The workaholism as an obstacle to safety and well-being in the workplace

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ABSTRACT: The workaholism, defined as addiction at work, increase burnout and negatively affects the psychological well-being. It was developed a quantitative study using self-reported measures. This study aims to evaluate the variables: passion for work, work engagement, engagement for life and job satisfaction as predictors of workaholism and the effects of workaholism on the psychological well-being and burnout. With a sample of 199 workers, the results of multiple linear regression analysis allowed to identify that some of the variables and their dimensions have significant effects on the workaholism and on psychological well-being and burnout.

1 INTRODUCTION

Workaholics can be defined as people whose exaggerated need to work may become dangerous to health, interpersonal relationships and even for personal satisfaction (Oates, 1971). While most studies on workaholism consequences have been focused on their negative aspects (eg, Killinger, 1991), some authors suggest that workaholism may be beneficial to workers and to the organization. On the one hand workaholics are addicted and cannot control his need to work, on the other, are particularly diligent and dedicated workers (Ng, Sorensen & Feldman, 2007). The research on this topic has referred several predictors of this type of addition to working as a passion for the work, the engagement at work (eg, Gorgievski, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2010) the engagement for life (eg, Scheier et al, 2006) and also job satisfaction (eg, Scott, Moore & Micelli, 1997). Studies have shown various consequences, including, burnout (eg, Vallerand, Paquet, Philippe & Charest, 2010) and psychological well-being (eg, Schaufeli et al, 2009; Wrosch, Scheier, Miller, Schulz & Carver, 2003). The burnout is a long-term process in which the individual can no longer manage their work situation, which is negatively associated with psychological well-being on the capabilities for facing the daily challenges (Ryff, 1989). Thus, if an individual shows signs of burnout, it is natural that their psychological well-being decrease significantly. The burnout and low psychological well-being, represents costs to organizations and to society. This is because they are positively related to increased absenteeism, hospitalizations due to mental and cardiovascular disorders (eg, Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and to decreased productivity and increased accidents at work, more pronounced in activities in extreme thermal environments (Costa, Baptista & Diogo, 2011). Given the relevance of this issue, it is urgent and essential to identify the predictors of burnout and psychological well-being.

The main objective of the present study is to analyse the workaholism predictors (passion for the work, the work engagement, engagement for life, job satisfaction) and workaholism effects in burnout and psychological well-being, using a multiple linear regression.

It is our expectation that:

H1: The predictors of workaholism contribute positively to burnout and negatively to the psychological well-being explanation.

H2: The workaholism affects the psychological well-being and burnout.

2 METHOD

2.1 *Sample and Procedure*

A convenience sample of 199 participating workers (135 women and 64 men) is aged between 18 and 68 years (M = 38.52 and SD = 10.09). Regarding the educational level approximately 43.7% of participants have a university degree; 3% - primary education; 18.1% - basic education and 35.2 % - secondary education. Most respondents are employees (81.9 %), about 11.1 % are entrepreneurs and 7 % have a contract to provide services.

2.2 *Measures*

Participants were asked to answer a self-reported questionnaire made up of the measuring instruments. All variables are operationalized according to an increasing 7 points Likert scale (1- totally disagree to 7 - totally agree). For all variables, validated instruments or tested for the Portuguese population were used.

Passion for Work: Portuguese adaptation (Gonçalves, Orgambídez-Ramos, Ferrão & Parreira, 2014) of Work Passion Scale (Vallerand et al, 2003), which provides two dimensions measured by 7 items each: harmonious passion ($\alpha = 0.92$) and obsessive passion ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Engagement at Work: was assessed with two-dimensional scale UWES (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002). The 9 items on the UWES scale are grouped into three subscales that reflect the dimensions underlying the engagement: vigor, dedication and absorption. The observed α ranged between 0.83 and 0.88.

Engagement for Life: was assessed by one-dimensional scale of LET developed by Scheier et al (2006), comprised of six items that result in an index of life purpose, assessing the importance of activities for the individual ($\alpha = 0.67$).

Job satisfaction: were assessed using the scale of Job Satisfaction developed by Warr, Cook & Wall (1979). It is a one-dimensional scale, consisting of sixteen items where participants indicate their degree of satisfaction with the various features of their work ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Workaholic profile: was assessed by three-dimensional scale WorkBat developed by Spence & Robbins (1992) twenty-five items: job involvement (generalized attitude of psychological involvement with work); drive (inner compulsion to work hard and when fault failure at work) and appreciation of the work (pleasure derived from work). With regard to the internal consistency of the scale, this shows a good reliability in the general range ($\alpha = 0.83$), however, the involvement subscale work demonstrates an alpha 0.41, in the subscale drive the alpha is 0.80 and finally, in appreciation of the work the alpha is 0.84.

Burnout: was evaluated with fourteen items of two-dimensional scale of Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM) of Shirom & Melamed (2006). The scale consists of three subscales evaluating: physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion and cognitive weariness (α between 0.88 and 0.93).

Psychological well-being: it was assessed by GHQ12 scale of Goldberg & Williams (1988). It is a one-dimensional measure consists of 12 items ($\alpha = 0.93$) assessing the inability to carry out normal functions and the appearance of new and distressing experiments.

3 RESULTS

In this subsection are shown the results obtained for each of the variables described, which are presented in tabular form. The presentation begins with means (M) and standard deviations (ST) values (Table 1) and follows with the hierarchical regressions (Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5).

3.1 *Descriptive analysis*

With regard to the Passion for the Work, we can see that both dimensions are distributed evenly across the scale, and the Harmonious Passion is the dimension with the highest mean (M = 4,94; SD = 1,40). On the dimensions of Engagement at Work, all dimensions are distributed evenly across the scale, verifying a higher mean in Absorption dimension (M = 5,04; SD = 1,37) and a lower mean in the Vigor dimension (M = 4,82; SD = 1,33). The variables Engagement for Life, Job Satisfaction and Psychological Well-being presented means of 6.07, 4.75 and 2.94, respectively. The Drive dimension of Workaholism variable has a highest mean value (M = 4,27; SD = 1,30) and the Job Involvement dimension has a lower mean value (M = 3,98; SD = 0,80). As for Burnout, the Physical Fatigue dimension has the highest mean and the Cognitive Fatigue dimension has the lower mean (M = 3,38; SD = 1,50 e M = 2,15 ; SD = 1,35, respectively).

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the variables.

	M	*SD*
Harmonious Passion	4,94	1,40
Obsessive Passion	3,11	1,45
Vigor	4,82	1,33
Dedication	4,98	1,51
Absorption	5,04	1,37
Life Engagement	6,07	0,80
Job Satisfaction	4,75	1,15
Job Involvement	3,98	0,80
Drive	4,27	1,30
Work Appreciation	4,11	1,19
Psychological Well-being	2,94	0,90
Physical Fatigue	3,38	1,50
Emotional Exhaustion	2,67	1,46
Cognitive Fatigue	2,15	1,35

3.2 *Inferential Analysis*

Two models were tested to obtain a model that allows predicting the psychological well-being and burnout, according to the independent variables using a multiple linear regression. The first model evaluates the effect of predictor variables work passion, the work engagement, engagement for life and job satisfaction on the psychological well-being and the burnout. In relation to psychological well-being, this model explains about 42.8% of this variable, partly due to the positive contributions of obsessive passion ($\beta = 0.230$) and

negative of engagement for life (β = - 0.229) and job satisfaction (β = -0.245) with p ≤ 0.002 for all situations. Regarding variable burnout, the first model accounts for about 21 % of the physical size, 24 % of the size and emotional stability 17 % of the size cognitive fatigue.

With the introduction of workaholism variable (Model 2), the predictive value increases for all variables as can be analysed in Tables 2 to 5. In particular, regarding psychological well-being the variables with a greater contribution are the obsessive passion (β = 0,193; *p* = 0,003), life engagement (β = - 0,249; *p* = 0,000), job satisfaction (β = -0,226; *p* = 0,003) and job involvement dimension (β = 0,172; *p* = 0,004). Overall, the five variables explain significantly 47,1% of psychological well-being (r^2 = 0,471; *p* = 0,000).

Table 2. Model 2: Psychological Well-being.

	Psychological Well-being		
	β	*t*	*p*
Harmonious Passion	-0,083	*-1,003*	0,317
Obsessive Passion	0,193	*3,010*	0,003
Vigor	-0,190	*-1,843*	0,067
Dedication	-0,161	*-1,306*	0,193
Absorption	-0,053	*-0,491*	0,624
Life Engagement	-0,249	*-4,105*	0,000
Job Satisfaction	-0,226	*-2,998*	0,003
Job Involvement	0,172	*2,902*	0,004
Drive	0,105	*1,675*	0,096
Work Appreciation	-0,005	*-0,61*	0,952
	r^2 = 0,471; *p* = 0,00		

As for the burnout, the variables with the highest contribution are job satisfaction (β = -0,234; *p* = 0,01) and the work appreciation dimension (β = -0,307; *p* = 0,003), for the physical fatigue dimension; obsessive passion (β = -0,173; *p* = 0,024) and vigor dimension (β = -0,265; *p* = 0,031) for the emotional exhaustion; and finally the variables life engagement (β = -0,243; *p* = 0,002) and job satisfaction (β = -0,268; *p* = 0,005) for the cognitive fatigue dimension.

Table 3. Model 2: Burnout (PF)

	Physical Fatigue		
	β	*t*	*p*
Harmonious Passion	-0,006	-0,63	0,95
Obsessive Passion	0,134	1,765	0,079
Vigor	-0,174	-1,425	0,156
Dedication	-0,056	-0,381	0,704
Absorption	0,196	1,532	0,127
Life Engagement	-0,044	-0,617	0,538
Job Satisfaction	-0,234	-2,612	0,01
Job involvement	0,044	0,631	0,529

Table 3. Model 2: Burnout (PF)(Cont.)

	Physical Fatigue		
	β	*t*	*p*
Drive	0,145	1,951	0,053
Work Appreciation	-0,307	-2,994	0,003
	r^2 = 0,254; *p* = 0,00		

Table 4. Model 2: Burnout (EE)

	Emotional Exhaustion		
	β	*t*	*p*
Harmonious Passion	-0,063	-0,645	0,52
Obsessive Passion	0,173	2,274	0,024
Vigor	-0,265	-2,167	0,031
Dedication	-0,085	-0,58	0,563
Absorption	0,00	0,003	0,997
Life Engagement	-0,125	-1,736	0,084
Job Satisfaction	-0,126	-1,407	0,161
Job Involvement	0,094	1,336	0,183
Drive	0,083	1,118	0,256
Work Appreciation	-0,026	-0,259	0,796
	r^2 = 0,254; *p* = 0,00		

Table 5. Model 2: Burnout (CF)

	Cognitive Fatigue		
	β	*t*	*p*
Harmonious Passion	-0,101	-0,983	0,327
Obsessive Passion	0,034	0,429	0,668
Vigor	-0,012	-0,093	0,926
Dedication	0,043	0,276	0,783
Absorption	0,00	0,00	1
Life Engagement	-0,243	-3,204	0,002
Job Satisfaction	-0,268	-2,853	0,005
Job Involvement	0,028	0,38	0,704
Drive	0,062	0,791	0,43
Work Appreciation	0,012	0,113	0,91
	r^2 = 0,175; *p* = 0,00		

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The model with greater explanatory power was the one with five independent variables together. With regard to the first hypothesis, this was partly confirmed, since only the obsessive passion, engagement for life and job satisfaction showed significant contributions over the psychological well-being. As pointed out in the literature, the obsessive passion creates the malaise in individual, since it has a rigid and defensive relationship to work, causing negative effects as stress and anxiety (Vallerand et al, 2003). In relation to the life engagement, the relationship between variables is negative, which means the less life engagement, greater psychological malaise. This result is consistent with the study of Wrosch and colleagues (2003) that points out that when the individual is not engaged with life, this will have negative effects on his/her physical and psychological well-being. On the

other hand, the less job satisfaction greater the psychological malaise levels (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It was also found that only the job involvement dimension of workaholism has a negative and significant contribution in psychological well-being levels. This result is coincident with some studies (e.g., Burke, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2006, 2009), which suggests that work excessively and compulsively causes stress, which is incompatible with high levels of psychological well-being (eg, Schaufeli et al, 2009). In the case of emotional exhaustion dimension it is explained only by obsessive passion and vigor. When you have an obsessive passion, the individual displays persistence to always be working leading to a conflict between work and other activities of life and consequently to burnout (Vallerand et al, 2010). On the other hand, the greater the force at work, the lower the prediction emotional exhaustion by the worker. Thus, this result can find justification in the JDR model, in which burnout is the opposite of engagement, and the vigor and dedication the direct opposites of exhaustion (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). As for the physical fatigue and cognitive fatigue, denotes the effect of vigor and engagement for life, respectively, and job satisfaction. According to Siegrist (2008) the perception of burnout can be damped by job satisfaction, for example receive suitable rewards balances workers' efforts and reduce the stress reaction. Thus, dissatisfied employees consider receiving inadequate rewards for their efforts, which can worsen the depletion process. Regarding the effect of workaholism on burnout, despite increasing the explanatory power of the model as a whole, it was found that a dimension of the work assessment showed a significant contribution to the dimension physical fatigue.

According to the literature, some studies point to the existence of significant relationships between addiction to work and physical exhaustion (Taris, Schaufeli & Verhoeven, 2005), however this was not observed in this study and workaholism contribution despite significantly, it is very poor in burnout explanation. This study provides an overview of workaholism and their effects on the increase of the burnout and the decrease of psychological well-being. Both involve significant losses for organizations. Similarly, studies show that the addiction at work is equated with negative results and that overwork is strongly related to the demanding work indicators (percentage of extra time, job demands-resources) (Schaufeli, Taris & Van Rhenen, 2008).

At the same time, it is recognized the effect of these variables on reduction in levels of attention and increased fatigue, conditions that increase the likelihood of accidents at work.

Thus, the identification of the factors that enhance these risk situations will allow organizations to design prevention and intervention strategies among its employees, in order to promote healthier and safer work environments and thus contributing to their success and high performance.

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