by radical changes in social structure and family life, it causes individuals to be “unhappy”. It is impossible for a person to be in full well-being in societies where work and life safety cannot be ensured, there is no possibility of finding a job, and the unrest created by the imbalance of income distribution is not resolved (Kesgin and Topuzoğlu, 2006, p.47; Araz et.al.,2007, p.112). The biggest strength of the

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tourism enterprises in the service sector is its employees. Akıncı (2002) states that the factors that affect the job satisfaction of the employees of tourism enterprises are psycho-social factors. The voluntary / self-sacrificing behaviors of employees beyond the normal defined job descriptions in their relations with the guests of enterprises will increase the competitiveness of the enterprises. This situation depends on the high \ balance of well-being of tourism workers not only in their work but also in their non-work lives.

Work-life balance is primarily related to the ability of the employee to maintain control between work and non-work life and to balance these two different living spaces so that they do not adversely affect each other. The intense pace of work and uncertainty in tourism enterprises may cause this balance not to be found. Therefore, wellness perceptions of tourism workers are negatively affected. The American Council on Exercise (2000) states that creating free time during the day enables employees to renew themselves psychologically and emotionally and increases their work performance. Tourism enterprises have long working hours, dynamical structure, stress caused by service problems developing beyond the control of employees, problems in customer relations are problems in maintaining work-life balance. These factors lead to unhealthy and low moral morale, conflicts and stress levels. The most important help of the employees in coping with such promotions is the recreational activities they participate in work or non-work time (Mokaya and Gitari, 2012). Abe et al. (2016) found that there is a significant relationship between wellness programs and work-life balance strategies.

Recreation can be defined as all kinds of activities that individuals do in order to increase their well-being in leisure periods (in business life or non-business time) reserved for them. Individuals who have achieved awareness of the physiological, psychological and sociological positive effects of the activities as a result of participation in recreational activities can achieve long-term happiness. The benefit of achieving a balance between leisure and work has been demonstrated by examining many variables, such as spending time with family and friends in leisure, important factors of goodness, social and family adjustment (Brown et.al. 2011, p.45). Mbaabu (2013) found that physical fitness programs improve job quality, job performance, productivity and morale, mental health programs reduce stress and anxiety, improve mental ability awareness, and entertainment programs increase group commitment, team performance and productivity. It showed that fitness, mental health and entertainment have an impact on employee performance and well-being.

Wellness refers to optimal health rather than disease-free health (Rančić et.al., 2013). Individuals deal with many chronic diseases (sugar, heart, blood pressure, obesity, etc.) in their daily lives, as well as psychological (anxiety, anxiety, stress, etc.) and social (loneliness, social interaction anxiety, etc.). The point of dealing with these problems and encountering is the fact that the incidents seen at certain ages in the past are encountered at every age and area today. Therefore, it is also important to adopt preventive treatment / therapy practices and to increase awareness of individuals on these issues and to support them with state policies. The perception of classical health in individuals physician, operation medication and so on. has evoked concepts such as regular nutrition, anti-aging, beautification, and being fit with changing health consumer awareness. Healthy living is an active process that enables people to become conscious and make choices against a more conscious existence. (www.nationalwellness.org). Stress factors (irregular nutrition, environmental pollution, unfavorable working conditions, deterioration of family unity, economic uncertainty, etc.) that individuals encounter and cannot overcome or manage in their daily lives cause problems in socio-psychological well-being as well as negative physiological consequences (Zengin, 2018). Wellness plays an important role in evaluating the leisure time of individuals from past to present, preserving and improving their health (physiological, psychological, sociological). Wellness focuses on minimizing the effects of the three dimensions of stress that individuals are most

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