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Ideal Affect, Actual Affect, and Affect Discrepancy During Leisure and Paid Work

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Abstract

This study examined relationships among ideal affect (i.e., how one prefers to feel) and actual affect during leisure and paid work. Data were collected from individuals who worked at least 20 hours per week. Findings revealed that: (a) low-arousal positive affect was preferred over high-arousal positive affect by female participants; (b) during leisure the low level of high-arousal negative affect male and female participants desired experiencing was realized; (c) the level of low-arousal positive affect male participants preferred experiencing was realized during their leisure; and (d) none of the levels of affect (i.e., high-arousal positive, low-arousal positive, high-arousal negative, low-arousal negative) participants desired experiencing were met during their paid work. Implications for leisure theory and practice are discussed.

Keywords: *affect; arousal; gender; leisure; paid work*

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Numerous studies have demonstrated that affect is an important dimension of leisure experiences (e.g., Hull, 1990; Hull, Michael, Walker, & Roggenbuck, 1996; Kleiber, 2000; Kleiber, Walker, & Mannell, 2011; Lee, Dattilo, & Howard, 1994; Shaw, 1985). To date, however, little research has been conducted in the leisure studies field on how this compares with other life domains. One of the few exceptions is a study (Kelly & Kelly, 1994) of leisure, paid work, and family/community that compared these three domains on eight dimensions of meaning. Two of these dimensions measured affective properties. Analyses indicated that, in terms of disengagement (e.g., *I can rest and relax*), leisure bested family/community which in turn surpassed paid work. In terms of experience/involvement (e.g., *I am often bored*, reverse coded), family/community bested leisure which in turn surpassed paid work. The authors concluded that this type of investigation could offer new perspectives on fundamental issues, though they were also quick to add that "such 'ultimate questions' are not fashionable in current social and behavioral science research, but may be important to people. Such issues should not be left entirely to the speculation of those with no empirical grounding for their research" (p. 272).

Kelly and Kelly's (1994) comments presage the positive psychology platform put forward by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), who wrote six years later that: "the social and behavioral sciences can….articulate a vision of the good life that is empirically sound while being understandable and attractive" (p. 5). Support for their proposition was bolstered by the inclusion of 15 articles written by, among others: Ryan and Deci (2000) on self-determination theory, Massimini and Delle Fave (2000) on optimal experience, and, of particular importance for this study, Diener (2000) on subjective well-being.

Subjective well-being has three distinct components, each of which can be considered at a global level (i.e., life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect), or at a domain level (e.g., leisure satisfaction, leisure positive affect, leisure negative affect; work satisfaction, work positive affect, work negative affect), or both (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2013). Positive psychologists, and social scientists more broadly, typically focus on people's actual affective state. But Tsai, Knutson, and Fung's (2006) research indicated that people's preferred or "ideal" affective state was also important, in part because the "discrepancies" between the two influenced individuals' behavior and experiences—with a follow-up study (Tsai, 2007) finding this was especially true in terms of the leisure domain. Based on the above, therefore, three primary research questions are proposed:

RQ1. Are there significant discrepancies between the affective state an individual ideally wants to feel and the affective state the same person actually feels during leisure?
RQ2. Are there significant discrepancies between the affective state an individual ideally wants to feel and the affective state the same person actually feels during paid work?
RQ3. Are the discrepancies between what an individual ideally wants to feel and what she or he actually feels during leisure (i.e., RQ1) significantly different from the discrepancies the same person has between what he or she ideally wants to feel and what she or he actually feels during paid work (i.e., RQ2)?

Finally, some evidence indicates affective states may differ in frequency, intensity, and regulation strategies used, by gender (Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai, 2007; Kring & Gordon, 1998; Davis, Greenberger, Charles, Chen, Zhao, & Dong, 2012). Consequently, gender could also potentially influence relationships between and among ideal affect, actual affect during leisure, and actual affect during paid work. Thus, a secondary research question is proposed:

What role, if any, does gender (i.e., male, female) play in terms of each of this study's three main research questions?

Literature Review

This review begins by defining affect before outlining current social psychological research on affect and ideal affective states. The second subsection provides an overview of extant research on affective states in the leisure and paid work domains. The final subsection provides an overview of research on gender's influence on affect and ideal affect.

Affect and Ideal Affect States

Affect has been defined as neurophysiological changes or states that individuals experience as moods, emotions, or feelings (Russell, 2003; Tsai, 2007). To better understand the underlying processes of affect as well as the different affective states that individuals experience, Russell (1980) created a circumplex model. There have been many iterations of Russell's affect circumplex model, most of which involve two orthogonal dimensions: (a) valence, which reflects the hedonic tone of affective experience and ranges from pleasure to displeasure; and (b) activation, which reflects a sense of mobilization or energy and ranges from sleep to frenetic excitement (Barrett & Russell, 1999). With the circumplex model, depending on a person's valence and level of activation, his or her affective state will be located in one of four quadrants: (a) high-arousal positive (HAP) (e.g., enthusiastic); (b) low-arousal positive (LAP) (e.g., calm); (c) low-arousal negative (LAN) (e.g., dull); or (d) high-arousal negative (HAN) (e.g., fearful). For example, if a person's valence is pleasurable and his or her arousal is high he or she will be in the high-arousal positive affect category and thus he or she would feel enthusiastic, excited, elated, etc. (Tsai, 2007).

Until relatively recently, research on affect focused on how people actually felt. Tsai (2007), however, proposed it was also important to look at people's ideal affect, as well as how, when, and why it differed from their actual affect. Actual affect involves the affective states people truly experience whereas ideal affect involves the states people would prefer to experience (Tsai, 2007). Tsai held that there are four types of ideal affective states: (a) ideal high-arousal positive (i.e., I-HAP) and ideal low-arousal positive (i.e., I-LAP), both of which people want to experience to a greater degree; and (b) ideal high-arousal negative (i.e., I-HAN) and ideal low-arousal negative (i.e., I-LAN), both of which people want to experience to a lesser (if any) degree.

Preliminary research suggests that depending on a person's ideal high-arousal positive affect or ideal low-arousal positive affect preferences, he or she may be more likely to seek out certain leisure activities over others. For example, in one study (Tsai, 2007), participants who were ideal high-arousal positive affect-oriented generally engaged in more physically rigorous activities such as exercise, team sports, and running whereas, conversely, ideal low-arousal positive affect-oriented participants generally engaged in more passive activities such as reading and computer games. Tsai proposed that if people's actual affect is significantly discrepant from their ideal affect they will participate in certain mood producing or modifying behaviors (e.g., leisure activities) to minimize this discrepancy. This discrepancy is defined as the gap or magnitude of the difference between how people would ideally like to feel and how they actually feel.

Affective States and Leisure and Paid Work Domains

In leisure studies, variation in affective states across domains has typically been examined as a part of broader investigations of meaning. Shaw (1985), for instance, found "leisure situations are characterized by high levels of enjoyment and relaxation, while non-leisure situations are

low on both factors. Freedom of choice and intrinsic motivation are also shown to discriminate *fairly well*" (p. 14; italics added). Similarly, Kelly and Kelly (1994) also focused more on meaning generally and less on affective states specifically. Given their study's key findings were already reviewed in our introduction, we will only add here that these researchers: (a) considered their sample's homogeneity (i.e., all staff at the same university) to be its major limitation; and (b) suggested that domain meanings (including, we assume, those involving affect) could differ by, for example, gender.

A few social psychological studies have also compared the affective states experienced by people in their leisure and paid work domains. Stone (1987), for instance, had participants complete a daily questionnaire on their moods and daily events. Participants were all married males who completed the questionnaires for a minimum of 84 days. All events were rated as desirable or undesirable and as involving either negative (i.e., skeptical, sad) or positive (i.e., elated, energetic) moods. Of the desirable events, family-leisure, friends-relatives, and social-leisure were significantly related to mood. Participation in these events were significantly and positively correlated with positive mood and significantly and negatively correlated with negative mood. In contrast, desirable paid work events were also significantly related with mood, although paid work events had the opposite association with mood. For example, desirable paid work events were negatively correlated with positive mood and positively correlated with negative mood.

In a related study, Stone and colleagues (2006) examined females' levels and variability of affect over a single working day. Positive affect (i.e., happy, warm/friendly, enjoying myself) and negative affect (e.g., frustrated/annoyed, angry/hostile, depressed/blue), as well as tired, impatient, and competent, were measured. Findings indicated not only affective state differences depending on the time of day but also the type of activity. For example, in terms of enjoyment: (a) it was lowest upon waking but rose steadily toward noon, after which it dropped considerably before rising in the mid-afternoon and peaking in the mid-evening; (b) doing housework, commuting, and working were significantly and negatively associated with this emotion (-0.60, -0.35, and -0.20, respectively) whereas intimate relations, exercising, socializing, and relaxing were significantly and positively associated with this emotion (0.82, 0.73, 0.71, and 0.57, respectively); and (c) diurnal cycles flattened considerably after certain activities were also taken into account.

Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre (1989) examined six psychological qualities during 78 Chicagoans' leisure and paid work, using the experience sampling method (ESM). Three of these qualities—affect (i.e., happy-sad, cheerful-irritable, friendly-hostile, sociable-lonely), potency (i.e., strong-weak, active-passive, alert-drowsy, excited-bored), and relaxation (i.e., relaxed-tense)—are particularly relevant to the current study. These researchers found that leisure and paid work: (a) did not differ significantly in terms of affect, (b) potency was significantly greater in the latter situation, and (c) relaxation was significantly greater in the former situation. They also examined how these qualities varied across leisure/paid work and flow/nonflow situations, finding their participants were "most happy in leisure flow and least happy in work nonflow.... [whereas] in contrast, relaxation was higher during leisure than work, regardless of whether people were in flow or nonflow" (p. 819).

Ryan, Bernstein, and Brown (2010) conducted a study involving 74 employed American males and females using ESM. Results showed participants' moods to be less positive and more negative during work situations (e.g., behavior at a job, commuting to and from one's job) compared with "non-work" situations (e.g., household chores, leisure activities). In their limitation section, the authors acknowledged that self-maintenance and leisure activities could potentially

have differential impacts. They also speculated that, because of this shortcoming, the variations they discovered between work and non-work domains may have been underestimated.

In summary, although research is limited some evidence indicates certain affective states are experienced more during leisure than during paid work and vice versa.

Gender, Affect, and Domains

A number of studies have examined gender differences in affect and emotional behavior using self-reports and physiological measurements (Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai, 2007). Generally, differences have been found in the frequency of different emotions experienced, the intensity of emotion experienced, and the extent to which emotion is suppressed and regulated. Less, however, is known about how gender influences ideal affect or how gender's influence could vary across domains, such as leisure and paid work.

Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2002) conducted a study involving 5,886 participants from 38 different nations. In their study they looked at the frequency of unpleasant and pleasant emotions that occurred in the previous month. They found females experienced negative emotions more frequently than males. Gross and John (1998) compared males and females' emotional expressivity and discovered females exhibited greater positive and negative expressivity. Simon and Nath (2004) found males and females did not differ in the frequency of emotion experienced overall, but the former did report positive feelings (i.e., calm, excitement) more often and negative feelings (i.e., anxiety, sadness) less often.

Researchers have also compared males and females' emotional intensity. Chentsova-Dutton and Tsai's (2007) findings suggested females experienced love more intensely than males. This having been said, there were no gender differences in emotional intensity for other emotions (i.e., disgust, happiness). The authors concluded gender differences may vary by specific emotions. Davis et al. (2012) looked at the emotional intensity levels of American and Chinese participants by showing them emotion eliciting pictures. They found that females reported experiencing more intense negative emotions than males, regardless of ethnic background. Moreover, Chinese males experienced emotion with the lowest intensity and American females experienced emotion with the highest intensity. Kring and Gordon (1998), however, discovered the opposite to be true. Although they did find females to be more expressive of their emotions than males, they did not find any difference in the intensity of emotion actually experienced by either. For example, when shown emotion eliciting films, females were found to be more facially expressive. However, the frequency of expression did not influence the intensity of the emotion experienced by females. Therefore, males and females were not significantly different when it came to pleasant, unpleasant, high activation, or low activation, emotions.

Studies of gender and affect have also focused on the regulation and suppression of emotion. Davis et al. (2012) found Chinese males used emotion-regulation strategies that helped them disengage from feeling certain ways more often than other groups (i.e., American males, American females, and Chinese females). In contrast, American females used emotion-regulation strategies less than all other groups. Gross and John (1998) compared emotional masking between males and females. They found the former to mask their emotions more than the latter. They concluded this finding might suggest the existence of a difference in emotional expression between males and females, but not necessarily a difference in emotional experience. Gross and John (2003) further examined the suppression of emotions by males and females. Findings showed those who suppressed more than others experienced and expressed less positive emotion. These individuals also experienced more negative emotion in comparison to those partici-

pants who used suppression less frequently. With regard to gender, Gross and John found males scored higher than females on their study's suppression scale.

Extant literature on gender and affect across domains is quite limited. In one of the few such studies, Larson, Richards, and Perry-Jenkins (1994) had 55 mothers and 55 fathers report their level of affect, using a scale composed of three semantic differential items (i.e., happy-unhappy, cheerful-irritable, friendly-unfriendly), across 13 activities. Paid work differed the most, with females being significantly happier than males. The researchers posited that these working mothers felt more positive because (a) they had increased opportunities for adult social interaction at paid work, and (b) for those who felt unhurried at work, this may have provided them with a way to cope with their nonnegotiable obligations at home. Moreover, the researchers posited that working fathers felt less positive because their role as family providers may have translated "into less choice, greater pressure, and hence more frequent irritability and frustration" (p. 1042) in their jobs. Larson et al. concluded that "women reported lower affect than men during leisure activities at home: They appeared to enjoy themselves less in this context" (p. 1044). This appears to have been especially true in terms of two types of leisure activities: media (e.g., reading, watching television, listening to music) and socializing (e.g., talking, attending a party with one's spouse).

Extant literature on ideal affect and gender is also quite limited. The majority of studies that have examined ideal affect and gender have involved comparisons between college students with Western (i.e., American) and Eastern (i.e., Chinese) ethnic or cultural backgrounds (Tsai et al., 2006; Tsai, Miao, & Seppala, 2007; Tsai, Louie, Chen, & Uchida, 2007). One exception to the above is a study that looked at European American, Asian American, and Taiwanese Chinese preschool children (Tsai, Louie, Chen, & Uchida, 2007). In all of the above cases, no significant differences in ideal affect, by gender, were found.

Although the last findings suggest that gender does not influence the way people ideally want to feel, the research reviewed immediately before it did indicate that gender does on occasion influence how people actually feel. If females experience specific emotions more frequently and more intensely and regulate their emotions less often than males, perhaps the discrepancy between their ideal and actual affect could vary in different ways or domains than that of males. However, it must be reiterated that conflicting findings have been reported in studies of affect and gender, especially in regard to differences in emotional intensity (Kring & Gordon, 1998). Moreover, the research on ideal affect and gender has shown no relationship between the two, although the number of studies conducted on this topic is quite small.

In summary, research on affect has focused on how people actually feel, but Tsai (2007) suggested that it is also important to look at ideal affect, and to differentiate it from actual affect. Actual affect involves the affective states people truly experience whereas ideal affect involves the states people would prefer to experience (Tsai, 2007). Tsai has theorized that leisure could act as a moderating behavior that helps people negotiate the discrepancy between their ideal and actual affect. Although no significant gender differences in ideal affect have been found to date, the amount of research on this topic is very limited and, what has been done, has largely involved university students. Consequently, more research focusing on gender and the processes leading to potential gender differences is warranted, as well as research looking at the influence of gender on ideal and actual affect.

Method

Participants

The target population consisted of individuals living in the Edmonton (Canada) metropolitan area who could be contacted by direct telephone dialing. The initial criterion for participation was random selection of an eligible individual who was 18 years of age or older. To qualify, potential participants had to work at least 20 hours per week in one job. Random-Digit Dialing (RDD) was used to ensure that households had an equal chance to be contacted whether or not their household was listed in a telephone directory. The sampling frame of telephone numbers was based on land-lines and excluded business, unlisted cell phone, and government exchanges.

Data were obtained from 401 individuals, with a total of 257 individuals providing complete nonsociodemographic data and also indicating that they were British/Canadian. (The latter being a necessary criterion as Tsai et al., 2006, found ethnicity can influence ideal affect preferences.) Overall, there were slightly more females (52.0%) than males. The majority of participants were either 35 to 49 or 50 to 64 years of age (37.7% and 40.5%, respectively). Most were married or with partners (68.5%), with the remainder either being single/never married or "other" (14.8% and 16.7%, respectively). Although 10.6% had completed a Master's, doctoral, or professional (e.g., law) degree, 20.1% had completed high school or less. Of the remainder, 44.9% had either some university or had started or completed community college, while 24.4% had either completed a Bachelor's degree or obtained a professional designation (e.g., Certified Accountant). A slight majority had a household income over $100,000 Canadian (50.6%), with the remainder making either less than $50,000 Canadian (12.9%) or between $50,000 and $99,000 Canadian (36.5%). Finally, participants worked, on average, 38.7 hours per week (*SD* = 9.4).

Measures

The instrument was composed of "primary" and "secondary" measures. In terms of primary measures, participants reported: (a) during paid work, how frequently they typically felt W-HAP (two items: excited, enthusiastic), W-LAP (two items: calm, relaxed), W-LAN (two items: dull, sluggish), and W-HAN (two items: nervous, fearful). Each of these items was measured using a 5-point unipolar scale (ranging from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*); (b) during leisure, how frequently they typically felt L-HAP, L-LAP, L-LAN, and L-HAN measured with the same eight affect items and 5-point scale; and (c) ideally, overall how much or little they would like to feel I-HAP, I-LAP, I-LAN, and I-HAN, also measured with the same items and scale. In terms of secondary measures, participants reported their (a) leisure, paid work, and overall life satisfaction (one item each; from 1 = *Completely Dissatisfied* to 10 = *Completely Satisfied*); (b) sociodemographic information; and (c) need satisfaction during and motivations for leisure and paid work, as well as their actual leisure participation in 12 activity categories (not discussed further here).

Tsai and associates (2006) found their ideal and actual affect measures demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability with a sample of European Americans. However, because our population was composed of British-Canadians, and because we measured overall actual affect during leisure and paid work separately, we examined the validity and reliability of our measures using a variety of statistical techniques.

In terms of factorial validity, for example, separate exploratory factor analyses (EFA), using promax rotation, on each of the four types of ideal affective state, each of the four types of actual affective state during paid work, and each of the four types of actual affective state during leisure, were conducted. With the first EFA, the Kaiser criterion (first eigenvalue = 2.23, variance

explained = .56) identified one factor, with I-HAP and I-LAP having negative (both -0.74), and I-HAN and I-LAN having positive (0.70 and 0.79, respectively), coefficients. With the second EFA, the Kaiser criterion (first eigenvalue = 2.00, variance explained = .50) identified one factor, with W-HAP and W-LAP having positive (0.67 and 0.79, respectively), and W-HAN and W-LAN having negative (-0.57 and -0.77, respectively), coefficients. With the third EFA, the Kaiser criterion (first eigenvalue = 1.66, variance explained = .41; second eigenvalue = 1.05, variance explained = .26) identified two factors, with: (a) L-HAP and L-LAP loading on the first (0.87 and 0.81, respectively) and second (-0.07 and -0.29, respectively) factors; and (b) L-HAN and L-LAN loading on the first (-0.07 and -0.27, respectively) and second (0.84 and 0.74, respectively) factors. In summary, these results suggest affect is orthogonal; whether it be ideal, during leisure, or during paid work.

In terms of predictive validity, we examined correlations between: (a) the four types of actual affective state during paid work and overall paid work satisfaction; and (b) each of the four types of actual affective state during leisure and overall leisure satisfaction. Results indicated, as expected, that W-HAP and W-LAP were significantly and positively (0.57 and 0.40, respectively; both $p < .0001$), and W-HAN and W-LAN were significantly and negatively (-0.26 and -0.55, respectively; both $p < .0001$), associated with overall paid work satisfaction. Similarly, results indicated that L-HAP and L-LAP were significantly and positively (0.42 and 0.32, respectively; both $p < .0001$), and L-LAN was significantly and negatively (-0.27; $p < .0001$), associated with overall leisure satisfaction. (Note. Although L-HAN was not significantly associated with overall leisure satisfaction, its correlation, -0.06, was in the predicted direction). In summary, these results suggest reasonable levels of predictive validity.

In terms of reliability, we examined the standardized Cronbach coefficient alphas for each of the four types of ideal affective state, each of the four types of actual affective state during paid work, and each of the four types of actual affective state during leisure, scales. The ideal affective state scales' alphas ranged from .59 to .77 (I-HAN and I-LAN, respectively); the paid work affective state scales' alphas ranged from .63 to .77 (W-LAN and both W-LAP and W-LAN, respectively); and the leisure affective state scales' alphas ranged from .40 to .70 (L-HAN and L-HAP, respectively). Given all 12 scales were composed of only two items, and scale length influences alpha levels (DeVellis, 1991), the majority of these reliabilities seem reasonable. The exception is the L-HAN scale's alpha and, to better understand why this result was found, we decided to conduct separate analyses, by gender. The resulting Cronbach alphas were .48 for males and .32 for females, which suggests that the two groups may differ in how they conceive or perceive nervousness and fearfulness. Given the exploratory nature of this study we chose to continue to use the L-HAN scale as it was originally conceptualized, however future researchers should take this issue into account when developing similar studies.

Research Design

The study was observational in nature. The primary research questions entail within-participant comparisons (e.g., an individual's I-HAP and the same individual's L-HAP), and therefore a correlated design is appropriate (Dunlap, Cortina, Vaslow, & Burke, 1996).

The secondary research question entails both within-participant comparisons (e.g., a female individual's I-HAP and the same female individual's L-HAP) and between-participant comparisons (e.g., female individuals' I-HAP and male individuals' I-HAP), and therefore correlated and independent designs, respectively, are applicable (Dunlap et al., 1996).

Procedures

Data were collected by the University of Alberta Population Research Lab using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The instrument was electronically formatted and a sample database of randomly generated telephone numbers was loaded onto the CATI system. A pretest (N = 10) was conducted in mid-April, 2012 and the instrument's readability, comprehensibility, and length were evaluated and necessary modifications were made. Interviewing then took place between the end of April and the middle of June, 2012. Telephone numbers were called on various days and at different times of day. Telephone supervisors monitored the interviewers' work, checked call dispositions, and conducted back-up interviewing.

Five thousand telephone numbers were allocated, with 401 interviews being completed. The primary reasons for uncompleted interviews included: business/fax (n = 1,012), answering machine (n = 832), and no answer (n = 600). The overall response rate was 30%.

Results

Statistical Analyses

Means and standard deviations for each of the four types of ideal affective state, each of the four types of actual affective state during paid work, and each of the four types of actual affective state during leisure, were calculated.

Because our primary research questions entailed within-subject comparisons and a correlated design, dependent (also called pairwise) t-tests were appropriate (Dunlap et al., 1996). Noteworthy here is that Tsai et al. (2006) also employed dependent t-tests when they compared people's ideal and actual affect. Based on the above, data analyses involved a series of dependent t-tests between: (a) each type of ideal affective state and the corresponding type of affective state during leisure (e.g., I-HAP minus L-HAP); (b) each type of ideal affective state and the corresponding type of affective state during paid work (e.g., I-HAP minus W-HAP); and (c) the product of (a) (e.g., I-HAP minus L-HAP) less the product of (b) (e.g., I-HAP minus W-HAP). To reduce the likelihood of Type I errors (i.e., rejecting the null hypothesis when it is actually true), we used a probability level of $p < .01$ rather than the customary $p < .05$. As well, because participants' observations were correlated, we employed Dunlap and associates' (1996) recommended formula to ensure our effect sizes were not inflated. Cohen's (1992) effect size guidelines were used for comparative purposes (i.e., a d of .20 is small; a d of .50 is medium; a d of .80 is large). Given the magnitude of some of our results, we also deemed a d of 1.10 to be indicative of a very large effect size and a d of 1.40 to be indicative of an extremely large effect size.

To address our secondary research question, the same series of dependent t-tests described above, but by gender, were performed. Then, because this question also entails between-participant comparisons and an independent group design (Dunlap et al., 1996), MANOVAs (and, if significant, follow-up ANOVAs) are appropriate. Weinfurt's (1995) effect size guidelines for MANOVAs and ANOVAs, respectively, were used for comparative purposes (i.e., an η^2 or R^2 of 0.01 is small; an η^2 or R^2 of 0.09 is medium; an η^2 or R^2 of 0.25 is large).

Statistical Analyses Results

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) for each of the four ideal affective states as well as the results of the associated dependent t-tests. As shown in the top section of this table, participants overall did not prefer I-LAP significantly more than I-HAP nor do they reject I-LAN significantly more than I-HAN. Male participants (middle sec-

tion) neither significantly preferred I-LAP more than I-HAP nor did they significantly reject I-LAN more than I-HAN. In contrast, female participants (bottom section) significantly preferred I-LAP more than I-HAP, and significantly rejected I-LAN more than I-HAN. The former test's *d* was roughly in between the small and medium effect size benchmarks while the latter test's *d* was slightly above the small effect size benchmark. The MANOVA comparing the difference between I-HAP and I-LAP, and I-HAN and I-LAN, by gender, was significant Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.98$, $F(2,254) = 3.23$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Only the former ANOVA was significant $F(1,255) = 4.72$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .02$ however, with the difference between I-HAP and I-LAP being greater for females than for males. Noteworthy here is that both effects sizes were small.

Table 1

Comparison of Ideal Affective States (HAP/LAP & HAN/LAN)

	Ideal Affect	Difference		
Sample (Type of Affect)	*M* (*SD*)	*MD*	*t*-value	*d*
Overall				
Positive				
High Arousal	4.02 (0.82)			
Low Arousal	4.16 (0.80)	-0.14 (0.75)	-3.02	0.17
Negative				
High Arousal	1.51 (0.63)			
Low Arousal	1.41 (0.65)	0.10 (0.58)	2.86	0.16
Males				
Positive				
High Arousal	3.92 (0.88)			
Low Arousal	3.95 (0.90)	-0.04 (0.74)	-0.54	0.04
Negative				
High Arousal	1.53 (0.64)			
Low Arousal	1.47 (0.68)	0.06 (0.61)	1.04	0.09
Females				
Positive				
High Arousal	4.11 (0.76)			
Low Arousal	4.35 (0.64)	-0.24 (0.74)	-3.72***	0.34
Negative				
High Arousal	1.50 (0.63)			
Low Arousal	1.35 (0.63)	0.15 (0.55)	3.08*	0.23

Note. Affective states measured on a 5-point unipolar scale (from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*). *N* = 257 for full-sample analyses; *N* = 124 for male-only analyses; *N* = 133 for female-only analyses. *$p < .01$. **$p < .001$. ***$p < .0001$.

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics for each of the four affective states during leisure as well as the results of the associated dependent *t*-tests. Overall, participants experienced L-LAP significantly more than L-HAP, and experienced L-LAN significantly more than L-HAN. The former test's *d* was slightly below the medium effect size benchmark whereas the latter test's *d* was slightly above it. As shown in the middle and bottom sections of this table, male and female participants did not appear to differ in regard to the above, and this was confirmed by the MANOVA Wilks' $\Lambda = 1.00$, $F(2,254) = 0.05$, $p > .05$.

Table 2

Comparison of Leisure Affective States (HAP/LAP & HAN/LAN)

	Leisure Affect	Difference		
Sample (Type of Affect)	*M* (*SD*)	*MD*	*t*-value	*d*
Overall				
Positive				
High Arousal	3.68 (0.88)			
Low Arousal	4.02 (0.72)	-0.34 (0.87)	-6.32***	0.42
Negative				
High Arousal	1.44 (0.60)			
Low Arousal	1.84 (0.70)	-0.40 (0.79)	-8.05***	0.61
Males				
Positive				
High Arousal	3.63 (0.88)			
Low Arousal	3.98 (0.69)	-0.36 (0.88)	-4.49***	0.45
Negative				
High Arousal	1.48 (0.63)			
Low Arousal	1.87 (0.73)	-0.39 (0.80)	-5.40***	0.57
Females				
Positive				
High Arousal	3.73 (0.89)			
Low Arousal	4.06 (0.75)	-0.33 (0.86)	-4.43***	0.40
Negative				
High Arousal	1.40 (0.58)			
Low Arousal	1.81 (0.67)	-0.41 (0.79)	-5.96***	0.65

Note. Affective states measured on a 5-point unipolar scale (from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*).
$N = 257$ for full-sample analyses; $N = 124$ for male-only analyses; $N = 133$ for female-only analyses. *$p < .01$. **$p < .001$. ***$p < .0001$.

Table 3 reports the descriptive statistics for each of the four affective states during paid work as well as the results of the associated dependent t-tests. Overall, participants did not experienced W-HAP and W-LAP significantly differently, but they did experienced W-LAN significantly more than W-HAN. As shown in the middle and bottom sections of this table, male and female participants once again did not appear to differ in regard to the above, and this too was confirmed by the MANOVA Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.99$, $F(2,254) = 0.71$, $p > .05$.

Table 3

Comparison of Work Affective States (HAP/LAP & HAN/LAN)

	Work Affect	Difference		
Sample (Type of Affect)	*M* (*SD*)	*MD*	*t*-value	*d*
Overall				
Positive				
High Arousal	3.20 (0.95)			
Low Arousal	3.22 (0.94)	-0.03 (0.99)	-0.44	0.03
Negative				
High Arousal	1.86 (0.81)			
Low Arousal	2.17 (0.88)	0.30 (0.95)	-5.10***	0.36
Males				
Positive				
High Arousal	3.29 (0.91)			
Low Arousal	3.35 (0.94)	-0.07 (0.99)	-0.72	0.07
Negative				
High Arousal	1.93 (0.89)			
Low Arousal	2.18 (0.94)	-0.25 (0.96)	-2.89*	0.27
Females				
Positive				
High Arousal	3.11 (0.98)			
Low Arousal	3.11 (0.93)	0.01 (0.99)	0.09	0.01
Negative				
High Arousal	1.81 (0.72)			
Low Arousal	2.16 (0.82)	-0.35 (0.95)	-4.31***	0.45

Note. Affective states measured on a 5-point unipolar scale (from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*). $N = 257$ for full-sample analyses; $N = 124$ for male-only analyses; $N = 133$ for female-only analyses. *$p < .01$. **$p < .001$. ***$p < .0001$.

Table 4 reports the descriptive statistics for each of the four ideal affective states, each of the four actual affective states during leisure, the mean differences between corresponding states, and the results of the associated dependent *t*-tests. According to these tests: (a) the level of I-HAP participants preferred to feel was significantly greater than the level of L-HAP they actually

experienced, with effect sizes being in the small to medium range overall as well as by gender; (b) the level of I-LAN participants desired experiencing was significantly lower than the level of L-LAN they actually experienced, with effect sizes being in the medium to large range overall as well as by gender; and (c) the level of I-LAP females preferred to feel was significantly greater than the level of L-LAP they actually experienced. In contrast there was no difference in the amount of I-LAP and L-LAP experienced overall and by males. Though the MANOVA was not significant at the customary probability level Wilks' $\Lambda = 2.27$, F (4,252) = 0.97, $p < .07$, future researchers may want to focus specifically on the difference between I-LAP and L-LAP as the ANOVA (F [1,255] = 7.60, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .03$) indicated that this discrepancy was significantly greater for females than males.

Table 4

Comparison of Ideal Affect with Actual Affect During Leisure

Sample (Type of Affect)	Ideal Affect *M* (*SD*)	Leisure Affect *M* (*SD*)	Difference *MD*	*t*-value	*d*
Overall					
Positive					
High Arousal	4.02 (0.82)	3.68 (0.88)	0.34	6.16***	0.39
Low Arousal	4.16 (0.80)	4.02 (0.72)	0.13	2.33	0.18
Negative					
High Arousal	1.51 (0.63)	1.44 (0.60)	0.07	1.46	0.11
Low Arousal	1.41 (0.65)	1.84 (0.70)	-0.43	-8.57***	0.64
Males					
Positive					
High Arousal	3.92 (0.88)	3.63 (0.88)	0.29	3.68***	0.33
Low Arousal	3.95 (0.90)	3.98 (0.69)	-0.03	-0.33	0.04
Negative					
High Arousal	1.53 (0.64)	1.48 (0.63)	0.04	0.65	0.07
Low Arousal	1.47 (0.68)	1.87 (0.73)	-0.40	-5.02***	0.57
Females					
Positive					
High Arousal	4.11 (0.76)	3.73 (0.89)	0.38	5.02***	0.46
Low Arousal	4.35 (0.64)	4.06 (0.75)	0.29	3.78***	0.41
Negative					
High Arousal	1.50 (0.63)	1.40 (0.58)	0.09	1.39	0.15
Low Arousal	1.35 (0.63)	1.81 (0.67)	-0.46	-7.32***	0.71

Note. Affective states measured on a 5-point unipolar scale (from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*). $N = 257$ for full-sample analyses; $N = 124$ for male-only analyses; $N = 133$ for female-only analyses. *$p < .01$. **$p < .001$. ***$p < .0001$.

Table 5 reports the descriptive statistics for each of the four ideal affective states, each of the four actual affective states during paid work, the mean differences between corresponding states, and the results of the associated dependent *t*-tests. According to these tests: (a) the level of I-HAP all participants preferred to feel was significantly greater than the level of W-HAP they actually experienced, with effect sizes being between the large and the very large benchmark; (b) the level of I-LAP all participants preferred to feel was significantly greater than the level of W-LAP they actually experienced, with this effect size nearing the extremely large benchmark; (c) the level of I-HAN participants desired feeling was significantly lower than the level of W-HAN they actually experienced, with effect sizes being very close to the medium benchmark overall as well as by gender; and (d) the level of I-LAN participants desired feeling was significantly lower than the level of W-LAN they actually experienced, with effect sizes being between the large and very large benchmarks overall as well as by gender. The MANOVA comparing the above differences, by gender, was significant Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.89$, $F\,(4,252) = 8.03$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .11$. This represents a medium effect size. Two follow-up ANOVAs were significant: (a) the difference between I-HAP and W-HAP $F\,(1,255) = 7.86$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .03$, with this gap being greater for females than males; and (b) the difference between I-LAP and W-LAP $F\,(1,255) = 22.80$, $p < .0001$, $R^2 = .08$, with this gap also being greater for females than males.

Table 6 reports the descriptive statistics for each of the four affective states in terms of their leisure discrepancy (i.e., ideal affect minus the corresponding leisure affect), each of the four affective states in terms of their work discrepancy (i.e., ideal affect minus the corresponding paid work affect), the mean differences between the two discrepancies, and the results of the associated dependent *t*-tests. According to these tests: (a) the overall discrepancies between leisure and paid work were greatest for LAP, with this effect size being close to the large benchmark; (b) the overall discrepancies between leisure and paid work were also considerable for HAP, with this effect size being very close to medium benchmarks; and (c) the overall discrepancies between leisure and paid work were also noticeable for HAN and LAN, with the former's effect size being very close to the medium benchmark while the latter's was between the small and medium benchmarks. The MANOVA comparing the above discrepancies, by gender, was significant Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.95$, $F\,(4,252) = 3.19$, $p < .05$ $\eta^2 = .05$. Two follow-up ANOVAs were significant: (a) the discrepancies between leisure and paid work in terms of LAP $F\,(1,255) = 8.41$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .03$, with this gap being greater for females than males; and (b) the discrepancy between leisure and paid work in terms of HAP $F\,(1,255) = 4.96$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .02$, with this gap also being greater for females than males.

Table 5

Comparison of Ideal Affect With Actual Affect During Work

Sample (Type of Affect)	Ideal Affect *M* (*SD*)	Work Affect *M* (*SD*)	Difference *MD*	*t*-value	*d*
Overall					
Positive					
High Arousal	4.02 (0.82)	3.20 (0.95)	0.82	12.26***	0.92
Low Arousal	4.16 (0.80)	3.22 (0.94)	0.93	13.31***	1.07
Negative					
High Arousal	1.51 (0.63)	1.86 (0.81)	-0.35	-6.08***	0.48
Low Arousal	1.41 (0.65)	2.17 (0.88)	-0.76	-12.63***	0.97
Males					
Positive					
High Arousal	3.92 (0.88)	3.29 (0.91)	0.63	6.84***	0.70
Low Arousal`	3.95 (0.90)	3.35 (0.94)	0.60	6.22***	0.66
Negative					
High Arousal	1.53 (0.64)	1.93 (0.89)	-0.40	-4.61***	0.51
Low Arousal	1.47 (0.68)	2.18 (0.94)	-0.71	-7.83***	0.85
Females					
Positive					
High Arousal	4.11 (0.76)	3.11 (0.98)	1.00	10.56***	1.14
Low Arousal	4.35 (0.64)	3.11 (0.93)	1.24	13.25***	1.55
Negative					
High Arousal	1.50 (0.63)	1.81 (0.72)	-0.31	-3.97***	0.45
Low Arousal	1.35 (0.63)	2.16 (0.82)	-0.81	-10.08***	1.10

Note. Affective states measured on a 5-point unipolar scale (from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*). N = 257 for full-sample analyses; N = 124 for male-only analyses; N = 133 for female-only analyses. *$p < .01$. **$p < .001$. ***$p < .0001$.

Table 6

Comparison of Difference between Ideal Affect and Actual Leisure Affect (Leisure Discrepancy) with Difference between Ideal Affect and Actual Work Affect (Work Discrepancy)

	Leisure Discrepancy	Work Discrepancy	Difference		
Sample (Type of Affect)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*MD*	*t*-value	*d*
Overall					
Positive					
High Arousal	0.34 (0.88)	0.82 (1.07)	-0.48	-7.61***	0.49
Low Arousal	0.13 (0.92)	0.93 (1.13)	-0.80	-13.88***	0.76
Negative					
High Arousal	0.07 (0.77)	-0.35 (0.93)	0.42	8.77***	0.49
Low Arousal	-0.43 (0.80)	-0.76 (0.96)	0.33	6.06***	0.37
Males					
Positive					
High Arousal	0.29 (0.88)	0.63 (1.02)	-0.34	-4.16***	0.35
Low Arousal	-0.03 (0.96)	0.60 (1.08)	-0.63	-8.48***	0.61
Negative					
High Arousal	0.04 (0.76)	-0.40 (0.97)	0.44	6.28***	0.50
Low Arousal	-0.40 (0.89)	-0.71 (1.00)	0.31	3.82***	0.32
Females					
Positive					
High Arousal	0.38 (0.87)	1.00 (1.09)	-0.62	-6.49***	0.62
Low Arousal	0.29 (0.87)	1.24 (1.08)	-0.96	-11.25***	0.97
Negative					
High Arousal	0.09 (0.78)	-0.31 (0.90)	0.40	6.11***	0.47
Low Arousal	-0.46 (0.72)	-0.81 (0.93)	0.35	4.74***	0.42

Note. Affective states measured on a 5-point unipolar scale (from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*). $N = 257$ for full-sample analyses; $N = 124$ for male-only analyses; $N = 133$ for female-only analyses. *$p < .01$. **$p < .001$. ***$p < .0001$.

Discussion

In this section, we discuss our findings regarding each of our three primary research questions but, before doing so, we briefly outline our results concerning the concepts of ideal affect, actual affect during leisure, and actual affect during paid work, individually.

Conceptual Findings

First, it is important to remember that Tsai's (2007) research focused on how ideal affective states differed cross-culturally. Thus, though she did conduct certain within-group comparisons, Tsai did not report these results in sufficient detail to compare them with those in this study. Visual inspection of Tsai's findings, however, suggest that her European American participants exhibited little if any preference for one positive affective state over the other—an inference largely consistent with our empirical findings.

After we reanalyzed our data by gender, however, we found that, though males did not significantly prefer ideal low-arousal positive affect over ideal high-arousal positive affect or vice versa, females did significantly prefer ideal low-arousal positive affect over ideal high-arousal positive affect. Similarly we found that, though males did not significantly reject ideal low-arousal negative affect over ideal high-arousal negative affect or vice versa, females did significantly reject ideal-low arousal negative affect (e.g., dull) over ideal-high arousal negative affect (e.g., nervous). These joint results suggest that the concept of ideal affect may be more pertinent for females than males; perhaps because female, and to an even greater degree, maternal, role demands could lead to the development of preferences for the presence of calmness (e.g., Simon & Nath, 2004) and the absence of dullness (e.g., Rosenblum, Mazet, & Bénony, 1997).

Second, in terms of actual affect during leisure, leisure low-arousal positive affective states (e.g., calm) were experienced significantly more than leisure high-arousal positive affective states (e.g., excitement) by all participants. On the one hand, this finding is not surprising given watching television remains by far the most popular leisure activity in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). On the other hand, this finding lends further support to past (Kleiber, 2000) and more recent (Heo, Lee, Kim, & Chun, 2012; Spiers & Walker, 2009) calls for greater research attention being paid to relaxing leisure activities.

Third, in terms of actual affect during paid work, there are two noteworthy findings. First, work low-arousal positive (e.g., calm) and work high-arousal positive (e.g., excited) affective states were experienced equally by our participants, which could mean their paid work is emotionally positive and balanced in terms of activation (i.e., a sense of mobilization or energy; Barrett & Russell, 1999). Conversely, of course, this could also mean their paid work is emotionally positive but stagnant in terms of activation. Second, although our participants reported experiencing work low-arousal negative (e.g., dull) more than work high-arousal negative (e.g., fearful) affective states, neither the former nor the latter likely leads to a high degree of satisfaction in the paid work domain or at the global (i.e., overall life) level. Whether this is true or not, however, must remain conjecture. A recent review (Erdogan, Bauer, Truxillo, & Mansfield, 2012), on the one hand, held that life satisfaction was paid scant attention by the management field whereas, on the other hand, only 3.1% of life satisfaction articles involved working adults. Interestingly for those of us in the leisure studies field, Erdogan and associates concluded their future research section by speculating that:

> Those who feel that their quality of work life is dissatisfactory may place more importance on nonwork domains. Examining the interactive effects of work and nonwork domains would increase our understanding of whether and how work life contributes to life satisfaction. (p. 1066)

Research Question One Findings

Our first primary research question asked, "Are there significant discrepancies between the affective state an individual ideally wants to feel and the affective state the same person actually

feels during leisure?" Examined holistically, our findings suggest participants were able to realize their desired levels of ideal high-arousal negative affect and close to their preferred levels of ideal low-arousal positive affect, during leisure. Leisure, however, did not provide the high levels of excitement and enthusiasm they preferred (i.e., ideal high-arousal positive affect) and, even more so, it did not provide the low levels of dullness and sluggishness they desired (i.e., ideal low-arousal negative affect). The former results could be because participants recalled more passive leisure activities (e.g., reading, computer games) that appeared to elicit low-arousal positive affective states (Tsai, 2007). The latter result could be associated with leisure boredom (Iso-Ahola & Weissinger, 1990), or self-as-entertainment incapacity (Mannell, 1984), or both.

The secondary research question added, "What role, if any, does gender play in terms of the first primary research question?" Both male and female participants experienced significant differences between their ideal high-arousal positive affect and leisure high-arousal positive affect with effect sizes in the small to medium size range. Therefore, it appears leisure was not effective in helping participants realize their ideal high-arousal positive affect regardless of gender. When looking at our entire study population, participants were able to reach levels very close to their ideal low-arousal positive affect during leisure. This being said, there were differences in the level of ideal low-arousal positive affect attainment during leisure between females and males. The difference between ideal low-arousal positive affect and leisure low-arousal positive affect for males was not significant. In contrast, there was a significant difference between ideal low-arousal positive affect and leisure low-arousal positive affect for females, with the effect size being in the small to medium range. Based on these findings, it appears leisure is a better mechanism for males than females when trying to realize one's ideal low-arousal positive affect. It should be noted that males did not significantly prefer ideal low-arousal positive affect over ideal high-arousal positive affect or vice versa, whereas females did in fact prefer ideal low-arousal positive affect over ideal high-arousal positive affect. Even though females do appear to value ideal low-arousal positive affect more so than males, they are not meeting their ideal low-arousal positive affect levels during leisure to the same extent as males.

These findings are reminiscent of an earlier mentioned study (Larson et al., 1994) that found females enjoyed certain types of leisure activities less than males. This difference was especially true in terms of media (e.g., reading, watching television, listening to music) and socializing (e.g., talking, attending a party with one's spouse). Thus, it may be that, while these kinds of leisure activities resulted in low-arousal positive affect (i.e., relaxation) for males they instead resulted in low-arousal negative affect (i.e., dull) for females. Noteworthy here is that Iso-Ahola (1997) suggested passive leisure activities could have a negative effect on an individual's health and well-being because they can lead to boredom and apathy. In contrast, Sonnentag (2001) found passive activities had a positive impact on well-being, especially for individuals in high stress paid work situations. Thus, while passive activities appear to have the ability to lead to either negative or positive well-being, perhaps it is actually the type or "quality" of the passive activity that is important.

Research Question Two Findings

Our second primary research question asked, "Are there significant discrepancies between the affective state an individual ideally wants to feel and the affective state the same person actually feels during paid work?" Overall, when comparing ideal and paid work affect, significant discrepancies were found in all four instances. As with previous research (Ryan et al., 2010; Stone, 1987; Stone et al., 2006), paid work situations increased negative affect and decreased positive affect regardless of the arousal dimension. These results are not too surprising given

that "Work means getting oneself to do things, a lot of things, that one would not really want to do. Work is done primarily for the external rewards" (Baumeister, 1991, p. 116). Although it is certainly true that some people do get satisfaction from paid work (Baumeister, 1991; Erdogan et al., 2012; Kelly, 1996), our results suggest our participants did not realize any of their ideal affective states in the paid work domain. Moreover, the sheer magnitude of this discrepancy seems cause for concern as, although work high-arousal negative affect neared the medium effect size benchmark, work high-arousal positive affect, work-low arousal positive affect, and work-low arousal negative affect all exceeded the large effect size benchmark (Cohen, 1992).

The secondary research question added, "What role, if any, does gender play in terms of the second primary research question?" Although both males and females exhibited the same general patterns, the results of the follow-up ANOVAs revealed that there are significant gender differences in discrepancies between ideal and paid work positive affect regardless of the arousal dimension. These results indicated that, compared to their male counterparts, female participants expressed ideal positive affect more frequently and work positive affect less frequently. These results might represent greater emotional expressivity, which refers to "individual differences in the extent to which people outwardly display their emotions" (Kring, Smith, & Neale, 1994, p. 934), in females (Gross & John, 1998). Furthermore, because memory for emotions involves a highly reconstructive process (Scollon, Koh, & Au, 2011), and this study examined the retrospective reports of affect, females' emphasis on the frequency of positive affect might be further stressed through their unique reconstructive process. However, this gender difference did not extend to either high- or low-arousal negative affect. As Chentsova-Dutton and Tsai (2007) posited that gender differences may exist only for specific emotions, gender differences in the degree of expressivity may also depend on the hedonic tone of affective experiences. In fact, all of our MANOVAs did not identify any significant gender differences in high- and low-arousal negative affect. However, given some previous studies (Davis et al., 2012; Gross & John, 1998) found gender differences in regard to negative affect, more research is needed on this topic.

Research Question Three Findings

The third primary research question asked, "Are the discrepancies between what an individual ideally wants to feel and what she or he actually feels during leisure (i.e., RQ1) significantly different from the discrepancies the same person has between what he or she ideally wants to feel and what she or he actually feels during paid work (i.e., RQ2)?" Significant discrepancies were found in all four cases, but low-arousal negative affect and high-arousal negative affect differences were less appreciable in terms of gender and less considerable in terms of magnitude. Described another way, participants' actual feelings of dullness/sluggishness and nervousness/fearfulness, though more frequent during paid work than during leisure, were in neither instance exceptionally discrepant from their ideal feelings of dullness/sluggishness and nervousness/fearfulness. It is worth recalling here that Shaw (1985) also found Canadians' actual affect was less positive and more negative during their nonleisure than their leisure. Similarly, Ryan and colleagues (2010) reported that their American participants "had less positive and more negative moods when at work than when not working" (p. 115). These results, they held, were due in part to people's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness being satisfied less in the former situation than the latter.

The secondary research question added, "What role, if any, does gender play in terms of the third primary research question?" In contrast with the aforementioned findings, high-arousal positive affect and low-arousal positive affect differences were more perceptible in terms of gen-

der and more substantial in terms of magnitude. Described another way, males' actual feelings of excitement/enthusiasm and calmness/relaxation, though more frequent during leisure than during paid work, were, respectively, mildly and moderately discrepant with their corresponding ideal feelings. Females' actual feelings of excitement/enthusiasm and calmness/relaxation were also more frequent during leisure than during paid work, but these affective states were, respectively, moderately and highly discrepant with their corresponding ideal feelings. The discovery of these gender differences is not unexpected as we have already noted the concept of ideal affect may be more pertinent for females because of female and maternal role demands. Females have been found to enjoy certain types of leisure activities—activities likely to elicit low arousal positive affect—less than males; and females in our study reported much higher discrepancy levels between ideal and paid work affect compared with their male counterparts.

In terms of the last finding, one reason for this could be variability in emotional expressivity (Gross & John, 1998). But another reason is likely the increased demands placed on females in the twenty-first century workplace. Two decades ago, Larson et al. (1994) found females were actually happier than males when at a paid job, but that this outcome was dependent upon them feeling unhurried. Given the increased frequency of workplace interruptions (e.g., due to email), the increased frequency and intensity of daily hassles in the workplace, and the increased likelihood of poor workplace supervision as a result of high unemployment and low unionization rates, their finding induces a certain degree of nostalgia. (See Duxbury & Higgins, n.d., for more on work-life issues in Canada, and Erdogan et al., 2012, for more on paid work and life satisfaction.) Regardless of which of these reasons is accurate, the reality is our female participants experienced a "double whammy" when their ideal high-arousal positive and ideal low-arousal positive affective states were compared with their corresponding actual affective states in both the leisure and paid work domains.

Conclusion

Although numerous studies have shown that affect is an important dimension of leisure experiences (e.g., Hull, 1990; Hull, et al., 1996; Kleiber, 2000; Kleiber et al., 2011; Lee et al., 1994; Shaw, 1985), few have examined whether or not this is also true in other life domains. Additionally, because the concept of ideal affect is relatively new, earlier research in this broad area focused only on actual affect. Finally, though gender has been reported to influence both leisure phenomena as well as certain aspects of affect, this factor is sometimes overlooked or, even when it is examined, results are contradictory. This study sought to address the above issues and, having done so, we believe our findings have important implications for leisure theory and practice.

Our findings provide further support for Tsai's (2007) affect valuation theory (AVT) in that leisure activities do appear to play a prominent role in addressing the discrepancy between people's ideal and actual affect. If correct, AVT might prove to be an important new research avenue as this framework could: (a) supplement self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as approaches to explain and predict leisure participation; (b) expand leisure constraint theory (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991) beyond the inhibition and prohibition of activities to include the psychological phenomena within these "containers" (Henderson, 1990); (c) combine with broaden-and build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), which holds that positive affect results in broadened cognitive and behavioral repertoires (e.g., playing, exploring), to discover whether a reciprocal and reinforcing relationship exists (e.g., ideal high-arousal positive affect → leisure participation → high leisure high-arousal positive affect → higher ideal high-arousal positive affect → increased leisure participation → higher

leisure high-arousal positive affect → ad infinitum); (d) expand Newman's et al. (2013) leisure and subjective well-being model beyond its current five core psychological mechanisms; and (e) because theory development is lacking in race, ethnicity, and leisure research (Floyd, Walker, Stodolska, & Shinew, 2014), and because AVT and the concept of ideal affect's origins are in the cognate area of cross-cultural psychology, it could provide additional insight into this topic.

Our results also have important practical implications. For instance, recreation providers could offer and design activities that focus on better eliciting leisure high-arousal positive affective states generally and, for females, leisure low-arousal positive affective states specifically. Although substantial variation in the types of leisure activities that lead to different affective states for different people is expected, leisure high-arousal positive affect activities more likely involve outdoor activities (e.g., rock climbing, kayaking, rafting, hiking, skiing) and organized sports (e.g., basketball, soccer, hockey). By being aware of ideal-actual affect discrepancies, program planners could have a better idea of the extent to which it is necessary to change the rules and the general structure of activities to make them more exciting, elating, and enthusiastic. For example, certain environments could be identified or manipulated to make them more exciting for rafters—not too unlike what the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Driver, Brown, Stankey, & Gregoire, 1987) currently attempts to do. In contrast, for many people, leisure low-arousal positive affect activities might involve board games, meditation, art lessons, etc. Again based on an awareness of the ideal-actual affect discrepancy, recreationists as well as recreation providers could choose and modify these activities to foster optimally calm, peaceful, and relaxed states.

Perhaps, of even more potential value, recreation providers could design programs to better educate individuals about their preferred affective states and how to achieve these states in both their leisure and their paid work domains. These types of programs would also give providers and educators an opportunity to explain the types of activities available to individuals, and which ones could best help them diminish the discrepancy between their ideal and actual affect. Possibly, given our scales' reliability and validity, they could provide a starting point for the development of such a leisure (and, for that matter, an employment) education instrument.

Various aspects of the social context and their influence on ideal and actual affect should also be examined; as well as how recreation planners and managers can decrease discrepancies between people's ideal and actual affect. The latter would be particularly important because, for some people, enhanced emotional health is an unexpected outcome of leisure participation (Wiersma & Parry, 2010). Therefore leisure practitioners need to purposely provide opportunities to decrease discrepancies between people's ideal and actual affect. Finally, according to Wiersma and Parry, having a broad perspective in terms of leisure and emotional health is required; specifically: "leisure scholars and practitioners need to extend our emphasis beyond the individual psychosocial domain to a more socio-structural domain to fully understand the relationships between leisure and emotional health" (p. 66).

As with any research, this study has limitations. First, it would be beneficial to examine ideal, leisure, and paid work affect in other cultures, as variations are likely (Tsai, 2007). Second, analysis of specific leisure activities and various types of occupation would allow for a clearer understanding of the differences between the two domains. For example, do specific paid work and leisure environments and activities decrease the ideal-actual affect discrepancy more than others? Does a person's ideal affect influence the paid work/leisure activities they prefer and participate in? Third, actual affect was measured retrospectively; in contrast, use of the experience sampling method (Hektner, Schmidt, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2007) would capture "real-time" reports of actual affect. Fourth, examining the intensity as well as the frequency of affective

experiences would be an important line of inquiry both theoretically and practically. Although happiness and subjective well-being are more a function of frequency than intensity (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 2009), this topic is particularly relevant in leisure studies because outdoor recreation events usually involve multiple phases (i.e., anticipation, travel to, on-site, travel back, and recollection; Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). Understanding how discrepancies between ideal affect and actual affect during leisure change over time would not only increase our understanding of multiphasic leisure experiences but it could also provide beneficial information to outdoor recreation practitioners on the "planning and management of both hard-to-define, nature-based values and benefits" (Walker, Hull, & Roggenbuck, 1998, p. 469).

In conclusion, our results demonstrate that leisure provides people with opportunities to better experience the affective states they prefer and to better avoid the affective states they abhor—albeit only when compared with paid work. Given these are two of the three most important domains in most people's lives (along with either family/community, Kelly & Kelly, 1994; or family/partnership, Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2010), however, it seems clear there is a pressing need to conduct further research on leisure, ideal affect, and actual affect, and to incorporate these future findings into leisure theory and practice.

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