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Double Life: Music as Work and Serious Leisure

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ABSTRACT

Serious leisure (SL) is defined as an intensive, long-term free-time activity which has deep meaning for an individual and generates its own rewards without external incentives. SL has been studied intensively, yet studies on the mutual effects of an individual's work and SL are scanty, especially when music is either the work or the SL. Our research addressed the connection between work and SL with both musicians and non-musicians. The data consisted of nine interviews. Four of the participants were professional musicians with various SLs (acting, woodwork, handicrafts, and urban culture). The other five (an architect, a librarian, two directors, and a project manager), conversely, had music as their SL. Qualitative content analysis of the data was conducted, and we analysed the data in relation to psychological recovery experiences (psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery and control), using the concepts of segmentation, spillover and compensation. The data were classified into three thematic clusters 1) Participants' manner of talking about SL, 2) Aspects of SL, and 3) SL and work with further subdivisions into themes and categories. Our data did not show any difference between comments from the two participant groups. SL had positive effects on subjective well-being, notions of identity, and working abilities. It stimulated psychological recovery and gave meaning and content to the participants' lives. We suggest that in today's busy work life, employers should take advantage of SL and its positive effects.

Keywords: Music, Psychological Recovery, Serious Leisure, Well-Being at Work, Work.

JEL codes: J22, J23, J24, J28.

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1. Music as work and as serious leisure activity

This article addresses music both as principal work and as free-time activity. Stebbins divides free-time activities into three types of leisure: *Casual leisure* is a relatively short-lived pleasurable activity with immediate rewards, requiring little specialized training (Stebbins, 2001); *project-based leisure* is also short-term, occasional or infrequent but requires planning, effort and at least some skill or knowledge (Stebbins, 2003); and *serious leisure*, which is defined as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity. It is sufficiently substantial, interesting, and fulfilling for a participant to

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find a career there by acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (Stebbins, 2014b, 4). Our use of the term serious leisure (SL hereafter) follows that of Stebbins: an individual’s free time activity which is meaningful, intensive and rewarding; which the individual has knowingly chosen; and to which he/she allocates time and other resources. In terms of skill level and amount of activity, SL falls somewhere between a typical hobby and a profession. In this article, we will use the term SL, except when referring to earlier literature concerning hobby activities: we use the term ‘hobby’ when that term is used in the original.

1.1 Background

Various hobbies have been shown to have positive effects on subjective well-being (See, e.g. Heo, Lee, McGormick, & Pedersen, 2010; Korpela & Kinnunen, 2010; Cuenca, Kleiber, Monteagudo, Linde, & Jaumot-Pascual, 2014; Liu, 2014; Pi, Lin, Chen, Chiu, & Chen, 2014; Liu & Yu, 2015; Stebbins, 2015). Additionally, hobbies positively affect an individual’s experience of satisfaction (Murray & O’Neill, 2015). In research on hobbies and their effects on subjective well-being, one of the identified mechanisms has been recovery from work demands and work stress (e.g. Korpela & Kinnunen, 2010; Ivarsson & Larsson, 2012).

By recovery we mean the psycho-physiological renewal process of unwinding and recuperating from work as well as the ability to confront new work-related challenges. Psychological recovery can be further divided into four separate experiences (Sonntag & Fritz, 2007). The first one is a psychological (or mental) detachment from work, the possibility to not think about work tasks for a time. The second experience is relaxation, a state with positive emotions and reduced activity of the sympathetic nervous system, which does not dissipate an individual’s resources. The third one, mastery, provides challenges and possibilities for learning new skills. The fourth experience is control, according to which the individual can decide the timing and amount of the hobby activity. Thus, via skill management and control, the individual is able to renew his/her resources.

In the review above, hobbies are seen as functionally separate – or segmented – activities from work. Yet, the relationship between work and free time hobbies can also be analysed in terms of transfer (or spill-over) and compensation (See, e.g. Sumer & Knight, 2001; Ivarsson & Larsson, 2015; concepts from Wilensky). A hobby can, additionally, be used as a counterbalance to work, and even as a retreat from unsatisfactory work. Individual experiences and issues of one’s whole life-span, as well as various situational aspects affect both the transfer-compensation and psychological recovery processes. For example, when examining the mutual time management of work and hobbies, several influencing factors have been identified, such as gender, educational level, income level, and character of employment, as well as the situation of one’s personal and family life (for a summary, see Ylikännö, 2011). In order to research the segmentation, compensation and transfer aspects between work and SL activities as well as the interrelationships among those aspects, individual data collection practices are needed (For more about data collection, see Chapter 1.4).

While there has been extensive research on the effects of listening and music-making on cognitive and motor skills, attentiveness, and other skills relevant for work activities (for a summary, see Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014), there has been very little exploration of the relationship between an individual’s main profession and music as an SL activity. Still less research has been conducted on the SL activities of musicians – that is, the non-musical, intensive and rewarding leisure activities of professional musicians.

1.2 Aim and research questions

The principal aim of our study was to examine musicians’ and non-musicians’ individual experiences about the connection between work and SL. For musicians, SL activities did not include music, while for non-musicians, the SL was music. The main research question according to the principal aim was how

an individual experiences the connection between work and the SL activity in his/her life. We opened the main question to many more detailed sub-questions as follows: what is the significance of SL for an individual's life; what kinds of subjective experiences are attached to it; how does SL manifest itself in daily life; what effects of well-being and other effects can be identified; what kinds of connections can be identified between SL activity and work; does SL create new personal relationships or contacts relevant for work activities; and what similarities and differences exist between the features of work and SL. We also discuss themes identified in our research data describing the relationship between work and SL, as well as the theoretical concepts of detachment, relaxation, skills management, control, segmentation, compensation, and transfer.

1.3 Data and methods

We decided to use individual interviews (nine participants) as a method for collecting data. Each interview had two parts. The first part, an open interview with a single open-ended question (*Tell us about your SL*), was immediately followed by a thematic part with thematised questions. The open part always occurred at the beginning of the interview to ensure that we did not 'lead' the thinking of the interviews with the thematic questions (See, e.g. Kvale, 1996). The open part allowed the participants to tell about their own ideas, understandings, implications and interpretations about SL and to show a kind of flash of their thinking and experiences concerning their SL at the moment of the interview; as stated by King (2004), the goal of a qualitative research interview is to see the research topic from the perspective of the participant. The thematic part of the interview included thematic questions based on earlier research. Although the themes were theory-based, both they and the main question were relatively open, allowing the participants to ponder on their responses. We analysed the data using qualitative content analysis according to the hermeneutical-phenomenological approach because we wanted to interpret the meanings included in the comments of the interviews. Additionally, we wanted to be open to all data and not restrict ourselves to themes that we had formulated according to earlier research (King, 2004). For a more detailed description of data collection and the analyses, see Chapter 2.

1.4 Results

Content analysis was performed bottom-up from the comments. The process revealed categories that were further combined into themes and three thematic cluster: (1) the manner in which the participants talked about their SL, (2) aspects of SL, and (3) SL and work (the three thematic clusters are discussed in detail in Chapters 3.1–3.3). We examined the categories in terms of psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control, as well as in terms of transfer and compensation.

For the majority of participants in our research, the origins of SL occurred in childhood or in adolescence. The significance of parents and acquaintances was important especially in the early phase of searching and selecting a musical hobby, and our data showed the effect of near relatives for starting up musical activities. We noticed that work and SL took place separately, at separate times, varied by character, and were associated with different sets of people. Also, the physical venues for work and SL were segmented; only in exceptional cases were they ever integrated. Yet, the possibility to exercise the SL could only occur through active time management.

SL had positive effects on subjective well-being and notions of identity. It affected the development of participants' professional careers and increased their self-confidence, allowing them to transfer attitudes, processes, learned skills and procedural means from work to SL or from SL to work. SL served as compensation, as a means to detach from work, or as counterweight, offering something else to think about. SL acted also as a balancing factor and as a means for psychological recovery: relaxation and refreshment, positivity, the joy of success, consolation, mood enhancement and the ability to recharge. Management of skill was another recurring experience in our data, described in terms of participants' reforming their professional reputation as well as in their application and usage

of ideas, attitudes, knowledge, skills and means. It was also evidenced by the gradual accumulation of self-confidence and perseverance.

This article focused on an obscure and un-researched area: the relationship between work and SL on an individual level. Even though the SL activities were not performed for the sake of work, there were effects on work; these were a consequence of the effects transferred through the individual. Our findings demonstrate that although the coordination between SL and work was challenging and although SL demanded a lot of time, it still had positive effects on coping and well-being at work. The results open up paths to benefit from mutual effects of SL and work. We suggest that employers actively support the employees' SL activities and seek the positive effects of SL.

1.5 Chapters in outline

Chapter 2 is a detailed description about the data collection and analysing methods. Chapter 3 gives a detailed analysis of the thematic clusters, themes, categories and sub-categories with quotes from the interview data. Discussion and conclusions are in Chapter 4.

2. Data collection and analysing methods

The research can be defined as a qualitative case study in which the connection between work and SL was examined as a phenomenon according to the phenomenological approach: the interview was a focused discussion around the issue (SL) under investigation (Chell, 2004). In addition, we used the hermeneutical-phenomenological approach in interpreting the experiences and comments included in the data and in looking for the implications of the experiences.

The data consisted of nine interviews from nine individuals aged 40 to 70. We used expert participants in our interviews: we chose participants who had a direct experience of SL and from whom we believed we could get plenty of information about the issue. Since the participants had volunteered for the study, we knew that they were also willing to talk about their insights.

We wanted to include different kinds of professions and SLs. At the same time, we wanted to keep the number of participants relatively small since we knew that the open interview produces rich but unclear data which might be difficult to cope with (for interviews, see Kvale, 1996).

Four participants were professional musicians (orchestral instrumentalists, free-lance musicians; below encoded as MaP; music as profession) with the following SL focus: woodcraft, city-culture research, acting, and handicrafts. Of these four, two were female. Five participants, one of whom was female, had music as SL (below encoded as MaSL). They engaged in a wide variety of musical activities, and some had more than one musical focus: playing the flute, piano, or cello; choir-singing, solo-singing, choir-conducting, popular music (singing and piano). The MaSL participants had the following professions: architect, manager, librarian, project manager and chief executive officer.

We conducted 10 hours and 10 minutes of recorded interviews in all. When we transcribed the interviews, we marked periods and commas in the text to structure the talk as sentences (preliminary interpretation; see Kvale, 1996). Otherwise, the transcribing was purely technical, with no analysis.

The written interviews totalled 57,334 words, that is, approximately 143 pages (400 words/page). After transcribing the interviews, we sent the text to the participants to comment on or make additions to the interviews. At that point, one participant sent us an email and another completed the interview by phone.

Since there were two researchers conducting the interviews, we listed the interview questions beforehand in order to diminish the interviewer influence on the participants' responses. The theory-

based themes and the main research questions are shown in Table 1. When analysing the data, we first conducted separate analyses and thereafter discussed the comments, coding and categorisation (researcher triangulation).

The ‘dialogue’ among the data, interpretation, and the two researchers led to a deeper understanding of the meaning structures involved in the data. In describing the methods, data, and analyses in detail, we describe the whole research process to allow the reader to follow the data collection, analysis and interpretation and evaluate the plausibility of the results (Koch, 2006).

Table 1: Theory-based themes and main interview questions.

Theory-based themes	Main interview questions
SL in an individual’s life	What are the - role, position and significance of SL - rewards of SL - experiences with SL - features of SL - flaws and obstacles of SL - connections / segmentation between work and SL
Effects of SL	What are the effects of SL on - personal relationships - subjective well-being (detachment, relaxation, compensation) - duties at work - mastery (new skills and transfer of skills; control) - time management

All data were analysed as one unit; that is, we did not separately analyse the open and the thematic parts. All responses were analysed according to the content, not the question. We followed the procedure from familiarisation, induction of comments, coding, and elaboration, to interpretation and checking (Bauer, Bicquelet, & Suerdem, 2014).

We coded the comments using a data-driven perspective and categorised them into subcategories, categories, themes and thematic clusters (bottom-up categorization). During the analysis, we did not use the theoretical concepts obtained from the literature; instead, we analysed the data using hermeneutic understanding (McAuley, 2004).

As a whole, the data were rich with both repeated comments (saturation) and variety. After analysing the data, we wrote the first version of Chapter 3 with numerous quotes and sent the text to each participant individually with the code we had used for him/her. At that point, they were able to check our understandings and interpretations. One participant asked us to correct one detail.

The process from planning the research to data collection, analysis and interpretation of the results, as per the hermeneutic paradigm, continuously deepened the researchers’ understanding and followed a hermeneutic path or circle. The process of building understanding between the two researchers as well as between researchers and participants occurred in a cyclic process of interpretation (McAuley 2004).

3. Results

The thematic clusters, themes and categories shown in Table 2. In the text below, the THEMATIC CLUSTERS are written in capital letters, and they are structured as second-level subtitles (3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). The themes are structured as third-level subtitles (3.1.1 etc.) The categories are in bold print, and the subcategories are underlined.

Table 2: Thematic Clusters, themes, and categories (and the number of possible subcategories in parentheses) revealed in the data.

<p>PARTICIPANTS' MANNER OF TALKING ABOUT SERIOUS LEISURE</p> <p>Enthusiasm</p> <p>Challenge of Verbalising</p>	<p>ASPECTS OF SERIOUS LEISURE</p> <p>Descriptions of SL</p> <p>Focus and content</p> <p>Means</p> <p>Processes</p> <p>Places and spaces</p> <p>Personal features related to SL</p> <p>Starting point and roots</p> <p>Incentives and impulses</p> <p>Effects of the personality (2)</p> <p>Dynamics of SL</p> <p>Motives</p> <p>Aims</p> <p>SL in everyday life</p> <p>Important experiences</p> <p>Experienced significance and effects of SL</p> <p>Significance of SL</p> <p>Effects on life management</p> <p>Effects on subjective well-being (3)</p>	<p>SERIOUS LEISURE AND WORK</p> <p>Coexistence of work and SL</p> <p>Personal relationships from SL to work</p> <p>SL has brought new contacts</p> <p>SL has no effect on personal relationships (2)</p> <p>Effects of SL on well-being at work</p> <p>Work-life balance</p> <p>Well-being at work (3)</p> <p>Compensation</p> <p>Effects of SL on work</p> <p>Effects on duties and career (2)</p> <p>Transfer of mastery</p> <p>Effects of SL on identity</p> <p>Similarities and differences between work and SL</p> <p>Similarity (6)</p> <p>Dissimilarity (6)</p> <p>SL as a profession</p>
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Since the study concentrated on the connections between SL and work, we discuss the first two thematic clusters only briefly, our focus being on the third thematic cluster. Additionally, the fourth theme of the second thematic cluster (“experienced significance and effects of SL”) is discussed in more detail since it has connections with effects on work.

3.1 Participants’ manner of talking about Serious Leisure

The first thematic cluster was the participants’ manner of talking about SL, and it included two themes: enthusiasm and challenge of verbalising.

3.1.1 Enthusiasm

When we asked the participants to tell about their SL, there was great enthusiasm, seen and heard especially in the manner in which participants described the content, means and courses of action of their SL and in the amount of talk. All participants described the importance of SL in some way or another. Additionally, all interviews showed that the participants were pleased to be able to talk about their SL, not to mention that the duration of the interviews (from 40 minutes to more than 90 minutes) also tells something about their enthusiasm.

3.1.2 Challenge of verbalising

Despite their enthusiasm, it was not always easy for the participants to verbalise their thoughts, ideas and experiences or the significance and effects of their SL. Even though some participants gave the impression of having reflected on the topic beforehand, most responses arose spontaneously at the moment of the interview. This could be heard in their search for words and pauses between words as well as in the wordiness of the responses and the reflective manner of their speaking. Very often the participants searched for the best way to verbalise their thoughts, or they expressed the difficulty of describing or explaining what they really meant. It often helped the participants if we asked the

question in another way. Only two participants left some responses unfinished or did not respond to some questions at all.

During the interviews, we did not interrupt the participants. Hence, the responses were often very wide and even rambling. This is actually understandable given that a participant may be verbalizing something for the very first time and that it is not clear for him/her (nor for the interviewer) what details belong or do not belong to the topic at hand. Rambling also included responses where the participants returned to earlier questions or topics. We interpreted this as indicating that the particular topic was very important to the participant or that something earlier left unsaid later popped into his/her mind. Seldom did the participants bring up other topics that we had not introduced. When it did occur, it is possible that they were unable or unwilling to respond to the question we asked but rather wanted to introduce some other issue that was important to them.

3.2 Aspects of serious leisure

SL was, as stated, important to the participants, and all participants were pleased to talk about it. We did not originally intend to collect aspects of SL, but since they were so central to the participants, we decided to include them in the study and will present them shortly. The second thematic cluster was divided into four themes.

3.2.1 Descriptions of SL

The first theme, descriptions of SL, was divided into four categories. The first category included comments describing the focus and content (e.g. projects, products and outcomes) of SL as well as definitions for SL. They described the means in a very tangible way, but they also talked about ethical aspects related to the means or economic possibilities for purchasing them. The short-term and long-term processes described the chains of events related to SL. All participants described at least one long-term process: how their SL had developed over the years. SL in relation to important situations or occasions in life was also described. The fourth theme, places and spaces, included both venues for executing the SL as well as venues for showing the outcomes. All participants mentioned some concrete and specifically-defined places as well as undefined places. Additionally, some participants talked about very abstract spaces.

3.2.2 Personal features related to SL

The theme personal features related to SL was divided into three categories. The first one was starting points and roots and included comments about people (parents, siblings, relatives, or friends) who had affected the participant's choice of SL or who had encouraged the participant in the activity. Some of the influences may have originated from ambient conditions such as school or living environment. These comments were typical for MaSL participants. However, not all participants mentioned such encouragement; in fact, the SL might be totally different from activities familiar to others at home. The incentives and impulses could be very old, from school age or even earlier times. The critical moment could just as well have been in adolescence or in adulthood. Nor were incentives necessarily sudden; instead, they may have gradually grown more and more important to the participant. The third category was the effects of personality and included comments dealing with the participants' attitudes and self-understanding, such as ambitions, curiosity, needs and desires. Attitudes towards SL were also mentioned. Some participants talked about the courage to take risks and test their boundaries in their SL, which was not possible in their main profession.

3.2.3 Dynamics of SL

The third theme, dynamics of SL, was divided into four categories. The first category included comments describing the motives of SL. The second category included both internal and external aims set for SL. These were either very concrete, somewhat abstract, or very abstract. The third category

included comments about SL in everyday life. The SL could be daily, either with varying amounts of time or with a constant minimum time. The SL could also be occasional, conducted when everyday life allowed: sometimes intensively, sometimes not at all. Some activities in SL could be regular, while others were project-like, and while the project was active, the involvement was very intensive. This category also included comments about how time used for SL was affected by season or the amount of daylight. We also heard about fears that the SL was taking too much time, perhaps away from the family, yet lack of time was mentioned only once. The fourth category included important experiences or top experiences involved in SL, with a great deal of variation. The moment of experiencing the finished piece of work and of realising that the solutions made during the process were successful were among the important experiences listed. For participants with music as the SL, the important experiences were often related to learning and the act of performing. Positive feedback was also mentioned as well as the possibility of sharing one's own experience or knowledge. Further, various emotions were mentioned as important experiences.

3.2.4 Experienced significance and effects of SL

The fourth theme included the experienced significance and effects of SL on subjective well-being and life management (excluding the effects on work and well-being at work). All participants talked about the significance and effects on a general level, in relation to their own lives. These comments were divided into three categories.

The first category, significance of SL, included comments from all participants. SL was *essential*, with a *lot of meaning*, and an intensive action that *needs a lot of focus*. No participant wanted to give up his/her SL; it was mentioned as *the second life* or *a double life*. Monetary rewards were not necessary; instead, the SL was considered as *an absolute that fulfils one's niche in life*. Via the SL it was possible for the participants to observe and consider the events and episodes of life since it had brought *new perspectives* to life, and it was *present all the time*. It was also considered to channel something *that you cannot put anywhere else*. SL was described as consisting of several sectors, each affording important experiences of its own.

The second category was effects on life management, and it included comments from all participants. SL helped the participants to *be themselves*, to recognise their *other side*, and it had effects on *self-esteem*. It gave *something new to think about*, it *increased courage* and gave *new insights to life*. One aspect related to life management was the idea that there must be many kinds of roles in one's life and that SL was *an appendage of life*. By SL it was possible to *evaluate one's relation to politics, life, world, humans, others, good, bad*. Yet, SL must not be so serious *that it could derail life*.

The third category included comments about the effects on subjective well-being. The effects were further classified into three subcategories. The first one included comments about the refreshing, healthy, relaxing, comforting, and therapeutic nature of SL, expressed by all but one participant. The SL *helps one to vent one's anger and aggression*, it is *like vitamins*. The therapeutic nature of SL was mentioned by using not only the word *therapeutic*, but also by talking about its effect on *psychological well-being*, *coping*, or by saying that *it can alleviate distress*, and that it *affects the well-being of your whole life*. The second subcategory of the effects on subjective well-being was the satisfaction, pleasure, high spirits, and positive affect resulting from SL; two participants also mentioned *flow*. The third subcategory included other comments related to subjective well-being. The participants pointed out that that SL *gives new work to one's brain*, that one can be *proud of one's originality*, that it *increases one's sense of proportion*, and it *makes you forget everything else*.

3.3 Serious leisure and work

The third thematic cluster was SL and work. It included various comments with connections between work and SL. The third cluster was further divided into seven themes.

3.3.1 Coexistence of work and SL

The interviews revealed that it was not always easy to combine work and SL. The majority of comments about time management and control involved ways to eke out time for the SL. The time used for SL was rarely taken directly from professional work, however; instead, participants made changes in their work, SL or family schedules to accommodate all of their activities. Some participants explained that they organised their SL to be near work or home so as not to take up undo time moving from one activity to another. Additionally, the participants could manage time by deciding either that SL must not *dominate too much* or by deciding that they want to take more time for it and take a project which forces them to *focus on serious leisure more than normal*.

3.3.2 Personal relationships from SL to work

The theme personal relationships from SL to work was further divided into two categories. The first one included participants' comments about how SL had brought new contacts into their work life. Four participants fit this category; it is noteworthy, however, that there were no professional musicians among them. Through SL, the participants told about getting to know *diverse persons* who are beneficial for work. Comments in the second category indicated that SL had no effect on personal relationships. This category was further divided into two subcategories. The first consisted of comments stating that SL rarely facilitated making new contacts, if ever. Comments in the second subcategory indicated that there were new SL contacts but that they were not work-related. One participant, however, predicted that there might be work-related SL contacts in the future. As a whole, it seemed that music as SL did indeed bring about new beneficial contacts.

3.3.3 Effects of SL on well-being at work

The theme with the largest number of comments was effects of SL on well-being at work. The theme was divided again into three categories, one of which was further divided into subcategories. The first category included comments about work-life balance. Some participants had found that balance, and in their opinion, SL was an important part of the process. Additionally, many participants said simply that *one must have at least one hobby*; otherwise, there is a danger that *work absorbs one's energy*. Working life was considered demanding, and *it is not getting any easier these days*. Work-life balance was also considered to be in the employer's best interest since *no company wants to have burnt-out workers*.

The second category included comments related to well-being at work specifically, and these comments were further divided into three subcategories. In the first subcategory, there were comments about coping with daily work: how SL gives energy for professional work or helps one to recover from work. SL was described as *a kind of "battery" charger [-]. That is, when you have recharged your batteries by the hours spent practicing, you disconnect the charger and you are charged*. The second subcategory included comments about SL as a counterbalance and how it gives you something new to think about; it *breaks the routine thinking* related to work, *offers an opportunity to do something else*, and helps *put things into perspective*. The third category was psychological detachment from work. Some of the comments were spontaneous and some emerged only after asking the thematic question. All but one participant mentioned detachment or replied that SL is a good way to detach from work. The third category included comments about SL as a kind of compensation. The comments expressed the idea that something was missing from work and that these voids were filled or compensated for by SL. These comments were especially true for one participant who experienced a strong lack of respect at work and sought compensation in SL.

3.3.4 Effects of SL on work

The theme of effects of SL on work excluded the aforementioned effects on well-being at work. This theme was divided into two categories, the first of which included comments about the effect of SL on duties and career. The category was further divided into two subcategories. The first one was creating

a reputation. This included comments to the effect that an individual's reputation is positively shaped by SL, in other words, that an individual's SL is considered as an additional area of expertise. The second subcategory included comments about inspirations and attitudes. SL was able to help solve problems related to work: during SL, *new solutions or points of view* might occur, or the issue might *take a new shape*. In addition, SL can provide *a positive offset* for work; it can give an individual *self-confidence* and *a broader perspective* on his/her work. The idea that SL and work can feed each other was also presented in the interviews.

The second category included a large number of comments concerning transfer (or spill-over) of mastery. All participants described how the challenges of SL spurred them to learn new skills and that these skills could be used at work as well. There was, however, mutual transfer between work and SL, and the direction was not always clear. The level of tangibility about both the mastery and the transfer varied significantly from general ideas about how to *apply knowledge* to actual, concrete *items that could be purchased* for use in the workplace. Additionally, participants talked about transfer of attitudes and procedural means, such as *time management, leadership, ways of negotiating, the order of things, balance, structure, courage, mental images or perseverance*.

3.3.5 Effects of SL on identity

The fifth theme included comments about the effects of SL on identity. Three participants, all professional musicians, talked about this. According to them, identity is formed throughout life from childhood on, and in addition to school and family, it is affected by both work and SL. SL was considered to broaden and otherwise influence the features of self-image. SL can boost one's ego, and it can also be used for identity-building in order to feel special. Additionally, the participants recognised that their SL acquaintances' perceptions of them differed from those of their working acquaintances. Surprisingly, however, the participants with music as SL did not mention identity.

3.3.6 Similarities and differences between work and SL

The theme similarities and differences between work and SL was divided into two categories. Similarities were further divided into six subcategories which included comments from all participants. The first subcategory was consistent work and effort: one has to work constantly to achieve something and feel that the results are worth the effort. Additionally, *skills and knowledge gradually accumulate* in both activities. The second subcategory included comments about aesthetics and structure common for both work and SL. The third subcategory included comments concerning similar feelings of success in both activities. The fourth subcategory included comments dealing with the idea that one can use one's own creativity within certain limits in both work and SL: In music, the score, style and taste set boundaries within which one can improvise and use one's creativity and imagination, while in SL, there are other kinds of boundaries. In the fifth subcategory, there were comments about similarities in operational principles and environments. The participants also mentioned the idea that interactions with others have similar characteristics in both work and SL. The sixth and last subcategory included a number of miscellaneous comments dealing with similarities between SL and work. Some of the comments were undefined, while others were very precise.

The second category was differences, and there was only one participant who did not mention any. The category was further divided into six subcategories, the first of which described differences in the level of abstraction. It included comments from MaP-participants only, about the level of abstraction in music as a profession (*evanescent, momentary, easily slips away*), while SL was tangible (*produces concrete, tangible, and permanent results*). The second subcategory was stressfulness. Participants in both groups described the stress and pressure at work as opposed to the stress-free quality of their SL; in addition, they recognised the ambitiousness of their work goals as compared with SL. The third subcategory dealt with differences in operational environments and groups of people. The professional musicians stated that music is *publicly performed, in groups, together with others*, while SL is *private and generally conducted alone*; here it was interesting that the musician participants did not think

about the hours they practiced their instrumental skills alone at home. Further comments about the working environment included *hierarchy* and the fact that work is *organised and ordered from above*, while SL is *self-organised*. Different *groups of people*, *ways of talking*, and *world-views* were also mentioned. The fourth subcategory was consistency: work is conducted according to a *strict schedule*; it is *obligatory*, while SL can be conducted *voluntarily*, according to *one's own possibilities and schedules*. SL does not suffer from *being set aside* in the same way that work does.

The fifth subcategory was labelled as physicality, and it included comments about the differences in the *physical demands* of work and SL as well as varying requirements in *physical and mental abilities*. *Pressures about appearance*, which are typical for some musical genres but not for SL activities, were also mentioned. The sixth subcategory included a number of other differences, e.g. work is based on *facts and knowledge*, while SL is based on *emotions, experiences and matters of opinion*; at work, one's *attention is focused on details or fragments*, and in SL, on *'the big picture' and complexities*. The professional musicians described work in a symphony orchestra as *impatient* since there is a new program every week, and SL as *persistent*. The uncertainty of art and the difficulty of evaluating the quality of the results of artistic work were factors in differentiating work from SL. The participants also mentioned the differences in the means of expressing themselves and in the very nature of the activity.

3.3.7 SL as a profession

The last theme covers participants' comments about whether SL could ever become a profession for them. Some participants had considered their SL as a career choice, and some had studied the subject area with a career in mind. However, they had chosen other professions and gave reasons for their choices, for example, *lack of self-esteem*, *low income*, *mental pressure*, and the *enervating nature* of the profession, as well as *early negative feedback*. Some participants had thought about SL as a profession but did not consider it as a realistic option at the time of the interview. For some participants, SL included features of a small-scale employment, and one participant planned to expand on it after retiring. One participant speculated that SL could become more like a profession if life circumstances allowed for it.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Our research deals with the relationship experienced between an individual's work and serious leisure activities with special focus on music. As the research was conducted in Finland, music was a feasible choice as SL. In Finland, music hobbyists are able to enjoy systematic teaching and instruction from a music-institution network which is quite extensive by international comparison; the Association of Finnish Music Schools has 97 member schools, with additional private and municipal schools offering possibilities for studying music (see www.musicedu.fi). Music is a common SL activity, and the great majority of former music-school students have non-music related professions.

Because the accumulated data of the interviews were extensive and included various themes related to individuals' work and life span issues, the data can be viewed from several perspectives. In the following sections, we consider the results and compare them to the results of earlier research and to the theories of segmentation, integration, compensation and psychological recovery. After that, we describe the influence mechanisms of SL as seen from the data, and finally we analyse the mechanisms as revealed by the data of how SL influences an individual's work and profession.

4.1 Segmentation, integration, compensation and psychological recovery

According to earlier research (Miller & Kohn, 1983; Sumer & Knight, 2001; also Stebbins, 1992, 1997), several modes of relationship are possible between work and SL activity. The relationship can be tightly integrated, including transfer of know-how, or work and SL can be segmented and completely separate from each other. The relationship between work and SL activity may also be negative, whereby

shortcomings at work are compensated for by SL. Work may also help or hinder SL by either increasing or diminishing the mental resources needed by the SL activity.

Work and SL were partly segmented in our data, and active time management was necessary for the participants. Acts such as schedule-matching helped participants experience control (which, according to [Sonnetag & Fritz, 2007](#), is one experience of psychological recovery) by making their own decisions about how much time to use for SL and what activities were possible to be put aside. Choosing venue arrangements for SL were also a part of the experience of control. Not surprisingly, combining and coordinating work and SL often necessitates deliberate decisions (See also [Finnegan, 1989](#)). [Ylikännö \(2011\)](#) also discusses difficulties in matching work and free time, the necessity of making choices, and how time usage does not always reflect the wishes of the individual. Some of our participants, for example, deliberately reduced their work hours in order to free up room for their SL, corroborating earlier research ([Finnegan, 1989](#)). In our data, both women and men talked about coordinating family and SL. This finding differs from that of [Ylikännö \(2011\)](#), who discussed differences in opportunities to spend time on hobbies for women and men.

The experienced effects can be interpreted as indicating that work and SL were integrated according to a holistic view in which all elements of life affect each other. Our participants clearly wished to make room in their lives for both work and SL. Our data showed that integration, transfer and compensation were not separate or competing processes, but rather that they interacted with each other ([Sumer & Knight, 2001](#)). Our data also included descriptions of the experience of psychological recovery ([Sonnetag & Fritz, 2007](#)) as a consequence of SL. This contrasts with the characterisation of work as stress-creating and mandatory. Creative hobbies in particular have been shown to have a positive influence on recovery, performance and creativity at work ([Eschleman, Madsen, Alarcon, & Barelka, 2014](#)).

4.2 Influence mechanisms of serious leisure

The overall view and effects of SL on work activities are shown in Figure 1. According to the figure, SL activity affects the individual in the first phase, and the effects on work activities are in turn a consequence of these primary effects. The summary effects are the result of this complex whole. Effects on work activities are necessarily transferred through the individual because SL activities by definition take place during free-time without direct contact with work. Initially, SL activity has an effect on the knowledge (know-how) of the individual. This takes place within the individual through an accumulation of knowledge, skills, thinking and procedural means, as well as through personal contacts (see also [Stebbins, 2009](#); [Haney & Kline, 2010](#)). These accumulate first as a latent store, ready to be used and applied in various activities. The more intensive and long-term the SL activity is, the more know-how it accumulates. The increased know-how, with a new balance of various sectors of knowledge, also leads to changes in the individual's self-image as an expert and as an actor.

SL has an effect also on an individual's own mode of being and state as well as on the feeling of balance in life. This need to detach from work and to attain a counterweight to work were demonstrated in the interviews. We found that these effects increased participants' general endurance and well-being. Through the effects on an individual's subjective well-being and coping mechanisms, SL activities accumulate resources for work and thus have an effect on coping at work and on the experience of well-being at work. Knowledge increase and the experience of well-being contribute jointly to work assignments, know-how, and enthusiasm at work. While the usage of accumulated knowledge and skills as well as the application of procedural and thinking models can be straightforward and visible, more typically, it goes unnoticed by the individual's colleagues and even by him/herself. The application (i.e. transfer, spill-over) of know-how has been described as typical for SL (e.g. [Heinonen, 2004](#)). Personal contacts gained through SL may also be transferred and become work contacts. Ideally, the effects of SL on an individual are transferred, ultimately contributing to the overall know-how of the individual's organization.

The interview data showed that the chain of influence also goes in the other direction; that is, work activities have an effect on SL activities. The knowledge accumulated through work activities has the potential to be utilised in SL. These effects were not mentioned in describing issues of well-being, however; the transfer from work to SL was recognised in know-how issues only (Figure 1, the two-ended arrows).

4.3 Conclusions

Our interview data show that SL activities were not performed for the sake of work, nor were the motives of SL connected with work. SL activities appeared to be motivated primarily by something other than work-related objectives, and their effects on work can be seen as side-effects or as an additional bonus. SL – whether music or something else – generated satisfaction, meaning and content in the participants' lives, influenced subjective well-being, personal relationships, coping at work and the experiences of identity, and produced experiences of learning and success. Similar results were reported by Murray & O'Neil (2015), although they used the Leisure Satisfaction Scale indicator developed by Beard and Ragheb instead of interviews. Our results also matched well with findings by Stebbins (2015), indicating that personal relations, quality of life and well-being, as well as experiences of flow and fulfilment are seen as important in SL. Liu & Yu (2015) have also described the effects of well-being; their research showed that the experience of well-being was significantly higher in the group of hobbyists than in the non-hobby control group. Also, Haukola & Kuusi (2015) emphasised the effects of SL on well-being at work as well as on know-how and skills.

The level of activity and systematic practice of a hobby had an effect on the experience of identity; furthermore, professional identity can differ from what one could call the hobbyist identity: Kelly (1983) used the concept of dual identity in describing personality in a profession versus SL; our participants used the concepts “double life” and the “second life”.

SL was an established activity for the participants of our study; i.e. it had made it through the phase of being abandoned for being uninspiring (Stebbins, 1992). Although SL was inspiring, which often created commitment to SL (Stebbins, 1997), our participants were not necessarily willing to make it their profession (see also Stebbins, 1998; Heinonen, 2004), for several reasons. The communal experience sometimes afforded by SL was important for some of our participants, but not for all (see also Stebbins, 1998). Money or the lack thereof was not a primary criterion in the choice of SL. We had no unemployed persons in our study (according to Ylikännö, 2011, for such people, it is important to consider what kind of free-time activities are possible).

The results of our research open up possibilities for further research. The influence mechanisms in interview data, as demonstrated in Figure 1, could be further considered in frameworks of, for example, organisational theories and/or organisational psychology. New kinds of data-gathering possibilities could also be tested. Our data showed the complexity of the relationships between SL and work, as well as ambiguities in articulating and verbalising thoughts and ideas. Our interviews also demonstrated how contemplation of these issues in an open interview stimulated new thoughts. The chain effects of SL, first on the individual and then through him/her on work, may have obscured the identification and awareness of the effects. Instead of one-off interviews, a longer-term and deeper process-like dialogue may be appropriate because it would allow the participants more time to develop their thoughts. Diary-type data collection could also be possible. Research on the mutual relationships between work and SL could also be extended to the workplace. In addition to the individual's own judgments about the effects of SL on work, views could also be gathered from participants' managers, subordinates, close

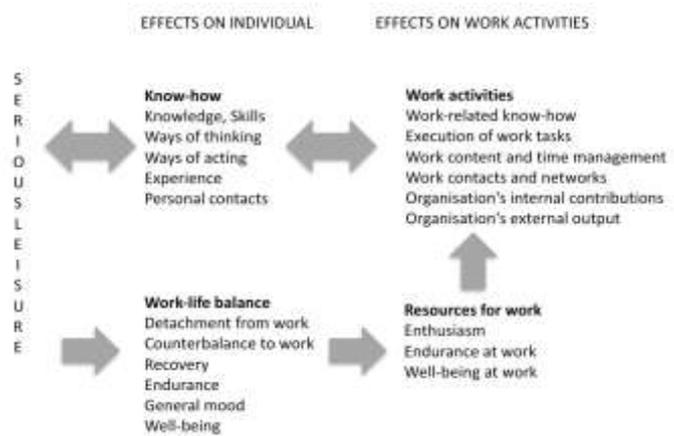


Figure 1: Influence mechanisms of SL.

workmates and possibly from a larger network, thus allowing the researchers to gather deeper data about the mutual effects of work and SL from a small group of target individuals. A thematically-structured query research could produce data that could be extrapolated (with the theme of psychological recovery, for example; see Recovery Experience Questionnaire; Sonnetag & Fritz, 2007); a questionnaire could even be sent to an extensive group of participants.

Our research indicates that music as SL does not substantially differ from other SL activities. Regardless of content, SL has profound effects on individuals' lives. Heinonen (2004) proposed that employers develop individual flexibility in working hours to make hobbies possible. We go one step further and propose, as a policy implication, that employers actively seek the positive effects of SL – from well-being at work to transfer of know-how, networking and innovation – and develop programs to increase the employees' awareness of SL and to support their SL activities, especially in these days of increasing workloads and blurring boundaries between work and free time.

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