




## Article

# From Passion to Burnout: The Role of Work–Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction in the Workplace

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**Abstract:** In the modern workplace, understanding the dynamics of work passion and its consequences on employee well-being is crucial. This quantitative study, conducted with Portuguese workers, seeks to examine and validate the Dualistic Model of Passion, which distinguishes between harmonious and obsessive passion, while also exploring the intricate relationships among work passion, job satisfaction, work–family conflict, and burnout. Using mediation analyses and structural equation modeling (SEM), a convenience sample of 326 participants (169 men and 157 women), aged between 19 and 69 years ( $M = 41.31$ ,  $SD = 10.52$ ), was analyzed to uncover how different types of work passion—obsessive and harmonious—impact professional outcomes and well-being. The findings reveal that obsessive passion for work is a significant predictor of work–family conflict, which, in turn, escalates the risk of burnout. In contrast, harmonious passion is positively associated with increased job satisfaction and acts as a buffer against the negative effects of work–family conflict. Notably, contrary to initial assumptions, obsessive passion does not directly precipitate burnout. Mediation analyses confirmed that work–family conflict plays a key role in this process, while SEM results demonstrated strong model fit indices, reinforcing its relevance and applicability in organizational settings. These results offer crucial insights for both theoretical advancement and practical applications, highlighting the importance of fostering a work environment that nurtures harmonious passion. By doing so, organizations can mitigate conflict and burnout while promoting higher levels of job satisfaction among employees.



Academic Editors: Isabella Crespi and Elena Macchioni

Received: 13 November 2024

Revised: 3 February 2025

Accepted: 6 February 2025

Published: 12 February 2025

**Citation:** Sousa, Cátia, and Ana Sofia Ferro. 2025. From Passion to Burnout: The Role of Work–Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction in the Workplace. *Social Sciences* 14: 104. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14020104>

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**Keywords:** work passion; burnout; job satisfaction; work–family conflict

## 1. Introduction

In an increasingly fast-paced world, where the speed of change challenges human balance, we witness a constant flow of innovations driven by society’s needs and dissatisfactions. This relentless pursuit of well-being, sustainability, and human appreciation coexists with the rise in job insecurity, inequality, and environmental impacts, creating a paradox; while there is a growing emphasis on balance and quality of life, physical and psychological exhaustion have also intensified (e.g., [Sonnentag et al. 2017](#)).

In this context, organizations face the challenge of keeping up with rapid transformations and achieving a performance that ensures their sustainability ([Tenney 2024](#)). People, invaluable resources for organizational success, play a fundamental role in this process, with the human resources function focusing on attracting and retaining talent aligned

with organizational values and objectives. However, the scarcity of professionals with the necessary skills results in fierce competition for talents, who become strategic assets for organizational differentiation and success (e.g., Maurer 2024; Tarique and Schuler 2010).

Passionate and innovative people, capable of envisioning and creating the future, are essential for any organization. As Perrewé et al. (2014) state, one of the most valued qualities today is passion for work. Passionate individuals, with focus and ambition, tend to overcome obstacles and be fully invested in what they do, traits common to athletes, successful entrepreneurs, and dedicated professionals (e.g., Moeller et al. 2019; Wang et al. 2022). However, such intense dedication can sometimes be risky. Passion requires continuous investment, and if uncontrolled, it may lead to burnout, a condition characterized by physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion (Shirom 2003). Studies show that job satisfaction can act as a protective factor against burnout, while work–family conflict (WFC), defined as a form of inter-role conflict where the demands of work and family domains are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985), contributes to its development. Harmonious and obsessive passions play distinct roles: the former reduces conflict and promotes satisfaction, while the latter amplifies WFC and the risks of burnout.

The Dualistic Model of Passion for Work, proposed by Vallerand et al. (2010), has been widely studied, but most research has focused on specific professional groups, such as athletes, entrepreneurs, or healthcare professionals (e.g., Vallerand and Houliort 2003; Curran et al. 2015). Less is known about how these relationships operate across diverse work contexts and in different cultural settings. Moreover, few studies have simultaneously examined the mediating roles of WFC and job satisfaction in the passion–burnout relationship. This study seeks to address these gaps by replicating and extending Vallerand et al.’s (2010) model in a sample of Portuguese workers, employing structural equation modeling (SEM) to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the relationships between passion, satisfaction, WFC, and burnout. By integrating these variables into a single model, this research offers a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which passion affects employee well-being, contributing to both theoretical advancement and practical applications in human resource management.

### 1.1. Work Passion

Work passion is a complex phenomenon widely explored in the literature. It is a multidimensional experience that oscillates between extremes, such as suffering–joy, satisfaction–dissatisfaction, and reason–passion (Vallerand and Houliort 2003). Despite appearing simple, it involves an intricate network of concepts, including people, feelings, emotions, and attitudes (Karlsson 2015; Marsh et al. 2013).

The development of work passion is shaped by biological, sociological, and social factors, emerging either gradually or through intense and transformative moments. This passion fosters dedication to professional goals, promoting intrinsic pleasure (Carvalho 2012; Gregório 2021). However, passion can have both positive and negative aspects. While fully expressed passions promote a balanced life, repressed passions may lead to destructive behaviors (Marsh et al. 2013). Thus, managing work passion requires balancing reason and emotion and promoting healthy work environments (Carvalho 2012).

Work passion directly influences personal identity, performance, and emotional well-being (Martins et al. 2014; Vallerand and Houliort 2003), making it crucial to follow human resources practices that aim to create healthy, productive workplaces.

Vallerand and Houliort (2003) proposed a dual model of work passion, comprising harmonious and obsessive dimensions, influenced by how the activity is integrated into one’s identity. Obsessive passion reflects disproportionate commitment, often associated with emotional conflicts and burnout (Vallerand et al. 2010; Trépanier et al. 2014). In contrast,

harmonious passion integrates flexibly and is associated with well-being, satisfaction, and reduced emotional exhaustion (Forest et al. 2011; Vallerand et al. 2007).

### 1.2. Work–Family Conflict

Research by Vallerand and Houliort (2003) and Vallerand et al. (2010) encouraged further exploration of the relationship between work passion and WFC. The interaction between professional and personal life, combined with work passion, promotes the emergence of conflicts between these spheres (Houliort et al. 2017). WFC arises from the incompatibility between work demands and family responsibilities in a bidirectional relationship (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Studies highlight that the centrality of work in modern society plays a key role in this conflict, as individuals increasingly prioritize professional commitments over family responsibilities (Carr et al. 2008; Xie et al. 2017; Zhang et al. 2011). The centrality of work is reflected in both the absolute and relative value individuals place on work, expressed through dedication and passion.

Balancing multiple social roles is crucial for both physical and psychological well-being (Eddleston and Powell 2012). However, constant professional and family pressures are major sources of stress that negatively impact health and overall well-being (Rincón and Martínez 2020). WFC has been linked to a range of negative outcomes, including stress, burnout, absenteeism, turnover, family dissatisfaction, and apathy, as well as increased substance use (Sousa et al. 2020). The contributing factors extend beyond professional stress and workaholism to include perceptions of organizational support for family, household task distribution, and family-related stress (Byron 2005; Matias et al. 2011; Sarbu 2018).

The psychological, physical, behavioral, and organizational consequences of WFC can be significant. Obsessive work passion exacerbates these challenges, disrupting balance across life domains and increasing the risk of both conflict and burnout (Houliort et al. 2017).

### 1.3. Burnout

WFC and the imbalance between life spheres create a demanding environment, perceived as oscillating between stimulation and tension. While these conditions can promote development, they also lead to discomfort and anxiety. When persistent, they result in physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, contributing to burnout (McKenna 2006).

Stress and burnout are widely discussed in the literature due to their impacts, such as decreased performance and lower satisfaction at work and in other life areas (Tavares et al. 2014). Stress is temporary and adaptive, reflecting difficulties in handling immediate situations (Almeida et al. 2013). Burnout, however, arises in response to prolonged occupational stress, evolving from idealistic enthusiasm to disappointment with workplace reality (Delbrouck 2006).

Burnout, according to the Maslach and Jackson (1981), is characterized by chronic exhaustion, lack of accomplishment, and cynicism. Emotional exhaustion depletes energy and affects relationships, resulting in irritability and withdrawal. Depersonalization manifests as alienation and cynicism, while lack of professional accomplishment leads individuals to undervalue their achievements. Shirom and Melamed (2006) describe burnout across three dimensions—physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive weariness—affecting energy, empathy, and mental agility. Work stress, according to these authors, occurs when individuals experience a loss of resources or an inability to recover them (Hobfoll et al. 2018).

Factors influencing burnout include excessive workload, anxiety, and lack of professional support. Recently, the World Health Organization classified burnout as a syndrome linked to chronic workplace stress, with consequences including dissatisfaction, absenteeism, depression, and a loss of meaning in work.

#### 1.4. Job Satisfaction

Given these insights, which broadly encourage employee engagement in the organizational framework as a fundamental source of job satisfaction and a mitigating factor against burnout, the importance of this variable becomes clear. The more motivated and dedicated individuals are, the higher the productivity levels organizations can achieve. This underscores the critical need to understand organizational climate, specifically, employee job satisfaction (Almeida et al. 2013).

Satisfaction is conceptualized as either an emotion or an attitude, reflecting a positive emotional state toward work (M. L. Lima et al. 1988). The causes of satisfaction can be personal, such as demographics and emotional control, or organizational, such as salary and working conditions (Cunha et al. 2007). Research indicates that organizational factors have a more direct impact on satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Araújo and Filho 2018).

People who are passionate about their work show greater perseverance and are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Carbonneau et al. 2008). Studies show that harmonious passion is positively correlated with job satisfaction, as observed among high-performance athletes and teachers (Faria et al. 2020; Prates et al. 2019). Generation Y values work–life balance, where work passion and satisfaction contribute to reducing turnover and increasing commitment (Purba and Ananta 2018).

A sense of belonging at work also strengthens the relationship between harmonious passion and satisfaction, highlighting the importance of a sense of belonging for organizational well-being (Pathak and Srivastava 2020).

#### 1.5. The Present Study

The primary aim of this research was to replicate the study by Vallerand et al. (2010), which proposed a model on the role of work passion in burnout. The model suggests that obsessive passion contributes to burnout, while harmonious passion prevents it, with the variables of conflict and job satisfaction acting as mediators. Obsessive passion positively predicts conflict between work and other life activities, while harmonious passion negatively predicts it. Harmonious passion also positively influences job satisfaction, whereas obsessive passion does not. Thus, conflict increases burnout, while satisfaction reduces it.

Houliort et al. (2017) proposed a model in which work passion predicts psychological stress. In this model, tension-based WFC mediates the relationship between obsessive passion and psychological stress, with harmonious passion showing negative effects. Studies such as those by Caudroit et al. (2011) and Thorgren et al. (2013) show that obsessive passion is associated with WFC, while harmonious passion is negatively related to family–work conflict (FWC).

Although recent studies suggest that obsessive and harmonious passion do not have a direct impact on job satisfaction, the literature indicates that job satisfaction is a crucial mediator in the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout (Houliort et al. 2017). A healthy balance between work and family life contributes to greater satisfaction and a lower risk of burnout (Junjunam 2020).

Research such as that by Lopes and Vallerand (2020) shows that, in athletes, obsessive passion is strongly related to burnout, while harmonious passion shows a weak association. The need for satisfaction and conflict plays significant roles in this relationship.

Based on the replication of Vallerand et al.'s (2010) study, the following hypotheses are formulated:

**H1:** *Harmonious passion is negatively related to WFC.*

**H2:** *Obsessive passion is positively related to WFC.*

**H3:** *Harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and job satisfaction influence burnout.*

**H4:** *WFC mediates the relationship between obsessive passion and burnout.*

**H5:** *Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout.*

**H6:** *Harmonious passion influences job satisfaction.*

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Sample

The sample (N = 326) consists of Portuguese professionals, mostly men (51.8%), aged between 19 and 69 years (M = 41.31, SD = 10.52). The majority are married or in a domestic partnership (61%), without children (35.6%), and hold a bachelor's degree (35.9%). Most work in the private sector (71.2%), with permanent contracts (66.6%), in full-time positions (94.5%), and have worked over 10 years in their current company (41.7%). The most represented professional areas are hospitality and tourism (18.1%) and other sectors (27.6%). Management is largely flexible with work schedules (70.9%), and most employees do not have exempt schedules (62.6%) nor hold management positions (62.9%).

### 2.2. Instruments

The questionnaire administered to participants included the following instruments:

**Passion Scale**—This study used the Portuguese adaptation of the Passion Scale by [Gonçalves et al. \(2014\)](#), originally developed in French by [Vallerand et al. \(2003\)](#). The scale consists of two 7-item subscales: harmonious passion (e.g., item 3: “This activity allows me to live memorable experiences”; item 5: “This activity is in harmony with other activities in my life”) and obsessive passion (e.g., item 8: “I cannot live without this activity”; item 13: “I have almost an obsessive feeling for this activity”). The scale can be adapted to any activity and is rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), with no reverse-scored items. Higher scores on each subscale indicate stronger levels of harmonious or obsessive passion, respectively. Cronbach's alpha for the subscales was 0.94 for harmonious passion and 0.93 for obsessive passion.

**Work–Family and Family–Work Conflict Scale**—The WFC and FWC scales, adapted for the Portuguese population by [Santos and Gonçalves \(2014\)](#), were originally developed in English by [Netemeyer et al. \(1996\)](#). This 10-item scale, rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), is a bidimensional instrument assessing two types of conflict: work–family conflict (5 items; e.g., item 1: “The demands of my job interfere with my family life”; item 4: “My job does not allow for absences due to family reasons”) and family–work conflict (5 items; e.g., item 7: “I forego professional tasks due to family commitments at home”; item 9: “My family life interferes with my job responsibilities, such as punctuality, meeting daily tasks, and working overtime”). Higher scores indicate a greater perceived conflict. The internal consistency values obtained were 0.89 for the overall scale, 0.89 for WFC, and 0.87 for FWC.

**Burnout**—Burnout was assessed using the Shirom–Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM) by [Shirom and Melamed \(2006\)](#). This 14-item scale includes three subscales: (1) physical fatigue (6 items; e.g., item 3: “I feel physically exhausted”); (2) cognitive fatigue (5 items; e.g., item 10: “I feel I cannot concentrate”); and (3) emotional exhaustion (3 items; e.g., item 13: “I feel unable to invest emotionally in colleagues and clients”). Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = never; 7 = always). Higher scores indicate greater burnout.

Internal consistency values obtained were 0.95 for the overall scale, 0.93 for physical fatigue, 0.96 for cognitive fatigue, and 0.95 for emotional exhaustion.

**Job Satisfaction**—The job satisfaction scale by M. Lima et al. (1994), composed of 8 items, assesses satisfaction regarding various aspects of work (e.g., item 2: “Regarding the organization and functioning of your department, you would say you are:” and item 4: “Regarding the salary you receive, you would say you are:”). Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = extremely dissatisfied to 7 = extremely satisfied). Higher scores indicate greater job satisfaction. The scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.91.

### 2.3. Procedures

The data were collected through a questionnaire available on Google Forms and in a paper-based format. Most responses (307 out of 340 participants) were obtained online. Data collection occurred between March 2024 and June 2024, during which the questionnaire remained open to participants. Before completing the survey, participants were informed about the study’s purpose and assured of anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. Upon completion, they were fully debriefed and thanked for their participation. A total of 14 incomplete responses were excluded based on the inclusion criteria (complete questionnaire, age over 18, and active employment), resulting in a final sample of 326 participants. The order of questionnaire presentation was as follows: demographic questions, followed by the Passion Scale, WFC/FWC Scale, Burnout Scale, and Job Satisfaction Scale.

### 2.4. Design

This study employed a cross-sectional correlational design to examine the relationships between passion (harmonious and obsessive), WFC-FWC, job satisfaction, and burnout. Specifically, the study investigates both direct and mediated effects among these variables. Harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and job satisfaction are considered predictor variables, while burnout is the main outcome variable. WFC-FWC is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between obsessive passion and burnout, whereas job satisfaction is expected to mediate the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout. The proposed model includes several direct effects: harmonious passion is expected to be negatively related to WFC (**H1**), while obsessive passion is hypothesized to be positively related to WFC (**H2**). Additionally, harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and job satisfaction are collectively expected to influence burnout (**H3**). Regarding mediation effects, WFC is expected to mediate the relationship between obsessive passion and burnout (**H4**), whereas job satisfaction is expected to mediate the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout (**H5**). Lastly, harmonious passion is hypothesized to influence job satisfaction (**H6**). This design allows for testing the interplay between passion, work–family conflict, job satisfaction, and burnout in a workplace context, providing insights into the mechanisms that contribute to employee well-being and occupational health.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 27.0, and SPSS AMOS v. 21.0. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations were computed to examine the relationships between the study variables. Mediation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes 2018), employing bootstrapping with 5000 resamples to test indirect effects. To better illustrate the mediation model, Figure 1 presents the tested paths, including the indirect effect ( $a \rightarrow b$ ) and the direct effect ( $c'$ ). Additionally, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed in SPSS AMOS to simultaneously estimate direct and indirect effects, providing a more robust assessment

of the hypothesized relationships. SEM was chosen over traditional regression analyses because it allows for the modeling of latent constructs, accounts for measurement error, and enables the testing of multiple relationships in a single model (Kline 2016). A path analysis approach was used to examine mediation effects. Model fit was evaluated using standard goodness-of-fit indices: NFI (Normed Fit Index) > 0.90 (acceptable fit); Comparative Fit Index (CFI) > 0.90 (acceptable fit); and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.08 (acceptable fit).

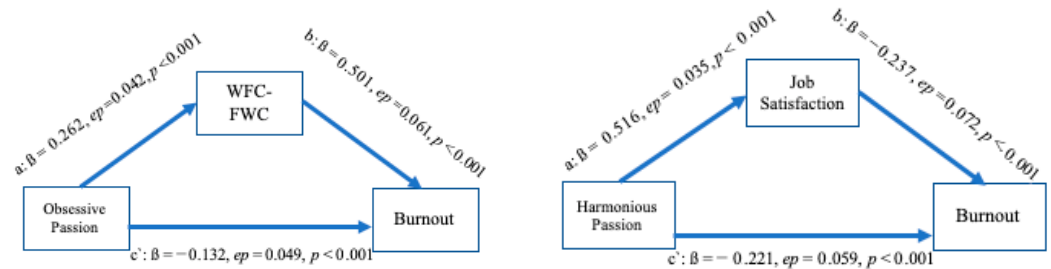


Figure 1. Mediation models.

These criteria follow the recommendations of Hu and Bentler (1999). The estimated parameters were interpreted based on standardized regression weights ( $\beta$ ) and confidence intervals, with statistical significance set at  $p < 0.05$ .

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the variables investigated. The variables with the highest means were job satisfaction ( $M = 4.66, SD = 1.28$ ) and harmonious passion ( $M = 4.47, SD = 1.57$ ), while emotional exhaustion ( $M = 2.22, SD = 1.47$ ) and FWC ( $M = 2.23, SD = 1.21$ ) had the lowest means. For comparability with previous research, a supplementary table (Appendix A Table A1) presents the key variables side by side with those reported by Vallerand et al. (2010), allowing for a direct comparison of means, standard deviations, and correlations.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables.

Variables	M	SD	Job Satisfaction	WFC-FWC	WFC	FWC	Harmonious Passion	Obsessive Passion	Burnout	Physical Fatigue	Cognitive Fatigue
Job Satisfaction	4.66	1.28	-								
WFC-FWC	2.91	1.22	-0.057	-							
WFC	3.59	1.62	-0.055	0.902 **	-						
FWC	2.23	1.21	-0.041	0.814 **	0.484 **	-					
Harmonious Passion	4.47	1.57	0.634 **	0.065	0.069	0.040	-				
Obsessive Passion	2.74	1.51	0.251 **	0.325 **	0.286 **	0.273 **	0.416 **	-			
Burnout	2.78	1.41	-0.372 **	0.390 **	0.345 **	0.326 **	-0.384 **	-0.001	-		
Physical Fatigue	3.17	1.64	-0.365 **	0.389 **	0.379 **	0.278 **	-0.358 **	-0.009	0.928 **	-	
Cognitive Fatigue	2.64	1.61	-0.294 **	0.275 **	0.233 *	0.245 **	-0.311 **	0.14	0.910 **	0.747 **	-
Emotional Exhaustion	2.22	1.47	-0.310 **	0.369 **	0.268 **	0.388 **	-0.348 **	-0.014	0.730 **	0.548 **	0.567 **

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

The correlations (also shown in Table 1) indicate that job satisfaction has a strong, positive correlation with harmonious passion ( $r = 0.634, p < 0.01$ ), a weak positive correlation with obsessive passion ( $r = 0.251, p < 0.01$ ), and a moderate negative correlation with burnout ( $r = -0.372, p < 0.01$ ), supporting hypotheses H6, H7, and H8. The burnout dimension most impacted by satisfaction was physical fatigue ( $r = -0.365, p < 0.01$ ).

WFC shows positive correlations with all variables, especially with burnout ( $r = 0.345, p < 0.01$ ) and obsessive passion ( $r = 0.286, p < 0.01$ ). The correlation between WFC and harmonious passion, although positive, is very weak ( $r = 0.069, p < 0.01$ ).

Finally, the correlations between burnout and types of passion were negative, with a moderate negative relationship between burnout and harmonious passion ( $r = -0.384, p < 0.01$ ). However, the correlation between burnout and obsessive passion was extremely close to zero ( $r = -0.001, p < 0.01$ ), indicating no meaningful relationship between these variables, despite reaching statistical significance. The relationship with harmonious passion was most notable in the physical fatigue ( $r = -0.358, p < 0.01$ ) and emotional exhaustion ( $r = -0.348, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions.

### 3.2. Mediation Analysis

To investigate the proposed mediation hypotheses (**H4** and **H5**), a mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' (2018) simple mediation model 4. The proportion of mediation is assessed using the formula: direct effect/total effect =  $e$ ;  $PM = (1 - e)$ . The first mediation analysis addresses **H4** (Table 2). The results show that obsessive passion ( $\beta = -0.13, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.23, -0.035], t(323) = -2.66, p < 0.05$ ) and WFC-FWC ( $\beta = 0.50, \text{ CI } [0.38, 0.62], t(323) = 8.13, p < 0.001$ ) are significant predictors of burnout. Approximately 17% ( $R^2 = 0.170$ ) of the variance in burnout levels is explained by these predictors (Table 2). The total effect of obsessive passion on burnout ( $c$ ), without the mediator, is  $\beta = -0.001$  and is statistically non-significant ( $p = 0.98$ ). However, the indirect effect (mediation) via the WFC-FWC variable was significant ( $\beta = 0.131, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } = 0.073-0.199$ ), as zero is not contained within the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval (BCa) (Hayes 2018). This means that WFC mediated approximately 99.23% of the relationship between obsessive passion and burnout, suggesting that the effects of obsessive passion on burnout primarily occur through increased WFC-FWC rather than a direct link.

**Table 2.** Coefficient model for burnout (WFC-FWC as a mediating variable).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	M (WFC-FWC)			Y (Burnout)		
	Coef	EP	<i>p</i>	Coef	EP	<i>p</i>
X (Obsessive Passion) <sup>a</sup>	0.262	0.042	<0.001 <sup>c</sup>	-0.132	0.049	0.008
M (WFC-FWC)	-----	-----	----- <sup>b</sup>	0.501	0.061	<0.001
	$R^2 = 0.105$			$R^2 = 0.170$		
	$F(1, 324) = 38.19, p < 0.001$			$F(2, 323) = 33.08, p < 0.001$		

Note: WFC-FWC = work-family conflict and family-work conflict; Coef = standardized coefficient; EP = standard error estimate;  $p$  = statistical significance;  $R^2$  = proportion of variance explained; <sup>a</sup> = Effect of the independent variable (X) on the mediator (M); <sup>b</sup> = Effect of the mediator (M) on the dependent variable (Y); <sup>c</sup> = Total effect of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) (before accounting for the mediator).

The second mediation analysis addresses **H5** (Table 3). The results show that harmonious passion ( $\beta = -0.22, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.33, -0.10], t(323) = -3.78, p < 0.001$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.24, \text{ CI } [-0.37, -0.09], t(323) = -3.29, p < 0.001$ ) are significant predictors of burnout. Approximately 17.5% ( $R^2 = 0.175$ ) of the variance in burnout levels is explained by these predictors. The total effect of harmonious passion on burnout ( $c$ ), without the mediator, was  $\beta = -0.34$  and statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The indirect effect (mediation) via job satisfaction variable was significant ( $\beta = -0.122, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } = -0.193, -0.051$ ), as zero is not contained within the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval (BCa) (Hayes 2018), confirming that job satisfaction mediated 35.29% of the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout. These results indicate that har-

monious passion reduces burnout partially through its positive influence on job satisfaction, reinforcing its role as a protective factor.

**Table 3.** Coefficient model for burnout (job satisfaction as a mediating variable).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	M (Job Satisfaction)			Y (Burnout)		
	Coef	EP	<i>p</i>	Coef	EP	<i>p</i>
X (Harmonious Passion) <sup>a</sup>	0.516	0.035	<0.001 <sup>c</sup>	−0.221	0.059	<0.001
M (Job Satisfaction)	-----	-----	----- <sup>b</sup>	−0.237	0.072	<0.001
	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.402			R <sup>2</sup> = 0.175		
	F(1, 324) = 217.78, <i>p</i> < 0.001			F(2, 323) = 34.30, <i>p</i> < 0.001		

Note: Coef = standardized coefficient; EP = standard error estimate; *p* = statistical significance; R<sup>2</sup> = proportion of variance explained. <sup>a</sup> = Effect of the independent variable (X) on the mediator (M); <sup>b</sup> = Effect of the mediator (M) on the dependent variable (Y); <sup>c</sup> = Total effect of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) (before accounting for the mediator).

### 3.3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The proposed model shows good fit indices: CMIN/DF = 2.14, *p* = 0.093; CFI = 0.991; TLI = 0.956; NFI = 0.984; RMSEA = 0.059 [0.000; 0.123]; these values are similar to those obtained by the authors (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Model fit indices for the research model.

	N	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	<i>p</i>	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Original (study 1)	97	4.50	4	2.87	0.48	0.95	1.00	0.00
Original (study 2)	258	12.09	10	1.20	0.29	0.99	0.99	0.029
Present Study	326	6.42	3	2.14	0.09	0.98	0.99	0.059

Note: CMIN—Chi-Square Minimum Discrepancy; DF—Degree of Freedom; CMIN/DF—Chi-Square Minimum Discrepancy divided by Degrees of Freedom; *p* = statistical significance; NFI—Normed Fit Index; CFI—Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA—Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

## 4. Discussion

This study aimed to replicate and extend the work passion and burnout model proposed by Vallerand et al. (2010), investigating how work passion (harmonious and obsessive), work–family conflict (WFC), and job satisfaction relate to burnout. The findings largely confirmed the model’s propositions, demonstrating that obsessive passion is positively associated with WFC (H2), while harmonious passion positively influences job satisfaction (H6). Additionally, WFC was found to mediate the relationship between obsessive passion and burnout (H4), and job satisfaction mediated the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout (H5). Furthermore, harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and job satisfaction significantly influenced burnout (H3). However, contrary to expectations, harmonious passion was not negatively related to WFC (H1), suggesting that experiencing harmonious passion does not necessarily mitigate work–family tensions. Overall, our findings align with previous research on the dual model of passion (Vallerand et al. 2010). However, some variations exist, particularly regarding the relationship between WFC-FWC and burnout. A detailed comparison of key statistics between the present study and Vallerand et al. (2010) can be found in Appendix A Table A1. These findings emphasize the dual nature of work passion and highlight the importance of managing work–life balance in preventing burnout. They also provide insights for organizations and employees on fostering harmonious passion while minimizing the risks associated with obsessive passion.

**H1** (“Harmonious passion is negatively related to WFC”) was not supported, as harmonious passion did not exhibit the expected negative relationship with WFC. Instead, the relationship was very weak and positive, suggesting that harmonious passion has minimal impact on work–family conflict. This finding contradicts previous research, which suggests that harmonious passion fosters flexibility, focus, and positive emotions in work activities, theoretically aiding individuals in balancing work and other life roles (Pereira et al. 2018; Vallerand 2012). Various authors (e.g., Pereira et al. 2018; Vallerand 2012; Vallerand 2015; Vallerand et al. 2010; Vallerand and Houliort 2003) support this idea, arguing that harmonious passion helps individuals integrate work as part of their identity, thereby reducing work–family conflict (WFC). A possible explanation for the current findings is that, while individuals with harmonious passion experience fulfillment in their work, they may still dedicate substantial time and energy to it, leading to occasional work–life conflicts. Additionally, prior research on harmonious passion and WFC has primarily focused on specific professional groups (e.g., educators, healthcare workers), where passion-driven autonomy may be more feasible, whereas this study includes a more diverse sample across multiple industries, where work flexibility varies. This weak association suggests a potential theoretical gap regarding the conditions under which harmonious passion effectively reduces WFC. It is possible that this relationship is moderated by external factors, such as job autonomy, workload, and workplace culture. In environments with high job demands or rigid work structures, employees with harmonious passion may still experience WFC despite their balanced approach to work engagement. Future research should explore potential moderators to clarify the mechanisms through which harmonious passion influences WFC and determine whether certain occupational contexts or work arrangements amplify or weaken this relationship.

**H2** (“Obsessive passion is positively related to WFC”) was confirmed. Obsessive passion showed a positive correlation with WFC, aligning with prior studies suggesting that excessive work dedication may lead to conflict in both personal and professional spheres, making it difficult for individuals to detach from work. Empirical evidence supports this, indicating that obsessive passion intensifies pressure and contributes to interpersonal and work–life conflicts (e.g., Burke et al. 2014; Pereira et al. 2018). Specifically, individuals with obsessive passion may struggle to set boundaries between work and personal life, leading to tensions with colleagues and family members.

**H3** was supported, indicating that harmonious passion, obsessive passion, and job satisfaction significantly influence burnout. Specifically, harmonious passion was negatively associated with burnout, reinforcing its protective role. This is consistent with Vallerand et al. (2010) and Lopes and Vallerand (2020), who found that employees with harmonious passion experience lower levels of physical and emotional exhaustion. By allowing individuals to engage in their work with autonomy and balance, harmonious passion reduces the risk of burnout (Deci and Ryan 2000). Conversely, obsessive passion was not directly related to burnout, suggesting that its impact occurs indirectly through WFC (**H4**). This finding diverges from earlier research (Vallerand et al. 2010), which found a direct link between obsessive passion and burnout. However, it aligns with studies emphasizing the role of mediating factors, such as work–life balance and emotional regulation, in shaping the effects of obsessive passion (Pollack et al. 2020).

**H4** was supported, confirming that WFC-FWC mediates the relationship between obsessive passion and burnout. The results indicate that obsessive passion alone does not significantly predict burnout. However, when WFC-FWC is introduced as a mediator, the relationship becomes significant, suggesting that the detrimental effects of obsessive passion on well-being occur primarily through its impact on work–family balance. These findings highlight the importance of managing work–family boundaries, as reducing con-

flict could mitigate the negative effects of obsessive passion on burnout (Burke et al. 2014). The mediation analysis results provide additional insight into the strength of this effect. The total variance in burnout explained by obsessive passion and WFC was  $R^2 = 0.170$ , indicating that while WFC-FWC is an important mechanism, other factors also contribute to burnout risk. Moreover, WFC accounted for approximately 99.23% of the total effect of obsessive passion on burnout, reinforcing the idea that work–family conflict is a key pathway linking obsessive passion to burnout. While our study found that obsessive passion does not directly predict burnout, this does not necessarily mean that such a relationship does not exist in specific contexts. Previous research suggests that obsessive passion may have different consequences depending on professional settings and work cultures (Curran et al. 2015; Vallerand 2015). In high-performance environments with strong external pressures and long working hours, obsessive passion may directly lead to exhaustion, particularly when work–life boundaries are weak or when organizations promote a culture of overwork. Future research should explore whether specific job characteristics or cultural norms moderate the relationship between obsessive passion and burnout, determining whether obsessive passion may have direct detrimental effects rather than operating through WFC. Additionally, obsessive passion and burnout may have a reciprocal influence. While obsessive passion may contribute to burnout through persistent over-engagement in work, individuals experiencing burnout might, in turn, develop stronger obsessive tendencies, struggling to disengage despite exhaustion (e.g., Tassell and Flett 2007). Future research should examine whether burnout itself reinforces obsessive passion, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of escalating work involvement and emotional exhaustion. Understanding this interplay could provide a more comprehensive perspective on how obsessive passion influences long-term well-being.

**H5** was confirmed, demonstrating that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout. This suggests that the protective role of harmonious passion against burnout is partly explained by its contribution to job satisfaction. Employees with harmonious passion experience higher job satisfaction, which, in turn, lowers their risk of burnout. These findings align with research indicating that job satisfaction acts as a buffer against work-related exhaustion (Houliort et al. 2017; Maslach et al. 1996). The mediation analysis showed that job satisfaction explained 35.29% of the relationship between harmonious passion and burnout ( $PM = 35.29\%$ ), with  $R^2 = 0.175$ , indicating that other factors also contribute to the protective effects of harmonious passion. While harmonious passion reduces burnout risk, job satisfaction is not the sole mechanism, and additional workplace conditions (e.g., autonomy, social support, and role clarity) may further enhance its protective effects. From an applied perspective, these findings suggest that increasing job satisfaction alone may not be sufficient to fully buffer employees from burnout. Organizations should focus on a broader strategy that combines workplace well-being initiatives, leadership support, and work–life balance policies to maximize the benefits of harmonious passion. Given the moderate effect sizes observed in both mediation models, future studies should explore additional factors that may strengthen or weaken the indirect effects of WFC and job satisfaction on burnout. For example, job autonomy, workload, emotional regulation strategies, and organizational support could play moderating roles in these relationships. Furthermore, a longitudinal approach could clarify whether these mediation effects remain stable over time or fluctuate based on changing work conditions.

**H6** was also supported, showing that harmonious passion strongly influences job satisfaction. Employees who view their work as an integral and meaningful part of their identity tend to experience higher levels of satisfaction (Houliort et al. 2017). These findings reinforce the importance of promoting organizational environments that support autonomy

and intrinsic motivation, as they foster harmonious passion, which, in turn, enhances job satisfaction.

Our findings confirm key aspects of [Vallerand et al.'s \(2010\)](#) Dualistic Model of Passion, particularly regarding the detrimental effects of obsessive passion on well-being. Consistent with their results, we found that obsessive passion leads to WFC, reinforcing its role as a risk factor for burnout. However, our study diverges in one significant way; unlike [Vallerand et al. \(2010\)](#), our results indicate that obsessive passion does not directly predict burnout but instead exerts its effects through WFC. This suggests that work–family imbalance is a crucial pathway through which obsessive passion leads to exhaustion, an aspect that was not explicitly examined in prior studies. This aligns with recent meta-analytical findings by [Pollack et al. \(2020\)](#), which highlight the role of work–life balance in moderating the relationship between passion and burnout. Regarding harmonious passion, our results differ from [Houliort et al. \(2017\)](#), who found that both harmonious and obsessive passion were positively related to job satisfaction. In contrast, our findings indicate that only harmonious passion significantly predicts job satisfaction, while obsessive passion does not. This suggests that although obsessive passion may drive engagement, it does not necessarily lead to greater job satisfaction, possibly because it creates rigid persistence and work–family conflict rather than a fulfilling work experience.

#### 4.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

A key contribution of this study is the inclusion of work–family conflict (WFC) as a mediating mechanism. While [Vallerand et al. \(2010\)](#) and [Houliort et al. \(2017\)](#) did not consider WFC in their models, our results show that it plays a crucial role in explaining how obsessive passion contributes to burnout. Specifically, obsessive passion alone did not predict burnout, but when WFC was introduced as a mediator, the relationship became significant (**H4**). This reinforces the idea that burnout is not merely a direct outcome of passion but is strongly influenced by how passion interacts with external stressors such as work–family conflict. These findings have important implications for both theory and practice, as it suggests that organizations seeking to prevent burnout should not only focus on passion itself but also on work–life balance policies that reduce WFC. Additionally, the mediating role of job satisfaction (**H5**) highlights that harmonious passion protects employees from burnout partly because it enhances job satisfaction, further supporting the importance of fostering a positive work environment. These findings emphasize the need for human resource policies that promote a sustainable work–life balance.

Organizations should be aware that a results-driven culture may encourage obsessive passion, which, if unchecked, can lead to work–family tensions and burnout. To mitigate these risks, companies should implement flexible work schedules and right-to-disconnect policies to prevent excessive work engagement. Leadership training can also help managers recognize signs of obsessive passion and encourage a healthier balance. Additionally, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) can provide psychological support and stress management strategies to employees at risk of burnout. Given the positive impact of harmonious passion on job satisfaction, organizations should foster a culture that promotes meaningful work and professional growth. This can be achieved through career development programs that enhance intrinsic motivation and reduce feelings of stagnation. Recognition and reward systems should also be designed to reinforce balanced engagement rather than excessive dedication. Moreover, organizational support initiatives, such as mentoring programs (e.g., [Whitten 2016](#)), can help employees align their personal values with their professional roles.

Finally, work–life balance policies—such as the Portuguese law on the right to disconnect (Lei n.º 83/2021; [Assembleia da República 2021](#))—should not only exist on paper but

also be effectively enforced to ensure that employees are not pressured to be constantly available. Managers should be trained to respect these boundaries and actively encourage employees to disconnect after work hours, preventing WFC from escalating into burnout. By implementing these strategies, organizations can foster harmonious passion, increase job satisfaction, and minimize the risks associated with obsessive passion and WFC, ultimately leading to healthier, more engaged, and more productive employees.

#### 4.2. Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations. Although the model showed good fit indices and most hypotheses were confirmed, different scales were used to measure burnout, job satisfaction, and work–family conflict than in the original study, which may have influenced the results. However, by assessing the three dimensions of burnout, this study addressed a limitation of the original study, which assessed only emotional exhaustion. Additionally, while [Vallerand et al. \(2010\)](#) used a sample of nurses, a profession associated with high burnout levels, this study relied on a more diverse sample, potentially impacting comparability. Another limitation is the cross-sectional design which restricts the ability to establish causal relationships among work passion, WFC-FWC, job satisfaction, and burnout. The original model is based on both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, tracking burnout over six months in nurses from France and Canada. Since burnout is a cumulative process, developing from prolonged exposure to stressors, a longitudinal approach would provide deeper insights into how these relationships evolve over time. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to track how WFC and job satisfaction influence burnout trajectories and whether the effects of obsessive and harmonious passion fluctuate across different time points. Additionally, longitudinal studies could assess whether interventions targeting work–life balance and job satisfaction have lasting effects in reducing burnout risk. Moreover, future research could expand the model to different cultural and professional contexts, enabling cross-cultural comparisons or focusing on specific professional groups particularly vulnerable to burnout, such as workers in emotionally demanding sectors (e.g., education, geriatric care) and industries undergoing constant technological change (e.g., IT, communications). In Portugal, where small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent a significant portion of the economy ([Instituto Nacional de Estatística \(INE\) \(2023\)](#)), it is crucial for organizations—particularly SMEs—to adopt effective HR policies that promote work–life balance, job satisfaction, and sustainable employee engagement. Given that job satisfaction plays a key role in mitigating burnout, companies should invest in initiatives such as recognition programs, career development opportunities, and mental health support, particularly in high-demand industries.

While this study provides important insights into the relationships between work passion, WFC, job satisfaction, and burnout, it does not specifically examine differences based on gender or parental status. Prior research has shown that work–family conflict may manifest differently depending on gender roles and caregiving responsibilities (e.g., [Shockley et al. 2017](#); [Winslow 2005](#)), which could influence the pathways explored in this study. Future research should conduct subgroup analyses to determine whether these relationships differ between men and women, as well as between parents and childless employees. Such analyses would provide a more nuanced understanding of how work–life balance mechanisms operate across different demographic groups. Additionally, it would be valuable for future research to test the model’s invariance across different sociodemographic factors, such as educational level and job sector, to assess whether the observed relationships are consistent across diverse populations. Expanding this approach could strengthen the generalizability of the findings and provide a more detailed understanding of how work passion and WFC interact in various professional and cultural contexts.

Although obsessive passion was not shown to predict burnout, this finding challenges the conventional view that obsessive passion is always negative, highlighting the need to explore alternative mediating pathways in this relationship (Pollack et al. 2020). Nevertheless, organizations should foster environments that promote harmonious passion (e.g., greater autonomy, lower pressure, work–family balance policies) to help employees reduce conflict, prevent burnout, and enhance job satisfaction. While managers cannot directly increase employees' passion, they can create conditions that support its emergence, encouraging employees to be “active creators” of their work (Pollack et al. 2020).

In summary, further research is needed to better understand how organizations can support employees in developing harmonious passion while minimizing the risks associated with obsessive passion and work–family conflict.

## 5. Conclusions

This study reinforces the dual nature of work passion and its implications for employee well-being and organizational outcomes. The findings confirm that obsessive passion is a key predictor of work–family conflict, which, in turn, increases burnout. Conversely, harmonious passion is positively associated with job satisfaction, which serves as a protective factor against burnout. These results emphasize the importance of considering both direct and mediated effects when examining the impact of passion in the workplace. One of the most significant insights is that obsessive passion does not directly predict burnout but rather exerts its effects indirectly through increased work–family conflict. This suggests that organizations should prioritize work–life balance strategies to mitigate the negative consequences of obsessive passion. Additionally, the strong relationship between harmonious passion and job satisfaction underscores the need to foster workplace environments that promote autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and alignment between work and personal values.

From a practical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of human resource policies that encourage a sustainable work–life balance. Organizations should recognize that a results-driven culture may inadvertently fuel obsessive passion, which, if unchecked, can lead to heightened work–family tensions and increased burnout risk. Future research should explore additional mediators, such as emotional regulation and coping strategies, to further clarify the mechanisms through which passion influences well-being. Moreover, longitudinal studies would be valuable in establishing causal relationships between these variables, offering deeper insights into how passion evolves over time.

In conclusion, while passion can drive motivation and achievement, its effects depend on how it is experienced and managed. By fostering conditions that support harmonious passion and reduce work–family conflict, organizations can enhance job satisfaction and protect employees from burnout, ultimately contributing to a healthier, more engaged, and more sustainable work environment.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, A.S.F. and C.S.; methodology, A.S.F.; software, A.S.F. and C.S.; validation, A.S.F. and C.S.; formal analysis, A.S.F.; investigation, A.S.F.; resources, A.S.F.; data curation, A.S.F.; writing—original draft preparation, A.S.F.; writing—review and editing, C.S.; visualization, A.S.F.; supervision, C.S.; project administration, C.S.; funding acquisition, C.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This work was funded by national funds through FCT—Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia—as part the project CIP—Ref<sup>a</sup> UIDB/PSI/04345/2020.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the President of the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences at the University of Algarve on 2 November 2020, under the code EDOC/2020/28292.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data supporting this study are available from the authors upon request.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Appendix A

**Table A1.** Comparison of means, standard deviations, and correlations of key variables between the present study and Vallerand et al. (2010).

Variables	M (SD) Present Study	M (SD) Vallerand et al. (2010)	1 Present Study	1 Vallerand et al. (2010)	2 Present Study	2 Vallerand et al. (2010)	3 Present Study	3 Vallerand et al. (2010)	4 Present Study	4 Vallerand et al. (2010)
Harmonious Passion (1)	4.47 (1.57)	4.57 (0.93)								
Obsessive Passion (2)	2.74 (1.51)	1.88 (0.91)	0.416 **	0.35 **						
Job Satisfaction (3)	4.66 (1.28)	4.09 (0.97)	0.634 **	0.50 **	0.251 **	0.14				
WFC-FWC (4)	2.91 (1.22)	3.38 (1.41)	0.065	0.07	0.325 **	0.44 **	−0.057	−0.01		
Burnout (5)	2.78 (1.41)	2.62 (0.59)	−0.384	−0.31 **	−0.001	0.02	−0.372 **	−0.41 **	0.390 **	0.24 *

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

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