

# All Work and No Play is Poor Human Factors: Party-Going and Work Satisfaction

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## Introduction

- Research on the effects of leisure time suggests significant psychological benefits, including reduced psychological strain, and improved work engagement and performance (Sonnetag, 2012).
- However, it is not necessarily clear whether this leisure time should be relaxing in nature or merely provide a distraction from work in order to reduce work-related fatigue.
- To extend this research, this study utilizes publicly available large-scale survey data (MIDUS II; Ryff, Seeman, & Weinstein, 2009) to determine the degree to which the frequency of party-going influences general affect and attitudes towards work.

## The Current Study

- Sample characteristics
  - Sample size:  $n = 1255$
  - Age: ( $M = 54.52$ ,  $SD = 11.71$ )
  - Gender: 542 men (43%), 713 women (57%)
- Participants self-reported:
  - Mood and Symptom Questionnaire (MASQ)
  - Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
  - Spielberger Trait Anger and Anxiety inventories
  - A social anxiety scale
  - The Relational Interdependent Self-Construal scale
  - A scale which assesses work attitudes
- The participants were also asked:
  - “Over the past month, how often did you spent time going to a party?”
    - 1 (never), 2 (1-6 times), 3 (7+ times)
  - If once, how pleasant, enjoyable, or rewarding was this?
    - 1 (neutral or unpleasant), 2 (somewhat), 3 (very)
- Expected Results:
  - Partying should be associated with increased positive affect, decreased negative affect, decreased anxiety, and improved work attitudes due to increased work detachment.
  - Improved work attitudes may be more of a function of detachment than positive affect, therefore positive affect shouldn't mediate party-going and work attitude.

## Results

Table 1

*Correlations with Party-going Frequency*

Affective Variables	Correlations ( $r$ )
High Positive Affect	.19**
Loss of Interest	-.14**
Depressive Symptoms	-.12**
Perceived Stress	-.11**
Social Anxiety	-.09*
Trait Anxiety	-.11**

\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < .01$

- The analyses suggest that party-going frequency is associated with decreased negative affect, increased positive affect, decreased stress, and decreased anxiety.

Table 2

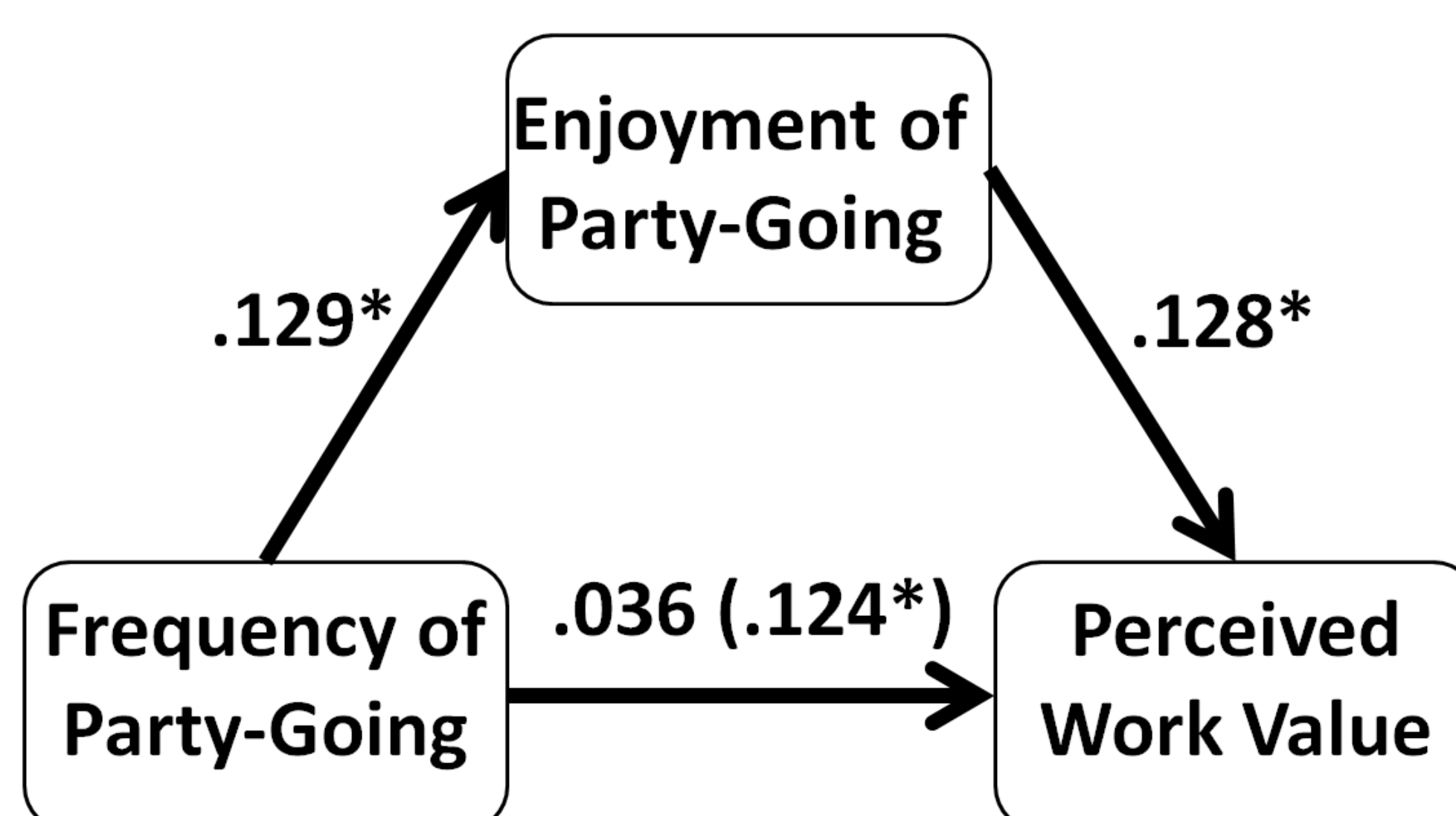
*Regressions with Party-going Frequency*

Work-Related Variables	$\beta$
Perceived Work Value	.156**
Colleague Assistance	-.087*

\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < .01$

- Regression analyses found that party-going frequency had a significant positive relationship with the perceived value of work, and a negative relationship with helping colleagues.

## Post Hoc Analyses



- There is a possibility that partying primarily has benefits due to positive affect, enjoyment in one area of life may spread to other areas as a form of positivity contagion.
- Multiple linear regressions found that both party-going frequency and party-going enjoyment was positively associated with work-value, and party-going frequency and enjoyment were positively related with each other. When controlling for enjoyment in a hierarchical regression, party-going frequency no longer predicted perceived work value.
- This simple mediation analysis found the relationship between party-going frequency and perceived work value was mediated by positive experience with the parties.

## Discussion

- The implications of these findings are that more intense forms of leisure may also be associated with improved well-being and work engagement, particularly for those individuals who enjoy parties. These relationships also hold true for a sample of middle-aged adults.
- Future research in this area should investigate whether the results of the current study are contingent on personality factors (see Nicodemus, 2012) and whether the social group with which the workers are engaging are in-group (i.e., employees of the same company) or out-group members (e.g., friends and family). The latter may partially account for the negative relationship between party going and colleague assistance.
- Positive experience appears to mediate party frequency and work value perception. While this finding was unexpected, it may be consistent with the psychological detachment literature (Sonnetag, 2012), in that individuals with high trait negative affect have difficulty detaching from work during off-hours.

## Practical Implications

- Given the established positive relationship between work satisfaction and productivity (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010)
  - The primary application of these findings would be the promotion of gatherings outside of the work environment to foster both worker well-being (Table 1) and positive attitude towards work and the work environment (Table 2).

## References

- Halkos, G., & Bousinakis, D. (2010). The effect of stress and satisfaction on productivity. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 59, 415-431.
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- Sonnetag, S. (2012). Psychological Detachment From Work During Leisure Time The Benefits of Mentally Disengaging From Work. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21, 114-118.