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BLEISURE TOURISM AS A TOOL FOR INCREASING WORK MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG THE Y AND Z GENERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Bleisure tourism is a specific type of tourism based on business travel, supplemented by leisure activities, which remains an under-researched concept in many countries, including Serbia. Considering its specific characteristics, this paper aimed to explore whether the positive effects of bleisure travel could be observed among Serbia's Y and Z generations, and if bleisure could be used to increase work motivation and job satisfaction. The research was conducted as a pilot study, involving 123 participants from the Y and Z generations in Serbia. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social networks and analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), appropriate for exploratory research with smaller samples. It was established that scarce business travel, limited resources regarding free time and money, and employers' lack of support for bleisure travel were shown as disincentives to engage in bleisure tourism. Despite this, the positive impacts of this form of tourism have been recognised. The positive aspects of bleisure tourism can be used in a strategy to strengthen autonomous motivation, which would positively affect the efficiency of employees, and consequently the success of companies.

Keywords: *bleisure tourism, motivation, job satisfaction, Y generation, Z generation.*

INTRODUCTION

The pleasure a person feels during the working day greatly influences their satisfaction, creativity, behaviour, energy, and job commitment. Having fun during work contributes to the reduction of emotional exhaustion and the feeling of anxiety and, therefore, has a positive effect on the reduction of absence from the workplace (Ford et al., 2004). The leisure economy recognised all these positive aspects, transforming numerous entertaining activities into means intended to create additional economic benefits. New generations made the most significant contribution to this transition, which requires that the business sphere of life include activities that will contribute to the feeling of relaxation, excitement, and freedom, namely, numerous social activities such as celebrations, social games and other forms of entertainment, as well as opportunities for personal development (Grant et al., 2014; Karl et al., 2005; Kleiber et al., 2011). As Blackshaw (2017) claims, work has become free time, and free time has become work, implying that the bound-

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aries between these two activities have been lost. This phenomenon, which has affected numerous spheres of human life, is described by a portmanteau word *bleisure*, a blend of two English words for business and leisure (Adhiatma et al., 2019). Bleisure tourism represents a relatively new and insufficiently researched form of tourism recognised as a modern trend in the tourism industry. It combines business travel and leisure tourism, the basis of which is a business trip imbued or supplemented with leisure-related activities. Although interest in this form of travel has been growing, it remains less explored in many tourism markets, including countries in transition (Ezeuduji, 2024; Tsaur & Tsai, 2023), such as Serbia. Namely, in the Serbian language, the English term is used for this form of tourism, which remains unfamiliar even to many experts in the field, suggesting limited empirical attention in Serbia. Given the scarcity of prior empirical studies on bleisure within this context, this study focuses on exploring its perceived existence and potential effects on work motivation and job satisfaction of employees from the Y and Z generations, rather than seeking to determine its full extent. The focus on these generations is based on their specific work-related values and expectations, as well as their growing presence in the labour market (Janićijević et al., 2025; Salvadorinho et al., 2026). The rationale behind this pilot study lies in identifying patterns and testing theoretically grounded assumptions that can serve as a foundation for future research. This study makes two contributions: it provides an initial empirical understanding of the relevance of bleisure tourism in the context of Serbia and its Y and Z generations, and it initiates a discussion regarding its function in improving workers' well-being.

BACKGROUND

Although the term bleisure is relatively new to tourism, the practice of incorporating leisure activities into business trips was noticeable even in the last decade of the 20th century (Sharkey, 2001). In literature, business trips are considered the opposite of those intended for leisure, primarily due to their purpose and activities (Yoo et al., 2016). According to Martín Roda (2011), business tourism is a product of mobility for business reasons, resulting from situations when an individual leaves their residency intending to achieve various commercial contracts or for the sake of attending events without receiving any compensation at the destination. In contrast, leisure travel is primarily related to free time, a term used to describe the absence of work-related obligations or the performance of social roles, a sense of freedom, and discretionary time (Venkatesh, 2006). Ali and Schmitz (2018) define bleisure tourism as “a concept created to describe the behaviour of business tourists who, during their travels, want to extend their journey to explore the visited destination, sometimes accompanied by friends, family, partners, colleagues.” CWT Solutions Group (2016) considers bleisure trips as business trips to which travellers add personal days, as they must meet at least one of the following criteria: the traveller arrives at the destination on a Saturday or departs on a Sunday, as this timing diverges from the typical business workweek.

Beyond its tourism appeal, bleisure travel enables employees to better engage with the culture and customs of the destination they are visiting, which positively affects how they conduct business, making them more effective (Future Market Insights, 2022). Ali and Schmitz (2018) further observed that travellers who engage in bleisure report having higher work efficiency, better work-life balance, and lower travel costs, highlighting the benefits of this hybrid form of travel. With the increasing representation of employees from Generations Y and Z, born between 1980 and 2010, organisations are increasingly required to adapt existing workplace practices in order to align with the expectations and needs of these generations (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Unlike previous generations, these workers are distinguished by a bigger emphasis on work-life balance, a higher awareness of mental health, and a stronger demand for meaningful, flexible, and wellness-oriented experiences (Gomez et al., 2019). Additionally, these are the generations that face numerous health challenges, as it was shown that Generation Y individuals are particularly prone to depression, substance abuse, hypertension, hyperactivity, and Type 2 diabetes, with Generation Z, exhibiting even

more pronounced mental health challenges, with stress and anxiety being particularly prevalent (Global Talent, 2022). Combining the state of health of these generations with the strain of modern business travel, which includes prolonged work hours, jet lag, poor diet, and social isolation, could prove detrimental to these workers (Rogers & Reilly, 2002; International SOS Foundation, 2018). In this context, employers and tourism professionals must recognise that for these generations, business travel could prove a potential health risk; thus, bleisure travel could emerge as a preventive measure against employee burnout and psychological distress.

Moreover, bleisure travel is increasingly perceived as a nonmonetary incentive that benefits both enterprises and employees by enriching employee motivation (Chen et al., 2016) and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction refers to the level to which an individual likes their job and it is influenced by a complex interplay of personal (personality, education, intelligence), social (relationship with co-workers, group work, informal organisation), cultural (attitudes, values, and beliefs), organisational (nature of work, relationship with employees, leadership styles) and external factors (economic, social impacts) (Spector, 1997; Janko, 2016). Every organisation should strive to prevent the occurrence of job dissatisfaction, which may result from the nature of the employee, tasks and roles, co-workers and superiors, and salary and benefits (Noe et al., 2006).

Between work motivation and job satisfaction exists a complex relationship, which is influenced by various personal, organisational, and social factors (Ertas, 2015; Homberg et al., 2015). Namely, motivation directs activities toward achieving goals, while satisfaction results from the given goals (Nedeljković Knežević et al., 2019). An employee can be highly motivated for work and at the same time be barely satisfied and vice versa (Hadžić & Nedeljković, 2008). To a certain extent, some researchers (Singh & Sharma, 2016; Rao et al., 2018) equate the concepts of motivation and satisfaction, which is not realistically possible.

Motivation represents a central factor in the success of any organisation. It can be viewed as an individual's willingness to use energy to achieve set goals and as a force that stimulates, controls, and maintains behaviour internally and externally (Beach, 1985; Daft & Noe, 2001). Business motivation can be interpreted as a mechanism by which employees are motivated by the company, through various incentives, to achieve organisational goals (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2012). Different theories of motivation try to answer the question of how many motives there actually are, whether all motives are equal, and if they are not, what their hierarchy is. Stepanov et al. (2016) believe that motivation theories can be divided into content theories, for example, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, which strive to determine what motivates people, and process theories, like Vroom's expectations theory or Skinner's reinforcement theory, which focus on the specificity of the motivational process.

Among the more recent content theories is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), an empirically based theory about human nature and behaviour that developed as a thoughtful critique of traditional reward-punishment motivation models (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Moyang, 2023). SDT stems from the assumption that people are inherently curious, self-motivated beings directed toward their growth, who not only react to stimuli but actively self-regulate in pursuit of their motives, goals, and values. Additionally, it acknowledges that human vitality and self-motivation can be considerably reduced depending on certain factors; thus, it identifies the conditions and contexts that most often lead to individual prosperity (Martela, 2020). This focus on external factors represents the main difference between SDT and other motivation theories, making this theory especially well-suited for tourism-based research that analyses motivation within organisational contexts (Moyang, 2023). Concerning bleisure tourism, the Self-Determination theory is an ideal choice for research as it highlights the fulfilment of employees' basic psychological needs (Table 1), crucial for propelling both work and leisure motivations. Depending on the reason why a person behaves in a certain way or performs an activity, SDT distinguishes between intrinsic motivation, identified, introjected, external regulation, and amotivation (Gagne et al., 2010). The term autonomous motivation refers to intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, as both are characterised by a high degree of volition and choice, while for introjected and external regulation, in which externally controlled pressures influence the regulation

of behaviour, the expression controlled motivation is used (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Ryan et al., 2022).

Table 1. *Three basic psychological needs of employees according to the Self-Determination Theory*

Autonomy	The need for freedom of choice, the opportunity to express ideas and make decisions about how to implement business tasks, the need for independent decision-making, and the initiation of activities.
Competence	The need for efficiency and success in business is satisfied when skills can be used and developed.
Relatedness	The need for connection and acceptance stems from human nature as a social being.

Source: [Deci & Ryan, 1987](#); [Van den Broeck et al., 2010](#); Ryan & Deci, 2017

Okine et al. (2021) found that higher employee motivation is connected to increased performance and efficiency, which can contribute to overall organizational performance. As long as the needs of employees are met, the gap between personal and organisational goals will decrease, making them coincide over time (Jesop, 2005). In the context of a modern approach to employee motivation, based on SDT, Pink (2009) distinguishes between intrinsic rewards, which originate from within the person (ability development, progress, choice), and extrinsic rewards, derived from external sources (money, promotion, praise) (Buchbinder & Shanks, 2008). Pink (2009) states that to encourage motivation, only routine activities should be rewarded, and employees should be allowed to have the opportunity to carry out their activities in the way they see fit.

According to Haider et al. (2014), awards can be divided into monetary and non-monetary prizes. Monetary rewards refer to salary increases and bonuses, which have a short-term effect on increasing motivation, especially when compared to non-monetary rewards. Non-monetary rewards such as shorter working hours, meals, additional days off, and team events have a long-term effect on increasing work motivation. Considering the nature of bleisure tourism, it can be classified as a non-monetary reward with numerous benefits for all parties involved. The potential of using bleisure tourism as a non-monetary reward was also determined by Ramgada (2021), who found that bleisure significantly contributes to establishing a better work-life balance while helping reduce individual travel costs.

Bleisure travel is emerging as a potential strategy that could positively affect the mental health, work motivation, and work-life balance of employees from the Y and Z generations, consequently contributing to a higher quality of work life and yielding better business results. Although bleisure tourism remains a relatively new and underexplored topic in the academic literature, its potential impact on employee well-being can be examined through theories such as the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). By allowing employees to integrate leisure into business travel, the three basic psychological needs defined by SDT, which are essential for maintaining motivation and job satisfaction, would be supported (Table 2).

Table 2. Satisfaction of basic psychological needs in bleisure travel according to the Self-Determination Theory

Autonomy	Giving employees freedom to manage their time and explore destinations on their terms
Competence	Providing exposure to new environments and opportunities for self-development
Relatedness	Allowing employees to travel with or meet friends, family, or colleagues, thereby reducing social isolation

Source: Authors' research

As a result, bleisure travel has the potential to transform an otherwise stressful business trip into a rejuvenating and inspirational experience. When organisations acknowledge and support bleisure, they show their employees that they care for their well-being, which can lead to higher levels of work engagement, loyalty, and performance (Ghazmeen et al., 2025). This is particularly relevant for Generations Y and Z, whose focus on work-life balance and mental health makes them more responsive to such practices (Waworuntu et al., 2022). Given that bleisure satisfies the basic psychological needs, it should lead to increased motivation and higher levels of job satisfaction. By not treating business and leisure as mutually exclusive, companies could improve not only employee satisfaction but also talent retention. From a practical standpoint, these insights suggest that companies should formally accommodate and encourage bleisure, not seeing it as a discretionary benefit but rather a strategic investment in human capital. Despite these insights, the knowledge on whether the positive effects of bleisure translate similarly across different cultural and regional contexts is less known. Based on this, the study aims to explore whether similar positive effects of bleisure can be observed with the employees from the Y and Z generations in Serbia. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed: *Bleisure tourism positively impacts work motivation and employee satisfaction among Serbia's Y and Z generations.*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Previous research on bleisure tourism has mostly focused on its growing presence within the tourism sector, especially emphasizing its economic implications (Batala & Slevitch, 2024; Boros et al., 2025). At the same time, attention has been given to employer attitudes and organizational policies related to the integration of leisure into business travel (Sood & Juneja, 2024), as well as its potential to improve work–life balance and employee well-being (Chakraborty et al., 2025; Iyengar & Venkatesh, 2024). Although limited research has examined the relationship between bleisure tourism and work motivation (Sardést & Ivanauskas, 2019; Laiju, 2026), and some studies have suggested its potential to enhance job satisfaction (Chakraborty et al., 2025), these relationships have rarely been considered from a generational perspective. Despite the growing interest in bleisure tourism, this topic still remains under-researched across many national contexts (Sohaili et al., 2022), including Serbia, where empirical evidence remains scarce. Thus, this study takes a pilot approach to test whether this form of tourism is present in Serbia and to provide initial insight into its impacts on work motivation and job satisfaction among employees from the Y and Z generations. The focus on these generations was intentional, as their specific characteristics, mostly the importance they put on work-life balance and mental health, make them more responsive to practices such as bleisure, making them particularly suitable for this study.

For the purpose of this research, a custom questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire included two scales that assessed the relationship between bleisure tourism, work motivation, and employee satisfaction

among the Y and Z generations. The Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (Gagné et al., 2010) was used to measure the extent to which bleisure tourism impacts the work motivation of this demographic, while the Generic Job Satisfaction Scale (Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997) evaluated whether bleisure contributes to a more positive work experience and overall job satisfaction. The chosen scales were initially translated and adapted from English to Serbian to ensure their suitability for the given context, and the accuracy of the translation was tested using the back-translation method, which involves translating the adapted scales back into English and comparing them with the original. This method ensured more accuracy in the translation process. The variables within the scales were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale (1 – do not agree at all, 2 – partially disagree, 3 – not sure, 4 – partially agree, 5 – completely agree), for which respondents expressed their degree of agreement/disagreement with the statements. Additionally, the questionnaire included 11 items related to bleisure and business trips, which were borrowed from bleisure-related research conducted by BridgeStreet Global Hospitality (2014), GBTA Foundation (2017), Ali and Schmitz (2018), Sardést and Ivanauskas (2019), and Tala et al. (2011). It contained two closed-ended and three semi-open-ended questions and a six-item scale for which respondents indicated the degree of agreement/disagreement using a five-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire was distributed online via social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Reddit) between April 22 and May 20, 2023, targeting individuals from the Y and Z generations residing in Serbia. The total sample included 123 participants, which exceeded the commonly suggested pilot sample sizes in social science research (Johanson & Brooks, 2010). As participation was voluntary, the sample may be subject to self-selection bias, as those more interested in travel-related topics were more likely to respond. Given its exploratory nature, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution and cannot be directly generalized to all populations.

The majority of the data was processed using IBM SPSS (version 23). Cronbach's alpha was applied to assess the internal consistency of the scales, and descriptive statistics were used to summarise the data on work motivation, job satisfaction, and bleisure tourism. Pearson's linear correlation was applied to examine the relationships between the work motivation and job satisfaction scales, to identify the strength and direction of these associations. To assess the relationships between bleisure tourism, work motivation, and job satisfaction, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS) was conducted. Data processing for this was carried out in the R environment (version 4.5.0), using the *plspm* package. Path coefficients and R^2 values were determined to evaluate the explanatory power of the model, while bootstrapping was applied to test the statistical significance of the path coefficients.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement model evaluation

Using the Lavaan package (version 0.6-19) in R, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to evaluate the construct validity and reliability of the scales. The model included three latent constructs: work motivation, job satisfaction, and bleisure, each represented by multiple observed indicators, which were estimated via maximum likelihood (ML). The CFA results provided partial support for the assumption that the observed indicators load onto the three dimensions (work motivation, job satisfaction, and bleisure). The overall model fit indices indicated a suboptimal fit: $\chi^2(347) = 913.94$, $p < .001$; Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.712; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.686; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.115, 90% CI [0.106, 0.124], $p < .001$; Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.097. The main model fit indices are presented in Table 3. While most fit indices were below conventional thresholds (e.g., CFI and TLI < 0.90, RMSEA > 0.08), the model's complexity and the modest sample size may partially explain these results. Acceptable factor loadings were supported by the moderate to high standardised factor loadings ($\lambda = 0.40\text{--}0.96$, $p < .001$) for all but one item. The factor loadings confirmed that each set of items loaded predominantly onto its respective construct, with no substantial cross-loadings observed. Item 12 from the

Work Motivation scale demonstrated a non-significant and very low loading ($\lambda = 0.07$, $p = .486$), indicating a limited contribution to the latent construct and potential for its removal in future studies. All latent variables were significantly correlated, including a strong positive correlation between Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction ($r = 0.78$), indicating theoretically coherent relationships. To evaluate the internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated, revealing a value of 0.867 for the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale, 0.906 for the Generic Job Satisfaction Scale, and 0.856 for the Bleisure scale, with all of them exceeding the 0.7 threshold, thus indicating strong reliability and internal consistency of the scales for the sample.

Table 3. *Measurement model fit indices*

Index	Value	Recommended threshold
χ^2 (df = 347)	913.94 ($p < .001$)	/
CFI	0.712	> 0.90
TLI	0.686	> 0.90
RMSEA	0.115	< 0.08
SRMR	0.097	< 0.08

Source: Authors' calculation

Although Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a confirmatory technique, it was applied in this study as an initial test of the measurement structure in a new empirical context. The obtained fit indices were sub-optimal (e.g., CFI = 0.712; TLI = 0.686; RMSEA = 0.115) and should therefore be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, the use of the scales in this study remains justified for several methodological and theoretical reasons:The research was conducted on a modest sample size ($N = 123$), which may have influenced the stability of model fit indices. Previous research (Kline, 2015; Hair et al., 2019) suggests that fit indices can be sensitive to sample size, especially in pilot or initial validation studies.

1. The Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale and the Generic Job Satisfaction Scale have been used and validated across diverse cultural and organisational contexts. Thus, additional support for their inclusion in this study is provided, due to their theoretical coherence and previous empirical validation.
2. The scales demonstrated good internal consistency and reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients well above the 0.70 threshold, indicating that even though certain model-level indices fall short of standard CFA requirements, they provide additional support for the internal coherence of the scales.
3. Most standardised factor loadings ranged from $\lambda = 0.40$ to 0.96 ($p < .001$), showing acceptable to strong item-level contributions to the latent constructs, with one item from the Work Motivation Scale having a low and non-significant loading ($\lambda = 0.07$, $p = .486$). This item was retained despite its low loading to preserve the integrity and comparability of the original scale, with recommendations for future research to consider its revision or removal.
4. Although fit indices suggest areas for improvement, the high correlation between theoretically related constructs (e.g., $r = 0.78$ between Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction) shows that the observed relationships are theoretically meaningful. It is reasonable to anticipate some degree of model misfit in the initial stages of research because the constructs are intricate, multifactorial, and tailored for a new cultural context.

These factors justify the use of the three applied scales in the study, while also highlighting the areas for refinement in future research. The confirmatory factor analysis provided partial support for the formulation of three distinct constructs (work motivation, job satisfaction, and bleisure), each representing a separate dimension. Work motivation reflects the degree of internal and external drivers that influence employees' engagement in work-related tasks, while job satisfaction indicates the fulfillment one feels regarding various aspects of the job, and bleisure represents the extent to which individuals integrate leisure activi-

ties into their business travel. The majority of the observed indicators demonstrated satisfactory loadings, suggesting that the items adequately represent the underlying dimensions. These constructs were subsequently used in further analyses to examine their interrelationships and their role in explaining employee behaviour and perceptions.

Socio-demographic profile of respondents

The first aspect that must be considered when looking at the obtained results is the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (Table 4). The respondents consisted of members of the Y and Z generations in Serbia, with a relatively equal share of participants from both groups, specifically, 54.5% from Generation Y and 45.5% from Generation Z. The sample was predominantly female (70.7%), with a significant number of respondents (41.5%) having completed higher school or faculty.

Table 4. *Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (n=123)*

Socio-demographic characteristic	Number	Percentage (%)
Generation		
Y (1980-1994)	67	54.5
Z (1995-2004)	56	45.5
Gender		
Male	36	29.3
Female	87	70.7
Education		
High school	28	22.8
Higher school/faculty	51	41.5
Masters studies	43	35
PhD studies	1	0.8

Source: Authors' research

Business travel patterns and bleisure-related behaviour

The collected data indicated that a significant percentage of respondents (66.7%) travel on business trips only once a year, 23.6% travel up to 5 times a year, while the other respondents (9.7%) make more than five business trips during the year. Since official statistical data on this topic is unavailable, if we were to compare these findings with the data from the European Union, notable differences could be observed. As this study does not include inferential statistical comparisons with EU averages, these differences offer a contextual framework for understanding travel habits in Serbia. According to a 2023 Deloitte study, 77% of European business travellers reported taking one to five trips in 2023, with 15% taking up to ten trips (Deloitte, 2024). This comparison could suggest that business travel in Serbia may be less frequent than in the EU, with sporadic business travel stemming from various factors, potentially reflecting a corporate culture within Serbian companies that may not prioritise frequent business travel. If this were the case, it could be difficult for bleisure tourism to appear within the Y and Z generations in Serbia due to the absence of the habit of participating in business trips and the possible higher stress level to which employees would be exposed because of the trip and job demands. In these situations, Y and Z generation employees could only focus on executing work tasks, neglecting other activities available at the destination. From an SDT perspective, employees could perceive this as behaving under pressure, which may result in controlled motivation, or even amotivation, thus decreasing intrinsic motivation and increasing the possibility of psychological fatigue (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The collected data within this research shows that over 36% of respondents focus exclusively on job requirements during a business trip, which represents a significant share of those who do not show much interest in the visited destination. Earlier research conducted by Bridgestreet Global

Hospitality (2014) indicated that 17,5% of business travellers who do not take the opportunity to explore the destination during their free time cite work-related reasons for their decision, suggesting that job requirements may hinder the development of bleisure. There may also be a theoretical basis for this reluctance to engage in bleisure activities within this demographic. As the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests, people are motivated to engage in activities that satisfy their basic psychological needs, such as the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Bleisure travel can contribute to the fulfilment of these needs by enabling employees the freedom to choose how they spend their leisure time (autonomy), the opportunity to participate in stimulating activities (competence), and the chance to connect with other people during the trip (relatedness). The desire to explore new destinations and immerse oneself in different cultural contexts may be seen as a reflection of intrinsic motivation, which is considered crucial for the well-being and sustained engagement of employees from the Y and Z generations. However, if these needs were to be restricted due to the lack of employer support or perceived time pressure, autonomy may be thwarted, consequently leading to reduced motivation and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Thus, the reluctance of over one-third of the respondents in this research to participate in bleisure may indicate a frustration of their basic psychological needs. Rather than seeing the business trip as a chance for personal growth, they experience heightened pressure and presumably a lack of autonomy, which negatively impacts their intrinsic motivation, enabling them to perceive bleisure as a viable option. Thus, the low level of bleisure engagement may reflect structural limitations and a motivational climate that fails to support basic need satisfaction.

Over 63% of respondents pointed out that they use their free time during a business trip to explore and experience the city they are in. The most common activities they engage in are sightseeing (20%), consuming local food and drinks (18.8%), and walking/hiking (14.1%). These results mostly coincide with those by CWT Solutions Group (2016), which indicate that at the destination, bleisure tourists most often enjoy consuming local food and drinks, then sightseeing and enjoying activities related to culture and history. Research by Çulfacı et al. (2024) has shown that consuming local food, utilising hotel facilities, and conducting architectural and cultural visits represent the most popular activities of bleisure tourists. The popularity of hiking/walking during travel may reflect a specific characteristic of the given target group that may be connected to their habits and the need to relieve stress and anxiety, as physical activity is shown to significantly reduce these conditions (Marconcin et al., 2022). From the perspective of SDT, this kind of physical activity can be seen as an indicator of intrinsic motivation, as it satisfies the need for competence and enhances vitality (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This information could be essential, especially when planning leisure activities for this segment of visitors.

Motivations and barriers for engaging in bleisure

The research results have shown that the main reasons respondents would use their vacation days to extend a business trip are that they want to see the world and seek new cultural experiences (43.1%), they want to refresh and relax (24.4%), and that they have never been to the given destination (14.6%). In these situations, most respondents (47.2%) do not take their partner or family members with them. SDT interprets this as a pursuit of intrinsically motivated experiences, which bring a sense of discovery and rejuvenation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This behaviour may also reflect integrated regulation, as to achieve autonomous motivation in a work setting, people may align their values with external activities (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As these findings coincide with those from other research (Bridgestreet Global Hospitality, 2014; Çulfacı et al., 2024; GBTA Foundation, 2017), this could suggest that experiencing the local culture could be seen as the primary motivator for business tourists that pushes them to engage in bleisure. Research by TravelPerk (2024) supported these findings, with 72% of Millennials and 79% of Gen Z stating that they want to travel for work to explore new places.

After finishing all of their business obligations, respondents are less likely to transform and extend their business trips into those intended for rest and recreation (this makes up 35.7% of respondents). Although

these results are low, they shouldn't be interpreted as a limitation of the sample, but rather as a reflection of the present structural and contextual constraints. The findings from GBTA Foundation's research from 2017 indicate that the main reasons for not extending business travel for leisure purposes include the lack of time, company policy, undesirable location, and cost. These results coincide with those from the current study, with the lack of time (46.6%) and financial reasons (34.8%) being stated as primary reasons. This data provides a good insight into the state of the labour market in Serbia. According to Eurostat (2024) (the statistical office of the European Parliament), statistics from 2024, Serbia has been among the leaders in Europe for the number of working hours of its employees for years, with an average of 40 hours per week. Together with the average net salary of 94,125 RSD (statistical report for February 2024, Republic Institute of Statistics), an amount equal to 803.69 euros (converted according to the mean exchange rate of the National Bank of Serbia, as of May 14, 2024), it is not surprising that respondents rarely participate in this type of tourism, which requires two significant resources that employees in Serbia have difficulty in managing. Also, an essential factor is the employer's support for this type of travel. It is questionable whether it is present, especially considering that 31.7% of respondents stated that their employer does not support bleisure tourism. The findings of other research (Bridgestreet Global Hospitality, 2014; GBTA Foundation, 2017) have also pointed out how company policy regarding bleisure travel often discourages it. From the perspective of SDT, the lack of support for bleisure travel could be viewed as a controlling factor that diminishes job satisfaction and contributes to lower work engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2002), thus providing a different stance on this form of travel could prove highly beneficial, as it would contribute to the increase of intrinsic motivation. Despite these results, 43.9% of respondents believe that as employees, they benefit from this type of travel, with 48% believing that bleisure tourism contributes to the increase of their business productivity. These results are supported by SDT, as even short leisure engagement during business travel can satisfy the basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Correlation analysis

Analysing the relationship between items associated with bleisure and business trips and the constructs measured by the work motivation scale and the generic job satisfaction scale (Table 5), a moderate positive correlation was identified between the bleisure-related items and both scales. The correlation between bleisure travel and work motivation ($r = 0.352$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that respondents who frequently combine business and leisure travel tend to report higher motivational levels. This finding is further supported by the structural model results, where bleisure also demonstrates a significant predictive effect on work motivation. SDT supports these findings, stating that when individuals satisfy their basic psychological needs, they are likelier to exhibit autonomous motivation, which leads to better work performance, creativity, and job satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This is important, especially considering that work-life balance and job satisfaction have been shown to influence the job performance of the Y and Z generations (Waworuntu et al., 2022). Thus, this suggests that offering opportunities for bleisure could serve as a non-monetary motivational factor that could enhance employee engagement and morale. Employer support for bleisure and job satisfaction has the strongest positive correlation ($r = 0.472$), highlighting the critical role that organisational policy has in shaping employee perceptions of travel-related benefits. In contrast, the weakest, yet still significant correlation ($r = 0.205$) was between exploring the city during business trips and work motivation, suggesting that while destination engagement may contribute to enjoyment, it does not necessarily result in an increased work drive. From the SDT perspective, this could suggest that not all activities have motivational benefits, highlighting that if they are not perceived as meaningful or self-endorsed, they may not satisfy the needs for competence or relatedness.

These results align with emerging research emphasising the motivational value of bleisure. For instance, Ramgade (2021) discovered that corporate workers are more interested in bleisure travel, associating this trend with their desire for greater job satisfaction and a better work-life balance. Similarly, Batala and Slevitch (2024) identified the key features of bleisure travel, with the three main ones being 'weekend for leisure', 'using leisure as motivation', and 'realistic expectations', which are closely linked to the motivation of trav-

ellers. As Ramsey et al. (2025) concluded, converting a business trip into a bleisure experience could positively impact work motivation and job satisfaction, as bleisure is shown to alleviate travel-induced stress and business travel burnout. Therefore, company support, flexibility, and recognition of leisure as a valid part of business travel may be considered important motivators in today’s modern workforce. These relationships offer an indication of the role of bleisure, which is subsequently investigated using the structural model to get a deeper understanding of its predictive potential.

Table 5. Results of Pearson’s correlation

Item	Generic job satisfaction scale	Work motivation scale
After fulfilling all business obligations, I transform and extend my business trip into one intended for rest and relaxation.	0.296 **	0.233 **
During a business trip, I use my free time to explore/experience the city I visit.	0.244 **	0.205 *
When I use my days off to extend a business trip, I take a partner or family member with me.	0.232 **	0.352 **
My employer supports bleisure.	0.472 **	0.352 **
Bleisure contributes to increased work productivity.	0.245 **	0.335 **
I feel that as an employee, I benefit from bleisure travel.	0.308 **	0.374 **

* * Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Source: Authors’ research

Structural model results (PLS-SEM)

Building upon the correlational findings, the structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) results provide a deeper insight into the predictive relationships between bleisure, work motivation, and job satisfaction. While the correlation analysis showed a moderate positive relationship between bleisure and work motivation and job satisfaction, PLS-SEM enabled the understanding of how bleisure tourism contributes to explaining variance in these constructs.

The constructs for bleisure, work motivation, and job satisfaction presented acceptable internal consistency and convergent validity in terms of measurement validity and reliability. Strong internal consistency was shown by Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability (rhoC) values for these constructs (Table 6), as all were above the recommended threshold of 0.70. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for bleisure (0.579) and job satisfaction (0.528) both surpassed the 0.50 threshold, indicating that the construct is captured by a substantial proportion of variance. However, although work motivation showed high reliability (alpha = 0.867, rhoC = 0.893), its AVE resulted in 0.422, suggesting that some items may not be as closely linked to the underlying construct. This highlights an area that could be further improved in future studies through the refinement or revalidation of this scale.

Table 6. Measurement Model Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability (rhoC)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	rhoA
Bleisure	0.855	0.892	0.579	0.866
Work Motivation	0.867	0.893	0.422	0.879

Job Satisfaction	0.899	0.917	0.528	0.904
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Source: Authors’ research

The structural path coefficients (Table 7) indicate that bleisure has a moderate positive effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.409$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.397$), which aligns with the correlation results, suggesting that employees who perceive leisure opportunities during business trips are more likely to feel motivated and happy at work. These structural relationships are consistent with the findings of **Çulfacı et al. (2024)**, who concluded that bleisure travel has a positive impact on motivation and satisfaction, highlighting the critical role of motivational factors in enhancing traveller experiences. They are also confirmed by SDT, which has shown that by allowing the integration of leisure into business trips, autonomous forms of motivation are supported. Additionally, these findings are consistent with the continuum of SDT, where identified and controlled regulation are supported by the opportunity to engage in bleisure, which enables the shift between controlled to autonomous motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Furthermore, bleisure explains significant variance in both categories, as indicated by the R^2 values. Although the path coefficients are statistically significant, their moderate size suggests that bleisure alone does not fully explain variations in motivation and satisfaction, indicating the influence of other factors such as personality traits, company culture, or travel destination appeal.

Tabela 7. *Structural Model Results (Path Coefficients and R²)*

Dependant Variable	Independent Variable	Path Coefficient (β)	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Work Motivation	Bleisure	0.409	0.167	0.160
Job Satisfaction	Bleisure	0.397	0.157	0.150

Source: Authors’ research

The quantitative results, which are upheld by the broader socio-economic context described in this study, empirically support the hypothesis that “Bleisure tourism positively impacts work motivation and employee satisfaction among Serbia’s Y and Z generations”. Despite the present constraints, such as infrequent business travel, limited organisational support, and prevailing work-related stressors, bleisure travel shows a contribution to both motivation ($\beta = 0.409$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.397$), confirming its relevance even in less-than-ideal conditions. Combined, these results show that bleisure is both linked to and a contributor to increased levels of job satisfaction and work motivation. This is additionally supported by nearly half of the respondents who perceive bleisure as a tool for increasing work productivity. This implies that workers from the Y and Z generations aren’t just open to the idea of incorporating leisure into their business travel experience, but are beginning to see it as a legitimate part of their overall work experience. By promoting autonomy, encouraging the development of competence, and facilitating social connections during business travel, organisations could drastically increase the intrinsic motivation and well-being of their employees (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Thus, bleisure should not be perceived as a bonus, but as a strategically important element in developing a more resilient, engaged, and satisfied workforce. As a result, these findings might be a useful starting point for continuing discussions around redefining employee well-being and the ever-changing demands of the modern workforce.

CONCLUSION

Although Serbia is formally a country in transition, if we were to observe some of its socio-cultural aspects, such as the characteristics of the Y and Z generations, it would show similarities with other more developed economies (Bubalo-Živković & Lukić, 2015). These generations are associated with changing trends,

as well as specific values and expectations in both work and travel contexts. Accordingly, following new trends in the tourism market, this research aimed to explore whether the positive effects of bleisure travel, which represents a combination of business and leisure tourism, could be observed within the Y and Z generations of Serbia, and if in this context bleisure could be used as a tool for increasing work motivation and job satisfaction.

Analysing the obtained research, we can conclude that employees in Serbia, who belong to the Y and Z generations, are familiar with business trips imbued with leisure activities. However, most rarely go on more than one business trip per year. This, combined with the reported lack of time (46.6%) and financial constraints (34.8%), as well as insufficient employer support (31.7%), suggests that these factors may act as disincentives to engage in bleisure tourism. Despite these limitations, the respondents recognised that this type of tourism can positively impact their work motivation and job satisfaction, which is further supported by the structural model results showing a positive effect on work motivation and job satisfaction. Therefore, based on the findings, the results indicate that the hypothesis proposed in this research, which states that bleisure tourism positively impacts work motivation and employee satisfaction among Serbia's Y and Z generations, can be accepted. Bleisure tourism could be seen as a low-cost, high-impact weapon that employers in Serbia could integrate into their practice, leading to improved organisational commitment and employee engagement. The positive aspects of this form of tourism can be used in a strategy to strengthen employees' autonomous motivation, which would positively impact their efficiency and, therefore, companies' success and market position. Accordingly, it is necessary to strengthen the awareness of the positive implications of this type of travel and, through various initiatives, influence the introduction of bleisure tourism into the business policy of companies in Serbia.

This research provides empirical support for the self-determination theory, showing that autonomous motivation in the workplace can be strengthened through non-monetary incentives such as bleisure. It also helps understand the interaction between organisational psychology and travel behaviour in transitional economies and contributes to the literature on bleisure tourism in Serbia, showing its potential benefits. In practical terms, the paper offers insights into how bleisure can be used to improve job satisfaction and organisational competitiveness. However, several limitations should be noted. Given the small sample size of this study, the findings should be interpreted with caution, as they may not fully represent the whole population. The given paper focused only on a particular segment of the working population, which can significantly affect the respondents' attitude about the benefits of bleisure tourism. Also, it focused on the positive aspects of bleisure tourism, while significant attention was not paid to the adverse effects, such as the blurring between work and private life. Overall, the attitude of local employers about bleisure tourism was not considered at all, and the given data could provide a better insight into the reasons for not implementing bleisure tourism within the business practice.

In this regard, future research could adopt an approach that combines organisational data and employer attitudes, focusing on including broader and more diverse samples. Also, research into the impact of bleisure tourism on companies that support and implement this type of travel would be interesting. It would show more precisely the impacts that bleisure could achieve as a tool for increasing work motivation and job satisfaction, potentially focusing on its long-term effects on performance, employee loyalty, and retention. Future research could also focus on the effects of bleisure tourism on family relationships, particularly on the impact of this type of tourism on individuals with children, and the effects that exposure to this form of tourism has on children and how it shapes their perception of employment. In conclusion, this study introduces bleisure as a viable tool for increasing work motivation and job satisfaction of the Y and Z generations, challenging academics and practitioners to reevaluate its position in the modern workplace.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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