

**A Journey into the Heart of Workaholism:  
Empirical Findings from Several Multi-sample Studies**

**Mario Del Líbano Miralles  
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# **A Journey into the Heart of Workaholism: Empirical Findings from Several Multi-sample Studies**

**Mario Del Líbano Miralles**

**Departamento de Psicología Evolutiva, Educativa, Social y  
Metodología**



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*Directores:*

Prof. Dr. Marisa Salanova Soria

Dr. Susana Llorens Gumbau

Prof. Dr. Wilmar B. Schaufeli

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**Prólogo (foreword)**

*Recuerdo perfectamente como aquel día de finales de Septiembre de 2003 acudí en busca de asesoramiento al despacho de Susana Llorens. Estaba en mi último año de carrera y quería solicitar una beca de colaboración. La conversación que tuvimos fue muy instructiva. Tras orientarme un poco y explicarme qué es lo que hacían en el equipo de investigación al que pertenecía (el Equipo WoNT), me remitió a Marisa Salanova. Aquel día Marisa me recibió con los brazos abiertos, dispuesta a orientarme en lo que pudiera. Desde el primer momento me sentí motivado por la fuerza que desprendía aquella mujer y que tanto contagiaba. Allí empezó todo, cuando ella mismo me insinuó que si era de mi agrado podía encargarme de estudiar la adicción al trabajo. Aunque mi vocación siempre había sido la Psicología Clínica, el campo de las adicciones y desde aquel momento el del trabajo, iban a significarlo todo para mí.*

*Dado que esta tesis se centra en el estudio de la adicción al trabajo creo que he de matizar un poco mis palabras, no vaya a parecer que soy uno de los muchos adictos al trabajo que se encuentran en nuestra sociedad. Lo que quiero decir es que desde el momento en que me adentré en el mundo del trabajador, en el estudio de cómo se siente, de qué le afecta, de qué podemos hacer para que se sienta mejor y mantenga un equilibrio en su vida, poco a poco, me fui formando yo también como investigador y como persona. Y a su vez, me empezaron a fascinar todos aquellos aspectos relacionados con el estudio de la Salud Ocupacional.*

*En estos 7 años he aprendido muchas cosas, entre ellas a mantener una conversación en inglés, a dirigirme en público a una audiencia, o a hacer distintos tipos de análisis estadísticos. Pero sin duda, lo más importante de todo es que no solo he aprendido a nivel profesional, sino también a nivel personal. Todos sabemos que trabajar es importante, no se puede negar, pero ahora tengo claro que nunca debería convertirse en el aspecto central de nuestras vidas. Entiendo el trabajo como un medio para alcanzar un fin, pero sin olvidar que ese fin también se pueda alcanzar por otros caminos. De lo contrario estaríamos perdidos.*

*"Cuando el trabajo es un placer la vida es bella.*

*Pero cuando nos es impuesto la vida es una esclavitud".*

*Máximo Gorky*





## Introduction

Currently we live in a world in which the traditional ways of managing time are changing radically (e.g., e-mail instead of postal mail, video conferences instead of on-site conferences, etc.). It looks like time looks is running very fast, or at least this is how people perceive it to be (e.g., “*I have no time to do that*”). There are examples of practices where time runs fast not only at work (e.g., fixed jobs, just-in-time production, high-performance work systems), but also in other life contexts (e.g., shared rhythms of shopping, new ways of traveling, and leisure characterized by journeys with more kilometers but shorter durations, the disappearance of common patterns of learning, relationship, work and retirement).

We witness a transition from an industrial time culture based on fixed timetables and clear division of labor between men (who went to work) and women (who looked after domestic matters) to a new culture based on gender equality, flexibility, customization, and rapid flow of information. In this new society, globalization has significantly influenced how the economy develops, especially in the last decade. As a result of this globalization, regional economies, societies and cultures have become integrated into a global network of communication, transportation, and trade (Bhagwati, 2004). All together involves that workers have to work more and more – and hardly – to achieve the best possible performance and to have more opportunities to do the best at work. Given these conditions, we can better understand why work is one of the most meaningful areas for people.

With this in mind, it is easy to imagine the typical Chief Executive Officer who works many hours, travels a lot, and has to be always ‘connected-to-work’ in order to accomplish company standards for performance. In this example, we notice other current and significant elements in work intensification, i.e., the use of the new – and continuously improved – Information and Communication Technologies (Green, 2004). Ubiquitous computers mean that work can always be done and that competitors can always be working. Smart phones are a way by which organizations control their employees. With them, workers can check their e-mails, obtain information when they need it, and can work on some document, report or similar task “whenever and wherever”. Moreover, the list of technological devices seemingly increases with each passing minute: powerful laptops, tablet PCs, etc., which results in the rapid interchange of information among individuals.

A context in which work is so important can become an alternative way of enjoying and obtaining social support and reinforcement (e.g., Bowling, Beehr, & Swader, 2005). In fact, there are workers who like their job so much that they continue to focus on what they are doing, they strive to move ahead with their work, and they put a lot of energy into what they are doing (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus, work can become a way of enjoying and growing for people who know how to strike a balance between their work and extra-work environments (i.e., work-engaged employees). However, work may also be considered a threat for people's well-being if it actually becomes the main thing in their life (i.e., workaholics). The boundary between working hard in a balanced and healthy way and working hard in a compulsive and unhealthy way is sometimes blurred, not only for individuals but also for organizations.

Organizations are usually interested in highly dedicated employees with enough energy for and high levels of commitment to the organization; they are known as 'work-engaged' employees. Top managers know that hard-working employees make all the difference and are, thus, often considered a valued organizational asset (Douglas & Morris, 2006). In fact, research shows that investment in human capital in general and psychological capital in particular may enhance employee psychological well-being. This investment is more relevant since the turbulent times most organizations (and people) are currently experiencing (e.g., Avey, Luthans.Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Salanova, 2009).

However as previously mentioned, working hard may not always be positive, but may develop into a psychological risk at work. Some employees can work 'in a wrong and unhealthy way' and lose control of the time they spend working; they can become 'workaholics'. Workaholism, the main issue of this dissertation, is a controversial topic for the lay public. In a society in which working hard is socially accepted, and even directly and indirectly reinforced, it is difficult to understand how work can be problematic for some employees. The construct of workaholism is commonly used to describe those people who work many hours and work very hard, and who contribute high levels of discretionary work effort 'in a compulsive way' (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006). Unlike engaged employees, workaholics do not enjoy doing things outside work, they feel guilty when they are not working, and they work hard because of a strong, irresistible inner drive (Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Workaholism is associated with negative consequences such as stress (e.g., Andreasen,

Ursin, & Eriksen, 2007), psychosomatic symptoms (e.g., Burke, Oberklaid & Burgess, 2004), physical exhaustion (Sonnetag, 2003), burnout (e.g., Schaufeli, Bakker, Van der Heijden, & Prins, 2009), and poor social relationships (e.g., Burke & Koksal, 2002), family problems (e.g. Robinson & Post, 1997) and poor performance (e.g., Shimazu, Schaufeli, & Taris, 2010).

Therefore, there is no doubt that workaholism constitutes, in contrast to work engagement (a positive construct at all levels, i.e., personal, social and organizational), a serious problem for today's society, organizations, and individuals. Despite the number and relevance of the scientific studies done on workaholism (see Chapter 1 for an in-depth review about the concept and measure of workaholism in research), there are some knowledge gaps that have not yet been tested and which need filling to promote the psychological health of employees in today's society. This is the main reason why workaholism is a 'hot topic' in Occupational Health Psychology.

Therefore, the main objective of this doctoral dissertation is to provide a deeper understanding of when work becomes "the only reason to live", i.e., workaholism: a phenomenon which is suffering for modern societies. In other words, to study a workaholism in depth in order to answer some of the research questions that require further research, and which are described below.

### *Research questions*

Despite workaholism having gained greater presence in the mass media and the number of scientific publications having increased in the last decade (from 50 peer review publications in *PsycInfo* in 2000 to 189 peer review publications in November 2010), much scientific research is still necessary to clarify some relevant issues. These key issues are referred to in the research questions of this dissertation. The first chapter of this dissertation is a systematic review of the previous workaholism literature that focuses on (1) its definition, (2) some theoretical models that attempt to explain the construct, and (3) its antecedents, (4) consequences and (5) main measurement tools. I have attempted to summarize the most relevant points of the state of the art of workaholism. After the literature review, I detected important gaps in workaholism research which I have endeavored to overcome with a set of five empirical studies.

Firstly, I noticed that past research on workaholism has been done by mainly following quantitative methods. These methods refer to "*the objective amount of an item*" (McMillan & O'Driscoll, 2006; p. 92), and involve counts and measures of

elements across dimensions, such as frequency, intensity, latency and duration (Berg, 2001). In addition, I obtain evidence that qualitative work in the workaholism field has commenced (e.g., Machlowitz, 1980), but is largely anecdotal in nature, and has not been tested using scientific frameworks and peer review processes (McMillan & O'Driscoll, 2006). Qualitative research refers to the subjective essence of an item, and to the meanings, definitions and characteristics of constructs. Clearly, in terms of furthering our understanding of workaholism, both quantitative and qualitative information are required (McMillan & O'Driscoll, 2006). Seen from this perspective, it is important to study workaholism by using qualitative methods and not only quantitative methods because this is the best way to focus on the meanings that individuals assign experiences. So far, the first research questions of this dissertation are the following: (1) what are the psychosocial dimensions of workaholism as experienced by workaholics? (2) what are the most prominent factors (e.g., antecedents and consequences) related to workaholism?

Secondly, past research also showed that workaholism has been confused with other more positive psychological constructs such as work engagement (mainly by those studies which conclude that positive workaholism is possible). Hence, the third research question is: (3) is workaholism a differentiated type of employee well-being?

Thirdly, our review of the workaholism literature also highlights the relevance of using correct measurement tools to obtain the most accurate results. Evidence shows that despite the Work Addiction Risk Test (Robinson, 1989) and the Workaholism Battery (Spence & Robbins, 1992) being two of the most used measures, they are not devoid of reliability deficiencies (e.g., Kanai, Wakabayashi, & Fling, 1996; Taris, Schaufeli, & Verhoeven, 2005). Moreover, the literature review also shows that the Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS; Schaufeli et al., 2006), specifically its brief version (DUWAS-10; Schaufeli, Shimazu, & Taris, 2009), is one of the most promising tools to measure workaholism with its two main dimensions: excess work and compulsive work. As the factorial structure of DUWAS-10 has been previously confirmed only in Japan and The Netherlands (Schaufeli et al., 2009), the next research question is: (4) is the factorial structure of DUWAS-10 also valid and reliable to measure workaholism in Spain?

As I aforementioned, the review done of workaholism emphasizes similarities and differences between workaholism and work engagement (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2008),

which leads to the following research questions: (5) are workaholism and work engagement two different work-related states of mind?; (6) are both constructs characterized by different personality patterns according to the Five Factor Model of Personality? (FFM; McRae & John, 1992). This last question refers to another important research gap evidenced by the workaholism review as only one study about personality and workaholism using the FFM (cf., Burke, Matthiesen, & Pallesen, 2006) and only one study about personality and work engagement employing the FFM (cf., Langelaan, Bakker, van Doornen, & Schaufeli, 2006) have been published. Insofar the role played by personality in workaholism and work engagement is clearer, scientific community will have more indicators to predict the prevalence of both constructs.

Finally, I am also interested in knowing the role played by beliefs (i.e., self-efficacy) in the explanation of workaholism. Previous research (e.g., Ng, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2007) has hypothesized that self-efficacy at work could be related to workaholism. Interestingly, the higher self-efficacy is, the greater workaholism will be) (see an in-depth review in Chapter 1). As far as I know, this hypothesis has not yet been tested; furthermore, based on the studies revealing that self-efficacy can have negative effects on employees depending on the context (e.g., Vancouver & Kendall, 2006), I put forward the last-but-one research question of this dissertation: (7) is work self-efficacy positively related to workaholism? This is an important question because work self-efficacy could be one of the key variables in the development of workaholism and, consequently, this result would suggest that self-efficacy could play a negative role, contrarily to the most common results in the field (e.g., Bandura, 1997). To answer this question, we use the following framework: the *Resources Experiences & Demands (RED) Model* (Salanova, Cifre, Martínez, & Llorens, 2007; Salanova, Cifre, Martínez, Llorens, & Lorente, in press) because this model takes personal resources in general, and self-efficacy in particular, as the most important variables to explain employees' psychosocial health. Moreover, work engagement is also studied and compared to workaholism to answer the last research question of this dissertation: (8) does work self-efficacy play the same role in both workaholism and work engagement experiences?

#### *Specific research aims: the dissertation chapters plan*

In order to answer the eight research questions put forward, this doctoral dissertation details one conceptual and theoretical chapter written in Spanish, and five

empirical studies written in English.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a final chapter provides a discussion of the main findings of the different empirical studies relating these with previous research. In this final chapter, theoretical and practical findings, weaknesses, strengths and challenges for future research are discussed. To perform these different studies, workaholism is assessed by using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and by employing samples from different countries (i.e., Spain and The Netherlands). The content of the chapters, their main objectives and hypotheses, are summarized as follows.

*Chapter 1* presents a summary of the state of the art of workaholism. The first step (and objective) at the beginning of this dissertation is to present a systematic overview of the most important research issues of workaholism. With this review, I also aim to bridge the knowledge gaps in workaholism research to develop several research questions with a view to testing them in empirical studies. Specifically in Chapter 1, conceptualization, theoretical models, antecedents, consequences, and measurement of workaholism are reviewed. This chapter is the starting point of the present dissertation, and guides workaholism research throughout the following chapters.

In the *first empirical study* (see Chapter 2) workaholism is qualitatively studied by personal interviews. Specifically, this study try to respond to the questions: (1) “what are the main psychosocial dimensions of workaholism as experienced by workaholics in their own words?”, and (2) “what are the most prominent factors (e.g., antecedents and consequences) related to workaholism?”. The first question considered necessary as a result of the literature review is to contribute to workaholism research by studying the construct from a qualitative point of view. Principles of the 'Grounded theory' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) are followed, and the Nvivo (QRS release 8.0) computer package is used to map the main symptoms, antecedents and consequences of workaholism. The main objective is to propose a heuristic workaholism model based on direct experiences narrated by workaholics.

*Study 2* (see Chapter 3) attempts to solve research question 3: “is workaholism a differentiated type of employee well-being?”. It focuses on the integration of some of the most studied taxonomies of well-being at work. We strongly believe that a good

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Universitat Jaume I European Dissertation norms, it is necessary to write some chapter of the Dissertation in the official language of the country, i.e., Spanish.

way to study workaholism is to differentiate it from other types of employee well-being. Both the literature review and the qualitative study of workaholism show that it is interesting to test whether workaholism is a type of employee well-being with idiosyncrasy itself and could, thereby, be considered as a meaningful construct. Moreover, with this study we contribute to the ongoing discussion (e.g., Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009) on the conceptualization and measurement of employee well-being. Although various psychological constructs have been used to describe different aspects of employee well-being (e.g., burnout, work engagement, flow at work), a systematic classification has not yet been put forward. Therefore, in order to answer research question number 3, a parsimonious and theory-based classification of employee well-being has been developed as a result of the integration of the most well-known taxonomies of well-being: (1) the affective approach of Warr (1990; 2007); (2) the cognitive approach of Csikszentmihalyi (1990); and (3) the affective-cognitive approach of González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret (2006).

In *Study 3* (see Chapter 4), the psychometric properties of DUWAS-10 (Schaufeli et al., 2009) are studied. This chapter attempts to answer question 4: “is the factorial structure of DUWAS-10 valid and reliable to measure workaholism in Spain?”. One important step in the study of workaholism is to have a reliable and valid measure of the construct. Thus the main objective of this chapter is to validate the factorial structure of the questionnaire using a Spanish sample. Since “hard-working” is apparently more common in Spain than in the Netherlands (see OECD, 2007), it is also interesting to examine whether there are differences on the psychometric properties of the questionnaire depending on the country (i.e., Spain vs. The Netherlands). For this reason, the data collected from these two European countries are compared. Hence, this study contributes to the current discussion on the assessment of workaholism.

In *Study 4* (see Chapter 5), attention is paid to direct comparisons between workaholism and work engagement. In the first two chapters of this dissertation, workaholism and work engagement are differentiated according to their relationships with other variables (e.g., job resources, job demands, outcomes). Since the literature review of workaholism demonstrates that the construct is sometimes confused with work engagement, it is important to confirm previous research on the similarities and differences between both constructs by answering question 5: “are workaholism and

work engagement two different work-related states of mind?”. Moreover, this chapter attempts to answer question 6: “are both constructs characterized by different personality patterns according to the Five Factor Model of Personality? Similar previous studies are carried out by proposing a different pattern of personality relationships between both constructs. In order to test employees’ personality, we used the FFM as a basis (McRae & Jonh, 1992) by following the few previous studies based on this framework in both the workaholism and work engagement fields. Hence, this study contributes to the ongoing discussion on the conceptual differences between workaholism and work engagement.

In *Study 5* (see Chapter 6), the role played by work self-efficacy in the understanding of workaholism is tested. According to Ng et al. (2007), work self-efficacy may positively relate to workaholism. In addition, work self-efficacy also emerges as an important antecedent of workaholism in Chapter 3. Therefore based on the hypothesis of Ng et al. (2007) the predicting role played by work self-efficacy in workaholism and work engagement is studied. In this chapter we answer two research questions: (a) “is work self-efficacy positively related to workaholism?” (research question number 7), and (b) “does work self-efficacy play the same role in both workaholism and work engagement experiences?” (research question number 8).

The specific aim of this study is to analyze the predictive role played by work self-efficacy in workaholism and work engagement, also by considering negative (i.e., work overload and the work-family conflict) and positive outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment). In order to test the proposed relationships, the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., 2007; Salanova et al., in press) is used as the theoretical background. Thus this study contributes to workaholism research with the first empirical results about the role played by work self-efficacy in workaholism, and with the inclusion of the construct in the *RED Model* predictions.

Finally in the *last chapter* (see Chapter 7), general conclusions and the most salient results of each chapter are summarized and discussed. All results are integrated in order to move one step forward in the understanding of workaholism. Moreover, the theoretical, methodological and practical implications of the current dissertation are discussed. Finally, weaknesses, strengths, and challenges for future research are also presented.



*Final Note*

We live in a society in which everything is happening faster than ever, and where it is difficult for organizations and individuals to keep abreast of such changes. In the last forty years, we have moved from typewriters and landlines to laptops and mobile phones. Many of us could be considered hard workers, and are frantic and under pressure on a daily basis. In this context, workaholism could prove serious damage for those employees who are not able to strike a balance in their lives, and for organizations whose results are significantly affected by this damage.

Overall, this dissertation attempts to shed light on the scientific understanding of workaholism in our ever changing and demanding society. I genuinely hope that this dissertation contributes to the enhancement of employees' psychosocial health in general by providing practitioners (e.g., executives, human resources managers, physicians) relevant data to help them diminish workaholism in particular.



## Capítulo 1: Revisión teórica de la adicción al trabajo

(Chapter 1: Theoretical review of workaholism)<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1. Introducción

Para la gente de a pie, ser adicto al trabajo es sinónimo de dedicar mucho tiempo a trabajar. La imagen de una persona adicta al trabajo casa con la de un alto ejecutivo, vestido de traje y con su indispensable maletín. Pero, ¿esta visión de la adicción al trabajo se corresponde con los resultados obtenidos por la investigación científica? ¿Qué se entiende por adicción al trabajo? ¿Desde cuándo se está estudiando este concepto? ¿Existen puestos de trabajo más adictivos que otros o depende de la personalidad que tenga el trabajador? ¿La fomentan las organizaciones?

En la presente revisión teórica se intentan contestar todas estas preguntas. El objetivo principal es destacar los aspectos más destacados en la investigación sobre adicción al trabajo, para sentar las bases de todo lo que todavía falta por conocer. De esta forma se podrán establecer los siguientes pasos a realizar en la investigación de la adicción al trabajo en general, y en los capítulos de la presente tesis en particular. Para ello, se trata en primer lugar la conceptualización de la adicción al trabajo, apartado en el que se incluye un extenso análisis de las definiciones que han tenido mayor impacto, el perfil típico de una persona adicta al trabajo y la distinción de la adicción de otros conceptos similares. En segundo lugar se exponen los modelos teóricos que han intentado explicar cómo se produce la adicción al trabajo. Posteriormente se describen los antecedentes y las consecuencias que se han relacionado con el constructo en un mayor número de estudios. Por último, se presentan los diferentes instrumentos de medida que pueden utilizarse para evaluar y diagnosticar de forma válida y fiable si un trabajador se puede considerar adicto al trabajo.

### 1.2. Conceptualización de la adicción al trabajo

#### 1.2.1. Definición de la adicción al trabajo

El término adicción al trabajo fue definido por primera vez por el ministro y psicólogo americano Wayne E. Oates en 1968, para referirse a su propia adicción al trabajo. En 1971 Oates publica el primer documento formal sobre el constructo, un libro titulado *Confesiones de un adicto al trabajo: la verdad sobre la adicción al*

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 1 has been published as: Del Líbano, M., & Llorens, S. (in press). *Guía de Intervención: Adicción al Trabajo* [Intervention guidance: workaholism]. Editorial Síntesis.

*trabajo*. En este libro el autor definió la adicción al trabajo como “*una necesidad excesiva e incontrolable de trabajar incesantemente que afecta a la salud, a la felicidad y a las relaciones de la persona*” (p. 11). Desde entonces, el concepto ha ido adquiriendo cada vez mayor popularidad tanto en el ámbito empresarial como en el de la investigación científica.

Dado que es un concepto relativamente reciente, todavía no existe pleno consenso sobre bastantes aspectos relacionados con este tipo de adicción. De entre la multitud de definiciones que existen sobre el concepto, se distinguen dos grupos de opinión. Uno que subraya los aspectos positivos de la adicción al trabajo y otro que enfatiza sus características meramente negativas. Respecto al primero, autores como Machlowitz (1980) y Korn, Pratt, y Lambrou (1987) entienden la adicción al trabajo como un fenómeno positivo desde un punto de vista organizacional. Más recientemente se pueden encontrar autores como Peirpel y Jones (2001) que afirman que la adicción al trabajo hace disfrutar a los más trabajadores. Respecto al segundo grupo de opinión, éste ha ganado adeptos con el paso del tiempo, como se demuestra si se comparan los estudios científicos que se han realizado hasta la fecha utilizando la base de datos PsycInfo (octubre de 2006). Se puede apreciar que en una proporción de 10:1 estudios, la adicción al trabajo se considera un constructo negativo con consecuencias dañinas para el trabajador.

También existe controversia en la literatura sobre los elementos clave a la hora de definir el concepto de adicción al trabajo. Como se decía anteriormente, existen multitud de propuestas de distintos autores. Si se hace un recorrido en orden cronológico por algunos de los estudios que se han realizado hasta la fecha, se puede obtener una visión general que permitirá al lector entender mejor en qué consiste la adicción al trabajo.

En los años 80 empieza el estudio intensivo de la adicción al trabajo. Cherrington (1980) la define como ‘*un compromiso irracional con el trabajo excesivo. Los adictos son incapaces de tomarse un descanso en el trabajo o tener otros intereses ajenos al mismo*’ (p. 257). Otra autora de la época, Machlowitz (1980), define a los adictos como gente ‘*que siempre dedica más tiempo y pensamientos a su trabajo de lo que la situación requiere...lo que los mantiene separados del resto de trabajadores es su actitud hacia el trabajo, no el número de horas que trabajan*’ (p. 1). De modo similar Moiser (1983) definió la adicción contemplando las horas que trabajaban las personas;

los adictos al trabajo eran aquellos que trabajaban al menos 50 horas a la semana. Se puede apreciar que mientras para unos autores lo importante es la actitud, para otros el aspecto básico se refiere a las horas dedicadas a trabajar, lo importante sería la conducta.

Ya en la década de los 90, Fassel (1990) afirma que la adicción al trabajo es una enfermedad progresiva y fatal que se enmascara como un rasgo positivo en nuestra cultura. Para ella, los adictos se alienan de sus propios cuerpos, de sus sentimientos, de su creatividad y de su familia y amigos. Otra autora relevante en estos años fue Killinger (1991), quien define al adicto como *‘una persona que va enfermando emocionalmente y dependiendo del control y el poder de forma gradual, a través de un impulso compulsivo para conseguir la aprobación de los demás y alcanzar el éxito’* (p. 6). En estas definiciones se aprecia cómo se radicaliza la visión negativa de la adicción al trabajo, entendiéndola como una enfermedad, y se hace referencia a otro aspecto que se tratará más adelante: cómo la deseabilidad social puede estar influyendo en la adquisición y el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo.

Es en esta década cuando surgen algunos de los estudios que tuvieron (y continúan teniendo) más impacto. Destacan los estudios de Spence y Robbins (1992), quienes definen al adicto al trabajo como alguien que está muy implicado en su trabajo, que se siente impulsado a trabajar a causa de una compulsión interna más que por demandas externas y que experimenta un bajo placer en el trabajo. También es importante la contribución de Porter (1996) que entiende la adicción al trabajo como *“una implicación excesiva con el trabajo evidenciada por descuidar otras áreas de la vida y que se mantiene más por motivos internos que por los requerimientos del trabajo o la organización”* (p. 71). En esta misma línea, Robinson (1997) define la adicción al trabajo como *“un desorden progresivo y potencialmente fatal, caracterizado por demandas auto-impuestas, por trabajar desmesuradamente, por la incapacidad para regular los hábitos de trabajo y por la exclusión de muchas otras actividades cotidianas”* (p. 81).

En estas últimas definiciones aparecen aspectos importantes en el estudio de la adicción al trabajo, como la connotación de compulsión para explicar por qué se dedica tanto tiempo a trabajar y la mención al ámbito extra-laboral como uno de los afectados por la adicción al trabajo. Estos aspectos fueron también recogidos por Scott, Moore, y Miceli (1997) que argumentaron que los miembros de la organización adoptan patrones

de conducta adictivos cuando: *“(a) dedican gran parte de su tiempo a actividades laborales cuando tienen la oportunidad de hacerlo, lo que resulta en dejar de hacer importantes actividades sociales, familiares o de ocio; (b) piensan en temas de trabajo de forma persistente y frecuente cuando no están trabajando; y (c) trabajan más allá de lo que es razonable esperar en base a los requerimientos de su trabajo o de sus necesidades económicas”* (p. 292).

En la primera década del año 2000 continuó el estudio de la adicción al trabajo. Snir y Zohar (2000) por ejemplo, la definieron como *“una dedicación de tiempo considerable y constante de la persona a actividades y pensamientos relacionados con el trabajo, que no derivan de necesidades externas”* (p. 294). En esta definición se recalca otro aspecto importante: solo si el exceso de trabajo es por razones internas (es decir, no intervienen razones externas como por ejemplo cumplir con un límite de tiempo o alcanzar un puesto mejor dentro de la organización) es cuando se entiende que puede existir adicción al trabajo. Quizás este tipo de causas externas faciliten el inicio de la adicción al trabajo, pero en ningún caso serían las responsables de la necesidad imperante de trabajar.

Una de las conceptualizaciones que aúna mejor todos estos aspectos relevantes de la adicción al trabajo es la que presentan Schaufeli et al. en el año 2006. Estos autores afirman que *“los adictos son personas que trabajan por encima de lo que las prescripciones de su trabajo requieren y que se esfuerzan más de lo que es esperado por la gente con quien o para quien trabajan, lo que supone que descuiden otras áreas de su vida fuera de su trabajo. Trabajan tanto debido a una compulsión interna, necesidad o impulso, y no a causa de factores externos tales como recompensas económicas, perspectivas de carrera, matrimonio pobre o cultura organizacional”* (p. 196).

Por tanto, teniendo en cuenta la evolución en el estudio del concepto de adicción al trabajo, ésta se podría definir como un daño laboral de tipo psicosocial caracterizado por el trabajo excesivo que se lleva a cabo debido a una irresistible necesidad o impulso de trabajar constantemente (Salanova, Del Líbano, Llorens, Schaufeli, y Fidalgo, 2008).

### *1.2.2. Perfil de la persona adicta al trabajo*

La investigación ha mostrado la existencia de una serie de aspectos que suelen estar presentes en mayor medida en las personas adictas al trabajo. Estos aspectos se han dividido en dos grandes grupos para facilitar su comprensión: (A) los que se han

considerado como ‘características claves’, aquellas que están presentes en la mayoría de las personas adictas, y (B) las consideradas como ‘características importantes’, las que son habituales pero no se observan en tantos casos (ver Tabla 1.1).

**Tabla 1.1.** *Características clave e importantes de la adicción al trabajo*

Características <i>clave</i>	Características <i>importantes</i>
1. Trabajo excesivo	1. Manipulación de la información
2. Trabajo compulsivo	2. Realización de tareas innecesarias
3. Negación del problema	3. Comunicación interpersonal deficiente
4. Necesidad de control	4. Problemas de salud
5. Alta importancia y significado del trabajo	5. Autoeficacia
6. Alta vitalidad, energía y competitividad	
7. Problemas extra-laborales	
8. Problemas de rendimiento a medio-largo plazo	

*A) Características clave*

1. *Trabajo excesivo.* Constituye una de las dos dimensiones básicas de la adicción al trabajo según Schaufeli et al. (2006). El adicto al trabajo siempre trabaja más de lo que su contrato le exige. En su afán por mantenerse constantemente trabajando, los adictos realizan un exceso de tareas acompañado de presión temporal durante su jornada laboral (sobrecarga cuantitativa) y hacen frente a un número excesivo de demandas en relación a las competencias, conocimientos y habilidades que poseen tanto a nivel mental como emocional (sobrecarga cualitativa). Además, resulta habitual que la persona adicta se lleve trabajo a casa, trabaje los fines de semana, durante las vacaciones, estando enfermo (que como se tratará más adelante hace

referencia a un tipo de presentismo) e incluso, aún sin estar realizando una tarea física y visible, es muy probable que permanezca pensando en temas de trabajo.

2. *Trabajo compulsivo*. Hace referencia a la segunda dimensión básica de la adicción al trabajo según Schaufeli et al. (2006). La sensación que tiene la persona adicta al trabajo se puede describir como un impulso que la orienta a trabajar, ya sea a través de la realización de tareas directamente relacionadas con su trabajo, o mediante pensamientos recurrentes sobre aspectos relativos a la resolución de un problema de trabajo, a la planificación de las tareas que faltan por completar, que se tienen que iniciar, etc. De hecho, sólo se encuentra bien cuando está trabajando. Cuando el adicto al trabajo no tiene la posibilidad de trabajar experimenta síntomas de ansiedad y sentimientos de culpabilidad (Robinson, 2000).

A lo largo de la presente tesis se estudiará si, en efecto, estas dos dimensiones pueden considerarse como básicas a la hora de explicar qué es la adicción al trabajo.

3. *Negación del problema*. Del mismo modo que en las adicciones a sustancias o en otro tipo de adicciones como la ludopatía, uno de los elementos clave en la adicción al trabajo parece ser la negación del problema por parte de la propia persona. Algunos autores afirman que debido a esta negación, y para justificar su exceso de dedicación al trabajo, el adicto inventa excusas que explica a sus compañeros de trabajo, amigos o familia (Porter, 1996). Las justificaciones del exceso de trabajo se producen independientemente de la situación en la que se encuentre la persona adicta al trabajo, ya sea en un periodo de tiempo donde las circunstancias laborales realmente incidan en el exceso de trabajo, o en épocas donde no existen factores externos que lo determinen. Tal llega a ser la negación de su problema que el adicto llega a creer que tales justificaciones son ciertas (Porter, 1996). Se necesita mayor investigación empírica para encontrar evidencias de cómo influye la negación en la adicción al trabajo. En uno de los capítulos de esta tesis se tratará con mayor detalle esta característica de la adicción al trabajo.

4. *Necesidad de control*. La persona adicta al trabajo tiene una alta necesidad de control acerca de todos los aspectos relacionados con su trabajo (e.g., modo de hacer las tareas, tiempo dedicado a cada una de ellas), ya que disponiendo de control se asegura poder trabajar siempre que lo desee y contrarrestar las amenazas que en ocasiones percibe en el ambiente en contra de sus propios logros (Porter, 1996). La percepción de estas amenazas es la principal responsable de la dificultad que tiene



para delegar su trabajo en los demás. La persona adicta prefiere encargarse de las tareas laborales personalmente para poder “controlar” los imprevistos que puedan surgir. Generalmente, el control que ejercen los adictos y las adictas al trabajo desencadena una serie de estresores grupales (e.g., frustración, falta de cohesión entre compañeros, clima enrarecido). Muchas veces asumen tareas que no tendrían que desempeñar según su rol dentro de la organización, generándose conflictos entre los trabajadores responsables de realizar esas tareas y la propia persona adicta (conflicto de rol). Estos estresores, además, afectan de forma directa o indirecta al rendimiento individual de cada trabajador y por extensión al rendimiento global de la organización.

5. *Alta importancia y significado del trabajo.* Para la persona adicta, el trabajo es el aspecto central de su vida, mucho más que la familia, los amigos o el tiempo libre. Todo gira y se organiza alrededor del trabajo. El adicto es un claro ejemplo del ‘vivir para trabajar’ en lugar del ‘trabajar para vivir’. Por ello, como ya se ha comentado anteriormente, es habitual que trabaje los fines de semana, en vacaciones e incluso cuando no se encuentra en buenas condiciones debido a alguna enfermedad. Dado que estas características se han encontrado en diversas investigaciones se las considera como correlatos de la adicción al trabajo (e.g., Aronsson y Gustafsson, 2005; Milano, 2005).
6. *Alta vitalidad, energía y competitividad.* El adicto es una persona muy enérgica, con altas dosis de vitalidad y motivada frecuentemente por la competitividad y la comparación social con los demás, ya sea compañeros de trabajo, amigos o familiares. Ese refuerzo social no hace sino incrementar la compulsión del adicto por trabajar más y más. La presencia de esta vitalidad y energía es uno de los elementos responsables de que en algunas investigaciones se haya confundido la adicción al trabajo con otros conceptos positivos como el *engagement*, que podría traducirse como ‘pasión por trabajar’, y con el compromiso organizacional, entre otros.
7. *Problemas extra-laborales.* La dedicación prácticamente exclusiva de las personas adictas a su trabajo implica una serie de problemas extra-laborales, entre los que destacan: la baja calidad de sus relaciones sociales o su insatisfacción fuera del trabajo (Del Líbano, García, Llorens, y Salanova, 2004). Respecto a las relaciones sociales, el descuido de la familia es una de las primeras consecuencias del exceso de trabajo. De hecho, algunos estudios muestran que los niveles de separación

matrimonial son relativamente altos entre los adictos al trabajo (Robinson, Flowers, y Carrol, 2001), y que, por término medio, experimentan más conflictos vida-trabajo que las personas no adictas. Además, los adictos tienden a percibir a sus familias con menor habilidad para resolver problemas de forma efectiva, con peor comunicación, con menos respuestas afectivas, y con una satisfacción relacional más pobre que los no adictos (Burke y Koksall, 2002). En uno de los capítulos de esta tesis se estudiará la relación de la adicción al trabajo con el conflicto trabajo-familia.

8. *Problemas de rendimiento a medio-largo plazo.* El rendimiento del adicto al trabajo a corto plazo puede ser bueno o incluso excelente, puesto que se implica por completo en sus tareas. Sin embargo, a medio-largo plazo la sobrecarga de trabajo y las altas expectativas sobre sí mismo (expectativas que le llevan a plantearse metas difíciles, muchas veces inalcanzables), pueden llevarle a problemas de rendimiento y a otro tipo de problemas como experimentar una sensación de fracaso constante (Porter, 2001).

#### *B) Características importantes*

1. *Manipulación de la información.* Aunque generalmente la persona adicta confía en las propias demandas de su trabajo para justificar su conducta, es posible que manipule situaciones o a sus compañeros para asegurarse una necesidad continua de trabajo. Así, el ocultamiento de la información, traicionar la confianza de los demás y la incapacidad para compartir o delegar responsabilidades (a la que ya se ha hecho referencia anteriormente), son algunos de los métodos que pueden utilizar para tener acceso a un exceso de trabajo (Porter, 2001).
2. *Realización de tareas innecesarias.* En sus intentos por trabajar en todo momento, el adicto al trabajo puede ir tan lejos como para crearse activamente más trabajo. Por ejemplo, puede realizar sus proyectos de la forma más complicada posible, haciendo tareas innecesarias o incluso llegar a crear errores que retrasen su ejecución para posteriormente solucionarlos (Machlowitz, 1980).
3. *Comunicación interpersonal deficiente.* A la persona adicta al trabajo le importa su propia tarea, y no tanto las relaciones con los demás. Este hecho está relacionado con sus escasas habilidades para comunicarse con sus compañeros, e influye directamente en los problemas que muestra para delegar. Esta deficiencia en la comunicación también tiene su efecto en los problemas que presenta a la hora de

trabajar en equipo, e incide en sus malas relaciones con compañeros, subordinados o superiores.

4. *Problemas de salud.* En algunas de las investigaciones que se han realizado hasta la fecha se ha detectado una relación positiva entre adicción al trabajo y la aparición de problemas de salud. Dado que trabajar muchas horas está asociado con elevados niveles de estrés y de enfermedad, principalmente porque los trabajadores no tienen la oportunidad de recuperarse de sus esfuerzos continuos y excesivos (Meijman y Mulder, 1998), se asume que los adictos al trabajo sufrirán también estos problemas. La presencia de problemas de salud en personas adictas al trabajo será tratada en alguno de los capítulos de esta tesis para comprobar si son un elemento habitual en la adicción al trabajo.
5. *Altos niveles de autoeficacia.* Una característica que puede constituir un elemento importante pero poco estudiado en la adicción al trabajo, son los niveles de autoeficacia que tiene las personas adictas en distintos contextos. Desde la *Teoría Social Cognitiva* (Bandura, 1997, p. 3), la autoeficacia se define como las “*creencias en las propias capacidades para organizar y ejecutar los cursos de acción requeridos que producirán determinados logros o resultados*”. La investigación ha mostrado que la autoeficacia puede determinar cómo se sienten, piensan y actúan las personas, y generalmente la ha relacionado con consecuencias positivas (Bandura, 1997). No obstante, en los últimos años se ha estudiado si las creencias de eficacia pueden tener también efectos negativos sobre la salud y el rendimiento de las personas (Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner, y Putka, 2002). En esta tesis se estudia con detalle el rol de la autoeficacia en la adicción al trabajo con la finalidad de comprobar si es un factor clave para que se produzca el fenómeno.

### *1.2.3 Adicción al trabajo y su relación con otros conceptos afines*

La investigación sobre adicción al trabajo ha ido evolucionando con el tiempo. A medida que se ha progresado en su estudio se han resuelto problemas conceptuales que surgían debido a su confusión con otros constructos. Por ello, se hace necesario plantear aquí los cinco constructos que en algún momento pueden plantear problemas de interpretación a la hora de diferenciarlos de la adicción al trabajo: (A) el presentismo, (B) el compromiso organizacional, (C) la implicación laboral, (D) el *Engagement*, y (E) la pasión por el trabajo.

### A) *Presentismo vs. Adicción al trabajo*

El presentismo describe aquellas situaciones en las que los trabajadores están en su trabajo pero en las que, por causa de enfermedad, lesión u otro tipo de condiciones, no rinden a su máximo nivel (Hemp, 2004; Zengerle, 2004). El término presentismo combina las ideas del trabajador ‘presente’ y las del absentismo, esto es, el trabajador está físicamente presente en el trabajo pero ausente en su mente o conducta.

Como se ha explicado cuando se ha descrito en el apartado anterior, el adicto al trabajo se caracteriza por ir a trabajar incluso cuando se encuentra enfermo, es decir, el adicto presenta altos niveles de presentismo. Ahora bien, no se tiene que confundir el presentismo con la adicción al trabajo, y por consiguiente no se ha de pensar que el trabajador “presentista” es adicto al trabajo. El presentismo se puede producir por una amplia variedad de razones: 1) debido a la *inseguridad laboral* del trabajador, que para conservar su puesto de trabajo se siente obligado a acudir a trabajar incluso en malas condiciones, 2) debido a la *co-responsabilidad* que el trabajador siente con el resto de su equipo, que le lleva a asumir el esfuerzo de acudir a trabajar estando enfermo, y 3) debido a la existencia de *problemas de personal* para reemplazar al trabajador enfermo, que dificulta que el trabajador pueda quedarse en casa durante los días necesarios para recuperarse (Aronson y Gustafson, 2005).

Dentro de la literatura existente sobre presentismo se pueden diferenciar dos ámbitos de estudio. El más tradicional se refiere al *presentismo que se produce debido a enfermedad*, es decir, cuando el trabajador acude a su puesto de trabajo a pesar de no estar capacitado para ser totalmente productivo debido a enfermedad o a condiciones médicas (e.g., Chatterji y Tilley, 2002; Hemp, 2004). La productividad del trabajador en estas circunstancias puede reducirse hasta en una tercera parte de lo que es habitual (Hemp, 2004). Entre las consecuencias que genera este tipo de presentismo se encuentran por ejemplo: trabajar más lentamente, menor calidad del trabajo, cometer errores, además de existir un mayor riesgo de contagio a otros trabajadores si la enfermedad es transmisible (CCH Incorporated, 2004). Algunos expertos afirman que ir a trabajar estando enfermo puede ser más costoso y dañino para la productividad y el rendimiento que permanecer en casa todo un día (e.g., Berger, Howell, Nicholson y Sharda, 2003; Hemp, 2004). Sirvan como ejemplo las conclusiones a las que ha llegado el “Bank One”, famoso banco americano, que ha calculado que el presentismo les supone unos gastos que ascienden a 223 millones de euros al año, mientras que los

tratamientos médicos y prescripciones junto con el absentismo y las minusvalías, les supone en total “*tan solo*” 126 millones de euros anuales (Hemp, 2004).

El otro ámbito de estudio que se ha originado recientemente se refiere al *presentismo* que se produce cuando el trabajador está presente en el trabajo pero no es capaz de realizar correctamente sus tareas debido, por ejemplo, a problemas de concentración (Simpson, 1998). Esta falta de concentración se puede producir, entre otros motivos, por realizar tareas de índole personal en el puesto de trabajo. Es lo que ha recibido el nombre de *presentismo no laboral*. Este tipo de presentismo incluye el envío de e-mails personales (a amigos y a la familia), navegar por Internet, pagar facturas personales, hacer compras on-line, jugar a juegos on-line u organizar reuniones personales. Los estudios realizados respecto a este tipo de presentismo apuntan a que las personas dedican 6.48 horas por semana a asuntos personales mientras están en su trabajo. En términos puramente económicos, este tipo de presentismo les cuesta a las organizaciones alrededor de 6,500 euros por persona al año debido a la pérdida que se produce a nivel de producción (D’Abate y Eddy, 2007). A pesar de estos abrumadores datos, estos autores señalan que todavía se está analizando si este tipo de presentismo es positivo o negativo para la organización, puesto que tan solo se ha relacionado con la desidia que presentan los trabajadores. De hecho, no se ha encontrado que afecte a aspectos tan importantes como el rendimiento final, la satisfacción o el compromiso. Por ello, se ha apuntado la posibilidad que el presentismo no laboral ayude al trabajador a mantener el equilibrio trabajo-no trabajo y pueda ser positivo. En otras palabras, que a pesar de que en términos económicos pueda suponer pérdidas, si estas ‘otras’ actividades ayudan al trabajador a continuar con su trabajo con fuerzas renovadas podría ser beneficioso.

Como se ha podido comprobar con la explicación de ambos tipos de presentismo, la adicción al trabajo no puede considerarse tan solo un tipo más de presentismo. En base a las características claves e importantes de la adicción que se han tratado en el apartado 1.2.2, se puede afirmar que la persona adicta difícilmente podrá experimentar un presentismo no laboral, siendo mucho más habitual, y característico, el presentismo que se produce debido a enfermedad, motivado por la compulsividad que experimentan.

#### *B) Compromiso organizacional vs. Adicción al trabajo*

Otro de los conceptos con los que se suele confundir la adicción al trabajo es con el compromiso organizacional. De hecho, la adicción al trabajo a veces ha sido

interpretada como un caso de compromiso extremo con la organización o con algún aspecto de la misma (Oates, 1971). Si éste fuera el caso, no sería necesario desarrollar modelos teóricos o proposiciones sobre adicción al trabajo, ya que se podría explicar tanto su naturaleza como sus consecuencias a través de los modelos de compromiso organizacional. Pero si se examinan detalladamente los constructos, se pueden detectar claras diferencias. Una de ellas hace referencia a que el compromiso organizacional tiene un componente actitudinal importante, mientras que en el concepto de adicción de adicción al trabajo este componente es más difuso, es decir, menos relevante.

El estudio del *compromiso con la organización* se llevó a cabo en sus primeras fases desde una perspectiva meramente actitudinal (e.g., Bateman y Strasser, 1984). Conceptualizaciones posteriores lo definen como un constructo multidimensional formado por tres aspectos principales: 1) un lazo afectivo con la organización, 2) un coste percibido por dejar la organización y 3) una obligación de permanecer en la misma (e.g., Meyer, Allen y Smith, 1993). Estas definiciones no coinciden con el concepto de adicción al trabajo al menos por dos razones: 1) el compromiso no se define en términos conductuales, sino que es afectivo por naturaleza, por tanto no se manifiesta necesariamente en el tiempo empleado en actividades de trabajo, y 2) es una reacción que varía en función del trabajador y de otros factores situacionales (Morrow, 1993). Por el contrario, los adictos al trabajo dedican muchas a horas a trabajar independientemente de los sentimientos que tengan hacia un trabajo u organización particular.

### *C) Implicación laboral vs. Adicción al trabajo*

La implicación laboral también es un concepto afín a la adicción al trabajo. La investigación sobre adicción al trabajo ha considerado en muchas ocasiones que la adicción era simplemente un caso de implicación laboral: *work involvement* y *job involvement*. Aunque en castellano resulta difícil traducir estos términos, se puede decir que la adicción al trabajo se ha relacionado tanto con la implicación con el trabajo en general (*work involvement*), como - más específicamente - con el puesto de trabajo que tiene la persona en ese momento (puesto actual) (*job involvement*) de forma extrema (Kiechel, 1989).

Concretamente, la implicación con el trabajo (*work involvement*) se puede definir como “una creencia normativa sobre el valor del trabajo en la vida de una persona, y es más una función de la socialización del pasado cultural de una persona que la

*implicación laboral*” (Kanugo, 1982; p. 342). Es un constructo similar al de la Ética Protestante del Trabajo, que se refiere generalmente a un valor intrínseco del trabajo, una creencia de que el trabajo es inherentemente bueno o satisfactorio (Spence, 1985). Se trata de un constructo más generalizado y por ello bastante similar a la conducta de los adictos al trabajo. Pero, como ya se ha argumentado, la adicción al trabajo no se refiere tan solo a una actitud o a una creencia sobre el trabajo, sino que también se refiere a un patrón de conducta y pensamiento generalizado sobre éste. Además, una persona puede estar muy implicada con el trabajo y no ser adicta al mismo. Por ejemplo, un trabajador puede ver el trabajo como central en su vida pero dejar de trabajar después de su jornada laboral y no volver a pensar en temas laborales hasta el día siguiente, en la línea de lo que hacen los trabajadores “engaged”. Por tanto, también se puede concluir que la adicción al trabajo no sería un caso extremo de implicación con el trabajo en general.

Por otro lado, la *implicación con el puesto (job involvement)* se define como “una creencia descriptiva del trabajo actual que tiende a estar en función de cuánto puede satisfacer el trabajo las necesidades presentes de una persona” (Kanugo, 1982; p.342). Este tipo de implicación también se ha descrito como el grado en el que la autoestima de una persona se ve afectada por su rendimiento en el trabajo. La implicación con el puesto se puede distinguir de la adicción al trabajo fundamentalmente por tres razones: 1) la adicción al trabajo no es una actitud o creencia sobre el trabajo; 2) la adicción al trabajo se produce por un impulso interno que lleva a la persona a trabajar compulsivamente y no sólo porque la persona satisfaga sus necesidades a través de su trabajo; y 3) los adictos al trabajo trabajan en exceso en diferentes situaciones laborales (distintos puestos, distintas organizaciones), no siendo los sentimientos hacia un trabajo en particular el factor que causa esta dedicación extrema. En contraste, la implicación con el puesto es específica de un puesto de trabajo y está determinada situacionalmente. Por tanto, se puede concluir que la adicción al trabajo tampoco puede considerarse como un caso extremo de implicación con el puesto.

#### D) *Engagement* vs. Adicción al trabajo

A pesar de que en la introducción de esta tesis ya se ha hecho hincapié en la relación entre ambos constructos, y de que a lo largo de los capítulos se volverán a tratar pormenorizadamente, no se podía realizar una revisión de la adicción al trabajo sin tener en cuenta su relación con el *engagement*.

El *engagement* se ha definido como “*un estado psicológico positivo relacionado con el trabajo que está caracterizado por el vigor, la dedicación y la absorción*” (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Roma y Bakker, 2002, p.79). El estudio del *engagement* se enmarca dentro de la investigación actual sobre la “Psicología Positiva”, perspectiva que se centra en las fortalezas y en el funcionamiento óptimo del ser humano, y no tanto sobre las debilidades y las disfunciones (Seligman y Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) que tan centrales han sido tradicionalmente en Psicología. Además, es una parte básica de lo que se conoce como capital psicológico positivo: el caldo de cultivo de las organizaciones saludables (Salanova, 2008).

Por otro lado, el *engagement* se puede considerar un indicador de la motivación intrínseca por el trabajo. Más que un estado específico y temporal, se refiere a un estado cognitivo-afectivo más persistente en el tiempo, que no está centrado exclusivamente en un objeto o conducta específica. Como apuntan Salanova y Schaufeli (2009), el *vigor* se caracteriza por altos niveles de energía y resistencia mental mientras se trabaja, por el deseo de esforzarse en el trabajo que se está realizando incluso cuando se presentan dificultades. La *dedicación* hace referencia a una alta implicación laboral, junto con la manifestación de un sentimiento de significación, entusiasmo, inspiración, orgullo y reto por el trabajo. Es un concepto cercano al término “implicación en el trabajo” (Kanungo, 1982; Lawler y Hall, 1970), pero éste último se refiere – como se acaba de comentar - básicamente a la identificación con el trabajo, mientras que la *dedicación* va más allá en términos cualitativos y cuantitativos, de la mera identificación. Por último, la *absorción* se produce cuando la persona está totalmente concentrada en su trabajo, cuando el tiempo le pasa rápidamente y presenta dificultades a la hora de desconectar de lo que se está haciendo, debido a las fuertes dosis de disfrute y concentración experimentadas.

El *engagement* podría llegar a confundirse con la adicción al trabajo porque coinciden en algunos elementos. Los trabajadores “engaged” son agentes activos, que toman iniciativas personales en su trabajo y que generan su propia retroalimentación sobre su desempeño (Schaufeli et al., 2001). Buscan nuevos retos en su trabajo y si llegan a sentir falta de reto profesional, prefieren cambiarlo o reestructurar sus puestos. Debido a su fuerte dedicación al trabajo, están también comprometidos en conseguir la excelencia en su desempeño, lo cual les lleva a generar retroalimentación positiva desde



sus supervisores (e.g., promociones, orgullo por el trabajo bien hecho) y también desde sus clientes o usuarios (e.g., gratitud, satisfacción, aprecio).

Como se puede comprobar tanto por la iniciativa de los trabajadores “engaged” como por su elevada dedicación, se podría llegar a confundir el concepto con el de adicción al trabajo. De hecho, se ha apuntado que gran parte de los estudios que consideran la existencia de una adicción al trabajo positiva están confundiendo el constructo con el engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Además, incluso se ha apuntado que ambos conceptos pueden compartir la dimensión de absorción (Schaufeli et al., 2006), hecho que refuerza la importancia de hacer una adecuada diferenciación a la hora de diagnosticar la adicción al trabajo. Por ello, en la presente tesis la adicción al trabajo se compara en la mayoría de los estudios con el engagement. Se pretende establecer claramente las bases que diferencian a ambos constructos.

#### *E) Pasión por el trabajo vs. Adicción al trabajo*

La pasión hacia una actividad es un concepto que ha sido muy utilizado en disciplinas como la Filosofía (ver Rony, 1990) pero que en el mundo de la Psicología ha recibido menos atención. Algunos psicólogos han enfatizado su poder motivacional (Frijda, Mesquita, Sonnemans, y Van Goozen, 1991), incluso la han estudiado junto a conceptos similares como la dependencia positiva y negativa (Glaser, 1976), pero ninguno de estos estudios ha tenido mucha repercusión. Ha sido a partir de la propuesta del *Modelo Dualístico de la Pasión* (Vallerand et al., 2003) que este constructo ha adquirido mayor relevancia. Vallerand et al. (2003) definieron la pasión como "*una fuerte inclinación de las personas hacia una actividad que gusta, que encuentran importante y a la cual dedican tiempo y energía*" (p. 757). Según su modelo se pueden distinguir dos tipos de pasiones: (1) la pasión armoniosa y (2) la pasión obsesiva. Para que una actividad pueda llegar a apasionar existen dos procesos importantes implicados: (1) la valoración de la actividad (tiene que gustar) y (2) la internalización que se haga de esa actividad (que se basa en la personalidad y en las condiciones sociales en las cuales se desarrolla), que es lo que distingue a los dos tipos de pasiones.

La pasión armoniosa se produce como resultado de la internalización autónoma de una actividad en la identidad de la persona, que tiene lugar cuando la persona acepta la actividad como importante sin ninguna contingencia unida a ella. Este tipo de internalización produce una fuerza motivacional que hace que la persona se implique en la actividad y genera un sentimiento de aprobación personal respecto a su consecución.

Por tanto, lleva a la persona a elegir hacer una actividad porque le gusta y no porque se sienta obligada a hacerla. Se mantiene en armonía con otros aspectos de su vida. Por tanto, las consecuencias que se derivan de ella son positivas (emociones positivas, persistencia en una actividad y mayor rendimiento a largo plazo).

La pasión obsesiva se produce como consecuencia de la internalización controlada de una actividad en la identidad de la persona. Esta internalización tiene lugar debido a presiones intra o interpersonales, que se producen porque ciertas contingencias están unidas a la actividad (tales como sentimientos de aceptación o de aumento de autoestima o porque el placer producido por la actividad llega a ser incontrolable). Así, aunque a las personas les gusta la actividad, se sienten impulsadas por esas contingencias internas que las controlan. Como la realización de la actividad llega a estar fuera del control de la persona, la actividad habitualmente ocupa un lugar desproporcionado en la identidad de la misma y produce conflictos con otras actividades de su vida. Por tanto, las consecuencias que se derivan de dicha actividad son negativas (emociones negativas, persistencia en la actividad descontrolada y menor rendimiento a largo plazo)

El *modelo Dualístico de la Pasión* se ha aplicado al mundo laboral con éxito. Existen muchos elementos en el trabajo que pueden gustar y la investigación ha demostrado que aquellas actividades, cosas o personas que gustan mucho a las personas tienden a formar parte de su yo interior (Aron, Aron, y Smollan, 1992; Deci, Egharir, Patrick, y Leone, 1994). Como señalan Gorgievsky y Bakker (2010) el *Modelo Dualístico de la Pasión* se puede aplicar dentro del contexto laboral a dos conceptos prácticamente sinónimos: el engagement y la adicción al trabajo. El engagement se acercaría mucho a la concepción de pasión armoniosa, mientras que la adicción al trabajo sería muy similar a la concepción de pasión obsesiva. De momento se necesitan más estudios para poder saber si estos conceptos son sinónimos o diferentes, pero es necesario que sus similitudes se tengan en cuenta al estudiar la adicción al trabajo.

### **1.3. Principales modelos teóricos de la adicción al trabajo**

En este apartado se presentan los principales modelos teóricos que han intentado explicar la etiología de la adicción al trabajo. A pesar de ello, ninguno de ellos ha conseguido imponerse como un marco teórico consolidado que permita explicar en su totalidad cómo se genera la adicción al trabajo y cómo se desarrolla a lo largo del tiempo. Además, algunas de estas propuestas todavía están por confirmar

empíricamente. Estas teorías se presentan por orden cronológico y son las siguientes: (1) Teoría de los Rasgos de Personalidad, (2) Teoría de Esfuerzo-Recompensa, (3) Modelo de Afecto-Cognición-Conducta, (4) Modelo del Conflicto de Rol y (5) Teoría de la Personalidad y los Incentivos.

### *1.3.1. Teoría de los Rasgos de Personalidad*

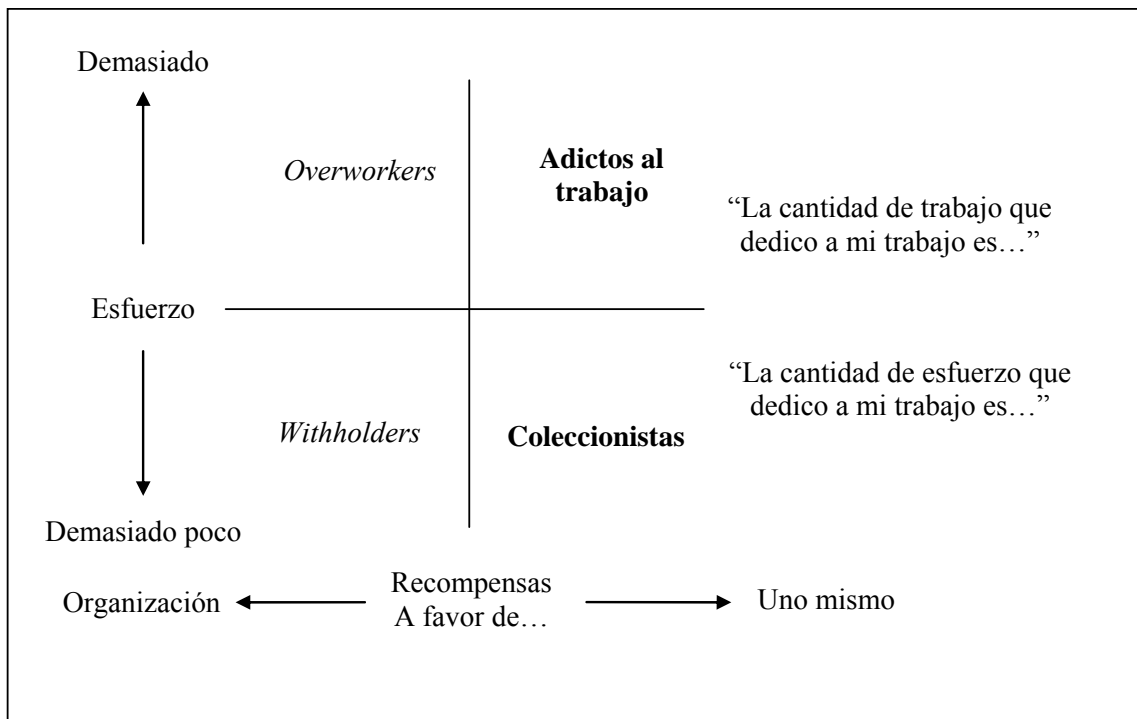
Esta teoría (McMillan, O'Driscoll, Marsh y Brady, 2001) intenta explicar la adicción al trabajo tomando como referencia los modelos de rasgos de personalidad. Considera que la adicción al trabajo se produce debido a rasgos de personalidad concretos. Parece ser que ante determinadas condiciones ambientales se podrían activar ciertos rasgos de personalidad que podrían dar lugar a que se manifestase adicción al trabajo. Según esta teoría las personas adictas nacerían con predisposición a serlo, siendo muy pequeña la influencia ambiental en su desarrollo. Esta asunción gana terreno si se considera que ante un mismo ambiente, son las características de personalidad las que influyen en la aparición de la adicción. Existe evidencia empírica que señala que incluso aquellos gemelos que comparten un mismo ambiente, pueden manifestar comportamientos diferentes en función de las características de personalidad de cada uno. De este modo, para esta teoría la personalidad sería la pieza clave para la aparición de la adicción al trabajo.

¿Pero qué rasgos de personalidad son los responsables de generar adictos al trabajo? Los rasgos más representativos serían: la obsesividad, la compulsividad, tener un nivel de energía elevado (Clark, Livesley, Schroeder e Irish, 1996) y el perfeccionismo (McMillan, Brady, O'Driscoll y Marsh, 2002). Así, las personas adictas al trabajo podrían caracterizarse por ser obsesivas (esto es, por estar continuamente pensando en temas de trabajo independientemente de la situación en la que se encuentren), compulsivas (esto es, por trabajar sin control con el objetivo de reducir la ansiedad que les provoca no hacerlo), por tener altos niveles de energía que destinarían únicamente a trabajar (pudiendo estar durante largos periodos de tiempo trabajando sin descanso), y por ser excesivamente perfeccionistas y detallistas en el trabajo que realizan. A pesar de lo atractiva que resulta esta teoría, el principal inconveniente que presenta es que solo explica un rango muy específico de conductas de la persona adicta, por lo que debido a la complejidad de la adicción al trabajo en muchas ocasiones no es útil para predecir su aparición ni para explicar las conductas que se asocian a ella.

### 1.3.2. Modelo de Esfuerzo-Recompensa

Otro modelo teórico que ha recibido la atención de la comunidad científica en la explicación de la adicción al trabajo es el propuesto por Peirpel y Jones (2001). Estos autores proponen un modelo teórico específico de adicción al trabajo que considera dos dimensiones independientes a partir de las cuales es posible estudiar la adicción al trabajo: (1) la percepción del esfuerzo que realiza la persona y (2) la percepción de la recompensa recibida. En función de la combinación de estas dos dimensiones estos autores distinguen cuatro tipos de trabajadores (ver Figura 1.1): (1) los adictos al trabajo, (2) los *'overworkers'*, (3) los *'withholders'* y (4) los coleccionistas.

Más concretamente, estos autores entienden como *'adictos al trabajo'* a aquellos trabajadores que perciben que hacen un gran esfuerzo pero también que a cambio de ese esfuerzo reciben una gran recompensa, acorde con el esfuerzo que han realizado. Esto implica que según esta teoría, para los adictos al trabajo merecería la pena esforzarse por los resultados que este esfuerzo les supone. En segundo lugar, los *'overworkers'* serían aquellos trabajadores que perciben un desequilibrio entre el esfuerzo que realizan (grande) y la recompensa que reciben (pequeña), y que por tanto experimentarían sentimientos de impotencia y frustración. Por otro lado, los *'withholders'* serían los que perciben que se esfuerzan poco en la realización de la tarea y que este pequeño esfuerzo va acompañado de una recompensa igualmente pequeña. Son personas poco motivadas que suelen tener bajo rendimiento. Finalmente están los *'coleccionistas'*, que serían aquellos trabajadores que perciben que se esfuerzan poco pero que a cambio reciben grandes recompensas. Estos trabajadores por poco que se implicaran en una tarea ya percibirían ganancias, por lo que suelen ser personas motivadas y que obtienen buenos resultados. Este modelo de cuatro tipos de trabajadores fue puesto a prueba en un estudio con 174 trabajadores de Reino Unido. Los resultados confirmaron que la adicción al trabajo no solo dependía del esfuerzo del trabajador (las horas que dedica), sino también de la recompensa que creía recibir a cambio de ese esfuerzo. Por tanto, una persona adicta al trabajo dedicaría mucho tiempo a trabajar pero siempre con la finalidad de recibir sus *'ansias'* recompensas. A pesar de las buenas maneras del modelo, esta línea de investigación no ha tenido continuidad en estudios posteriores y el modelo no ha podido ser confirmado.

**Figura 1.1.** *Modelo de Esfuerzo-Recompensa*

### 1.3.3. Modelo de Afecto-Cognición-Conducta

Un tercer modelo teórico que pretende explicar cómo se produce la adicción al trabajo es el de Ng et al. (2007). Estos autores proponen estudiar la adicción al trabajo basándose en las *Teorías de la adicción*, conservando las nociones básicas que estableció Oates (1971), el padre fundador del constructo. El modelo considera tres dimensiones básicas en la explicación de la adicción al trabajo. Estas dimensiones son las siguientes: (1) afecto, (2) cognición y (3) conducta. En base a estas tres dimensiones distinguen una serie de antecedentes de la adicción al trabajo que clasifican en: (1) disposiciones (e.g., autoestima), (2) experiencias socio-culturales (e.g., experiencias familiares), y (3) refuerzos conductuales del ambiente (e.g., recompensas tangibles e intangibles) (ver Figura 1.2). Según el modelo, es la existencia e interacción de unos antecedentes específicos lo que determina que el trabajador desarrolle un patrón de conducta caracterizado por disfrutar trabajando (dimensión afectiva), por dedicar un tiempo excesivo a trabajar por el placer que le produce (dimensión conductual), y por presentar problemas para dejar de trabajar porque al hacerlo experimenta síntomas de ansiedad (dimensión cognitiva). Entre estos antecedentes de la adicción destacan bajos niveles de autoestima, rasgos de personalidad relacionados con el éxito, presencia de adictos al trabajo en la familia, y alta autoeficacia o competitividad en el trabajo. El trabajador que presentase este patrón de conducta sería categorizado como adicto al

trabajo y tendría asociadas una serie de consecuencias que también predice el modelo, entre las que se encuentran la satisfacción tanto laboral como con la carrera profesional, pero también problemas de salud tanto física como mental, así como relaciones sociales muy pobres.

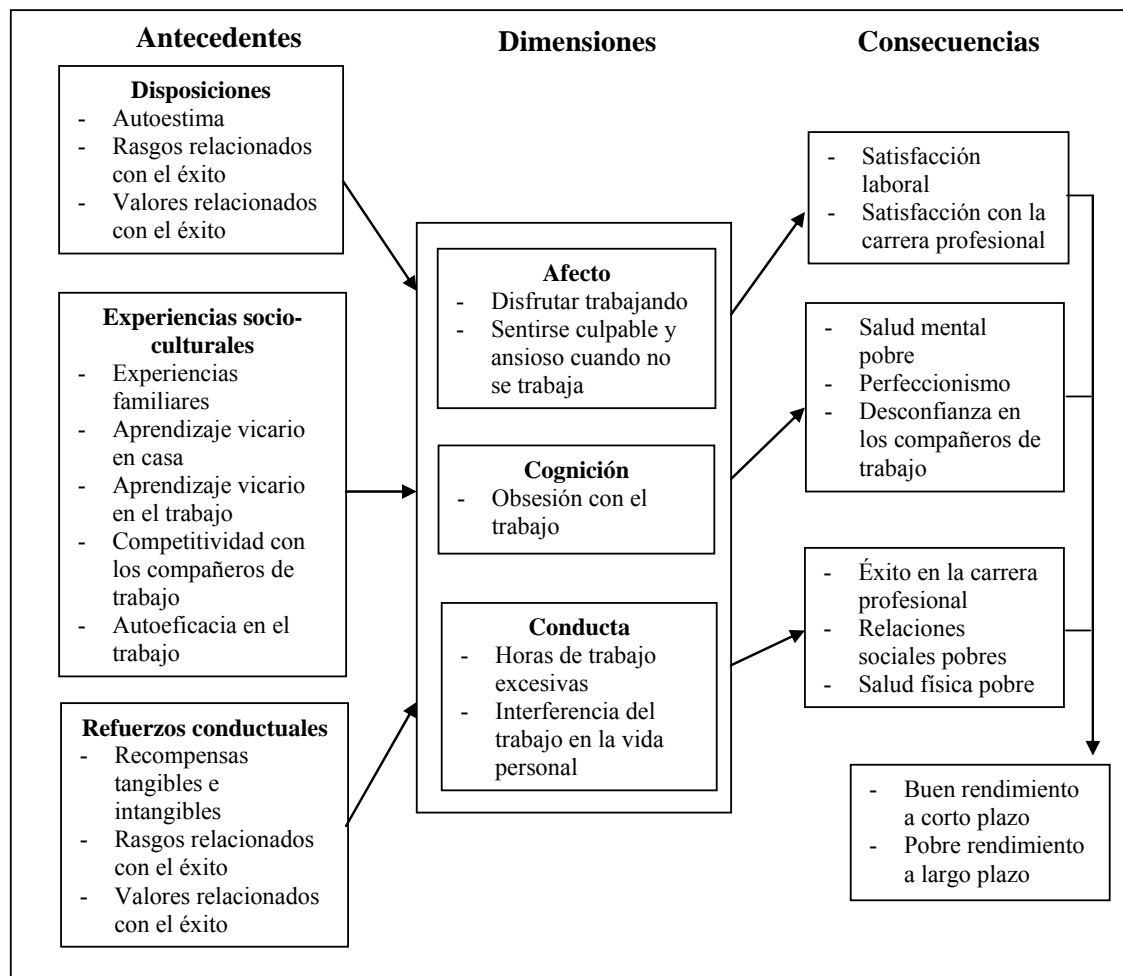
Hasta la fecha, este modelo constituye la opción más completa para explicar cómo y por qué un trabajador puede convertirse en adicto al trabajo. Su principal inconveniente es que se trata de un modelo de índole meramente teórica, y todavía no existen estudios empíricos que permitan confirmar las hipótesis que propone. Una de ellas, la relativa al papel de la autoeficacia en la adicción al trabajo será puesta a prueba en esta tesis.

#### *1.3.4. Modelo del Conflicto de rol*

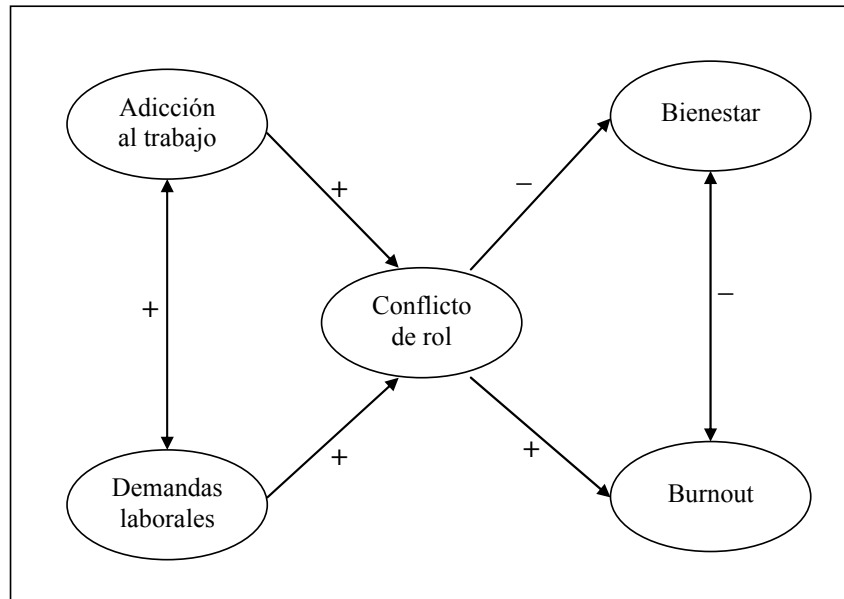
Más recientemente, Schaufeli, Bakker, Van der Heijden y Prins (2009b) proponen un modelo basado en el papel mediador del conflicto de rol en el proceso de adicción al trabajo, de otros síndromes psicosociales del trabajo como el burnout o síndrome de estar quemado en el trabajo (Robinson, 1998a; Schaufeli et al., 2009) y del bienestar (entendido como el conjunto de felicidad, salud y satisfacción laboral) (ver Figura 1.3). El burnout se define como "*un estado mental persistente, negativo, relacionado con el trabajo, en individuos 'normales', que se caracteriza principalmente por agotamiento, acompañado de distrés, un sentimiento de reducida competencia y motivación, y el desarrollo de actitudes y conductas disfuncionales en el trabajo*" (Schaufeli y Enzmann, 1998, p. 36).

El burnout está compuesto por tres dimensiones que hacen referencia al trabajo que realiza una persona, independientemente del tipo que sea (físico, relacional, etc.), denominadas: agotamiento, cinismo y/o despersonalización e ineficacia (Maslach, Schaufeli, y Leiter, 2001). Según el modelo, el conflicto de rol resulta un factor clave que media la relación entre la adicción al trabajo, el burnout y el bienestar. En función de los niveles de conflicto de rol, las consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo se relacionarán con menores niveles de bienestar y con mayores niveles de burnout.

**Figura 1.2. Modelo de Afecto-Cognición-Conducta**



Concretamente, el modelo propone que la adicción al trabajo y las demandas laborales están asociadas indirectamente con el burnout y con el bienestar a través del conflicto de rol. Esto significa, por ejemplo, que la adicción al trabajo en combinación con altas demandas laborales puede producir burnout pero siempre que el trabajador experimente conflicto de rol, esto es, que perciba demandas contradictorias entre sí a la hora de realizar su trabajo. La adicción al trabajo actuaría, pues, como un factor de riesgo individual que contribuiría, independientemente del contexto, al desarrollo del burnout y a la reducción del bienestar.

**Figura 1.3.** *Modelo de Conflicto de rol*

### 1.3.5. Modelo de la Personalidad y los Incentivos

Otra teoría que se suma a la explicación del desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo es la *Teoría de la Personalidad y los Incentivos* desarrollada por Liang y Chu (2009). Se trata de un modelo específico de adicción al trabajo que estos autores desarrollan a partir de las propuestas de Ng et al. (2007). Esta teoría propone que la adicción al trabajo aparece cuando confluyen tres factores: (1) unos determinados rasgos de personalidad, (2) los incentivos personales y (3) los incentivos organizacionales.

Respecto a los rasgos de personalidad, el modelo considera cuatro rasgos claves en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo, esto es, (1) los rasgos obsesivos-compulsivos, (2) la orientación hacia el éxito, (3) el perfeccionismo y (4) la responsabilidad. El primero hace referencia a la ‘obsesión’ que experimentan los adictos por el trabajo y a la dificultad que tienen para dejar de trabajar. La ‘orientación hacia el éxito’ influye tanto en el tiempo invertido como en el dedicado a pensar sobre el trabajo, siempre más allá de los requerimientos reales. El ‘perfeccionismo’ hace referencia a la exactitud con la que se realizan las tareas y se ha relacionado frecuentemente con la adicción (Goodman, 2006). Por último, la ‘responsabilidad’ está asociada con altos niveles de éxito a través de la planificación y la perseverancia.

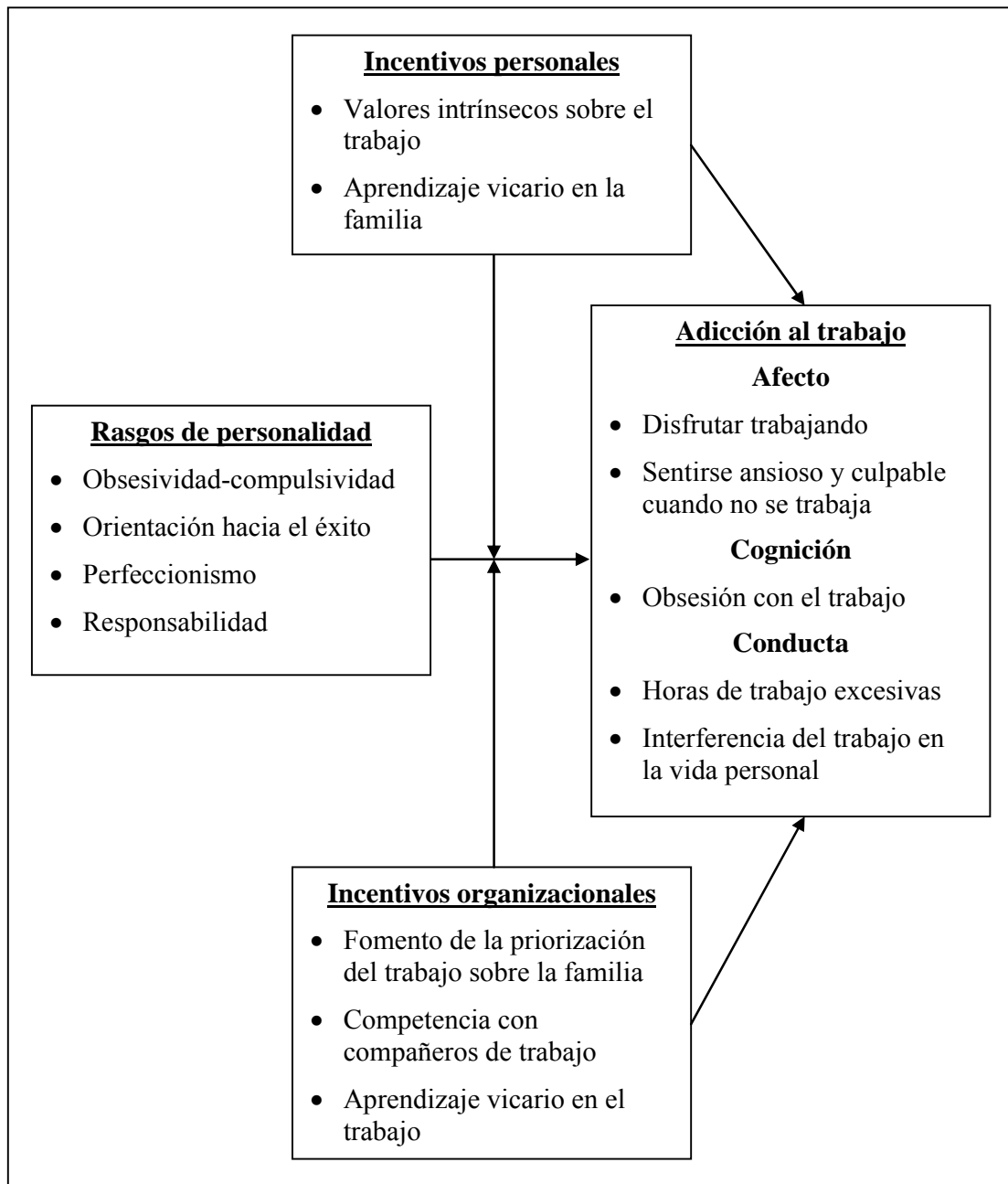
Respecto a los dos tipos de incentivos, los ‘incentivos personales’ se generan a través de los valores internos de cada persona hacia el trabajo, que son los que hacen priorizar el trabajo sobre otros contextos. En la creación de estos incentivos también



ejerce un papel importante el aprendizaje vicario de conductas adictivas en la familia. Esto es, cuantas más conductas adictivas se presenciaren en la familia más probabilidad de desarrollar adicción. En segundo lugar, los ‘incentivos organizacionales’ se refieren al fomento de la adicción al trabajo en el ámbito de trabajo, esto es, se refiere a medidas como el reconocimiento explícito a aquellas personas que trabajan por encima de lo estipulado (ya sea económico o social), o el fomento de una cultura organizacional en la que trabajar más de lo normal sea lo habitual (y en algunos casos incluso 'obligatorio'). También se refieren a la competencia o rivalidad que se establece entre los trabajadores, y al aprendizaje vicario de conductas adictivas en el ámbito laboral (aprender mediante la observación de conductas adictivas de los compañeros).

Según el modelo, estos dos tipos de incentivos (personales y organizacionales) afectan a la relación que existe entre rasgos de personalidad y adicción al trabajo (ver Figura 1.4). La interacción entre rasgos e incentivos es la responsable de hacer disfrutar a la persona por trabajar (dimensión afectiva), de que trabaje en exceso, de que tenga dificultades para diferenciar entre su vida laboral y su vida privada (dimensión conductual) y de que se obsesione con su trabajo (dimensión cognitiva), llevándole hacia la adicción al trabajo. Los rasgos de personalidad serían factores más estables y permanentes, mientras que los incentivos se generarían a lo largo del tiempo. Por tanto, este modelo entiende que la adicción al trabajo se produce como resultado de la interacción de factores individuales y de las condiciones ambientales en las que se encuentra la persona, es decir, que un adicto al trabajo “no nace”, sino que también “se hace” en función del ambiente en el que se desenvuelva.

En resumen se puede afirmar que, a pesar de que a medida que progresa el estudio de la adicción al trabajo se están estableciendo cada vez más las bases de un modelo teórico que permita explicar el proceso de desarrollo del fenómeno, todavía se necesitan estudios – sobre todo - de carácter empírico, que a lo largo del tiempo permitan aunar en un solo modelo las propuestas más adecuadas. Para ello, en esta tesis se presenta un estudio cualitativo de la adicción al trabajo, con el que se pretende sentar las bases del estudio futuro del constructo.

**Figura 1.4.** *Modelo de la Personalidad y los Incentivos*

#### 1.4. Antecedentes de la adicción al trabajo

Al margen de los modelos teóricos que se acaban de presentar, en la literatura sobre adicción al trabajo se han detectado un gran número de antecedentes del constructo. A continuación se presentan aquellos que han recibido un mayor apoyo empírico. En líneas generales se pueden diferenciar dos tipos de antecedentes en función de su foco de influencia: (1) factores individuales y (2) factores organizacionales.

#### *1.4.1. Antecedentes de la adicción al trabajo: factores individuales*

Características individuales como el género, la edad, o el estado civil han sido consideradas en algunos estudios como posibles antecedentes de la adicción al trabajo, aunque los resultados obtenidos al respecto no han sido concluyentes. Sin embargo, existen otro tipo de antecedentes que han obtenido más apoyo empírico: (A) la familia de la que proviene la persona, (B) los valores personales y laborales que posee el trabajador, (C) la autoestima, y (D) la personalidad. Existe un quinto antecedente, (E) la satisfacción laboral, que dependiendo del estudio se ha considerado como antecedente o consecuencia de la adicción al trabajo.

##### *A) Familia y adicción al trabajo*

Uno de los antecedentes que parece tener una mayor influencia en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo es la familia. De hecho, algunos estudios han señalado que los patrones de interacción que se aprenden en la familia (e.g., darle más prioridad al trabajo que a cualquier otra cosa) a menudo se asimilan como roles en la vida de los adictos al trabajo y pueden suponerles presiones y estrés en el trabajo (Weinberg y Maukch, 1991). Algunas teorías hablan del proceso o fases a través de las que se genera la persona adicta en función de la familia a la que pertenece. Otras investigaciones hacen referencia a la dinámica o a los procesos que tienen lugar en la generación de la adicción al trabajo en familias desestructuradas.

Desde la primera de las perspectivas, Garson (1990) entiende que la persona pasa por 3 fases desde que nace hasta que se convierte en una persona adulta adicta al trabajo:

- Fase 1: la persona es criada en una familia en la que el padre o la madre son adictos al trabajo o tienen otros tipos de adicciones (e.g., alcoholismo). Dicha familia puede ser disfuncional y establecer reglas opresivas de conducta que impidan la expresión abierta de sentimientos, o la discusión de problemas personales o interpersonales, y al mismo tiempo establecer estándares de perfección no realistas ('hay que ser el mejor en todo'). Serían esos padres que solo felicitan a sus hijos e hijas cuando consiguen grandes logros (e.g., he aprobado todas las asignaturas con matrícula de honor), omitiendo las recompensas en otro tipo de logros más pequeños (e.g., he aprobado todas las asignaturas con aprobados y notables). Como se puede apreciar, en esta fase se intuyen aspectos tratados en los modelos teóricos anteriores como el perfeccionismo o el aprendizaje vicario, que hacen que los niños aprendan las

conductas adictivas de sus padres con la simple observación de las conductas que realizan.

- Fase 2: en la juventud, cuando la persona no recibe la aprobación de los demás (compañeros, amigos), se manifiestan los primeros síntomas de adicción que se han incubado durante la infancia. Es un modo de reivindicación.
- Fase 3: la adicción, que ya es manifiesta, se agrava en la edad adulta con la crisis de los cuarenta. Las crisis interpersonales y de salud se convierten en cuestiones importantes en esta fase, por lo que si la adicción no se reduce o se detiene, puede llegar a ser crónica y llevar al deterioro de las relaciones interpersonales o incluso a la muerte de la persona. De hecho, en países como Japón se tuvo incluso que definir un término para referirse a la muerte debida al exceso de trabajo, esto es, el denominado '*karoshi*' (Hosokawa, Tajiri, y Uehata, 1982).

En segundo lugar, Robinson (1996a, 1996b; 1998a), mantiene que la adicción al trabajo se puede entender como un indicador de un sistema familiar irregular. La adicción al trabajo, como ocurre con otras conductas adictivas, sería intergeneracional y pasaría a las generaciones futuras a través de procesos y dinámicas familiares. Desde este punto de vista, la adicción sería una respuesta aprendida que se produciría por la existencia de un sistema familiar disfuncional. Se ha de considerar cómo de nuevo el aprendizaje vicario en la infancia parece tener un gran peso a la hora de que la persona se convierta en adicta cuando ya es adulta.

Con el fin de comprobar si realmente existía la relación entre familia y adicción al trabajo, en otros estudios (e.g., Robinson, 1998b, Robinson y Kelley, 1998) se relacionaron los índices de falta de salud de los padres con los índices mostrados por sus hijos, encontrándose relación entre los mismos y por tanto, confirmando su relación.

#### *B) Valores de las personas y adicción al trabajo*

Además de la familia, los valores generales que tienen las personas muestran una relación clave en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo. Los valores de las personas reflejan nociones generales y abstractas respecto a pensamientos y acciones, y actúan como guías de sus prioridades (Schwartz y Bilsky, 1987). De este modo, todas las personas poseen valores que hacen que prioricen más unos ámbitos de la vida que otros. Por ejemplo, el hecho de tener unos valores más marcados hacia el trabajo que hacia otros ámbitos, implica que se tengan mayores deseos de adquirir responsabilidad en el puesto de trabajo y de asumir retos. Como consecuencia de ello, el trabajador puede

estar más comprometido con el trabajo y ser más efectivo, exitoso y creativo (Ali y Al-Kazemi, 2005), así como encontrarse más satisfecho laboralmente (Brown, 2002). En base a este razonamiento se ha propuesto que los valores pueden tener una influencia importante en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo.

Un concepto muy relacionado con los valores es el de ‘centralidad’ del trabajo en la vida de las personas. Existen algunas personas para quienes el trabajo es central en sus vidas, mientras que para otras lo es la familia o la religión, por poner algunos ejemplos. En esta línea, Snir y Harpaz (2004) comprobaron que aquellas personas que tienen una baja centralidad familiar, es decir, que atribuyen poca importancia a su familia, tienen más probabilidades de dedicar más tiempo a otras áreas de su vida como el trabajo, y por tanto, tienen mayores probabilidades de desarrollar adicción al trabajo. Por su parte, otras investigaciones (Burke, 2001a, Burke y Koksas, 2002) han concluido que las personas adictas al trabajo poseen valores organizacionales positivos más fuertes (e.g., si existe algún problema en su organización lo dan todo para solucionarlo) comparados con trabajadores no adictos, lo que de nuevo refuerza la hipótesis de que la posesión de valores hacia el trabajo es un factor fundamental para llegar a ser adicto al trabajo.

En otros estudios que también han evaluado la relación entre los valores personales de los trabajadores (evaluados como miedos y creencias) y la presencia de adicción al trabajo (Burke, 1999a, 2001b), se ha mostrado que los trabajadores con puntuaciones más altas en miedos y creencias informaron de una mayor impulsividad para trabajar y de un mayor desequilibrio familia-trabajo. Asimismo, aquellos trabajadores con miedos y creencias no tan arraigados señalaron una mayor satisfacción con el trabajo. Para evaluar las creencias de estos trabajadores, los autores utilizaron una escala de miedos y creencias generales. Esta escala estaba compuesta por tres dimensiones diferentes: (1) competencia con otros (e.g., "*solo puede ganar uno en cualquier situación*"), (2) principios morales (e.g., "*creo que las buenas personas siempre pierden*"), y (3) percepción de uno mismo (e.g., "*me preocupa bastante lo que los demás piensen de mí*").

### C) Autoestima y adicción al trabajo

Otro antecedente que puede influir en el desarrollo de adicción al trabajo es la autoestima. Se refiere al grado en el que una persona se quiere a sí misma y piensa que es valiosa (Brockner, 1988). En diversos estudios se ha señalado que con la finalidad de

conseguir la aprobación de los demás, las personas que poseen bajos niveles de autoestima dedican mucho tiempo a trabajar de forma compulsiva para obtener un buen rendimiento y sentirse respaldados (e.g., Burke, 2004). La adicción al trabajo les otorgaría a las personas con baja autoestima, poder y control sobre su conducta, lo que sería una forma de demostrar su valía social y organizacionalmente (Cochran y Rabinowitz, 2000).

Para Porter (1996), aquellas personas con bajos niveles de autoestima tienen más probabilidades de iniciar conductas adictivas que otras personas con mayores niveles, entre otras cosas porque estas conductas evitan los sentimientos negativos que se producen en otras situaciones cotidianas, como puede ser la interacción con personas. Robinson (1996a) apunta que el exceso de trabajo permite a los adictos mantener el control sobre una parte de sus vidas y que esto a su vez les supone un mayor placer en general. De nuevo este antecedente muestra una estrecha relación con la familia en la que ha crecido el trabajador adicto, ya que la autoestima también se desarrolla principalmente en ese contexto. Que se tenga constancia, tan solo existe un estudio empírico en el que se haya relacionado la adicción al trabajo y la autoestima. En este estudio se encontró que los adictos al trabajo tenían niveles más bajos de autoestima en comparación con otros trabajadores (Burke, 2004). A pesar de este resultado, se necesitan más estudios que permitan afirmar con seguridad que la autoestima es, en efecto, un antecedente que repercute directamente sobre el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo.

#### *D) Personalidad y adicción al trabajo*

Aunque el estudio de la personalidad en relación con la adicción al trabajo está todavía en sus primeras fases, hasta el momento se pueden distinguir dos corrientes diferenciadas de estudio. La primera se refiere al estudio del patrón de conducta Tipo A y tiene un mayor número de estudios a sus espaldas. La segunda hace referencia al estudio de las cinco dimensiones principales de personalidad según la teoría de los Cinco Grandes, perspectiva que está empezando a obtener resultados interesantes. A continuación, se detallan estas dos perspectivas.

##### *D.1. Patrón de Conducta Tipo A y Adicción al trabajo*

Los estudios sobre la relación entre adicción al trabajo y patrón de conducta Tipo A se inician en los años 80 y 90, cuando se realizaron distintas investigaciones que señalaban una posible relación de este tipo de patrón y los rasgos obsesivo-compulsivos

con la adicción al trabajo. Concretamente las investigaciones apuntaron que ambos aspectos influían en las manifestaciones conductuales de la adicción al trabajo, esto es, que son las personas que presentan un patrón de conducta Tipo A y además rasgos obsesivos-compulsivos los que tienen más probabilidades de ser adictos al trabajo (Seybold y Salomone, 1994).

El Patrón de Conducta Tipo A se caracteriza por ser un patrón complejo de acción-emoción en personas enfrascadas en una lucha interminable por conseguir objetivos en el menor tiempo a cualquier coste (Friedman y Rosenman, 1959). Como Savickas indica (1990), el Patrón de Conducta Tipo A se puede describir aplicado al ámbito laboral, como *“una competitividad, urgencia en el tiempo, impaciencia, hostilidad y sobre implicación en el trabajo”* (p.152-153). Este autor también hace hincapié en la existencia de un solapamiento entre el Patrón de Conducta Tipo A, los rasgos obsesivos-compulsivos y la adicción al trabajo. Como se ha tratado en el punto 1.2, la investigación ha propuesto estas características como elementos definitorios en algunas concepciones de adicción al trabajo. En esta línea, Machlowitz (1980) afirmó que *“el Patrón de Conducta Tipo A se corresponde bastante con los rasgos obsesivo-compulsivos y probablemente también con los adictos al trabajo”* (p. 44). Schwartz (1982) también conectó las tres categorizaciones afirmando que las personas que presentan un Patrón de Conducta Tipo A presentan un estilo obsesivo y que comúnmente estas personas son adictas al trabajo. Unos años más tarde, Naughton (1987) sugería que los individuos con un estilo de conducta obsesivo-compulsivo era probable que eligieran el trabajo como un área donde manifestar sus rasgos obsesivos de personalidad, a lo que añadía que la evaluación de la personalidad obsesiva-compulsiva de estos sujetos podía ayudar a comprender mejor la adicción al trabajo. De estas investigaciones se podría concluir que el adicto presentaría un estilo obsesivo-compulsivo, que manifestaría sobre todo en el área laboral.

Más recientemente, Del Líbano, Llorens, Schaufeli, y Salanova (2006) advierten de la similitud que existe entre las características típicas del Patrón de Conducta Tipo A con respecto a algunos de los comportamientos que presentan los adictos al trabajo. Estas características son las siguientes:

1. La urgencia e impaciencia en situaciones de espera.
2. La hostilidad ante la ausencia de control, manifestada a través de cólera o ira, o a través de la hostilidad en sí misma (e.g., competitividad, actitudes de dominio, y

evitación de conductas de conformismo y sumisión) y mediante agresividad manifiesta (física o verbal).

3. Las constantes auto-referencias para enfatizar su auto-concepto a través, por ejemplo, de llamar la atención sobre la posición social privilegiada que puede estar ocupando, de exagerar la propia importancia y de realizar afirmaciones arrogantes.

4. Y finalmente, la sobre-implicación y sobre-compromiso con la organización a la que pertenecen.

La investigación sobre adicción al trabajo ha comprobado que los adictos con Patrón de Conducta Tipo A con más riesgo de sufrir accidentes cardiovasculares y accidentes laborales son: los más impulsivos y enérgicos sin objetivos claros, que emiten muchas conductas improductivas, regulados por motivaciones de poder y competitividad, que experimentan frecuentemente emociones de cólera e ira pero que controlan excesivamente la expresión de estas emociones negativas. Además, estas personas son desconfiadas y escépticas, con baja autoestima, que utilizan muchos contenidos auto-referenciales, y que son poco asertivos (ya que se caracterizan por sus comportamientos agresivos contra los demás) (Salanova et al., 2008).

Aunque diversas investigaciones han seguido la misma línea de estudio y han propuesto también el Patrón de Conducta Tipo A como un factor relacionado con la aparición de la adicción al trabajo (e.g., Spence, Helmreich, y Pred, 1987), los estudios de Pérez-Prada (1996) y McMillan (2000) señalan que la relación entre ambos conceptos puede ser menor de lo que indican muchas investigaciones, por lo que es necesario continuar con su estudio.

#### *D.2. Las cinco grandes dimensiones de personalidad y la adicción al trabajo*

Aunque existe poca investigación empírica respecto a la relación de la adicción al trabajo y la personalidad, en Psicología son clásicos los estudios que utilizan los rasgos de personalidad como predictores de conductas. En este sentido, algunos estudios se han basado en el modelo de los *Cinco Grandes* (Five Factor Model) (e.g., Goldberg, 1993; McCrae y John, 1992) para estudiar qué dimensiones de personalidad están influyendo en la génesis de la adicción al trabajo (ver Tabla 1.2). Esta teoría pretende integrar diversos conceptos y medidas de personalidad en un solo marco teórico. De este modo la teoría propone que diferentes patrones de pensamiento, sentimiento, comportamiento y respuesta a demandas ambientales se pueden describir en función de las puntuaciones que en ellos se obtengan en cinco dominios de personalidad: extraversión, neuroticismo,



afabilidad, responsabilidad y apertura mental. McCrae y Costa (2003) cambiaron el término neuroticismo por el de estabilidad emocional para que todas las dimensiones se evaluaran en sentido positivo. Concretamente, la extraversión se asocia con sociabilidad, dominancia, ambición y asertividad. La estabilidad emocional se asocia negativamente con inestabilidad, propensión al estrés, inseguridad personal y depresión. La afabilidad se relaciona con ser cooperativo, bondadoso y agradable. Responsabilidad se asocia con persistencia, dependencia y ser organizado. Finalmente, la apertura mental se asocia con ser intelectual, imaginativo e inconformista.

**Tabla 1.2.** Dimensiones y sub-dimensiones de los Cinco Grandes

Dimensiones	Sub-dimensiones
1. <i>Extraversión</i> (E)	Dinamismo
	Dominancia
2. <i>Estabilidad Emocional</i> (EE)	Control de emociones
	Control de impulsos
3. <i>Afabilidad</i> (A)	Cooperación
	Cordialidad
4. <i>Responsabilidad</i> (R)	Escrupulosidad
	Perseverancia
5. <i>Apertura Mental</i> (AM)	Apertura a la cultura
	Apertura a la experiencia

Hasta la fecha solo se tiene constancia de un estudio que haya relacionado la personalidad basada en el modelo de los Cinco Grandes y la adicción al trabajo. Burke et al. (2006) obtuvieron que la extraversión se relacionada con la implicación en el trabajo, de manera que a mayor extraversión mayor implicación, mientras que bajos niveles de estabilidad emocional y apertura a la experiencia, y altos niveles de responsabilidad estuvieron relacionados con una mayor compulsividad. Se necesitan más estudios que relacionen el complejo mundo de la personalidad con el estudio de la adicción al trabajo y confirmen los resultados obtenidos por estos autores. Por ello, en

uno de los capítulos de esta tesis se presenta un estudio en el que se compara el patrón de personalidad de los adictos al trabajo con el de los trabajadores engaged.

*E) Satisfacción laboral y adicción al trabajo*

La relación existente entre satisfacción laboral y adicción al trabajo es bastante estrecha, de manera que existe evidencia para considerar que la adicción puede actuar tanto como una consecuencia como un antecedente. En este sentido, algunos autores mantienen que la satisfacción laboral es una consecuencia potencial de la adicción al trabajo orientada al éxito (Scott et al., 1997); es decir, es una consecuencia en aquellos adictos que trabajan con el único objetivo de obtener éxito. Estos serían los que se sentirían más satisfechos con su trabajo a medida que cumplieran sus objetivos. Por tanto, desde esta perspectiva primero se produciría la adicción al trabajo y después la satisfacción.

Sin embargo, la satisfacción también puede actuar como antecedente y por tanto como generador de adicción al trabajo. En este caso, podría ser que aquellas personas con un elevado nivel de satisfacción laboral acabaran desarrollando adicción al trabajo. En este sentido, se argumenta que sería más probable que los trabajadores satisfechos fueran más allá de lo esperado en sus trabajos y trabajaran más horas que trabajadores insatisfechos (Brief, 1998). En un estudio realizado con una muestra heterogénea de 973 trabajadores, los resultados obtenidos por Snir y Harpaz (2004) dan apoyo a esta hipótesis: los trabajadores más satisfechos con su trabajo también fueron los que más horas dedicaban a trabajar. Este resultado apoyaría las interpretaciones de la adicción al trabajo desde la teoría del afecto-cognición-conducta, que como se ha explicado anteriormente mantiene que uno de los factores que afecta al desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo es el placer - o satisfacción - que el hecho de trabajar produce en el trabajador (dimensión afectiva). De forma similar al de la autoestima, tampoco existen suficientes estudios que permitan afirmar con total certeza que la satisfacción laboral se pueda considerar un antecedente necesario para el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo o que, por el contrario, pueda considerarse como una de sus posibles consecuencias, sobre todo por la carencia de estudios longitudinales que permitan inferir causalidad. A lo largo de esta tesis se estudiará también el papel de la satisfacción laboral en la adicción al trabajo.

#### *1.4.2. Antecedentes de la adicción al trabajo: factores organizacionales*

Además de los factores individuales que se acaban de mostrar, existen otros factores que influyen en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo pero que son de naturaleza organizacional. Podrían existir organizaciones que favorecieran el desarrollo de puestos de trabajo adictivos. Cuando una sociedad está marcada por la competitividad comercial, es bastante frecuente que desde las organizaciones se inste a trabajar duro para obtener los mejores resultados. Dos preguntas surgen de esta realidad. La primera hace referencia a si el fomento de la dedicación exclusiva - y a veces excesiva - por parte de los dirigentes (esto es, que se premie a aquellos trabajadores que dedican muchas horas a trabajar), es el responsable de que un trabajador se convierta en adicto al trabajo. La segunda se refiere a si es el tipo de trabajo el que es adictivo en sí mismo, al margen de que las organizaciones puedan también fomentar la adicción. En los siguientes sub-apartados se hace hincapié en ambas posibilidades.

##### *A) Las organizaciones y la adicción al trabajo*

Que muchas organizaciones refuerzan la conducta de los adictos al trabajo es un hecho bastante frecuente, sobre todo en aquellas organizaciones que parecen valorar más el tiempo trabajado que los resultados obtenidos (Porter, 2004). De hecho, los profesionales que dedican más horas a trabajar son percibidos como más comprometidos con su organización y se les suele poner como ejemplos de estándares de trabajo (Burke, 2001a). A estos factores se les une el uso de las nuevas tecnologías como herramientas de trabajo (e.g., móviles, ordenadores portátiles, Internet, etc.), que como se ha comentado en la introducción de esta tesis, en muchas ocasiones facilitan las conductas de trabajo excesivo de la persona adicta. Las tecnologías permiten trabajar en cualquier momento y en cualquier lugar, lo que dificulta que la persona desconecte del trabajo cuando está en un contexto extra-laboral (e.g., con la familia, de vacaciones, en su tiempo libre). Otros aspectos que influyen en este sentido son, por un lado, el cambio de los roles de género que se está produciendo desde hace algunos años (es decir, el hecho de que la mujer se haya incorporado al mercado laboral y se compartan los roles familiares con la pareja) y, por el otro, la aceptación de la adicción al trabajo como una cualidad personal positiva, que la establece como un aspecto valorado por la sociedad.

¿Se podría afirmar entonces que las organizaciones crean adictos al trabajo? ¿Las organizaciones constituyen un antecedente clave en el desarrollo del fenómeno? Diversos autores apuntan en esa dirección (e.g., Fassel, 1990; Schaeff y Fassel, 1988),

aunque también los hay quienes afirman que es el hecho de que existan varias personas adictas al trabajo en una organización, lo que la hace adictiva y que se refuercen dichas conductas en el resto de trabajadores (e.g., Porter, 1996; Scott et al., 1997). A pesar de que hasta el momento no se ha llegado a conclusiones claras al respecto, sí que existe consenso respecto a que para muchas personas el puesto de trabajo llega a ser más preferible y satisfactorio que su propia casa, con lo que se incrementan las posibilidades de que esas personas desarrollen adicción al trabajo (Hochschild, 1997).

El estudio de la influencia de la organización en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo se hace más complejo todavía si se considera una alternativa más: ¿existen organizaciones que atraen a un tipo determinado de trabajadores?, ¿podrían ser atraídos los adictos al trabajo por un determinado tipo de organizaciones? Según la *Teoría de la Atracción-Selección-Agotamiento* de Schneider, Goldstein y Smith (1995) esto es un hecho. Diferentes tipos de organizaciones atraen, seleccionan y retienen a diferentes tipos de personas en función de sus sistemas de selección, socialización y recompensa. A pesar de que no se ha estudiado el caso concreto de la adicción al trabajo, desde esta teoría se propone que, en función de la cultura de cada organización y por ende, de sus sistemas para atraer a personal nuevo, el tipo de personas más o menos adecuadas para los puestos de esa organización pueden ser las que tengan más opciones de ser adictas al trabajo. En cualquier caso, hasta que no se comprueben empíricamente estas hipótesis, no se podrá afirmar que unos tipos concretos de organizaciones sean los responsables directos de la aparición de la adicción.

#### *B) Los puestos de trabajo y la adicción al trabajo*

La segunda cuestión a tratar en este apartado hace referencia a si es el tipo de trabajo y no la organización lo que es adictivo y, por tanto, generador de la adicción al trabajo. Aunque la adicción al trabajo está principalmente relacionada con características personales, sí existen algunos estresores o demandas laborales que podrían llegar a convertirse en potenciadores de la adicción. Por demandas laborales se entienden aquellos aspectos físicos, psicológicos, sociales u organizacionales que requieren del trabajador esfuerzo físico, y/o psicológico y que se asocian con costes físicos y/o psicológicos (Schaufeli y Bakker, 2004). Así, cuando personas potencialmente ‘adictas’ perciben la presencia de determinadas demandas laborales específicas en sus puestos de trabajo, éstas últimas podrían multiplicar la posibilidad de desarrollar adicción al trabajo.

Investigación reciente ha constatado que existen determinadas demandas denominadas ‘retadoras’ (*challenge stressors*, e.g., elevada sobrecarga de trabajo o presión temporal) que, contrariamente a cómo funcionan las demandas ‘obstáculo’ (*hindrance stressors*, e.g., la ambigüedad de rol o la inseguridad laboral), pueden tener efectos positivos sobre el desempeño y la motivación laboral si se presentan a ciertos niveles (Lepine, Podsakoff y Lepine, 2005). Concretamente, las demandas retadoras pueden incrementar la motivación laboral si se asocian de forma positiva con diferentes aspectos como: (1) el esfuerzo que se realiza a la hora de afrontar los objetivos que se pretenden alcanzar, (2) el esfuerzo que hay que dedicar para acabar una tarea en un tiempo límite o (3) la probabilidad de que alcanzando un objetivo se obtengan determinadas recompensas (e.g., reconocimiento social, satisfacción personal, dinero); de modo que alcanzar el ‘reto’ conllevaría obtener las ‘recompensas’. Esto que a grandes rasgos parece constituir un aspecto positivo, puede tener efectos negativos a la hora de desarrollar adicción al trabajo. El trabajador o trabajadora, impulsado por la motivación generada gracias a las demandas retadoras, podría dedicar todavía más tiempo a trabajar aumentando de este modo la probabilidad de desarrollar una adicción al trabajo.

Así, estas demandas retadoras podrían convertirse en demandas potenciales de la generación de ambientes adictivos. Entre las principales demandas retadoras que podrían llegar a ser ‘adictivas’ se encuentran: la sobrecarga de trabajo, la presión temporal y las fechas límite. Como se ha tratado anteriormente, si los adictos se caracterizan por trabajar excesivamente y por parecer que siempre tienen ‘prisa’ (urgencia-impaciencia), se entiende que la presencia de estas demandas retadoras en sus trabajos potenciará todavía más su propia adicción. En uno de los capítulos de esta tesis se estudiará con más detalle el efecto que tiene la sobrecarga cuantitativa en la adicción al trabajo.

Pero no solo por las demandas retadoras que existen en un puesto de trabajo en particular se puede desarrollar adicción al trabajo. También los recursos laborales que el trabajador tenga a su disposición por parte de la organización pueden influir de alguna forma. Por recursos laborales se entienden aquellos aspectos físicos, psicológicos, sociales y organizacionales que son funcionales en la consecución de las metas, reducen las demandas laborales, y estimulan el crecimiento y desarrollo personal y profesional (Schaufeli y Bakker, 2004). De este modo se ha comprobado que la autonomía es un

recurso laboral que puede facilitar el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo. En este sentido, un trabajador autónomo tendría más facilidades de desarrollar adicción al trabajo que un trabajador asalariado, puesto que tiene una mayor flexibilidad para acomodar el trabajo a sus necesidades y a la vez tiene mayores responsabilidades (Loscocco, 1997). Además, es habitual que este tipo de trabajadores experimenten un aumento de la sobrecarga de trabajo puesto que trabajan muchas horas y muy duro, sobre todo cuando están creando su empresa desde cero (Hatten, 1997). Lo mismo podría aplicarse a un puesto que dotase a la persona de la posibilidad de estructurar su trabajo del modo que considerase más adecuado. Por tanto, un puesto de trabajo puede facilitar la adicción al trabajo siempre y cuando el trabajador posea un grado considerable de autonomía (Snir y Harpaz, 2004).

En definitiva, se podría afirmar que existen los puestos de trabajo adictivos, aunque habría que puntualizar que sería la interacción entre las condiciones laborales (presencia de demandas retadoras y recursos laborales específicos) y la forma de ser de cada persona (sus valores, su bagaje familiar, su personalidad, entre otros), lo que determinaría finalmente la presencia o ausencia de adicción al trabajo.

En conclusión, se puede afirmar que las organizaciones tienen un papel importante en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo de sus empleados. Por ello, los máximos responsables de éstas han de realizar evaluaciones continuas en las que se considere cómo la presencia de las demandas retadoras y recursos laborales explicados, pueden afectar a sus trabajadores en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo.

### **1.5. Consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo**

Se pueden distinguir distintos tipos de consecuencias derivadas de la adicción al trabajo dependiendo de su foco de alcance. Por tanto, a continuación se presentan estas consecuencias clasificadas a distintos niveles en función de su ámbito de influencia: (1) que afectan a la propia persona adicta al trabajo (e.g., aspectos relacionados con la satisfacción y la salud), (2) que afectan a la organización (e.g., rendimiento y relaciones entre compañeros) y (3) que afectan a las relaciones extra-laborales (e.g., conflicto familia-trabajo y problemas conyugales). Ahora bien, es necesario tener en cuenta que en muchas ocasiones los distintos tipos de consecuencias están interrelacionados, por lo que a pesar de que se intenten tratar por separado, es inevitable hablar de las mismas en más de uno de los siguientes sub-apartados.

### *1.5.1. Consecuencias de la adicción sobre la persona adicta al trabajo*

La mayor parte de las consecuencias que se derivan de la adicción al trabajo recaen en el propio adicto. A pesar de que existen algunas investigaciones que indican que los adictos pueden funcionar relativamente bien, sin padecer demasiados problemas de salud, sin experimentar altos niveles de estrés (Burke, 1999b; McMillan y O'Driscoll, 2004) e incluso encontrarse satisfechos con su trabajo (e.g., Del Líbano et al., 2004), la mayoría de los estudios han relacionado la adicción al trabajo con consecuencias negativas para el trabajador. De hecho, la investigación realizada en la década de los 80 ya señalaba que la adicción podía tener efectos negativos sobre la propia persona. Según estos estudios, los adictos al trabajo presentan un estilo de vida caracterizado por la ansiedad y el estrés, lo que aumenta las posibilidades de padecer, por ejemplo, problemas cardíacos (Klaft y Kleiner, 1988).

En estudios más recientes se han obtenido resultados que apoyan las consecuencias negativas de la adicción sobre los propios adictos. Los adictos al trabajo informan de altos niveles de estrés laboral y presentan quejas de salud (sobre todo de tipo mental) relacionadas con su impulsividad (Buelens y Poelmans, 2004; Burke, Richardsen y Mortinussen, 2004b). En este sentido, se ha apuntado que trabajar muchas horas aumenta la fatiga de la persona, presumiblemente porque ésta no tiene tiempo suficiente para recuperarse del esfuerzo excesivo (Sonnetag, 2003), lo que a su vez se traduce en estados de estrés, en alteraciones del sistema inmune (Trinkoff, Geiger-Brown, Lipscomb, y Lang, 2006), en depresión y otros trastornos psicológicos (Shields, 1999), así como en una mayor probabilidad de cometer errores por parte de la persona adicta al trabajo (Akerstedt, Fredlund, Gillberg, y Jansson, 2002).

Desde un punto de vista emocional, se ha constatado también que los adictos presentan una menor satisfacción extra-laboral (p. ej., menor satisfacción con las relaciones sociales) que otros trabajadores no adictos (e.g., Bonebright, Clay, y Ankenmann, 2000). Otros resultados relacionados con la satisfacción que experimentan las personas adictas han sido propuestos por Buelens y Poelmans (2004), quienes observaron que las personas adictas al trabajo estaban poco satisfechas con su salario, con su familia, con sus relaciones con compañeros de trabajo y con sus supervisores, en comparación con otros trabajadores no adictos (aunque no con su trabajo en general, con el que se encontraban satisfechas). También Burke (1999c) en una muestra de 540

empresarios, señaló que los adictos al trabajo informaban de más estrés laboral en comparación con otros trabajadores no adictos.

Además, como ya se ha comentado anteriormente, la adicción al trabajo también puede contribuir a aumentar la aparición de otros fenómenos psicosociales negativos como por ejemplo, el burnout (Robinson, 1998a; Schaufeli et al., 2009). Por ejemplo, Nagy y Davis (1985) encontraron que la adicción al trabajo y el burnout estaban relacionados positivamente (a más adicción al trabajo más burnout) en un estudio realizado en 240 profesores de secundaria. Concretamente la adicción se relacionó con 2 de las dimensiones del burnout: por un lado los adictos se distanciaban emocionalmente de sus alumnos (despersonalización), por el otro se mostraban cansados a nivel emocional (agotamiento emocional) debido al esfuerzo que su trabajo les suponía a este nivel. Del mismo modo, Burke y Matthiesen (2004) encontraron en otro estudio los mismos resultados: los adictos al trabajo se caracterizaban por altas puntuaciones en despersonalización y agotamiento emocional, esto es, por tener mayores niveles de burnout que otro tipo de trabajadores. Andreassen et al. (2007) también obtuvieron resultados interesantes respecto a las consecuencias derivadas de la adicción al trabajo. Concretamente, estos autores compararon a adictos al trabajo entusiastas con adictos no entusiastas (les diferenciaba el modo en que experimentaban su trabajo, los primeros disfrutaban mientras que los segundos no) y encontraron que los adictos no entusiastas eran los que mostraban más estrés, más burnout y más quejas de salud.

En relación a las quejas de salud derivadas de la adicción al trabajo, existen diversos estudios que muestran que son consecuencias habituales en trabajadores adictos. Por ejemplo, Burke (2000a) concluye que los adictos muestran más síntomas psicosomáticos así como menores niveles de bienestar físico y psicológico que otros trabajadores. En esta línea, Burke et al. (2004a) en una muestra de psicólogas australianas, encontraron que la adicción al trabajo estaba asociada con un elevado número de quejas psicosomáticas y con bajos índices de bienestar psicológico. Por tanto, en base a todos estos estudios se puede concluir que la adicción al trabajo parece estar asociada con quejas de salud tanto físicas como psicológicas (McMillan, O'Driscoll y Burke, 2003)

### *1.5.2. Consecuencias de la adicción sobre la organización*

Pero la adicción al trabajo no solo afecta al trabajador que la padece en el plano individual, sino que también penetra en las vidas de sus compañeros y afecta a la



organización en la que trabaja. Afecta a los compañeros de trabajo porque como se ha comentado anteriormente, el adicto tiene problemas para delegar en ellos e incluso en ocasiones asume parte de su trabajo, en su afán por trabajar cada vez más. De hecho, Mudrack y Naughton (2004) constataron en una muestra de 278 trabajadores americanos que los adictos al trabajo tienden a inmiscuirse en el trabajo de sus compañeros para asegurarse que lo están realizando correctamente según los estándares de rendimiento que poseen. Además, si la conducta del adicto es reforzada por la organización, los compañeros de trabajo pueden sentirse minusvalorados y entrar en competencia directa con él, viéndose deterioradas sus relaciones interpersonales.

Pero la adicción no sólo afecta a las relaciones con los demás, sino que afecta también a la organización debido a los problemas de rendimiento que presenta la persona adicta al trabajo. Curiosamente, aunque a corto plazo el adicto puede producir por encima de la media, a medio/largo plazo y debido al exceso de trabajo asumido, su rendimiento llega a estar muy por debajo de lo esperado.

Además, el deterioro de las relaciones con los compañeros de trabajo también afecta a los resultados organizacionales. En este sentido Porter (1996), a través de la comparación del alcoholismo con la adicción al trabajo, explica las razones por las que se genera un ambiente de trabajo nocivo alrededor del adicto y cómo ello afecta negativamente a la organización. Por un lado, los compañeros prefieren no trabajar con personas que se centran más en el trabajo que en el resultado a alcanzar porque entienden que ganan tiempo. Este hecho lleva al adicto a trabajar cada vez de forma más independiente, con lo que muchas de las tareas que se tendrían que realizar de forma cooperativa se realizan individualmente y la organización se ve perjudicada, obteniendo unos beneficios inferiores a los que se podrían alcanzar en el caso de que la dinámica de trabajo fuese diferente (e.g., más cooperativa). Además el adicto o adicta necesita controlar todos los aspectos relacionados con su trabajo, lo que también incluye el trabajo que hacen sus compañeros porque no confía en sus capacidades, que constituye otro ejemplo de los motivos por los que se limita de nuevo el trabajo cooperativo y la delegación de tareas.

En otra investigación posterior, Porter (2001) continúa con el estudio de cómo la adicción al trabajo afecta a los compañeros en particular y a la organización en general. Con una muestra heterogénea de 265 trabajadores de una fábrica de alta tecnología, Porter concluye que los adictos no conceden valor al trabajo de sus subordinados, lo que

por una parte supone no delegar trabajo en ellos, y por la otra que a través de las acciones y de las palabras del adicto perciban que no se les valora y, por tanto, bajen su rendimiento, afectando de nuevo a los resultados de la organización negativamente. En este sentido, el perfeccionismo que caracteriza a la persona adicta al trabajo hace que posea estándares de rendimiento muy altos que difícilmente se pueden satisfacer, lo que le lleva a trabajar cada vez más para alcanzar unos objetivos que siempre se renuevan y aumentan. Si el adicto o adicta tiene trabajadores a su cargo, éstos se pueden ver también inmersos en el ritmo de trabajo que marca, lo que se podría traducir en un aumento del estrés al que están sometidos y en un menor rendimiento generalizado de la organización a la que pertenecen. Incluso el refuerzo externo por el trabajo bien hecho, podría hacer que el adicto intentase trabajar más para convencerse a sí mismo de que merece la recompensa que le ha sido otorgada (Ellingsen y Johannesson, 2007).

### *1.5.3. Consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo sobre las relaciones extra-laborales*

Como cualquier otra adicción, la adicción al trabajo también tiene un efecto negativo sobre las relaciones personales que se establecen fuera del contexto de trabajo. Es un hecho que la vida de la persona adicta se centra en su trabajo, con lo que el tiempo que dedica a su familia y a sus amistades es escaso. En este sentido, la investigación ha demostrado el deterioro del círculo social y familiar en las personas que son adictas al trabajo.

En los años 80 empiezan los estudios sobre el impacto de la adicción en la familia. Kluft y Kleiner (1988), por ejemplo, escribieron acerca de los problemas conyugales de los adictos, y constataron que la amplia mayoría de matrimonios terminan en divorcio. También Minirth, Meier, Wichern, Brewer y Skipper (1981) estudiaron los problemas sociales derivados de la adicción. Según estos autores el adicto no tiene tiempo para relaciones extra-laborales, lo que incluye a la familia y a las amistades. En esta línea, se ha constatado que los niveles de separación matrimonial son relativamente altos entre las personas adictas al trabajo (Robinson et al., 2001), y que, por término medio, experimentan más conflictos vida-trabajo que las personas no adictas. Además, tienden a percibir a sus familias con menor habilidad para resolver problemas de forma efectiva, con peor comunicación, con menos respuestas afectivas, y con una satisfacción relacional más pobre que las personas que no son adictas (Burke y Koksal, 2002).

En los años 90, Robinson encabeza la realización de diversos estudios sobre los efectos de la adicción en la familia. El primer estudio dirigido a investigar la relación

entre la adicción al trabajo y el funcionamiento de la familia, proporcionó evidencia de que la adicción puede llevar a relaciones familiares deficientes, favorecer los conflictos y crear disfunción dentro de la familia (Robinson y Post, 1995; 1997). Además, informes clínicos sugirieron que a causa de las características estructurales y dinámicas de la adicción al trabajo, cada miembro de la familia podía verse afectado por la adicción y desarrollar problemas de salud (Robinson, 1998b). La estructura de la familia adicta al trabajo hace que los cónyuges y los hijos pueden llegar a convertirse en extensiones del trabajo y de la profesión del adicto, moldeando sus vidas alrededor de los intereses y valores de éste, lo que puede hacer que sean habituales los conflictos familiares (Pietropinto, 1986; Robinson, 1998b).

A pesar de que puede parecer que las consecuencias negativas de la adicción al trabajo sobre la familia son bastante claras, que se tenga constancia hasta el momento solo se ha llevado a cabo una investigación en la que se haya evaluado directamente a los cónyuges de los adictos al trabajo, preguntándoles a cerca de la atmósfera en la que viven (Robinson, Carrol y Flowers, 2000). Según este estudio los cónyuges de personas adictas mostraron un mayor distanciamiento, un menor afecto positivo hacia sus respectivas parejas y además se caracterizaban por tener un locus de control externo, esto es, percibían en mayor medida que los cónyuges de trabajadores no adictos, que los sucesos de su vida ocurrían como resultado del azar, el destino, la suerte o el poder y decisiones de otros. Carrol (2001) sugiere que las esposas de los adictos no comprenden su comportamiento, lo que puede hacer que se planteen sus propias percepciones y sentimientos, e incluso pueden llegar a plantearse si no son ellas las que realmente tienen un problema. Esto se podría generalizar también a los maridos. Independientemente de si es hombre o mujer el cónyuge, el hecho de que una persona se comporte de forma incomprensible puede tener un efecto protector en su pareja, generándose este tipo de pensamientos de culpabilidad acerca de la propia conducta.

Con la evolución de la investigación, no solo se ha tenido en cuenta el efecto sobre los cónyuges de las personas adictas al trabajo, también los hijos de las mismas han sido estudiados. La literatura clínica sugiere que muchos hijos de adictos heredan las mismas características de sus progenitores. Además estos niños son fácilmente dirigibles y buscan cumplir con las expectativas de los adultos (Robinson, 1998a). Otro aspecto que se ha comprobado es que los hijos de adictos al trabajo tienen mayores niveles de depresión, evalúan a sus familias como más disfuncionales y tienen un mayor

riesgo de desarrollar ellos mismos adicción con el tiempo, que otros hijos de trabajadores no adictos (Robinson y Kelley, 1998). Por tanto, se puede decir que la adicción al trabajo de los padres afecta de forma negativa a sus descendientes, que tendrán mayor probabilidad de desarrollar problemas de salud (de tipo mental) que, a su vez, afecten a su desarrollo (Robinson, 2001).

En resumen, parece existir bastante consenso respecto a que las consecuencias extra-laborales de la adicción son negativas a nivel familiar, tanto las que aumentan las posibilidades de que los hijos o hijas de personas adictas al trabajo también lo acaben siendo en un futuro, como las que implican problemas en la salud mental de éstos y de los cónyuges. La investigación ha de continuar su camino no solo teniendo en cuenta las consecuencias familiares (como se ha visto existen muchas propuestas pero no tantos estudios que las refuten), sino también utilizando a esos familiares como fuentes externas de comunicación que sirvan para contrastar la información obtenida directamente del adicto.

### **1.6. Herramientas de evaluación de la adicción al trabajo**

Constituye uno de los puntos clave de la presente tesis, ya que sin una adecuada medición de la adicción al trabajo sería muy difícil controlar su aparición en las organizaciones, así como proseguir con su estudio. El interés de los investigadores en dotar al profesional de instrumentos que le permitan evaluar de forma válida y fiable la adicción al trabajo surge ya en los años 80 de la mano de Marilyn Machlowitz, quien en base a diversas entrevistas a trabajadores con problemas de adicción al trabajo se percató de que era necesario desarrollar las herramientas adecuadas para poder evaluar dicho fenómeno de forma sistemática.

En la Nota Técnica sobre Adicción al Trabajo publicada por el Instituto Nacional de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo, Del Líbano et al. (2008) presentan diferentes herramientas de evaluación de la adicción al trabajo que han mostrado su validez en diferentes contextos laborales y en distintos países (p. ej., España, Holanda, EEUU, etc.). Las herramientas de evaluación de la adicción al trabajo pueden dividirse en 3 grandes bloques: (1) listas de comprobación, (2) cuestionarios de autoinforme, y (3) entrevistas. Esta revisión teórica se centra únicamente en los cuestionarios de autoinforme porque son la herramienta de evaluación de la adicción al trabajo que se ha utilizado mayoritariamente y, por ende, de la que existen más propuestas diferentes.

Los cuestionarios de autoinforme adaptados para la evaluación de la adicción al trabajo surgieron formalmente a finales de los 80. A pesar de que se han propuesto varios cuestionarios para medir la adicción al trabajo, la presente revisión se centra en los 3 que más investigación han generado y que permiten evaluar la adicción al trabajo con suficientes garantías de calidad: (1) el Work Addiction Risk Test (WART; Robinson, 1989), (2) el Workaholism Battery (Workbat; Spence y Robbins, 1992), y (3) el Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS) en sus dos versiones: larga (Schaufeli et al., 2006) y breve (Schaufeli et al., 2009). A continuación se detallan cada uno de ellos.

#### *1.6.1. WART: Work Addiction Risk Test*

Este instrumento fue creado por Bryan Robinson en 1989 en base a los síntomas que diferentes psicólogos clínicos detectaron y describieron tras diversas terapias con adictos al trabajo. Está compuesto por 24 ítems puntuables en una escala Likert que oscila entre 1 (nunca verdad) y 4 (siempre verdad). Las preguntas describen los hábitos de trabajo de los trabajadores, quienes han de valorar en qué medida el contenido de las preguntas se ajusta a lo que es habitual en su vida o jornada laboral. La puntuación total que se obtiene permite diferenciar a 3 tipos de trabajadores en función del intervalo en el que se encuentren. Dicha puntuación se relaciona directamente con el riesgo de padecer adicción al trabajo. Así, (1) los trabajadores que puntúan entre 25-56 puntos se consideran no adictos, siendo el riesgo de adicción bajo, (2) los que puntúan entre 57-66 se consideran pseudo-adictos y presentan una probabilidad media de padecer adicción, y (3) los trabajadores que puntúan entre 67-100, que son los que se considera que tienen una probabilidad muy alta de ser adictos al trabajo.

Para la creación del cuestionario, tras una serie de entrevistas personales con adictos al trabajo, se seleccionaron los 5 síntomas más relevantes de este tipo de adicción y se confeccionaron preguntas que trataban de evaluar esos síntomas. Los 5 síntomas que se consideraron dimensiones básicas de la adicción al trabajo según este cuestionario (Flowers y Robinson, 2002), son los siguientes: (1) Tendencias Compulsivas, (2) Control, (3) Auto-absorción, (4) Incapacidad para delegar, y (5) Auto-valoración. La dimensión denominada Tendencias compulsivas se refiere a aquellas conductas impulsivas que muestran los trabajadores y que les llevan a trabajar duro, y que además les suponen dificultades para relajarse después de trabajar. Esta dimensión se evalúa a través de 9 preguntas. Un ejemplo de pregunta es: “*Me siento culpable cuando no estoy trabajando en alguna cosa*”. La segunda de las dimensiones, Control,

hace referencia a la necesidad de los trabajadores de disponer de su trabajo y de aspectos relacionados con el mismo cuándo y cómo quieran, lo que les asegura poder trabajar en todo momento, y que a su vez implica malestar cuando tienen que esperar o cuando las cosas no se hacen como quieren. Esta dimensión se evalúa a través de 7 preguntas. Un ejemplo de pregunta es: *“Me irrito cuando me interrumpen si estoy en medio de algo”*. La tercera dimensión denominada Auto-absorción, se refiere a la facilidad con la que las personas dedican más energía a trabajar que a otras áreas de su vida, lo que hace que descuiden esas otras áreas. Esta dimensión se evalúa por medio de 5 preguntas. Un ejemplo de pregunta es: *“Dedico más atención, tiempo y energía a mi trabajo que a mis relaciones con amigos y seres queridos”*. La cuarta dimensión, Incapacidad para delegar, se relaciona con las dificultades de los adictos al trabajo para confiar en sus compañeros, lo que les impide dejar que continúen ellos con aspectos de su trabajo. Esta dimensión se evalúa a través de 1 solo ítem: *“Prefiero hacer la mayoría de cosas por mí mismo/a antes que pedir ayuda”*. La última de las dimensiones, denominada Auto-valoración, hace referencia al grado en el que una persona está más interesada en los resultados de su trabajo que en el proceso de trabajo en sí mismo. Esta dimensión se evalúa a través de dos preguntas. Un ejemplo de pregunta es: *“Estoy más interesado en el resultado final que en el proceso de mi trabajo”*

A pesar de que diversos estudios han señalado que el WART puede considerarse un instrumento de evaluación fiable (ver Robinson, 1999, para una revisión), Taris et al. (2005) en su estudio de validación del WART en Holanda, comprobaron que la información que proporcionaba una de las dimensiones del cuestionario, Tendencias Compulsivas, era prácticamente la misma que se obtenía con el cuestionario en su totalidad y que por tanto no era necesario utilizar el resto de ítems para evaluar la adicción al trabajo. Además, son necesarios todavía más estudios sobre la idoneidad del cuestionario utilizando muestras de trabajadores, ya que en su mayoría ha sido puesto a prueba con muestras de estudiantes (Robinson, 1999; Robinson y Post, 1994, 1995; Robinson, Post, y Khakee, 1992).

#### *1.6.2. Workbat: Workaholism Battery*

Confeccionado por Spence y Robbins en 1992, el Workbat es uno de los cuestionarios sobre los que se han realizado más investigaciones. Está compuesto por 25 ítems puntuables en una escala Likert de 5 puntos de anclaje que oscila entre 1 (totalmente de acuerdo) y 5 (totalmente en desacuerdo) y diferencia tres dimensiones:

(1) implicación laboral, (2) compulsividad, y (3) satisfacción laboral. Estas tres dimensiones son las que conforman el llamado "*modelo de la triada adictiva*", en el que se basan todas las preguntas del cuestionario.

Con la dimensión de implicación laboral se evalúa la dedicación a trabajar por parte de cada trabajador con preguntas como: "*Entre mi trabajo y otras actividades estoy muy implicado, no tengo tiempo libre*". Con la dimensión de compulsividad se evalúan los motivos por los que el trabajador dedica tanto tiempo a trabajar, con preguntas como: "*Me siento culpable cuando me tomo un tiempo de descanso en el trabajo*". Por último, la dimensión de satisfacción laboral evalúa el placer que siente la persona por trabajar, con preguntas como "*Pierdo la noción del tiempo cuando estoy implicado en un proyecto*".

En función de la puntuación obtenida en cada una de estas dimensiones, el cuestionario permite distinguir entre 6 perfiles laborales diferentes: (1) adictos al trabajo, (2) trabajadores entusiastas, (3) adictos entusiastas, (4) trabajadores no 'engaged', (5) trabajadores relajados, y (6) trabajadores desilusionados (ver Tabla 1.3). Los autores consideran los tres primeros como perfiles adictivos.

**Tabla 1.3.** *Perfiles laborales según la tipología de Spence y Robbins (1992)*

Tipo	Implicación laboral	Compulsividad	Satisfacción laboral
<i>Adicto al trabajo</i>	Alta	Alta	Baja
<i>Entusiasta</i>	Alta	Baja	Alta
<i>Adicto entusiasta</i>	Alta	Alta	Alta
<i>'Engaged'</i>	Baja	Baja	Baja
<i>Relajado</i>	Baja	Baja	Alta
<i>Desilusionado</i>	Baja	Alta	Baja

El Workbat es uno de los cuestionarios que más se ha utilizado para evaluar la adicción al trabajo. En el amplio número de estudios realizados (e.g., Buelens y Poelmans, 2004) se ha llegado a la conclusión de que las dimensiones de compulsividad

y satisfacción laboral se pueden considerar fiables, mientras que la dimensión de implicación laboral parece presentar más problemas (McMillan et al., 2001).

Además, diversos estudios (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008) plantean la inadecuación de la dimensión de satisfacción para evaluar la adicción al trabajo. Si la adicción al trabajo es en sí misma se considera un constructo negativo, no tiene sentido evaluar su 'lado positivo' preguntando cuestiones sobre la satisfacción de los trabajadores. Este tipo de dimensión solo sería adecuada para compararla con la adicción al trabajo, pero desde esta perspectiva negativa no tendría sentido indicar que es una parte de ella. Además, este tipo de preguntas son más adecuadas para estudiar el engagement que también se caracteriza por la elevada dedicación al trabajo, y que se ha explicado y diferenciado de la adicción al trabajo anteriormente.

### *1.6.3. DUWAS: Dutch Work Addiction Scale*

Con la finalidad de superar las distintas limitaciones que presentan los dos cuestionarios que se acaban de presentar surge el cuestionario DUWAS, que fue desarrollado en su primera versión por el equipo de investigación del catedrático de Psicología Social, el Dr. Wilmar Schaufeli (<http://www.schaufeli.com>) de la Universidad de Utrecht (Holanda) en el año 2006.

El DUWAS destaca como herramienta de evaluación de la adicción al trabajo por diferentes motivos: (1) ha demostrado su validez y fiabilidad científica, (2) está basado en una conceptualización de la adicción al trabajo bidimensional que tiene en cuenta sus principales características, (3) tiene en cuenta tres correlatos de la adicción al trabajo que han demostrado estar presentes en la mayoría de los casos de adicción, y (4) permite diagnosticar la adicción al trabajo comparando los resultados obtenidos por los trabajadores con baremos que provienen de distintas muestras normativas.

El principal objetivo del DUWAS es evaluar y diagnosticar la adicción al trabajo teniendo en cuenta sus dos dimensiones principales anteriormente comentadas. Además, el cuestionario permite contrastar la información obtenida con los correlatos de la adicción al trabajo, lo que permite dar más peso a las conclusiones que se puedan extraer de los resultados totales. El DUWAS está formado por un total de 19 ítems que se distribuyen en tres bloques diferenciados: (1) correlatos de la adicción al trabajo, (2) dimensión trabajar excesivamente, y (3) dimensión trabajar compulsivamente.

(1) *Correlatos de la adicción al trabajo.* Son tres ítems que evalúan aquellos aspectos que en diferentes investigaciones se han encontrado de forma habitual en la



descripción de las personas adictas al trabajo. Se puntúan en una escala tipo Likert de 4 puntos de anclaje (de 1 'casi nunca' a 4 'casi siempre'). Dos de las variables hacen referencia al trabajo que realizan los adictos fuera del contexto laboral, lo que incluye el trabajo que realizan en periodos de tiempo libre (los fines de semana y en casa) y aquel que hacen estando enfermos (i.e., presentismo).

(2) *Dimensión Trabajar Excesivamente*. Hace referencia a la primera de las dos dimensiones de la adicción al trabajo que considera el DUWAS. Esta dimensión es muy similar a la dimensión denominada Tendencias compulsivas del cuestionario WART. En el estudio sobre la validación del WART en Holanda que se ha explicado anteriormente, Taris et al. (2005) comprobaron la cuasi-equivalencia de esa dimensión con el cuestionario en su totalidad, por lo que la consideraron como una versión reducida del mismo. Tras un análisis más exhaustivo de las preguntas que conformaban la dimensión, se dieron cuenta de que la mayoría de ellas evaluaba aspectos relacionados con el trabajo excesivo, por lo que decidieron adaptar su nombre para que fuera más descriptivo y con posterioridad se seleccionó como una de las dos dimensiones básicas del DUWAS. Esta dimensión está formada por 9 ítems que también se puntúan en una escala tipo Likert de 4 puntos de anclaje (de 1 'casi nunca' a 4 'casi siempre'). Un ejemplo de ítem de la dimensión es: "*Generalmente estoy ocupado, llevo muchos asuntos entre manos*".

(3) *Dimensión Trabajar Compulsivamente*. Constituye la segunda de las dimensiones que tiene en cuenta el DUWAS. De forma similar a la anterior, fue extraída a partir del análisis de una de las dimensiones de otro cuestionario, el Workbat. Como también se ha visto anteriormente, los estudios sobre la validez factorial de este cuestionario (e.g., Kanai et al., 1996) no pudieron confirmar la estructura tridimensional propuesta por sus creadores (Spence y Robbins, 1992), lo que supuso eliminar la dimensión denominada Implicación laboral. Con ello el Workbat quedó con dos dimensiones: Compulsividad y Satisfacción Laboral. Schaufeli et al. (2006) desestimaron incluir la satisfacción laboral en su nuevo cuestionario porque consideraron que no era adecuado incluir una dimensión positiva para evaluar un fenómeno que en general se considera negativo. Para ser coherentes con la denominación de la otra dimensión del cuestionario, Trabajar Excesivamente, decidieron renombrar la dimensión del Workbat como Trabajar Compulsivamente. Esta dimensión está formada por 7 ítems que se puntúan de nuevo en una escala tipo Likert

de 4 puntos de anclaje (de 1 'casi nunca' a 4 'casi siempre'). Un ejemplo de ítem de la dimensión es: "*Me siento culpable cuando tengo un día libre en el trabajo*".

El DUWAS cuenta con unas normas de interpretación que se generaron en base a los primeros estudios sobre adicción al trabajo en los que se utilizaron las dos dimensiones que contempla el cuestionario (Taris, y Schaufeli, 2003; Taris, Schaufeli, Van Hoogenhuyze y Zon, 2003; Taris et al., 2005). En base a estos valores normativos, las puntuaciones obtenidas por los trabajadores y las trabajadoras se pueden calificar desde niveles muy bajos a niveles muy altos.

#### *1.6.4. DUWAS-10: Dutch Work Addiction Scale reducido*

A pesar de que en los estudios en los que se ha utilizado el DUWAS han mostrado buenos índices de fiabilidad y validez (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2008), recientemente se ha validado una versión reducida del cuestionario (Schaufeli et al., 2009) con el fin de que su tiempo de cumplimentación sea todavía más reducido a la hora de evaluar la adicción al trabajo junto a otros constructos de interés. Concretamente, el DUWAS reducido o DUWAS-10 mantiene las dos dimensiones básicas consideradas en el cuestionario original, reduciendo el número de ítems a 5 por dimensión (10 ítems en total). En la reducción de la escala se eliminaron aquellos ítems que tenían un contenido similar y que, por tanto, no aportaban información de utilidad. Además no se incluyeron los correlatos de la adicción al trabajo. Esta versión breve del cuestionario ha sido validada en muestra holandesa y japonesa por lo que se dispone del instrumento en holandés y japonés (Schaufeli et al., 2009). En este estudio el cuestionario obtuvo buenos índices de fiabilidad y validez, lo que indica su adecuación para el estudio de la adicción al trabajo. En cualquier caso, se necesitan más estudios que confirmen la validez de la estructura factorial del DUWAS-10 en otros países. En base a esta necesidad, en la presente tesis se pone a prueba el cuestionario utilizando una muestra de trabajadores españoles en comparación con una muestra de trabajadores holandeses.

### **1.7. Conclusiones**

La principal conclusión que se puede extraer una vez finalizada esta revisión teórica de la adicción al trabajo es que es un constructo complejo, sobre el que ya se conocen muchos detalles pero sobre el que todavía quedan bastantes aspectos por estudiar. La falta de consenso existente sobre su definición en sus primeras fases de estudio, el perfil característico de una persona adicta tipo, o la dificultad a la hora de distinguirlo de otros conceptos similares como el presentismo, el *engagement* o la

pasión por el trabajo, son cuestiones que hay que tener presentes para avanzar en el estudio de la adicción.

Por otro lado, el análisis de los principales modelos teóricos que existen para explicar este daño psicosocial, muestra que ninguno de ellos es el modelo teórico definitivo a pesar de que todos proponen procesos interesantes para explicar el constructo. De todos los modelos presentados, el que se muestra más completo, es el modelo de Ng et al. (2007), que tomando como base la *Teoría de la adicción*, propone tres dimensiones básicas: (1) afecto, (2) cognición y (3) conducta, y una serie de antecedentes y consecuentes que se derivan y producen (a partir) de ellas. Sin embargo, el principal problema que presenta es que resulta bastante complejo, por lo que de momento no ha sido probado empíricamente. La ausencia de un modelo predominante para explicar la adicción al trabajo constituye una importante laguna que impide que se avance en su investigación, por lo que futuros estudios deberían consolidar una teoría que permita avanzar en el estudio de la adicción al trabajo de forma consensuada y lógica. En este sentido, esta tesis presenta un estudio que analiza cualitativamente la adicción al trabajo, con la finalidad de proponer un modelo categórico que indique el camino por el que debe continuar el estudio del constructo.

Al margen de los modelos teóricos predominantes, se han revisado también los antecedentes individuales que más se han estudiado en el campo de la adicción al trabajo. Como resultado de esta revisión, se puede concluir que la familia donde crece el futuro adicto al trabajo puede ejercer una influencia notable, no solo porque se pueden aprender conductas adictivas directamente de los progenitores, sino también porque es en la familia donde se suelen sentar las bases de los valores que guían a cada persona. Además, la familia también puede tener influencia tanto en los niveles de autoestima como en parte del desarrollo de la personalidad de cada persona.

En cuanto a los antecedentes a nivel organizacional, esto es, cómo influyen las acciones de la organización donde trabaja el adicto en la adquisición y desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo, pueden existir organizaciones que refuercen conductas no recomendables y potencien el desarrollo del fenómeno. Sin embargo, también es posible que sea el tipo demanda (demandas reto como la presión temporal o la sobrecarga cuantitativa), el que motive en mayor medida a unos trabajadores que a otros (trabajadores propensos a desarrollar adicción al trabajo) y sea éste el motivo por el que se desarrolle la conducta adictiva.

Por lo que respecta a las consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo, la investigación apunta a su efecto negativo. Por un lado en la propia persona adicta al trabajo, que puede experimentar problemas de salud (tanto físicos como mentales) y baja satisfacción. Por otro lado en la organización, que se puede ver afectada por los problemas entre el adicto y sus compañeros de trabajo, además de por el pobre rendimiento de éste a medio/largo plazo. Y por último, también puede tener efectos negativos en ámbitos extra-laborales como la familia, donde puede producir problemas relacionales con la pareja e incluso con la educación de los hijos (si se tienen).

En relación a las herramientas de evaluación de la adicción al trabajo, actualmente todavía no se dispone de una herramienta que permita evaluar la adicción al trabajo con total fiabilidad y que demuestre tener una estructura sólida en diversos países. El último de los cuestionarios descritos en esta revisión, el DUWAS-10 parece posicionarse como la herramienta más prometedora al recoger en un solo cuestionario las virtudes de los dos cuestionarios que más se han utilizado tradicionalmente en la investigación de la adicción al trabajo, y al estar obteniendo buenos resultados en cuanto a sus propiedades psicométricas. Aun así, se necesita más investigación que refute los datos obtenidos hasta el momento.

En resumen, gracias a esta revisión teórica se ha podido constatar la evolución que se ha producido en los últimos años en cuanto al conocimiento científico de la adicción al trabajo. A pesar de que se han realizado bastantes estudios en los que se han propuesto distintas definiciones, antecedentes, consecuentes y modelos explicativos de la adicción al trabajo, todavía queda mucho camino por recorrer en el estudio y la comprensión de qué variables son trascendentes para que un trabajador se convierta en adicto. En los siguientes cinco estudios empíricos de esta tesis se continúa con el estudio de la adicción al trabajo en un intento por avanzar en su conocimiento de acuerdo a las necesidades existentes.

## Chapter 2

### Studying the key aspects of workaholism: a qualitative perspective<sup>3</sup>

#### Summary

Although many studies about the main characteristics of workaholism have been conducted, a comprehensive theoretical model of the construct is still lacking. The objective of the present study is to analyse workaholism qualitatively in order to map its main symptoms, antecedents and consequences systematically by interviewing 47 employees (52% males) from different organizations working in different occupations (i.e., engineers, architects, teachers, researchers, police officers and blue collar employees) who are characterized by being hard workers. The analyses of personal interviews following the principles of the 'Grounded Theory' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and using the Nvivo (QRS release 8.0) computer software package resulted in a heuristic model of workaholism. The domains that emerged were classified in several categories: antecedents (i.e., social reinforcement, organizational pressure, vicarious learning, work values, work self-efficacy, time-based autonomy, and non-work anhedonia), symptoms (i.e., overwork and compulsiveness), consequences (i.e., positive vs. negative) and self-regulation mechanisms.

*Key words:* workaholism, work engagement, self-efficacy, work values, Grounded Theory

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## Introduction

Today's society understands work as a key factor for its development. Working to live vs. for enjoyment is often confused with living to work, that is to say, spending most of the time working without any rest. What is the good of working so hard if people do not have time to be relaxed and feel good? There are lots of workers who spend too many hours working and do not have time to be with their families or their friends, they cannot disconnect from job matters, and they feel guilty when they are not working. These workers are known as workaholics.

Generally, employees who work hard could be critical for organizations because they are synonymous with profits. Hard work allows society to attain global competitiveness and thereby maintain relative standards of living in the global economy. But hard work has its downside. Workaholism is generally defined as an obsessive-compulsive behaviour of people who spend too much time at work and too little time with their families or in non-work activities (Salanova et al., 2008). This lack of 'work-life balance' is usually thought to inflict negative impacts on the person's health, on co-workers' job satisfaction and performance, and on the happiness of family members. However, there are people who work long hours without negative impacts on themselves or others – indeed they might inspire co-workers to greater performance and job satisfaction, and their families may be happier due to the successes achieved and the material things afforded. These particular hard workers are known as work-engaged employees and, in some studies, they have been confused with workaholics (see Schaufeli et al., 2006). It could be that organizations also confuse the two concepts, and they take measures to reduce work engagement because they think that it is workaholism. Thus, these actions could reduce the employees' job satisfaction, inhibit their supply of work hours, or reduce the associated external benefits, and thereby this might prove very damaging for the organizations themselves, and indirectly for society. For this reason, it is especially important for workaholism to be studied in depth and for workaholics to be clearly differentiated from engaged workers.

Although since Oates (1971) defined workaholism for the first time as “*an excessive and uncontrollable need to work incessantly that disturbs health, happiness, and relationships*” (p.11), the concept has been studied by a multitude of authors but only recently have calls for further analysis and the development of a theory of the 'working hard' phenomenon started to appear (Burke, 2002; Burke, Oberklaid, &

Burgess, 2004; McMillan, O'Driscoll, & Burke, 2003; Piotrowski & Vodanovich, 2008; Snir & Harpaz, 2004). One main focus of earlier research has been on describing and categorizing worker types, the result being different classifications of workers depending on the authors. For instance, six distinct types of work behaviours can be identified using the Spence and Robbins (1992) 'workaholism triad', i.e., depending on (1) the employees' work involvement, (2) the strength (and direction) of their psychic drive to work, and (3) the enjoyment they derive from work, whereas three different behaviour patterns can be distinguished according to the study by Scott, More and Miceli (1997). At this point, these categorizations merely describe similar groups of people in terms of the different factors, but these factors have not been integrated into a conceptual model that explains one or more in terms of the other(s).

A second interest of previous research has been to focus on the consequences of high levels of work effort (e.g., Burke & Fiskensbaum, 2009; Porter, 1996; Shimazu et al., 2010). The term workaholism is typically associated with having negative impacts on the individual (e.g., ill-health, emotional discharge, stress), and on co-workers (e.g., interpersonal conflicts, problems with working in teams) (e.g., McMillan, O'Driscoll, Marsh, & Brady, 2001; Porter, 2001). But surely there are employees who do not work especially hard and also suffer from these same problems and inflict negative externalities on their co-workers. Conversely, it is also possible to find other hard workers who seem to thrive on work and confer positive externalities on their co-workers. It seems that conceptually the 'working hard' phenomenon is a separate issue from that of workaholism, and thereby workaholism needs to be studied in greater depth.

What have not received so much attention in the literature have been the underlying determinants, or the antecedents, of workaholism. What causes the employee to work hard, to become a workaholic? Five potential antecedents of workaholism have received more conceptual and research attention. Two of them, i.e., family of origin (e.g., Robinson, 1998) and personal beliefs and fears (e.g., Burke, 1999a; Burke, Burgess, & Oberklaid, 2003) are the result of socialization practices within families and society at large. The third and fourth antecedents, organizational factors (e.g., Harpaz & Snir, 2003) and values that support a work-personal life imbalance (e.g., Burke, 2001c, Burke & Koxsal, 2002) represent organizational values and priorities. The fifth,

personality correlates (e.g., Burke et al., 2006; Clark, Lelhooek, & Taylor, 2010), depend on each person and thus represent individual factors.

Although different antecedents and consequences have been studied, they were not derived in a systematic way. Instead they seem to be studied in a rather haphazard manner, with workaholism often operationalized differently. For this and the previous reasons, theoretical models of workaholism (see Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007) have recently been proposed in order to unify criteria and to study the construct, its antecedents and its consequences in a uniform manner, but unfortunately they have not yet been tested empirically. To overcome this lack of empirical evidence, the main objective of this study is to analyse workaholism qualitatively in order to map its main symptoms, antecedents and consequences systematically by interviewing workaholics from different organizations.

## **Method**

This study employed the principles and methods of the Grounded Theory. Rather than imposing a theoretical perspective as a starting point for the research, the Grounded Theory approach derives theory from the data and provides insight into the phenomenon of interest, enhances understanding of the experiences of the respondents, and provides a meaningful guide to action that it is designed to address the resulting issues (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is impossible, however, for researchers to totally disregard their experiences, expert knowledge, and values in contemporary society. In fact, Strauss and Corbin (1998) encouraged the use of discipline-based knowledge as long as the knowledge fits the data and is not inappropriately applied to it. Glaser (1992) specified that the analyst's assumptions, experiences and knowledge are not necessarily bad in and of themselves.

Individual semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1) were conducted with qualified and hardworking employees to elicit the descriptions of their work experiences and their perceptions of the influence of these experiences in their non-work contexts. This information would then be used to map the main symptoms, antecedents and consequences of workaholism.

### *Participants and procedure*

The sample comprised 47 employees (52% males) who were characterized by their job dedication and their hard work. Their mean age was 34 years ( $SD = 5.97$ ). It was a heterogeneous sample composed of employees who pertained to different



occupations, such as university lecturers (23.4%), researchers (21.3%), engineers (17%), architects (12.8%), managers (10.6%), police officers (8.5%), and other qualified jobs (6.4%). Based on education, 72.3% of the employees had a university degree, 19.1% had finished high school studies, and 8.6% had completed primary school.

Firstly, an initial recruitment was carried out by placing different advertisements in the local press, in which people with high standards of working (i.e., potential candidates who believe that they spend more hours working than those established by contract) were encouraged to participate in our study. An additional recruitment was conducted by sending an electronic recruitment announcement to the research staff of the Universitat Jaume I (Castellón, Spain). An initial interview was carried out with the people who contacted the researchers (N=45) in order to select the final interviewees (N=37). The candidates were selected on the basis of the criterion of real number of hours worked (i.e., if they worked more hours than those required by contract).

As interviews were conducted, the researcher determined the need for additional data with which to obtain more information until the theoretical saturation criterion was reached (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In order to find this additional data the researcher relied on the snowball technique, whereby those who were interviewed referred to other potential participants. This third strategy led to 10 new participants being enrolled in the study (N=47).

As an example of the analyses performed in the first stage, theoretical sampling strategy (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used to analyse the data collected to date on what was eventually referred to as 'the values', a recurrent topic during the interviews. Subsequently, a further 10 interviews (second stage) were then performed to elicit more information about these values in a search for additional sources of information. In line with Grounded Theory procedures, data collection proceeded concurrently with analyses and ended when theoretical saturation was achieved (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

#### *Data Analyses: coding process*

An expert in Occupational Health Psychology interviewed all of the participants in the study. Following Grounded Theory procedure (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), transcripts were coded and analysed immediately following each interview and prior to each subsequent interview. Transcriptions were open-coded using qualitative research coding software, QSR NVivo 8.0 (QSR International, 2008). Transcripts were read and

recoded several months later and the results were compared with the first coding. Repeated coding (which yielded similar results) established the consistency of the data. Specifically, the percentage of agreement in the identification of domains and categories was 89%. Common themes were identified and recorded in the respondents' own words in memos and they were counted and classified in tables. For example, several participants mentioned working hard because they did not have 'enough' motivation in their non-work lives. It was apparent that 'lack of hobbies or interests' was a category to be investigated further. The expert wrote a memo: "*Is working hard a way to feel fine with oneself, to compensate for one's lack of incentives in non-work domains, or is it connected to other categories that might fall under an umbrella?*"

The expert used the constant comparative technique described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to cluster the codes into themes, which were then grouped in categories. Relationships emerged among categories in the axial coding phase. The researcher wrote memos throughout the coding process, which helped to identify relationships between the categories. Findings and the coding scheme were reviewed a number of times by the same expert in order not to introduce variance into the results and to ensure consistency of the data.

## **Results and Discussion**

After the qualitative analysis of the interviews by the Grounded Theory, 19 employees were considered to be workaholics, 20 were classified as work-engaged employees and 8 as 'usual' employees (those not considered to be workaholics or work-engaged). Based on the quotes from the 19 workaholics, three different groups of domains were identified and included in a descriptive model of workaholism: i.e., symptoms, antecedents, and consequences. In addition, another domain – a psychological regulatory mechanism – was identified as the explanation of why workaholism continues over time.

### *Symptoms of Workaholism*

Two domains can be distinguished as the main symptoms of workaholism. These two domains are called 'overwork' and 'compulsiveness' (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1.** *References for domains considered to be symptoms of workaholism (N=19)*

Domains	References
<b>1. Overwork</b>	<b>130</b>
- Extreme dedication	28
- Simultaneousness	16
- Excess of goals	16
- Work at home	25
- Work at weekends	25
- Work in holidays	20
<b>2. Compulsiveness</b>	<b>132</b>
- Problems to disconnect	32
- Refusing to delegate	20
- Perfectionism	21
- Impatience	23
- Excess of commitment	19
- Working while ill	17

### *Overwork*

This domain represents all the characteristics related to the excessive amounts of time spent working. More particularly, six main themes emerged within this domain: extreme dedication (working more hours than the number stipulated by contract), simultaneousness (doing more than two things at the same time while working), multiple goal-setting, working at home, working at weekends, and working while on vacation. Thus, two different types of aspects were considered: qualitative (multiple goal-setting) and quantitative (the rest of the themes). Many of the respondents explained that they commonly got to work earlier than their co-workers and that it was also usual for them to be the last to leave the office. They also coincided in the number of things that they usually did at the same time while they were working; some of them even spoke of situations like: "*some days I eat while I am typing on the computer and*

*looking for some documents in the stack of books of my desktop*". Workaholics do many things simultaneously because they always need to be doing activities; they are multi-tasking people. It may be that for this reason they usually want to accomplish *multiple goals at work*. Hence they often set too many goals, and can even create work for themselves (Machlowitz, 1980). In this line, one of the interviewees stated that "*I need to continuously establish different goals in order to grow, to be always busy*". In a similar way, another interviewee explained "*sometimes I have so many goals that I have serious problems to achieve all of them*".

The other three themes were also very common among workaholics and are related to voluntary overwork. All of them *worked at home* almost every day, they usually *worked at weekends* (especially if they were not married) and they very often *worked on holiday* (if they took a vacation they tried to work with the laptop or with other devices). There were some differences among interviewees in the time spent working in these conditions, but they all had one characteristic in common: they needed to be connected to their work at all times. For instance: "*Many times when I'm at home, I work a little bit more, even on holiday*".

### *Compulsiveness*

Another representative domain of workaholics that was identified in the interviews was the compulsiveness that workaholics showed in different situations related to both work and non-work contexts. Specifically, within this domain six themes also emerged: problems to disconnect, refusing to delegate, perfectionism, impatience, excess of commitment, and working while ill. All of the workaholics interviewed spoke about the problems they had when it came to *disconnecting from work*. For instance: "*when I arrive home and I am with my children, I turn work over in my mind*". Or for example: "*I cannot watch television because I am always thinking about work and I do not like TV programs. It is like recurring thoughts about work*". Compulsiveness can also be observed at work, because all the interviewees *refuse to delegate* their work to their co-workers. One workaholic, for instance, explained that when she could not be in the office for personal reasons and someone had to do her 'job things', she felt a sort of tightness in her upper body that prevented her from breathing normally. This is one of the consequences of workaholism (anxiety) that we discuss below. In the interviews, one central aspect that seemed to be especially important when it came to delegating was the *perfectionism* of workaholics. They thought that other people worked worse

than them. For example, one of the interviewees said: "*people do not stop to think what the best way to finish a task is, they simply do it quickly and as a consequence the final result is dreadful*". Another characteristic of the compulsiveness detected in the interviews was *impatience*. Workaholics show behaviours of frustration when they cannot work – regardless of the reason. Many of the respondents talked about feeling a sort of itch and they displayed repetitive behaviours or nervous tics when they had to wait. Moreover, sixteen of the nineteen workaholics described themselves as impatient. Here we have an interesting link between workaholism and the Type A behavioural pattern, which has been frequently studied in the literature on workaholism (e.g., Naughton, 1987; Seybold & Salomone, 1994). Generally speaking, this pattern is characterized by the presence of a high level of competitiveness and ambition in subjects, together with an excessive workload (all aimed at achieving goals) and a notably hostile and impatient behavioural expression (cf. Vila-Villarroel, Sánchez, & Cachinero, 2004).

Another important point related to compulsiveness was *the excessive commitment* of workaholics. This characteristic relates directly to work centrality, which is explained below as a potential antecedent of workaholism. Because of the importance that work has for workaholics, they become employees who are extremely committed with the 'working world'. One of the participants, for instance, explained that he felt the need to give his all for his job and he also felt a great deal of responsibility for any mistake that was made, even without being directly responsible for it. As a consequence of this excessive commitment and also the sense of responsibility, another common feature in workaholics is *working while ill*. Some of the interviewees said that they had often gone to work with a cold. According to their experiences, they could work well although they did not perform as they usually did. We can argue that it would be like a type of *presenteeism* because the employee is physically present in the workplace, but the performance of the organization is negatively affected.

In general, the two domains that have been explained, i.e., overwork and compulsiveness, are homologous to the bi-dimensional conceptualization of workaholism by Schaufeli et al. (2006), that is, working excessively (the behavioural component) and working compulsively (the cognitive component). The most obvious characteristic of workaholics is that they work far beyond what people require of them. Consequently, they devote an excessive amount of time and energy to their work,

thereby neglecting other domains of life such as leisure and family time (e.g., Buelens & Poelmans, 2004; Mudrack & Naughton, 2001). For instance, North-American workaholics work an average of 50-60 hours per week (Brett & Stroh, 2003) and there are even people who can work up to 70 hours per week (Hewlett & Luce, 2006). The analysis of the interviews showed that this overwork is characterized by extreme dedication, simultaneousness, excess of goals, and working when it is not recommended, such as at home, at weekends and on vacation.

However, conceiving workaholism only in terms of the number of working hours, number of goals, or moments that are inappropriate for working would be wrong because we would be neglecting its addictive nature. After all, people may work long hours, have multiple goals or work on vacation for many reasons without being addicted to work, such as delivery deadlines, financial problems, poor marriage, social pressure, or career advancement. Rather than being motivated by such external factors, an obsessive internal drive motivates a typical work addict in a way that she/he cannot resist. Particularly, the interviews showed that compulsiveness is characterized by problems to disconnect, problems to delegate, perfectionism, impatience, excess of commitment, and working while ill. Our results are in the line of a review of workaholism (McMillan & O'Driscoll, 2004), which indicated that working excessive hours and being pushed by an obsessive inner drive were core characteristics in 7 of the 9 definitions of workaholism considered in the study. Hence, we confirm that workaholism can be conceived as an irresistible inner drive to work too hard, that is, it is characterized by excessive and compulsive work.

#### *Workaholism Antecedents*

The domains that, based on the analysis of the interviews, can be considered antecedents of workaholism refer to (1) individual factors: vicarious learning, work values, work self-efficacy and time-based autonomy; (2) organizational factors: company pressure and non-work anhedonia; and (3) social factors: social reinforcement (see Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2.** *References for domains considered to be workaholism antecedents (N=19)*

Domains	References	Domains	References
<b>1. Vicarious learning</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>5. Company pressure</b>	<b>24</b>
- From relatives	19	- Overwork culture	24
- From co-workers	18		
- From significant others	15		
<b>2. Work values</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6. Non-work anhedonia</b>	<b>37</b>
- Work achievement	31	- Lack of hobbies	19
motivation	29	- Lack of other interests	18
- Work centrality			
<b>3. Work self-efficacy</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>7. Social reinforcement</b>	<b>71</b>
- Control	34	- Comparison with co-workers	17
- Ability to react	19	- Favourable opinion from people	17
			19
		- Family compatibility	18
		- Extrinsic motivation	
<b>4. Time-based autonomy</b>	<b>20</b>		

### *Vicarious Learning*

This is one of the four individual factors that emerged. Vicarious learning by observation of others' addictive behaviours (Bandura, 1986) can induce workaholism (Barnes, 1990) through the learning of behaviours that are typical of this psychosocial disorder. If individuals see that some relative (e.g., parents, spouse, siblings, significant others) or some co-worker or even the boss can work excessively, they may have a tendency to treat their own work in the same way because they are influenced by those important role models (Machlowitz, 1980). For instance, Oates (1971) suggests that some wives who become workaholics have taken their husbands' work behaviours as

their own role model and believe they need to do as much as or more than their husbands just to achieve the same level of recognition from their children or relatives. Three main themes emerged from this domain: vicarious learning from (1) relatives, (2) co-workers, and (3) significant others.

*Vicarious learning from relatives*

Some of the participants in the interviews talked about the influence of their parents (predominantly fathers) on their work style, which would make it a kind of intergenerational transfer: "*My father always worked very hard and I always wanted to become like him. He worked at home every day until late, even at weekends*", said one of the respondents. "*I think that it is possible that I work hard because I learnt that it is the only way to do it. My father loved work; I watched him as he worked at his old desk while on vacation*", mentioned another participant.

*Vicarious learning from co-workers*

When employees have co-workers who work very hard (especially if they are their bosses), they may feel that they cannot follow their pace. Frequently a workaholic boss can be perceived as a role model for the employees because he works so hard himself and requires the same from his subordinates. Thus, with this type of boss employees might be more likely to become workaholics. In this sense, one of the respondents explained how her boss was always the first to arrive at the office and the last to go home. Moreover, another interviewee explained that he had had a co-worker in his first job who worked so extremely hard that his co-workers named him "the busy man", because he was always very busy and only occasionally took breaks. Curiously, nowadays he felt as if he was another 'busy man' due to his excessive dedication to work.

*Vicarious learning from significant others*

In addition to the influence of relatives and co-workers, many of the respondents talked about the influence of other significant people for them. For example, one of the interviewees explained that several flat-mates worked very hard until late when they arrived home, and they were always boasting about how well considered they were at work. Another participant in the interviews remembered how the life of her best friend had changed since he bought a mobile with Internet connection: "*he began to check his e-mail frequently just in case there was some new incident at work. Strangely enough, nowadays I have the same problem, and in fact it's not necessary for me*".



### *Work Values*

This second domain refers to values that characterize workaholics. Values are said to lie at the core of our beliefs, attitudes, and the most visible aspect of human beings: behaviours (Posner, Randolph, & Schmidt, 1987). Furthermore, values are considered to be normative standards for judging and choosing among alternative modes of behaviour (Becker & McClintock, 1967). Two main themes can be found in this domain: work achievement motivation and work centrality.

#### *Work achievement motivation*

This type of motivation is usually manifested by attention, effort, and persistence. Workaholics are people who spend a lot of time working and who are highly committed to their organization. But more specifically they are characterized by their *achievement motivation*, which refers to an individual's motivation to accomplish difficult tasks, maintain high standards, and exert an extra effort to attain excellence ().

One of the interviewees, for instance, said that his job was his hobby and that he enjoyed himself when he was working. Another participant in the interview explained that he loved all the tasks related to his job because he learnt different things every day. Another very representative explanation was the one given by another interviewee who said "*I always have to do my job in the best way. When I am able to manage difficult tasks is when I feel good*". This characteristic of workaholics is also commonly associated to work-engaged employees. The main difference is that while engaged employees are able to stop working, workaholics find it very hard to disconnect (as is explained below in the consequences of workaholism).

#### *Work centrality*

This provides an indicator of an individual's affective commitment to his or her work (Schmidt & Lee, 2008). Since people with higher work centrality are more committed to their work role, they may experience greater difficulty to keep a balance between work and non-work contexts. In fact, Snir and Harpaz (2006) found that employees with a high level of work centrality worked more hours per week than did those with a low level of work centrality. In the interviews, several workaholics talked about the importance of work in their lives with sentences such as: "*I think that it is not possible to be happy if you do not have a good job*", "*for me the first thing is to feel good in my job, the rest of the things are secondary, family included*", "*If I am not well in my job, I cannot be well in other domains of my life*".

### *Work Self-efficacy*

In accordance with the interviews, work self-efficacy could be considered another antecedent of workaholism. As proposed by Ng et al. (2007), individuals who have stronger self-efficacy in work activities than in non-work activities are more likely to become workaholics. This domain implies two themes that are related to each other: control, and ability to react.

#### *Control*

Self-efficacy includes control as a key element. In fact, it refers to the extent to which individuals are confident about exerting control over certain aspects of life. One of the interviewees explained that he felt in control of his environment when he worked, because he perceived that he had enough tools to do his job tasks correctly. Another participant said that the main difference between her behaviours in and out of work was the degree of control over her context. It seems she had some problems in the interactions with her family because she thought that she was not able to manage these relationships. Inversely, her thoughts related to her work were different because she felt confident about herself and she believed in her abilities.

#### *Ability to react*

The workaholics that were interviewed showed they had capabilities to respond to unexpected events at work. They are perfectly familiar with the procedure of their work and what options are better when they have problems to continue working, which relates directly to their high levels of work self-efficacy. The higher the levels of work self-efficacy are, the more confidence in themselves they will display, and thus the clearer their idea of how they have to work will be, which reinforces their pattern of workaholic behaviour even more. Some interviewees referred to this ability to react in the following terms: "*when I am in my workplace I know what it is better to do to perform well at any given time, even when we have some problem*" or "*despite the fact that I can sometimes make a mistake if there is a unexpected problem, I need just a little time to react and to correct my mistake*".

#### *Time-based Autonomy*

Time-based autonomy refers to the freedom to decide how much time to work and how much time not to work. For employees prone to workaholism, this freedom to distribute their time constitutes a risk of becoming a workaholic. One of the interviewees explained that one of the most appreciated things in his job was that he

could decide the order of his tasks and the moment when he could work. Another participant said how time-based autonomy in her job could be interpreted from two different points of view; on the one hand, it was really useful for her to be able to choose the distribution of her job tasks because, for instance, if she had to go to the doctor, she could do so without problems, but on the other hand the possibility of working wherever or whenever she wanted also had its disadvantages because she had more problems to disconnect from work.

### *Company Pressure*

This domain refers to those actions that the organization or supervisors do in order to encourage employees to work more time. These perceived pressures of the company and the supervisors have a relevant impact on employees because they usually feel obliged to work more and more. One main theme emerged in this domain: overwork culture.

#### *Overwork culture*

Many organizations are characterized by having an overwork culture in which it is very important to spend a lot of time working. In fact, as pointed out by Burke (2001c), organizations often promote workaholic behaviours. Managers and professionals who put in long hours are perceived as dedicated and committed staff. Most of the workaholic participants in the interviews work more time than is needed to perform well and, generally, all the co-workers of these employees work in a similar way. One respondent described, for example, that sometimes he thought he was doing his tasks in a negative way because his co-workers worked more time than him. The solution that he found to feel better with himself was to work more hours than his co-workers, thereby reinforcing the workaholic culture of the organization.

### *Non-work Anhedonia*

This domain represents the external problems that workaholics seem to have when they are not working. Commonly, workaholics are not interested in things that are not directly related to work; they are not curious about learning in other fields of their life, or about some type of entertainment such as reading or listening to music. Particularly, in this domain one particular theme can be distinguished: the lack of hobbies or other personal interests.

### *The lack of hobbies or other personal interests*

During the interviews most of the workaholics explained that they do not have any motivations outside of work. One of them said: *"I do not like anything outside work, but I can watch television for some minutes"*. Another one explained: *"I hate not working because I do not know what to do"*. Other quotes about this theme were: *"My job is my hobby because I love what I do while I'm working"* or *"I don't have many hobbies, hmm, maybe to tidy up my stuff at home... because if not my wife will kill me"*. Therefore, workaholics are people who are so focused on their jobs that they do not have practically any interests or hobbies other than their work.

### *Social Reinforcement*

This represents the social profits that working hard affords employees. Within this domain four main themes emerged: downward social comparison, people's favourable opinion, family compatibility, and extrinsic economic rewards. All of them make it easier for employees to work more time because they imply rewards for working hard.

#### *Downward social comparison*

As proposed by Festinger's theory (1954), people have a need to evaluate their attitudes and abilities and to compare themselves with other people in order to foster this evaluation process. Many interviewees compared themselves with other co-workers and the result of this comparison was a positive feeling related to the amount of time spent working. One respondent described, for instance, that he felt satisfied when he was aware that he could work harder than his co-workers. Another interviewee described a similar situation in which she felt extremely good when she was able to perform better than other people in her work team.

#### *Favourable opinion from people*

When behaviour is reinforced by the opinion of others, the person is more likely to repeat the behaviour in the future. In the developed countries, working a lot of hours is a good sign and a desirable behaviour because society understands that working hard is a synonym of making the most of life. One of the interviewees, for example, talked about how his friends encouraged him to continue working hard, despite having less time to do other activities. Another workaholic talked about his brother, *"he always tells me that I'm very persevering and committed to my work and that I'm an example for him"*.

*Family compatibility*

If the family has a rhythm of life similar to the rhythm of a workaholic, then its members are less likely to interfere in the time put aside for him to do work tasks. Accordingly, nine of the respondents agreed that their ex-partners had not been able to understand them because they had other preferences and, in consequence, they wanted to spend more time with them.

*Extrinsic motivation*

Sometimes workaholics can spend a lot of time working because they need to feel valued by the organization. Thus they can begin an activity for instrumental reasons, and gradually become workaholics as time goes by. The more hours they work, the more chances of achieving their goals and feeling valued they will have. In this sense, several interviewees said that if they worked a lot, they would have more (economic and social) rewards and they would also have more chances of being hired by other (better) organizations.

Overall, as we have mentioned above, the potential determinants of workaholism have not received much attention in the literature, although we have more data about family of origin, personal beliefs and fears, organizational factors and personality correlates. For the most part, these antecedents have been suggested in a piecemeal way without any clear relationship among them. In our study we integrate the underlying antecedents of workaholism, according to the interviews, within the same model. Although all of them had an important weight in the interviews, work values and work self-efficacy were the most important of all according to the number of references registered (see Table 2.2).

Work values can be studied on several levels of scope. Two levels were considered here. At the more general of those levels, the perceived salience of role membership was categorized from the interviews as perceptions of work centrality. Work, family, leisure, community, and religion are considered the five major domains of life (Meaning of Work [MOW] – International Research Team, 1987). Work is usually deemed more important than leisure, community and religion, and in several studies ranked second only to family (Harding & Hikspoors, 1995; MOW – International Research Team, 1987; Snir & Harpaz, 2005). Workaholics differ from other types of employees in the degree to which they value having a paid job. Given that individuals seek to attain what they value, activities are initiated and sustained with a

specific role evaluation in mind (Warr, 2008). Particularly, workaholics seek to achieve excellence or perfectionism at work (most likely because they have poor levels of self-esteem) and for this reason work is central in their lives, even more important than other life domains such as the family. Moreover, other studies have found positive correlations between work centrality and workaholism (e.g., Harpaz & Snir, 2003). At the specific level of work values, we distinguished work achievement motivation, which seems to be directly related to the long hours worked by workaholics. The higher the level of achievement motivation is, the more likely an employee will work long hours.

On the other hand, self-efficacy was the most important antecedent according to the analyses of the interviews. Workaholics unconsciously spend more time working due to their higher levels of self-efficacy in this context compared to their self-efficacy levels in other contexts such as family or leisure. This is one of the reasons for which they may devote as much time as they can to work activities and thereby avoid non-work activities at which they are less skilled. This result confirms the hypothesis of Ng et al. (2007), who proposed that the difference in self-efficacy in different domains could explain why workaholics devote so much time to work. In addition, this result is in accordance with *Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)* (Bandura, 2001), which claims that people may judge themselves as efficacious across a wide range of activity domains or only in certain domains of functioning, in this case in the work context. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacious people in a particular domain will devote more time in this domain than in others where they do not feel so self-efficacious. Thus, self-efficacy makes it possible to understand the excess of work that characterizes workaholics.

#### *Consequences of Workaholism*

Two main domains were created to categorize the consequences of workaholism: negative and positive consequences. The quality and quantity of the consequences that are derived from workaholism are not balanced. There are considerably more negative consequences than positive ones. For this reason, negative consequences were grouped in three different categories: social, physical, and emotional (see Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3.** *References for domains considered to be workaholism consequences (N=19)*

Domains	References	Domains	References
<b>1. Positive</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>3. Negative, emotional</b>	<b>67</b>
- Flow	21	- Anxiety	22
- Job Satisfaction	23	- Guilt	26
- Respect	20	- Sadness	19
<b>2. Negative, social</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>4. Negative, physical</b>	<b>86</b>
- Problems with co-workers	24	- No rest	20
- Problems with family	25	- Sleeping problems	19
- Problems with friends	20	- Exhaustion	24
		- Health problems	23

### *Positive Consequences*

Three themes emerged from the analyses of interviews: job satisfaction, flow experiences, and respect. Workaholics enjoy themselves when they are working, at least this is the way they described the feelings they experienced.

#### *Job satisfaction*

The interviewees felt *satisfaction* when they finished some tasks and achieved their aims. Expressions like "I feel very satisfied with my work when I finish one project on time" or "I love reading and learning new things in my job every day" were commonly repeated by the workaholics who were interviewed. The literature on the association between workaholism and job satisfaction has shown mixed results (e.g., Andreassen, Hetlan, & Pallesen, 2010; Brady, Vodanovich, & Rotunda, 2008) and it often depends on the number and the nature of the facets of workaholism. Some studies have shown that workaholics display low levels of job satisfaction (e.g., Burke, Richardsen, & Martinussen, 2004c), whereas others have shown the opposite results (e.g., Scott et al., 1997). In our interviews all of the employees identified as workaholics showed that they were satisfied with their jobs. Workaholics feel satisfied when they are working, especially when they achieve their goals. This consequence of workaholism is

remarkable for its positive connotation, but we could also interpret it as the result of a rationalization of workaholic behaviour, which is characterized by working hard. In order to reduce the cognitive dissonance that working hard produces in workaholics, they could think that they enjoy working hard.

#### *Flow*

It was also very usual for workaholics to experience flow. This peak-experience is so enjoyable that people will perform the activity even at great cost for the sheer sake of doing it. All of the participants said that they had felt this type of peak-experience several times while they were working. One of them described the episode as being "*very strange because I thought that a few minutes had gone by, but in fact it was more than one hour*". Flow experiences could play an important role in workaholism because they would be like 'the fuse that lights the fire' in the first stages of workaholism. In fact, flow theorists have sought to identify factors that stimulate people to undertake a certain degree of repetition in specific behaviours (Novak, Hoffman, & Yung, 2000), and one of them is flow. In addition, there is evidence that suggests that addictive behaviours are formed when behavioural repetition triggers a flow state (Chou & Ting, 2003). Therefore, flow experiences and workaholism could have reciprocal relationships. Future studies are needed to confirm that flow might act as an antecedent of workaholism. On the other hand, flow experiences are also usual in engaged workers. This is related to the ongoing debate about the differences between workaholism and work engagement (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2006). We could argue that flow experiences would happen for different reasons depending on the case, i.e., flow experiences in workaholics would be driven by the compulsion to work, whereas these experiences in work-engaged employees would be driven by the work itself. In that case, there should be a kind of 'tipping point' for workaholics, namely when the compulsive motivation becomes an intrinsic motivation.

#### *Respect*

In addition to this type of experiences, many respondents also pointed out that they liked the *respect* that working hard gave them. Workaholics are usually rewarded for their excessive dedication to work, so some of them could try to work hard in order to obtain special recognition from their supervisors or co-workers. One of the interviewees explained that "*Many times my boss has acknowledged my hard work – even nowadays I have a better position in my job as a consequence of my high level of*



*dedication*". Another interviewee also spoke in similar terms: "*I do not work only for the respect of my co-workers, but I admit that it has influence on my motivation to work hard*". A number of surveys conducted among workers suggest that employees want more than just monetary compensation, and in particular that they want a sort of appreciation and recognition from their employers that conveys 'respect' (Ellingsen & Johannesson, 2007). Workaholics have even higher expectations for respect and when they experience this respect they feel extremely good. One interesting question that arises then is that of why workaholics need respect in their work. Research has to answer this question, but perhaps it is due to insecure attachment in childhood, resulting in a lack of self-esteem?

### *Negative Consequences*

As we have mentioned earlier, workaholism also produces several negative consequences that affect the lives of workaholics and the people around them. We can classify these consequences in three categories: social, physical, and emotional consequences.

#### *Social consequences*

Workaholism causes social problems. Although three themes emerged from the contents of the interviews (problems with co-workers, problems with family, and problems with friends), the three could be included in a broader category labelled *social isolation*. Workaholics spend so many hours working that they do not have time to be with other people. It is common for workaholics to excuse themselves by making up some justification for their excessive dedication to work. As time goes by, the people around workaholics understand increasingly less about what is happening to them and slowly separate from them. They may even become totally alone in some extreme cases. Many examples of this social isolation were obtained from the interviews. Regarding the *problems with co-workers*, one of the participants in the study said that "*My relationships with my co-workers are not bad, but I cannot say that I have friends in my work*". Another participant explained that "*I have had some problems with my co-workers, especially with those who work in my department, because they do not know how to do their work well*". Regarding *problems with the family*, for instance, one of the interviewees explained that she had weekly arguments with her husband because she finished work very late and she often arrived home when her family had already had dinner. Similarly, another interviewee reported that "*My relationship with my parents is*

*good, but I do not have much contact with them because I work until late... girlfriends? I do not have time for that; I always have to finish some important project at work".* These are examples of the work-family conflict that derives from workaholism. Regarding *problems with friends*, the main common aspect was that workaholics lose their friendships due to their exclusive dedication to work. For instance, one of the participants said that *"I love to play tennis and I used to do it with some of my friends, but I have not been able to go in the last couple of years because of work. If I wanted to go, I would have to call up some friend personally because they do not call me anymore".* Another participant explained that *"It is true that I have fewer friends now than when I went to school, but we are adults and we have more responsibilities".*

These results confirm past research about the low levels of life satisfaction and high work-family conflict (Aziz & Zickar, 2006; Taris et al., 2005) that workaholics display. One of the tolls of workaholism is that it impacts directly on interpersonal relationships. As we observed in the interviews, divorce, social life disruption, family alienation and conflicts with co-workers are some of the potential risks that can deteriorate personal relationships. Unfortunately, too often the people who live with workaholics pay the highest price for this compulsive lifestyle (Machlowitz, 1980). Moreover, when the conflict is with the workaholic's co-workers, the risk of a general decrease in performance is really high, and thus the organization is also negatively affected.

#### *Physical consequences*

In the analyses of the interviews four themes emerged: no rest, sleeping problems, exhaustion, and health problems. Despite the fact that workaholics are people with energy and are motivated to continue working day after day, they have *problems to rest* and *to sleep* adequately and thus they usually feel *exhausted*. One of the participants said that *"When I go to bed I think about work matters and I have some difficulties in getting to sleep".* Another participant, with respect to his sleeping problems, explained that *"I am often very restless at night and it is difficult for me to rest".* The problems they have to rest, together with the constant activity and dedication of workaholics lead to them feeling exhausted. One of the workaholics interviewed gave a very interesting explanation: *"I can remember perfectly well that when I arrived home and I sat down to have dinner I felt extremely exhausted, but despite feeling like that I continued thinking about work. It was a mess".* Moreover, workaholics often have *health problems* as a

consequence of their lack of rest and their lifestyle (characterized by an inadequate diet). Fifteen out of the nineteen interviewees explained that they had had health problems in the last year. One of them was in treatment for a stomach ulcer as a consequence (according to the doctor) of his poor diet and of the high daily rhythm of work. Another interviewee, for instance, said that he had had to take sick leave three months earlier due to extreme exhaustion resulting from working many hours without rest (his record was 36 hours working non-stop). Other similar stories related to health problems (e.g., headaches, backache, and eye damage) were reported by the rest of the workaholics. These findings confirm past research about the high levels of exhaustion (Taris et al., 2005) or the poor health (Shimazu et al., 2010) that are typical in workaholics.

#### *Emotional consequences*

Finally, workaholism also causes emotional problems. In the analyses of the interviews three themes emerged: anxiety, guilt, and sadness. As we have seen previously, workaholics increase their job aims as time goes by, and they can have serious problems to achieve all of their goals. This pressure to finish projects, tasks and other similar job-related things in a specific time interval, together with the high rate of work that workaholics have, frequently makes them feel anxious. *Anxiety* was a theme that was often present in the interviews with workaholics; there were many references to it when they talked about work, friends or family. For example, one of them explained that *"I'm excessively worried about not being able to work when I get home, sometimes my parents need my attention and they do not understand that I have to do many things"*. Another interviewee also explained that *"I would like not to think about work when I have a day off but I cannot do it"*. Quotes like *"If I cannot go to the office for whatever reason and some co-worker has to do my tasks, I feel a sort of tightness that prevents me from breathing normally"* were also very common. In addition, workaholics also showed in their stories that they were prone to feeling *guilt*. This feeling was present in very different situations, not only when they could not work because someone was disturbing them, but also when they could not go to their children's birthday party, forgot some important date, or could not achieve some of their work goals. As an example of this type of consequences, one of the interviewees reported that *"Sometimes I feel guilty because when I have to work hard to finish some project I have to choose and work is the most important, as you can understand."*

*However, I feel happy with myself because I know that I have no other option".* In this example, we can see one of the regulatory mechanisms of workaholism, denial, which will be explained in more detail below. Lastly, some of the workaholics interviewed showed feelings of sadness when they remembered some of their worst experiences, especially those related to the family and derived from the excessive amounts of work. For instance, one of the respondents who was divorced said that he sometimes regretted his lack of attention to his family, *"I feel sad when I remember all the nice moments with my wife and I realize that I could have done something else to be with her still"*. In conclusion, and according to the interviews, the most usual problem among workaholics was guilt, frequently accompanied by anxiety. This relates directly to one of the dimensions of workaholism: compulsive work. The self-imposed stress of the compulsive behaviour results in increased somatic complaints (see physical category) and, although it was not talked about in the interviews, these complaints could imply maladaptive attempts to self-medicate, or distract, through misuse of drugs and alcohol (Holland, 2008).

In sum, the number of positive and negative consequences derived from workaholism taps into the ongoing debate about whether the construct is positive or negative. We can conclude that although workaholics experience some positive consequences, the negative consequences outweigh the others.

#### *Self-regulation Mechanisms*

Finally, it is essential to stress that this domain explains how workaholism continues over time. It refers to those mechanisms that workaholics use to justify themselves for the excessive amount of time devoted to work. Two main themes emerged in this domain: denial and justification.

#### *Denial*

Individuals who are excessively involved in their work are typically unable to recognize the compulsive nature of their behaviour patterns. As Porter (1996) claimed, in any addiction denial of the problem may be the greatest hindrance to corrective action. Although recognition alone does not ensure any change, failure to recognize the problem seems a guarantee that the excessive behaviour will continue. In the interviews many of the participants were not aware that they had an important problem. For instance, one of them said that *"I don't think I have a problem with the excess of work. I accept that I work many hours but I cannot do otherwise"*. Other references to this were:

*"I have sometimes thought that I could have a problem with my high level of dedication to my job, but I feel satisfied"* or *"If I could choose, I would undoubtedly work less"*. These employees had already had important problems as a consequence of their excessive and compulsive dedication to work.

### *Justification*

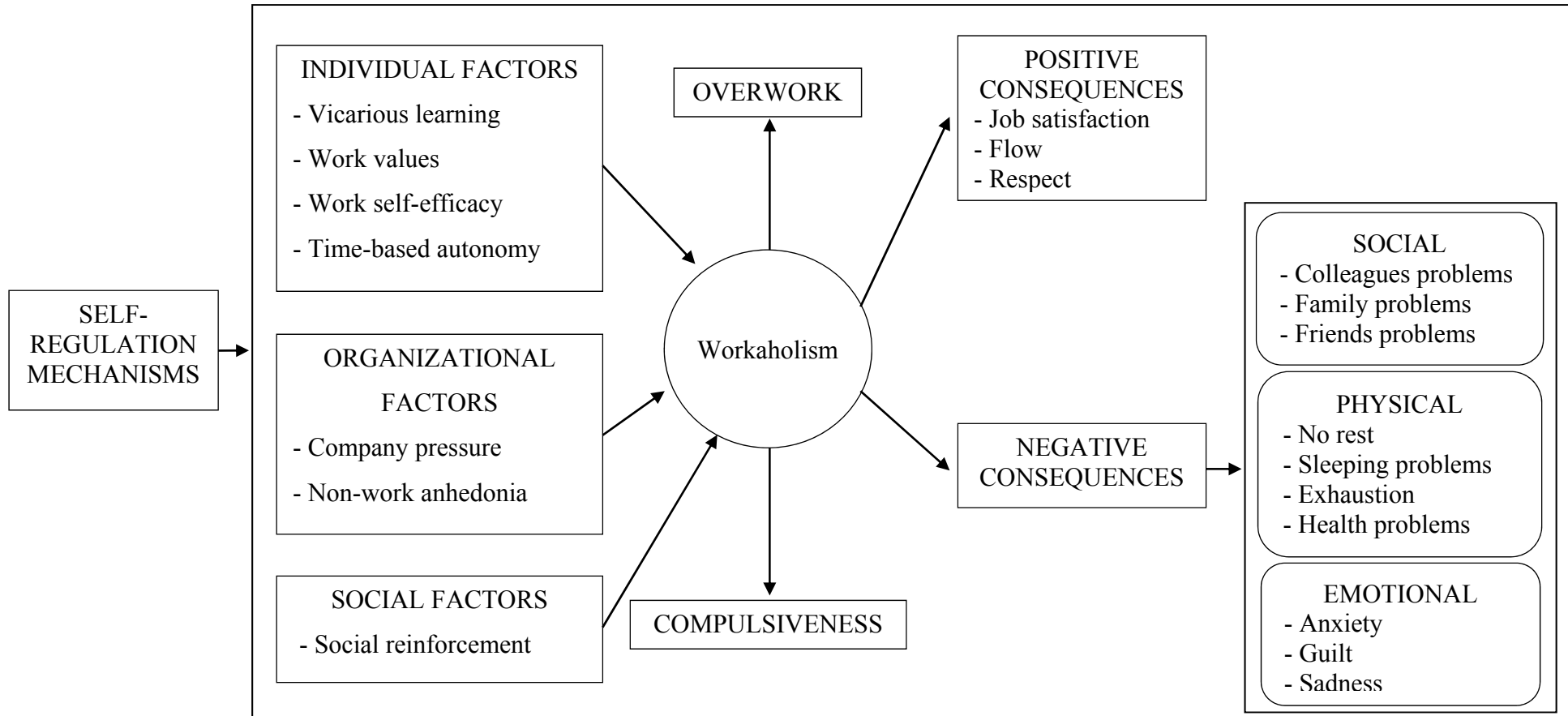
Other respondents did not deny their problem, but they did something similar – they referred to their responsibility at work to justify their excessive dedication. They made up justifications for their behaviours. Some of their answers were *"I am responsible for many employees and I have to spend more time working because I have to supervise their work"*, or *"When a project depends on you, you cannot choose when to go home"*. In both cases, workaholics worked more hours than was really necessary.

### **Conclusion**

The main objective of this study was to analyse workaholism qualitatively in order to map its main symptoms, antecedents and consequences. As a result of this qualitative analysis based on the Grounded Theory, we propose a heuristic model of workaholism in which the potential antecedents and consequences of the construct are described (see Figure 2.1.). In addition, we also propose two different psychological mechanisms that explain how workaholism is maintained over time. The more antecedents are present in the worker, the more likely she/he is to become a workaholic. Thus, this hypothetical worker might show symptoms related to overwork (e.g., multiple goal-setting, extreme work dedication) and to compulsiveness (e.g., impatience, problems to delegate) and he/she might experience (few) positive (e.g., job satisfaction, respect) and (predominantly) negative (e.g., social, physical and emotional problems) outcomes as a consequence of his/her overwork and compulsiveness.

This pattern of behaviours continues over time despite its negative impact on the employee, thanks to two psychological processes that are categorized as self-regulatory mechanisms in the heuristic model (i.e., denial and justification). Hence, we can argue that workaholics create a vicious circle where isolation and loneliness favour an increasing dependency on work. The workaholic departs from the normal function of work as an object and sets up a pathological relationship with this object over time, which is maintained with self-regulation.

**Figure 2.1.** *Heuristic model of workaholism (N=19)*



The resulting loneliness and isolation creates a further need to act out, as the resulting mood changes, in order to create the illusion that a need has been met (Nakken, 1996). The costs of workaholism are numerous and affect many domains such as leisure, family and health. Apart from these domains, the workaholic also adds important costs to the organization, such as higher health costs, increased health problems, more sick leaves, and a lower work ability rate than co-workers (Salmela-Aro & Nurmi, 2004). Moreover, as we have seen before, the workaholic may create a negative workplace atmosphere that results in increased stress on co-workers, primarily by minimizing the co-workers' sense of control (Porter, 2004).

### *Theoretical implications*

The present paper contributes to the ongoing discussion about the explanation of workaholism (e.g., Ng et al., 2007) by proposing a new descriptive model with which to better understand the symptoms, antecedents and consequences of the construct. To date, several theoretical models have been proposed to explain how workaholism happens and develops (e.g., Liang & Chu, 2009; McMillan et al., 2001). These models were based on past research on workaholism, but few have been empirically tested and none of them has been totally accepted yet. With our heuristic model, although some of the emerged variables are well-known in the literature on workaholism (e.g., compulsiveness, vicarious learning), some others (e.g., work self-efficacy, flow) have not received so much attention in previous research. The study of these variables might be interesting in the future to understand why workaholism starts and how it develops. Therefore, the most important theoretical implication of this study is to propose a model that is not based directly on past research, but which has emerged from the qualitative analyses of workaholism itself. This is a breath of fresh air in the study of workaholism because it breaks away from the traditional research based on previous studies, and it offers the opportunity to continue with the study of workaholism from a more applied perspective.

A second important theoretical implication of this study is that it conceives workaholism as a bi-dimensional construct, which coincides with the perspective of some recent studies that claim that workaholism is the result of the interrelation between excessive and compulsive work (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008).

Finally, the role of the self-regulatory mechanisms of workaholism that emerged (i.e., denial and justification) is also remarkable. It must be noted that denial is an

unconscious defense mechanism that is necessary for survival. Nobody can survive in life without a certain amount of denial to keep him or her in balance. But, with denial in relation to addiction, the denial is taken to an extreme and becomes unhealthy in that it becomes an obstacle to recovery. Justification is also common; workaholics justify reasons why they work so hard, and together with denial this can be another obstacle to reduce workaholism. From a theoretical point of view, both mechanisms have to be considered in the study of workaholism because they can have an influence on the employee self-reports, and thus distort the conclusions obtained in new studies.

#### *Challenges for Future Research and for Practice*

According to the heuristic model that was obtained, in order to measure workaholism reliably it would be necessary to use measurement tools based on the bi-dimensional structure of workaholism, which consists of the overwork (or excessive work) and compulsiveness (or compulsive work) dimensions. In the literature on workaholism, there is a questionnaire based on this bi-dimensional structure and it is called the Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS; Schaufeli et al., 2006). This questionnaire was proposed only a few years ago and more research is necessary to validate its factorial structure. Therefore, future research should take DUWAS into account as a candidate to measure workaholism.

In addition, it would also be important for future research to study the potential antecedents of workaholism according to our model. For example, work self-efficacy has been frequently associated with positive outcomes such as performance (Stajkovic, Lee, & Nyberg, 2009), affect (Salanova, Llorens, & Schaufeli, in press) and work engagement (Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2007) but only a few studies have found relationships with negative consequences (e.g., Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner, & Putka, 2002). Moreover, it would also be interesting to study the personality profile of workaholics. Even though in these qualitative analyses no theme emerged that was directly related to that, the personality of each worker is presumably exerting an influence in most of the domains of our heuristic model (e.g., in vicarious learning, work values). Thus, one possibility for future research is to study both work self-efficacy and personality. On the other hand, it would also be relevant to evaluate the consequences of workaholism, especially those included in the physical domain (e.g., sleeping problems, health problems) of the heuristic model, which was the domain with the most references.



Our findings also indicate promising directions for practitioners, who can evaluate workaholism by understanding the construct globally. Additionally, and more important, if they know the main psychological mechanisms that maintain workaholism behaviours (i.e., denial and justification), practitioners might be able to propose more specific intervention strategies to prevent workaholism, as well as to put forward more accurate means of promoting positive work behaviours and attitudes. In consequence, they might be able to improve the work conditions of workaholics more easily than can be done nowadays.

Finally, and despite not being directly addressed in this paper, another relevant construct such as work engagement should be taken into account in future research on workaholism. Almost half of the interviewees were finally considered to be work-engaged employees. They also worked many hours, even more than they were required to do by contract, but they experienced a greater balance in their lives and they did not feel compulsiveness when they were not working. In some cases, the line that separates both constructs can be so extremely thin that the measurement of them using questionnaires might not be totally discriminating. For this reason, future research could focus on the relationship of both constructs in comparison with their functioning with some of the variables that this qualitative study has shown to be relevant (e.g., personality, work self-efficacy, flow).

#### *Weaknesses and Strengths of the Study*

Our study constitutes the cornerstone to continue with the study of workaholism. However, it has two main weaknesses. First, only one expert analysed the interviews, so the factor of subjectivity was not as controlled as if these interviews had been rated by more than one person. Despite this, the fact that the interviews were analysed in two different periods (6 months between the two times) and by using the NVivo software, which allows everything to be systematized and classified in a more objective way than with the traditional methods of qualitative analyses, ensured the reliability of the results.

The second weakness is that we only interviewed workers once. If we had conducted a second interview with those who participated in our study, we would have been able to assess how workaholism progresses over time. Therefore, in future studies it would be interesting to conduct the second interviews in order to assess the progress of workaholism in a longitudinal study so as to be able to evaluate the role of its regulatory mechanisms in depth.



### Chapter 3

#### Feeling good or feeling bad? Toward a typology of employee well-being<sup>4</sup>

##### Summary

Generally speaking, employee well-being refers to people's affective and cognitive evaluations of their work. We distinguish between two affective (i.e., pleasure and energy) and three cognitive (i.e., challenges, perceived skills, and work identification) dimensions of employee well-being. In a heterogeneous sample of 786 employees (56% males), Confirmatory Cluster Analysis shows four patterns of employee well-being with significant and discriminant power: (1) 9-to-5 employees, (2) work-engaged employees, (3) workaholics, and (4) burned-out employees. Subsequent Multivariate Analyses of Variance using job demands, job resources, personal resources, and positive and negative outcomes show significant differences between these four patterns. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

*Key words:* Employee well-being, workaholism, burnout, work engagement

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## Introduction

Employee well-being is a traditional core issue for Occupational Health Psychology (OHP). Although various psychological constructs have been used to describe different aspects of employee well-being (such as burnout, work engagement, workaholism, flow at work, boredom, and job satisfaction), a systematic classification has still not been put forward. In addition, employee well-being has been studied from quite different theoretical frameworks (e.g., Busseri, Sadava, & Decourville, 2007; Fredrickson, 2001), but an overarching framework is lacking. Therefore, the main objective of this study is twofold: on the one hand, to *integrate* three different taxonomies of well-being at work: (1) Warr's (1990; 2007) affective approach, which is based on the distinction between arousal and pleasure that goes back to the circumplex model of emotions; (2) Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) cognitive approach, which is based on the balance of skills and challenges; and (3) González-Romá et al.'s (2006) affective-cognitive approach, which is based on the two-dimensional framework of energy and identification. This integration will result in a parsimonious and theory-based classification of employee well-being.

On the other hand, to know if workaholism (which can be defined as “*the tendency to work excessively hard in a compulsive way*”; Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 204) is a differentiated type of employee well-being that can be distinguished in this integration. Moreover, we validate this classification by using job (i.e., job demands, job resources) and personal (i.e., personal resources) characteristics, as well as positive and negative outcomes.

### *Three taxonomies of employee well-being*

*The affective approach.* Generally speaking, well-being refers to people's evaluations of their life in both affective and cognitive terms (Diener, 2000). Initial studies showed that two affective dimensions underlie psychological well-being: pleasure (valence) and energy (arousal) (Russell, 1979; Thayer, 1989; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). The pleasure axis reflects how well one is feeling, whereas the orthogonal activation axis refers to the mobilization of energy. These two dimensions constitute the so-called ‘circumplex model’ of well-being (Russell, 1980; Russell & Carroll, 1999), which postulates that affective states can be ordered on the circumference of a circle (for a review, see Larsen & Diener, 1992; Plutchik & Conte, 1997). Negative affect and positive affect constitute the end-points of the pleasure

dimension, whereby negative affect is characterized by feelings like anger, fear, nervousness and subjective stress and, conversely, positive affect is characterized by feelings like enthusiasm, energy, and happiness (Watson, 2000; Watson & Tellegen, 1985).

Using the same logic, Warr (1990, 2007) developed a bipolar affective well-being model based on positive and negative affect that refers specifically to job-related well-being. The advantage of conceptualizing well-being as a job-specific rather than as a context-free phenomenon is that relationships with job-related antecedents and consequences are stronger, and thus potentially offer a better understanding of how particular work characteristics are related to employee well-being. Warr (1990, 2007) considers three main axes in his model, two of which are identical to the traditional circumplex model of Watson and Tellegen (1985): energy and pleasure. The energy dimension, however, is not considered to reflect specific types of well-being, and its poles are therefore left unlabelled. In addition to these two orthogonal vertical and horizontal axes, two diagonal axes are also postulated: anxious-contented, and depressed-enthusiastic. Warr (2007) represents the diagram of his model of employee affective well-being as elliptical (rather than circular) in order to indicate that the pleasure dimension is of greater importance than the energy dimension. According to Warr (2007) pleasure may differ substantially across situations, and these differences are more likely to be reflected in well-being than in variations in energy. Scores on the diagonal axes are thus likely to be positively interrelated, rather than being independent (i.e., because of the ellipse the two diagonal dimensions are not orthogonal). Empirical evidence confirmed that the pleasure–displeasure axis accounts for most of the covariance between aspects of affective well-being (Daniels, 2000). Recently, Warr and Clapperton (2010) pointed out that feelings of happiness can be either more activated (e.g., in terms of enthusiasm and elation) or less activated (e.g., relaxed and contented). The same would apply to feelings of unhappiness: when people feel bad, this might be in an activated, energized, keyed-up way (e.g., anxious, tense, worried) or in a lethargic way (e.g., sad, depressed, and gloomy).

Langelan et al. (2006) proposed a similar taxonomy which includes three axes: two orthogonal axes (i.e., activation or energy and pleasure) supplemented by a third diagonal axis with the endpoints ‘burnout’ (low activation – low pleasure) and ‘work engagement’ (high activation – high pleasure). The authors found that work engagement

was positioned in the quadrant constituted by high scores on activation and high scores on pleasure, while burnout was especially related to low scores on activation. In their model, the burnout-engagement axis plays a similar role to the depressed-enthusiastic axis in Warr's (2007) model.

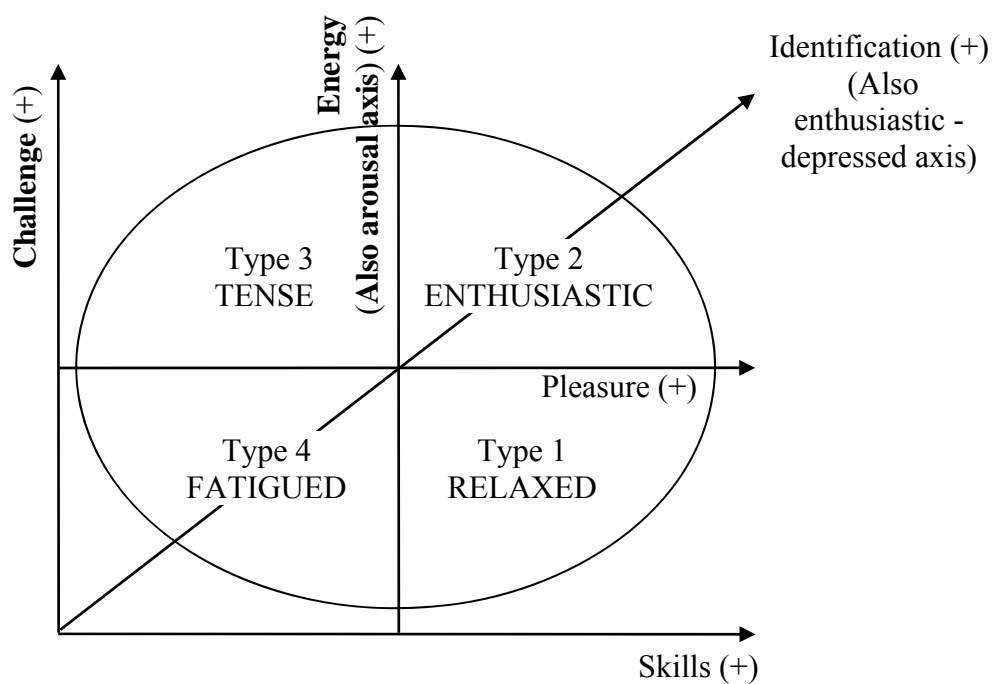
*The cognitive approach.* Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) Channel Model seeks to explain flow experiences by focusing on cognitive aspects of well-being. Flow is defined as a condition in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter at that moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This peak-experience is so enjoyable that people will perform the activity even at great cost for the sheer sake of doing it. According to the channel model, flow occurs when there is a balance between a high level of (perceived) challenges and a high level of (perceived) skills. Accordingly, the Channel Model of flow includes two basic cognitive dimensions: challenge and skills (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). More specifically, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) points out that in order to experience flow, challenges and skills must not only be in balance, but must also exceed certain levels so that the complexity of the activity is such that new skills are developed and new challenges are taken on. Applied to the work domain, this means that employees should experience flow when their challenges at work (i.e., job demands) match their professional skills at a high level. In addition, the model allows a distinction to be made between flow and boredom, because boredom is experienced when employees' skills exceed their job challenges. In contrast, when job challenges are high and skills are poor, employees are likely to feel anxious.

*The affective-cognitive approach.* Finally, González-Romá et al. (2006) proposed a taxonomy of burnout and engagement using two axes. Traditionally, burnout is considered to be a reaction to chronic occupational stress that is particularly characterized by emotional exhaustion (i.e., the draining of emotional resources) and cynicism (i.e., a negative, callous attitude toward patients, clients, students or customers, and a cynical attitude toward one's job) (Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). Work engagement is considered to be the conceptual opposite of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001) and it is defined as "*a persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment characterized by vigor* (i.e., high levels of energy and mental resilience while working), *dedication* (i.e., being strongly involved in one's work) and *absorption* (i.e., being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work)" (Salanova, Schaufeli, Llorens, Peiró, & Grau, 2000, p. 119; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker,

2002). Various studies have shown that, in fact, vigor and dedication constitute the core dimensions of work engagement (e.g., Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2006; Llorens et al., 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Storm & Rothmann, 2003). In the study by González-Romá et al. (2006), exhaustion and vigor were scalable on a single underlying bipolar dimension labelled 'energy', whereas the cynicism and dedication dimensions were scalable on another bipolar dimension labelled 'identification'.

*Toward an integration.* Figure 3.1 integrates the three approaches in order to classify particular aspects of work-related well-being, as discussed above, into one multi-axial classification system: (1) pleasure and arousal; (2) depressed-enthusiastic; (3) challenge and skills; and, finally, (4) energy and identification. Some dimensions are treated as being equivalent because they have an identical meaning (i.e., arousal and energy, identification and enthusiastic-depressed). Our first aim is to test the validity of this classification system.

**Figure 3.1.** *The research model*



More specifically, we expect:

Hypothesis 1: Four types of employee well-being can be identified:

- Type 1 (Relaxed), which is characterized by low scores on challenge, medium scores on energy and identification, and high scores on pleasure and skills (Hypothesis 1a).

- Type 2 (Enthusiastic), which is characterized by high scores on all five dimensions (energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification) (Hypothesis 1b).

- Type 3 (Tense), which is characterized by high scores on skills, medium-high scores on energy, challenge and identification, and low scores on pleasure (Hypothesis 1c). This type of employee well-being will correspond to workaholism.

- Type 4 (Fatigued), which is characterized by low scores on all five dimensions (energy, pleasure, challenge, skills and identification) (Hypothesis 1d).

To further investigate the validity of our classification system, the pattern of relationships among job demands, job resources, personal resources, and positive and negative psychological outcomes will also be studied.

#### *Well-being, demands, resources, and outcomes*

The *Resources-Experiences-Demands Model* (*RED*; Salanova et al., in press) is used as a conceptual framework to guide the second part of our study. The *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press) is a model of OHP which constitutes an extension of previous models, such as the *Job Demands-Control Model* (*JDC*; Karasek, 1979) and the *Job Demands-Resources Model* (*JDR*; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The distinctive element of the *RED Model* is that it considers that employees' psychological health depends not only on job demands (e.g., role conflict) and job resources (e.g., social support), but also on personal resources such as self-efficacy in the workplace, which is considered to be the pivotal element in the model.

Job demands are those physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of work that require a physical and/or psychological effort (either cognitive or emotional) and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. Although job demands are not necessarily negative, they may turn into job stressors when meeting those demands requires a great deal of effort from which the employee has not adequately recovered. Based on previous research (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Dollard, LaMontagne, Caulfield, Blewett, & Shaw, 2007), the following job demands have been included in this study: quantitative overload, mental and emotional demands, role stressors (i.e., role ambiguity and role conflict), and monotony.

Job resources refer to those physical, social or organizational aspects of the job that may: (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological



costs, (2) be functional for achieving work goals, or (3) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. Based on previous research (e.g., De Lange, De Witte, & Notelaers, 2008; Meier, Semmer, Elfering, & Jacobshagen, 2008), the following job resources were included: job control, transformational leadership, organizational quality, and team-working.

Finally, personal resources are aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). In fact, the *RED Model* considers personal resources as the cornerstone in the perception of job demands and job resources: employees interpret their social and work environment (i.e., job demands and job resources) in terms of their levels of self-efficacy (Salanova et al., 2009). Recent research (e.g., Lorente, Salanova, Martínez, & Schaufeli, 2008; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009) has shown that personal resources such as self-efficacy, mental and emotional competences, organizational-based self-esteem, and optimism are positively associated to work engagement, and negatively associated to burnout in different samples of employees (e.g., electrical engineers, fast-food employees, secondary-school teachers). Based on this research, the following personal resources were included in the study: self-efficacy, and mental and emotional competences. Moreover, we also considered the fit among mental and emotional demands with mental and emotional competences, respectively (see Jonge, Dormann, & Tooren, 2008).

Based on the assumptions of the *RED Model*, the combination of job demands and job and personal resources evokes two relatively independent psychological processes, i.e., erosion and motivation. According to the *erosion* process, when people have low levels of personal resources they think that they do not control the work environment in an effective way. Consequently, job demands are perceived more as hindrances than as challenges, and can lead to the depletion of energy (i.e., a state of exhaustion) and to health problems. In contrast, according to the *motivational* process, the availability of personal resources acts as a motivational mechanism that leads to the perception of more job resources. When personal resources are high, people think that they are controlling their environment in a correct way and they are more likely to experience fewer demands and more resources (Salanova et al., 2007).

In this study we also consider positive (i.e., organizational commitment, intrinsic interest, and positive emotions) and negative (i.e., turnover intention and psychosomatic complaints) outcomes to test our typology of employee well-being. Taking the *RED Model* as our basis, we expect to find significant differences among the four profiles of employee well-being regarding job demands, job resources, personal resources, and positive and negative outcomes. More particularly, we compare the groups that emerge from the cluster analysis with respect to all the job characteristics being evaluated. Consequently, we hypothesize that enthusiastic employees show the most favourable scores in terms of job demands, job and personal resources, and positive as well as negative outcomes (hypothesis 2a), whereas fatigued employees show the most unfavourable scores (hypothesis 2b). Finally, we also expect tense employees to show a profile of scores that is more positive than that of relaxed employees (hypothesis 2c).

## **Method**

### *Participants and procedure*

The sample comprises 786 Spanish employees (56% males) from private and public companies. Their mean age was 36 years ( $SD = 8.9$ ). It is a heterogeneous sample made up of workers from different occupations, i.e., 69% white-collar employees, 20% supervisors, 6% top managers and 5% blue-collar employees. As far as education is concerned, 43% of employees had completed high school, 35% held a university degree, 16% completed primary school, and 6% had not completed any schooling at all. Seventy-one percent of employees had permanent contracts and 29% worked part-time. The average tenure in their current job was 6 years ( $SD = 3.81$ ). Participants filled out an online questionnaire and after completion they received automatic feedback on their responses. The confidentiality and anonymity of the answers were guaranteed.

### *Measures*

We used a questionnaire that included a total of 25 scales referring to: well-being (8 scales), job demands (6 scales), job resources (4 scales), personal resources (2 scales), and positive and negative outcomes (5 scales). All scales were original or adapted versions of well-known, validated scales (see Table 3.1 for more information). Respondents answered using a 7-point scale ranging from 0 'never' to 6 'always', and for positive emotions we used the 7-faces rating scale (Kunin, 1955).

In order to assess employee well-being, we created five different dimensions. Specifically, *energy* ( $\alpha = .79$ ) was assessed as a composite of two variables: vigor (6 items) and fatigue (reversed; 5 items) (Salanova et al., 2000; Schaufeli et al., 2002). *Pleasure* ( $\alpha = .80$ ) was assessed with an affect-based measure referring to pleasure (1 item) and satisfaction with the task, one's colleagues, organization, technology use and one's work (5 items; based on Kunin, 1955). *Challenge* ( $\alpha = .72$ ) was based on a composite of dedication (2 items; Salanova et al., 2000; Schaufeli et al., 2002) and boredom (reversed; 2 items). *Perceived skills* ( $\alpha = .82$ ) were assessed as a composite scale consisting of professional efficacy (4 items) and inefficacy beliefs (reversed; 4 items) (Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2008). Finally, *identification* ( $\alpha = .90$ ) was assessed as a composite scale consisting of dedication (4 items) and cynicism (reversed; 4 items) (Salanova et al., 2000; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Table 3.1 shows all the variables, their original source, the number of items, and one example of an item.

#### *Data analyses*

Firstly, we computed the internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha), descriptive analyses, and intercorrelations among the study variables. Secondly, since the dimensions of employee well-being were composed of self-reported items, Harman's single factor test with Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) (e.g., Iverson & Maguire, 2000; cf. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) was used to test for bias due to common method variance. We compared two plausible models: M1, the one-factor model in which all the 10 scale-scores load on a single latent factor, and M2, the structure model, in which the 10 scale-scores load on 5 dimensions: energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification.

Thirdly, in order to test Hypothesis 1 we performed Confirmatory Cluster Analyses using k-means, and subsequent discriminant analyses in order to establish the different profiles of employee well-being. Finally, in order to test Hypothesis 2 we computed Multivariate ANalyses Of VAriance (MANOVA), using different clusters as independent variables, and job demands, job resources, personal resources, and the positive and negative outcomes as dependent variables.

## Results

### *Preliminary analyses*

Table 3.1 displays the means, standard deviations, and internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) of all the study variables. All alpha values meet the criterion of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), since they range from .72 to .94. As expected, the pattern of correlations shows that variables correlate significantly with each other in 88% of the cases<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the results of Harman's single factor test with CFA (e.g., Iverson & Maguire 2000; cf. Podsakoff et al., 2003) reveal a significantly lower fit to the data [ $\chi^2(35) = 875.04$ , RMSEA = .17, CFI = .77, IFI = .77, TLI = .71, AIC = 915.04]. In order to avoid the problems related to the use of Harman's single factor test (see Podsakoff et al., 2003), the results of the one latent factor (M1) were compared with multiple latent factors of well-being (M2) (i.e., energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification). Results show a significantly lower fit of the model with one single factor when compared to the model with multiple latent factors [Delta  $\chi^2(10) = 428.01$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. Hence, one single factor could not account for the variance in the data. Consequently, it seems that: (1) common method variance is not likely to have occurred in our dataset, and (2) the five dimensions of well-being can be discriminated.

### *Cluster analyses*

In order to uncover different patterns of employee well-being, Confirmatory Cluster Analyses were used, whereby employees' scores on energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification were employed as input for the analyses. In the first step, a non-hierarchical k-means cluster analysis was used to identify the number of clusters. In contrast to hierarchical cluster analyses, in k-means analyses a solution is obtained according to an a priori determined number of clusters; in our case there are four clusters. Non-hierarchical cluster analyses are used to achieve a cluster solution by way of an iterative process (Gore, 2000; see also Schaufeli, Bakker, Van der Heijden, & Prins, 2009b). Analogously to Cohen's  $d$ , 0.2 is considered a small effect, 0.5 is a medium effect, and 0.8 a large effect (Cohen, 1988). Figure 3.2 shows the standardized scores of each dimension of well-being for the four patterns.

Results confirmed that, as expected, four clusters of employee well-being emerged. These are characterized by scores that deviate strongly ( $p < .001$ ) from the

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<sup>5</sup>Due to the size of the correlation matrix, we have not included it in the article. However, it is available from the first author upon request.

respective means, thereby suggesting that the groups differ considerably in terms of the five dimensions of well-being (i.e., energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification) (see Table 3.2). Furthermore, discriminant analyses revealed that 97% of cases were classified appropriately.

The significant differences obtained between the four groups were confirmed by a *MANOVA* with cluster membership as the independent variable. This *MANOVA* [ $F(12, 2061.33) = 66.25, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26$ ] reveals highly significant differences between clusters as regards energy, pleasure, challenge, skills and identification. Univariate *F*'s

**Table 3.1.** Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), Internal Consistencies (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) and an example of an item for each scale (N = 786)

Variable	M	SD	$\alpha$	Number of items	Source	Example of item
<i>Well-being</i>						
1. Vigor	4.38	1.09	.86	6	Schaufeli, et al. (2002)	<i>'In my job, I feel bursting with energy'</i>
2. Fatigue	2.68	1.32	.79	4	Schaufeli, & Salanova (2007)	<i>'I feel exhausted when I finish my work'</i>
3. Satisfaction	3.01	1.92	.80	5	Kunnin (1955)	<i>A 'faces scale' for measuring, for instance, satisfaction with the task</i>
4. Boredom	1.92	1.38	r=.35***	2	RED.es	<i>'My job is boring me'</i>
5. Professional efficacy	4.84	1.08	.91	4	Schaufeli, & Salanova (2007)	<i>'I think that I'm competent in my work'</i>
6. Inefficacy beliefs	0.98	1.13	.83	4	Schaufeli, & Salanova (2007)	<i>'I think I'm inefficient to solve problems in my work'</i>
7. Dedication	3.86	1.42	.91	6	Schaufeli et al. (2002)	<i>'I am proud of the work that I do'</i>
8. Cynicism	1.66	1.52	.88	5	Schaufeli et al. (2002)	<i>'I doubt the significance of my work'</i>
<i>Job demands</i>						
9. Work overload	3.35	1.49	.88	5	Beehr, Walsh, & Taber (1976)	<i>'I have more work that I can do'</i>
10. Role ambiguity	2.20	1.52	.85	4	Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman (1970)	<i>'My job requires me to do things which are disorganized'</i>
11. Role conflict	2.61	1.49	.88	5	Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman (1970)	<i>'My job requires me to do things which I don't agree with'</i>
12. Monotony	3.95	1.67	.90	3	RED.es	<i>'My job requires me to do monotonous tasks'</i>
13. Mental overload	4.62	1.25	.74	3	Van Veldhoven & Meijman (1994)	<i>'My job requires a great deal of attention and concentration from me to do my work'</i>
14. Emotional overload	3.68	1.22	.83	8	Van Veldhoven & Meijman	<i>'My job requires working in a team in an</i>

					(1994)	<i>efficient way'</i>
<i>Job resources</i>						
15. Control	4.35	1.33	.80	4	Jackson, Wall, Martin, & Davis (1983)	<i>'In my job, I have autonomy to decide when to start, when to finish and in which order tasks are to be done'</i>
16. Transformational leadership	3.69	1.51	.94	10	RED.es	<i>'In my job, the person who supervises me directly organizes and distributes responsibilities'</i>
17. Organizational quality	3.24	1.29	.72	4	RED.es	<i>'In my organization, the level of work quality is excellent'</i>
18. Work team	4.77	1.12	.90	7	RED.es	<i>'My work team has clear work objectives'</i>
<i>Personal resources</i>						
19. Mental competences	4.80	1.00	.74	3	Van Veldhoven & Meijman (1994)	<i>'In my job, I am able to work with a lot of information'</i>
20. Emotional competences	4.27	1.08	.86	3	Van Veldhoven & Meijman (1994)	<i>'In my job, I must be able to deal with difficult people'</i>
<i>Positive and negative outcomes</i>						
21. Organizational commitment	3.71	1.38	.75	3	Cook & Wall (1980)	<i>'I like to tell others what organization I work for'</i>
22. Intrinsic interest	2.98	1.40	.74	3	RED.es	<i>'I do my work because I like it, not as an obligation'</i>
23. Positive emotions	3.37	1.50	.84		Kunnin (1955)	<i>'I feel relaxed'</i>
24. Turnover Intention	2.21	1.63	.93	3	RED.es	<i>'I'd feel better in another organization'</i>
25. Psychosomatic complaints	1.98	1.17	.90	14	RED.es	<i>'I have felt pains in my back over the last year'</i>

for each dimension as well as eta-squared ( $D^2$ ) values indicate that 34%, 72%, 62%, 27% and 62% of the variance in energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification, respectively, can be attributed to differences among the four clusters (see Table 3.2). These clusters have been dubbed: (a) Relaxed (type 1), (b) Enthusiastic (type 2), (c) Tense (type 3), and (d) Fatigued (type 4) (see Table 3.2).

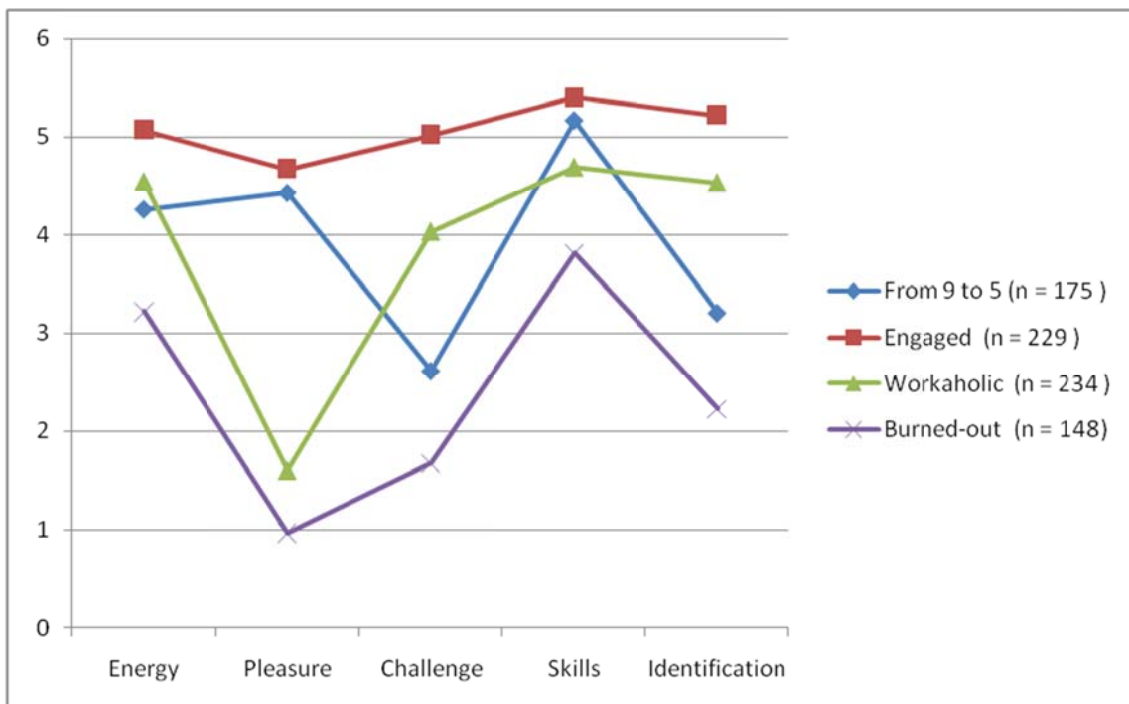
**Table 3.2.** Comparison of the five dimensions of employee well-being across the four clusters ( $N = 786$ )

Dimensions	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4		$F_{(3, 782)}$	$D^2$
	Relaxed		Enthusiastic		Tense		Fatigued			
	(n = 175)		(n = 229)		(n = 234)		(n = 148)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Energy	4.26	.89	5.07	.78	4.54	.74	3.22	1.16	137.38***	.34
Pleasure	4.43	1.00	4.67	.97	1.60	1.07	.97	1.04	661.91***	.72
Challenge	2.62	1.13	5.02	.77	4.03	.95	1.68	1.08	429.55***	.62
Skills	5.17	.82	5.40	.68	4.69	.92	3.81	1.27	99.26***	.27
Identification	3.21	1.05	5.22	.63	4.53	.79	2.23	1.07	424.54***	.62

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , F = Effect size F,  $\eta^2 = \text{Eta}$

As can be seen from Figure 3.2, cluster 1 ‘*Relaxed employees*’ includes 175 employees (22%) who score high on skills and pleasure, medium on energy, and low on challenge and identification. Cluster 2, ‘*Enthusiastic employees*’, includes 229 employees (29%) who score high on all five dimensions. Cluster 3, ‘*Tense employees*’, includes 234 employees (30%) and it is characterized by medium to high scores on energy, challenge, identification and skills, and low scores on pleasure. Finally, cluster 4, ‘*Fatigued employees*’, is composed of 148 employees (19%) who score the lowest on all five dimensions. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is confirmed.



**Figure 3.2.** Standardized scores of the four profiles of employees' well-being ( $N = 786$ )

#### *Differences among clusters*

To test our Hypothesis 2, a *MANOVA* was carried out with the cluster as the independent variable and job demands, job resources, personal resources, and positive and negative psychological outcomes as dependent variables. A highly significant multivariate effect was observed: Wilks' Lambda [ $F(54, 1642) = 21.58, p < .001, D^2 = .41$ ]. Results of subsequent multivariate analyses and  $D^2$  for job demands, job resources, personal resources, and positive and negative outcomes are shown in Table 3.3. In accordance with our expectations, highly significant differences were observed between clusters in terms of job demands, job resources, personal resources, and positive and negative outcomes. Personal resources explain most of the variance between the clusters (26%), followed by positive outcomes (18%) and job demands (12%).

In addition, the results of subsequent univariate analyses,  $D^2$  and pairwise comparisons are shown in Table 3.4. For the pairwise comparisons we employed Tukey's HSD follow-up tests, which correct for experiment-wise error rates. For the sake of brevity, only the main comparisons that include the purported four profiles of employee well-being are reported here.

**Table 3.3.** *Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with clusters as independent variables (N = 786)*

Variable	Wilks' $\lambda$	df	F	$\eta^2$
1. Job demands	.66	21, 2117	15.57***	.12
2. Job resources	.75	24, 1521	14.53***	.09
3. Personal resources	.40	12, 2016	68.58***	.26
4. Positive outcomes	.54	9, 1835	57.56***	.18
5. Negative outcomes	.88	6, 1562	16.77***	.06

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , F = Effect size F,  $\eta^2$  = Eta

We found that, compared to the other clusters, 'relaxed' employees (cluster 1) had significant medium scores on job demands, especially on monotony and mental demands. Moreover, they showed significant medium scores on job and personal resources, especially on team-working and mental competences. Regarding positive outcomes, they show medium scores on all of them, especially in intrinsic interest, and regarding negative outcomes they show the highest score on both indicators: turnover intention and psychosomatic complaints. Thus, Hypothesis 2a was confirmed.

Secondly, 'enthusiastic employees' (cluster 2) show significantly medium levels of job demands and, more particularly, they show the lowest scores on role stress but the highest on mental and emotional demands. Regarding resources, they show significantly higher scores on all job and personal resources than the other clusters. Likewise, results show that enthusiastic employees have significantly higher positive outcomes and the lowest scores on negative outcomes. Thus, Hypothesis 2b was confirmed.

Thirdly, 'tense employees' (cluster 3), compared to the rest of the groups, experience significant medium scores on job demands, with special relevance of the low levels in role ambiguity and the high levels in mental demands. Regarding job and personal resources, tense employees show significant medium scores on all of them, with special importance of the high levels in team-working and job control. As far as positive outcomes are concerned, they also show medium levels on all of them.

Particularly relevant are the lowest scores on both negative outcomes. Hence, Hypothesis 2c was partially confirmed.

Finally, ‘fatigued employees’ (cluster 4), compared to the rest of the groups, experience significantly higher scores on role ambiguity, role conflict, and monotony. However, they show the lowest scores on the other job demands, and also on all the job and personal resources studied. In addition, fatigued employees report the lowest scores on positive outcomes, especially on intrinsic interest, and the highest scores on negative outcomes, particularly on turnover intention. Thus, Hypothesis 2d was confirmed.

### **Discussion**

In this article we present a model to classify employees’ well-being that integrates three different kinds of taxonomies which, to date, have not been connected: (1) Warr’s (1990, 2007) affective approach, which is based on the distinction between arousal and pleasure that goes back to the circumplex model of emotions; (2) Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) cognitive approach, which is based on the balance of skills and challenge; and (3) González-Romá et al.’s (2006) affective-cognitive approach, which is based on the two-dimensional framework of energy and identification. Specifically, the objective of the present study was to integrate these three different taxonomies of well-being at work. In order to do this, we conducted a field study among a heterogeneous sample. Overall, the results of the present study contribute to our understanding of the different types of employee well-being and its characteristics in terms of job demands, job and personal resources, and positive as well as negative outcomes, following previous employee well-being taxonomies.

In relation to the first hypothesis (which proposed that four different types of employee well-being could be identified based on the taxonomies considered in the study), the role of the pleasure dimension in the final results deserves special attention. The F statistic and the  $R^2$  showed that this dimension explained more variance of employee well-being than the other four dimensions that were measured (i.e., energy, challenge, skills, and identification). Similar results were also found in previous studies related to well-being (e.g., Rushel & Carroll, 1999), which constitutes an indicator of the relevance of the pleasure dimension in explaining employees’ well-being. Therefore, we consider the differences in pleasure as one of the most relevant pieces of data in the different types of employee well-being.

**Table 3.4.** Comparison of the job demands, job resources, personal resources, and outcomes across the four clusters ( $N = 786$ )

Job and personal characteristics	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4		df	F	D <sup>2</sup>	Tukey's HSD
	(Relaxed)		(Enthusiastic)		(Tense)		(Fatigued)					
	From 9 to 5		Engaged		Workaholic		Burnout					
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
Work overload	3.58	1.53	3.54	1.56	3.17	1.36	3.05	1.47	3,764	5.78**	.02	1 > 3*,4**; 2 > 3*,4**
Role ambiguity	2.53	1.67	1.80	1.45	2.06	1.34	2.64	1.49	3,764	13.38***	.05	1 > 2***,3**; 2 < 4**, 3 < 4**
Role conflict	3.10	1.57	2.26	1.48	2.41	1.31	2.87	1.49	3,764	13.93***	.06	1 > 2***,3**; 2 < 4**, 3 < 4**
Monotony	4.37	1.54	3.38	1.75	3.86	1.66	4.49	1.45	3,764	18.85***	.07	1 > 2***,3**; 2 < 3*,4**, 3 < 4**
Mental demands	4.78	1.24	5.05	.96	4.49	1.13	3.96	1.51	3,764	26.95***	.10	1 > 4***; 2 > 3***, 2 > 4***, 3 > 4***
Emotional demands	4.03	1.26	4.17	1.08	3.23	1.03	3.20	1.20	3,764	39.75***	.13	1 > 3,4***; 2 > 3,4***
Job control	4.21	1.33	4.94	.98	4.14	1.16	3.64	1.51	3,578	27.12***	.12	1 < 2***, 1 > 4**; 2 > 3,4***; 3 > 4***
Transformational leadership	3.53	1.52	4.35	1.45	3.92	1.26	2.92	1.36	3,578	23.63***	.10	1 < 2***, 1 > 4**; 2 > 3**,4***; 3 > 4***
Organizational quality	2.95	1.24	3.91	1.17	3.53	1.00	2.46	1.11	3,578	41.16***	.17	1 < 2,3***, 1 > 4**; 2 > 3**,4***; 3 > 4***
Team-working	4.66	1.08	5.16	.97	4.82	.96	4.26	1.20	3,578	16.46***	.08	1 < 2***, 1 > 4**; 2 > 3*,4***, 3 > 4**
Mental competence	5.13	.73	5.38	.66	4.57	.85	3.86	1.15	3,765	111.42***	.30	1 < 2*; 1 > 3,4***; 2 > 3,4***; 3 > 4***
Emotional competence	4.92	.59	5.10	.58	3.59	.82	3.24	.93	3,765	300.02***	.54	1 < 2*; 1 > 3,4***; 2 > 3,4***; 3 > 4***
Organizational commitment	3.37	1.34	4.31	1.28	3.97	1.13	2.76	1.30	3,756	52.00***	.17	1 < 2,3***; 1 > 4***; 2 > 3*,4***; 3 > 4***
Intrinsic interest	2.32	1.29	3.98	.96	3.32	.99	1.63	1.06	3,756	172.31***	.40	1 < 2,3***; 1 > 4***; 2 > 3,4***; 3 > 4***
Positive emotions	2.97	1.51	4.07	1.34	3.67	1.23	2.28	1.36	3,756	59.99***	.19	1 < 2,3***; 1 > 4***; 2 > 3*,4***; 3 > 4***
Turnover Intention	2.77	1.68	1.78	1.49	1.75	1.46	2.91	1.61	3,764	29.90***	.11	1 > 2,3***; 2 < 4***; 3 < 4***
Psychosomatic complaints	2.30	1.22	1.78	1.19	1.76	1.01	2.28	1.17	3,764	12.70**	.05	1 > 2,3***; 2 < 4***; 3 < 4***

Notes. Results are significant at \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

In particular, our findings from Confirmatory Cluster Analyses showed that four different types of employee well-being emerged, i.e., relaxed employees, enthusiastic employees, tense employees, and fatigued employees, depending on the different relationships in the taxonomies considered and, consequently, our results confirmed Hypothesis 1. More specifically, relaxed employees were employees characterized by low scores on challenge, medium scores on energy and identification, and high scores on pleasure and skills. This profile could be called colloquially something like ‘9-to-5 employees’ because they seem content but fall short on drive. Although they do not feel bad in their jobs and they feel competent and efficacious at work, they lack enthusiasm and do not feel their job is challenging. Consequently, Hypothesis 1a was confirmed.

According to Hypothesis 1b, enthusiastic employees were characterized by high levels on all five dimensions, i.e., energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification. Due to the similarities of this pattern of scores with work engagement (e.g., high levels of energy and identification; González-Romá et al., 2006), we could call them ‘engaged employees’. These employees take pleasure in and are challenged by their jobs, where they can use their high levels of skills and energy to feel well while they are working. They also feel identified with their work and organization. Accordingly, we can complete the description of engaged employees by confirming that they are characterized by high levels of energy, pleasure and identification and, moreover, challenge and skills. Thus, Hypothesis 1b was also confirmed.

According to Hypothesis 1c, tense employees were characterized by high scores on skills, medium-high scores on energy, challenge, and identification, and low scores on pleasure. Due to the similarities of this pattern of scores with workaholism, we could also have labelled this group as ‘workaholics’. This profile resembles ‘workaholics’ due to the fact that the employees in this group feel competent and efficacious but do not feel pleasure in their jobs (e.g., Ng et al., 2007). They have good levels of energy and are identified with their jobs, but cannot translate these positive conditions into enough positive feelings. Consequently, the typical profile of workaholics can now be completed with the results of our study using the affective and cognitive dimensions considered. Hence, workaholics could be also characterized by medium-high levels of energy, challenge, skills and identification, and by low levels of pleasure. Thus, Hypothesis 1c was also confirmed.

According to Hypothesis 1d, fatigued employees were characterized by low levels in the five dimensions considered, that is, in energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification. This profile resembles burned-out employees because, like these, the employees in this pattern do not feel good at their job, do not consider it challenging, and do not feel identified with it – in fact they feel exhausted and cynical at work (e.g., González-Romá et al., 2006). In addition they do not feel competent and do not exhibit the necessary energy to work correctly. Accordingly, we can complete the description of burned-out employees by confirming that they are characterized by the lowest levels of energy, pleasure, skills, identification, and, moreover, challenge. Thus, Hypothesis 1d was confirmed.

The second purpose of this study was to examine whether job characteristics (i.e., job demands, job resources, and personal resources) and positive and negative outcomes would differ across the four types of employees' well-being. As predicted (Hypothesis 2a), in comparison to the other (three) groups, engaged employees experience the lowest job demands (e.g., role ambiguity), the highest job (e.g., job control) and personal (e.g., mental competences) resources, and the highest positive outcomes (e.g., organizational commitment). This agrees with the results of a study by Schaufeli et al. (2008), in which managers high in *work engagement* were almost exclusively characterized by *positive* features: they enjoyed good mental health, their social functioning was smooth, and they worked in resourceful jobs with positive outcomes. Following the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press), we can better understand why employees of this group experience positive emotions. The presence of more personal resources than job demands leads to the perception of more job resources by means of the motivational process. Hence, the (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivational potential of job resources encourages employees to meet their goals and to experience positive outcomes such as work engagement, exemplified by high energy, persistence, dedication, and absorption at work (Llorens et al., 2006; Salanova, Schaufeli, Xanthopoulou, & Bakker, 2010) as well to be committed to their jobs because they derive fulfilment from it (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Hypothesis 2b was also confirmed, because burned-out employees exhibited the highest job demands (e.g., routine), and the lowest job (e.g., organizational quality) and personal (e.g., emotional competence) resources. Moreover they experienced the lowest positive (e.g., intrinsic interest) and the highest negative (e.g., turnover intention)

outcomes, and hence it was the group with the worst perception of the work environment. According to the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press), when employees have low personal resources they perceive more job demands and fewer personal resources to cope with their work environment (following the erosion process) and, consequently, if the situation requires a sustained effort, they may exhaust their resources and become affected by energy depletion and health problems (see Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison, & Pinneau, 1975), and thus feel burnout. Different scholars have argued that employees among various occupational groups with low levels of self-efficacy perceive more specific job demands in the work context (e.g., work overload or emotional demands), which in turn predict *exhaustion* (i.e., severe fatigue) among various occupational groups (e.g., Bakker et al., 2005; Bakker et al., 2003) by the *erosion process*.

Finally, as predicted (Hypothesis 2c), compared to 9-to-5 employees, workaholics showed fewer job demands (e.g., emotional demands), similar job resources (e.g., job control), and more positive (e.g., positive emotions) and fewer negative (e.g., turnover intention) outcomes. If we compare workaholism with other addictions such as alcoholism, one of its main characteristics, together with the desire to control, is denial of the problem. As Porter (1996) asserted, individuals who are excessive in their work involvement are typically unable to recognize the compulsive nature of their behaviour patterns. Like alcoholics, they believe the person complaining is the one with the problem. As a consequence of this denial, typically workaholics can distort their scores in order to communicate a better impression of themselves. Interestingly, some 'positive' characteristics of workaholics such as job control or turnover intention obtained high scores, which is common in workaholics because of their need to work at any time and in any place (Harpaz & Snir, 2003).

Conversely, 9-to-5 employees exaggerate the negative condition of their job characteristics in order to show a worse impression of themselves. Compared to workaholics they show more job demands (e.g., workload), similar job resources (e.g., organizational quality), more personal resources (e.g., mental competence), fewer positive (e.g., intrinsic interest) and more negative (e.g., psychosomatic complaints) outcomes. Although 9-to-5 employees have not been studied previously, according to the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press) the imbalance between demands and competences perceived by this type of employees can affect their work-related well-

being by producing, for instance, lack of motivation. And this implies that 9-to-5 employees do not strive to achieve their aims. Similarly, according to the *Personality Systems Interaction* theory (Kuhl, 2000), when employees do not achieve their needs or implicit motives, they are more likely to experience a reduction in their well-being. As 9-to-5 employees are under-challenged (i.e., they have more resources than demands) and they also have high levels of skills, they can perceive a failure to seek opportunities to meet standards of excellence, and consequently have a tendency not to feel well (e.g., Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Grässmann, 1998; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995) and to perceive psychosomatic complaints (Sapolsky, 1992). This is a possible explanation for their higher levels of this kind of complaints compared to the rest of the patterns.

### *Theoretical implications*

The present paper contributes to the ongoing discussion (e.g., Avey et al., 2010; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009) about the conceptualization and measurement of employee well-being, by suggesting a new combination of affective and cognitive dimensions with which to interpret differences in patterns of employee well-being. It is shown that by using energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification as the main dimensions, it is possible to classify employees in four different typologies according to their psychological well-being. Three of these typologies are well-known in OHP (i.e., work engagement, workaholism, and burnout), whereas the remaining type of well-being, '9-to-5 employees', has not received so much attention in previous research and it could be an interesting area to study in the future. Specifically, and according to our hypothesis, workaholism can be considered a type of employee well-being with idiosyncrasy itself and, thereby, be contemplated as a meaningful construct. In addition, as in the Rushel and Carroll (1999) study, in our results the pleasure dimension was also the most relevant dimension of employee well-being, which confirms that differences in the pleasure that is experienced are more likely to be reflected in well-being than variations in energy, challenge, skills, or identification.

### *Challenges for future research and for practice*

It would be important for future research to study the 9-to-5 and workaholic groups in greater detail in order to clarify their relationships with job characteristics, which remain unclear with the results of the present study. Our findings also indicate promising directions for practitioners, who can evaluate some of the most representative well-being patterns at the workplace in the same study, without the need to use a large



number of questionnaires or different studies. Moreover, and more important, if they know the main affective and cognitive dimensions related to employees' well-being (i.e., energy, pleasure, challenge, skills, and identification), practitioners might be able to propose intervention strategies to prevent burnout and workaholism, as well as to propose more accurate means of enhancing work engagement. In consequence, they might be able to improve work conditions more easily than can be done nowadays.

#### *Weaknesses and strengths of the study*

One weakness of this study is that results were obtained by self-report measures, and consequently may be contaminated by the common method variance and by the wish to answer consistently (Conway, 2002). In order to control for this, we checked the potential impact of common method variance on our data (see Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although we cannot completely rule out the possibility that the common method variance bias is playing a role, our check for it proved negative. Another possible weakness was that we used a convenience sample because, although it was heterogeneous and different occupations were included, we had no control over what occupational groups were evaluated. This weakness could be overcome in future studies by including more occupational groups to validate the existence of the four patterns of psychological well-being that were identified.

On the other hand, our study also has the following strengths: (1) discriminant analyses showed that 97% of employees were well-classified into the patterns; (2) the main dimensions of affective and cognitive well-being were considered and thus the feasibility of the clusters that were found was considerably high; (3) most of our results were similar to the results of other studies (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2009a; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2008), which is an indicator of the robustness of our conclusions; and (4) pleasure was the dimension with the highest weight in the different types of employee well-being, which was also in line with other studies about well-being at work (e.g., Russel & Carrol, 1999).

#### *Final remark*

The major contribution of this study is that, based on an exploratory, bottom-up procedure, we ended up with four types of well-being that correspond to three well-known states like work engagement, workaholism, and burnout, and one new type that has not been studied in previous research: 9-to-5 employees (the 'normal' group). The relevance of these groups was confirmed by the different relationships found in each

one with the job characteristics that were considered (especially in work-engaged and burned-out employees) and by the similar relationships found in other studies. However, and since pleasure was the most relevant dimension in explaining employees' well-being, we can distinguish between two large groups of employees: those who feel good (healthy employees) and those who feel bad (unhealthy employees). Feeling good or feeling bad at work, that's the question!

## Chapter 4

### Validity of a brief workaholism scale<sup>6</sup>

#### Summary

The current study contributes to the understanding of workaholism as a negative construct, and its measurement by examining the psychometric properties of a short 10-item workaholism scale called DUWAS (*Dutch Work Addiction Scale*). Confirmatory factor analyses were carried out in a heterogeneous sample of 2,714 employees from the Netherlands (n = 2,164) and Spain (n = 550). The results confirmed the expected two-factor structure of workaholism: working excessively and working compulsively. Moreover, multi-group analyses showed that this two-factor structure was invariant across both countries. Finally, negative correlations among workaholism and psychosocial well-being (i.e., perceived health and happiness) are indicative of the workaholism negative nature.

*Key words:* workaholism, measurement, dimensions

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## Introduction

Work is a positive value for people in our current society but, when it is over-important for people, it could have negative consequences such as workaholism. Despite its relevance in modern society, scientific research on workaholism is lacking. One reason for this is that no consensus exists about its conceptualization and measurement. Focused on the workaholism as a negative construct, recently, Schaufeli et al. (2006) have proposed a new 17-item measure to assess workaholism; the Dutch Work Addiction Scale' (DUWAS) which consists of two sub-scales dubbed working excessively (WkE) and working compulsively (WkC). Besides a shorter version of the DUWAS composed of ten items tested in the Netherlands and Japan, has a promising psychometric feature (Schaufeli et al., 2009). The aim of the current study is twofold: (1) to investigate the factorial structure of this brief workaholism 10-items measure in two samples from different countries: Spain and the Netherlands, and (2) to assess the nature of workaholism comparing it with perceived health and happiness to confirm that workaholism may be considered as a negative concept.

### *What is workaholism?*

Despite the fact that, initially, workaholism was also considered a positive phenomenon - at least from an organizational perspective (Machlowitz, 1980; Naughton, 1987) - most authors agree that workaholism is negative in nature (Killinger, 1991; Porter, 1996). Oates (1971) coined the term workaholism and described it as “...*the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly*” (p. 11). This early description entails two core elements which return in later definitions of workaholism: working excessively hard and the existence of a strong, irresistible inner drive (cf. McMillan et al., 2003). The former points to the fact that workaholics tend to allocate an exceptional amount of time to work and that they work beyond what is reasonably expected to meet organizational or economic requirements. The latter recognizes that workaholics persistently and frequently think about work (even when they are not working), which suggests that workaholics feel “obsessed” with their work.

We agree with these assumptions and also with the definition by Salanova, Del Líbano, Llorens, Schaufeli and Fidalgo (2008, p. 1) which considers workaholism as “*a negative psychological state characterized by working excessively due essentially to an internal drive that cannot be resisted*”.

*The measurement of workaholism*

In line with our conceptualization of workaholism, we have operationalized it in terms of two scales, namely WkE and WkC, using the DUWAS (Schaufeli et al., 2006). This questionnaire comprises 17 items divided into two scales taken from two frequently used workaholism inventories: the Work Addiction Risk Test (WART; Robinson, 1999) and the Workaholism Battery (WorkBat; Spence & Robbins, 1992), respectively. To assess WkE, we used the Compulsive Tendencies Scale included in WART. The label of this scale was somewhat misleading because 7 of its 9 items referred to working hard with no reference to the underlying motivation, whereas the remaining items referred to the inability to relax and to feeling guilty when not working, both of which are indicative of WkC. For that reason, the authors relabeled the scale as WkE. A recent validity study into WART, using 3 independent Dutch samples, showed that the WE-scale performed equally well as the original 25-item version of WART (Taris et al., 2005). Despite conducting several studies about the psychometric properties and the factorial structure of WART (Flowers & Robinson, 2002; Taris et al., 2005), no confirmatory information about its psychometric characteristics is yet available (Burke, 2000b).

To assess WC, the Drive Scale included in WorkBat is used. This scale not only refers explicitly to the compulsive nature of the underlying motivation to work hard, but also to the compulsiveness of excessive work behaviour. The scale was also relabelled as WkC by DUWAS authors to be coherent with their workaholism conceptualization. Studies on the factorial validity of WorkBat failed to confirm Spence and Robbin's (1992) three-factor model of workaholism that included work involvement, work enjoyment and drive (Kanai et al., 1996; McMillan, Brady, O'Driscoll, & Marsh, 2002). Instead, the data suggest the elimination of the work involvement factor, leaving a two-factor model with enjoyment and drive as the core components of workaholism. DUWAS did not include the enjoyment component because the authors excluded 'good' forms of workaholism characterized by enjoyment. Thus, the DUWAS was composed of 17 items distributed in two dimensions: WkE (10 items) and WkC (7 items).

A Dutch study using an Internet-based survey revealed that two WkE items load on the WkC scale: *"I feel guilty when I am not working on something"* and *"It is hard for me to relax when I am not working"* (Schaufeli et al., 2006). It is clear that the content of these items reflects the negative consequences of a compulsive tendency to

work rather than excessive work. After changing the composition of both scales accordingly, the internal consistencies of the WkE and WkC scales proved satisfactory with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values of .80 and .86, respectively, whereas the correlation between both latent workaholism factors was .75. Because of "wrongly" loading the WkE items and given the length of the questionnaire, Schaufeli et al. (2009) developed an improved and shortened version of DUWAS using samples from the Netherlands and Japan. A 10-item version of the DUWAS emerged, with 5 items in each scale (see Appendix 2). The results showed that the 10-item DUWAS is an appropriate research tool to study workaholism.

#### *The relationship among workaholism and perceived health and happiness*

It is feasible to use the relationship that workaholism shows with other constructs more positive such as health and happiness. For example, Burke (1999d) pointed out that, usually, the drive component of workaholism positively relates to poorer perceived health (emotional satisfaction and physical satisfaction in terms of psychosomatic symptoms). So, the more scores in workaholism, the poorer perceived health is. More recently, Schaufeli et al. (2006) showed that WkC and WkE negatively relate to perceived health as well assessed by one item (e.g., "Generally speaking, do you feel healthy?").

There is a lack of studies into the relationship between workaholism and happiness. Only the study of Schaufeli et al. (2006) negatively related workaholism to a similar concept, overall life satisfaction, especially the WkC dimension. In addition, the drive component of workaholism usually relates negatively to psychological well-being and satisfaction (i.e., job satisfaction, or satisfaction with family, friends and community) (Burke, 2000a). Despite being happy is not measured in these studies, it is possible to consider satisfaction in several areas of life being close to the happiness concept. Thereby, we can also expect a negative relationship between workaholism and happiness.

#### *The current study*

The aim of the current study is twofold: (1) to test the factor structure of a brief self-report DUWAS version by verifying the 2-factor structure obtained in previous studies (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008) in two samples from different countries: Spain and the Netherlands; and (2) to assess the negative nature of workaholism comparing it with perceived health and happiness to confirm that

workaholism may be considered as a negative concept.

## **Method**

### *Participants and procedure*

A convenience sample was used which included 2,714 employees from the Netherlands and Spain. The Dutch sample comprised 2,164 employees (64% females) from different occupational sectors (i.e., services 18%, education 16%, industry 15% or commerce 12%). Ages ranged from 16 to 69, and the mean age of this sample was 37.9 (SD = 11.2). The web site of the largest popular Dutch psychology journal included the workaholism survey that participants filled on-line. Its homepage also invited visitors to learn more about their work-related well-being. After filling in, the users could graphically see an estimative feedback in an easy way of their results on levels of workaholism and engagement. We clearly explained in the feedback that scores were only an approximation and that it was necessary to contact with us to draw deeper conclusions.

The Spanish sample included 550 employees (54% females) who also completed an online questionnaire on a web site. Likewise, employees worked in heterogeneous jobs, including different occupational sectors (i.e., services 18%, education 15%, industry 11% or commerce 10%). Ages ranged from 18 to 78 years, and the mean age was 33.8 (SD = 9.8). The method selected to help make people aware of the questionnaire and the response procedure was similar to the Dutch sample. Participants filled in the on-line workaholism questionnaire which was included in a specifically elaborated web site (<http://www.wont.uji.es/adic>). The questionnaire included the same items and the same procedure as in the Dutch sample. Moreover, one theoretical article about workaholism was published in a Spanish popular psychology magazine to diffuse the link to the on-line questionnaire.

### *Measures*

*Workaholism* was assessed by two versions of the DUWAS questionnaire: (1) the original long (17 items) and (2) the new short version (10 items) (Schaufeli et al., 2006; 2009). Both versions are distributed in two dimensions: WkE and WkC. In the original longer version, WkE was evaluated by 9 items (e.g., “*I seem to be in a hurry and racing against the clock*”), while WkC was tested by 8 items (e.g., “*I feel obliged to work hard, even when it’s not enjoyable*”). In the short version, WkE was measured by 5 items and WkC by another 5 items. In both versions values were ranged from 1 (‘almost

never') to 4 ('almost always') in a frequency scale following the recommendations of the authors who created the questionnaire.

*Psychosocial well-being* was assessed by two indicators, i.e., perceived health and happiness. *Perceived health* was assessed by 1-self-constructed item measured from 1 'almost never' to 4 'almost always' (e.g., "Generally speaking, do you feel healthy?"). Finally, *happiness* was also measured by 1-self-constructed item ranging from 1 'unhappy' to 4 'very happy' (e.g., "Taking everything in account, how happy are you with your life?"). Despite we used only 1 item, previous factor analyses confirm that perceived health (communality = .71) and happiness (communality = .72) single-items have good reliability (see Harman, 1967; cf. Wanous & Hudy, 2001).

#### *Data analyses*

Firstly, internal consistencies (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) and descriptive analyses were computed. Secondly, Confirmatory Factorial Analyses (CFA), implemented by the AMOS program (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999) were employed to test the structural dimensions of workaholism using the original long questionnaire (17 items) in Spanish and Dutch employees separately. Thirdly, Multi-group Analyses (MLG) were also conducted to measure the structural dimensions of workaholism between the Spanish and Dutch samples when they are simultaneously analysed in order to test the invariance of the structure across countries (Byrne, 2001). The MLG were performed only with the short version of the questionnaire. Next, a test of the equality of covariances structures and factor loadings across samples was done by placing constraints on particular parameters (see Byrne, 2001). Different fit indices were tested: the  $\chi^2$  Goodness-of-Fit Statistic, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). Values smaller than .08 for RMSEA indicate an acceptable fit. For the rest of indices, values greater than .90 indicate a good fit. For nested models comparison the difference among chi-square was used meanwhile for non-nested model we computed the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC). The lower the AIC index, the better the fit is. Furthermore, the correlations among workaholism dimensions, perceived health and happiness were computed to measure the negative nature of the phenomena, using only the short version of the questionnaire.



## Results

### *Descriptive analyses*

Table 4.1 shows the mean values, standard deviations, internal consistencies (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ), and inter-correlations of all the scales used in this study with both samples. All the alpha values meet the criterion of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994), ranging from .75 to .85. Besides, the inter-correlations between WkE and WkC (in the original and shortened versions separately) were positive and significant. Moreover, the inter-correlations between the original and shortened scales ranged between .92 and .94 in the Dutch and Spanish samples, respectively. Finally, the inter-correlations of WkE and WkC with perceived health and happiness were negative and significant in both samples, as expected. The test for the common method variance for the variables by using the Harman's single factor test with CFA (e.g., Iverson & Maguire, 2000; cf. Podsakoff et al., 2003) reveal that one single factor could not account for the variance in the data [ $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 1014.11, p < .001$ ]. Consequently, the common method variance is not a deficiency in this dataset and the variables are related but *different*.

### *Confirmatory Factor Analyses*

In order to test the structure of the short DUWAS version, two competitive models: (1) M1, the original version of DUWAS and (2) M2, the short DUWAS version were tested in the Dutch and Spanish samples. That is, the M1 and M2 were tested in both samples, but independently analysed. Table 4.2 and 4.3 reveals that compared to M1, M2 is the best model with all fit indices fitting the criteria in Dutch ( $\Delta AIC = 1044.47$ ) as well as in Spanish sample ( $\Delta AIC = 523.99$ ). A revision of the Modification Indexes reveals that M2 may be significantly improved in both samples, independently analysed, if two pair of errors (items5-14 and items16-17) is allowing correlating. Theoretically, these errors could be allowed to covary attending to the considerable overlap in their content. In fact, both belong to the same dimension, i.e., WC. More specifically, items 5-14 are referred to work without enjoying meanwhile 16-17 are related to how workers feel when they are not working.

**Table 4.1.** Means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), correlations and internal consistencies (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for Spanish/Dutch on the diagonal) in the Dutch ( $n = 2,164$ ) and Spanish samples ( $N = 550$ ).

	Dutch		Spanish		Inter-correlations					
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. WkE long version	2.22	.51	2.5	.68	.85/.82	.66***	.92***	.66***	-.20***	-.16***
2. WkC long version	2.08	.57	2.21	.62	.80***	.79/.84	.49 ***	.94 ***	-.28***	-.25***
3. WkE short version	2.44	.59	2.64	.75	.93***	.69***	.78/.75	.46***	-.20***	-.15***
4. WkC short version	2.01	.64	2.07	.73	.77***	.93***	.63***	.79/.81	-.28***	-.25***
5. Perceived Health	3.07	.75	2.98	.95	-.31***	-.28***	-.28***	-.31***	-	.43***
6. Happiness	3.07	.58	2.91	.68	-.32***	-.31***	-.31***	-.32***	.44***	-

*Notes.* Correlations for the Spanish sample are below the diagonal; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Thus, the M3 (with this errors correlated) fits the data significantly best than M2 in Dutch [ $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 123.84, p < .001$ ] and Spanish samples [ $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 88.56, p < .001$ ]. In short, the results of a series of CFAs in the Dutch and Spanish samples, which were analysed independently, indicated that the short DUWAS version fitted the data better than the long version. It included 10 items distributed into two related but independent dimensions: WkE (items 3, 4, 6, 12 and 15) and WkC (items 5, 11, 14, 16 and 17).

Similar results are obtained when the two-factor model of the short DUWAS with the pair of errors correlated (M3) is tested in Dutch and Spanish samples but simultaneously analysed using Multigroup Analyses (MLG). Table 4.4 reveals that as expected the M3 shows a good fitting to the data again which implies the invariance of the structure of the short DUWAS across both countries, that is, the factor pattern is identical for both samples. The result of this M3 is graphically represented in Figure 4.1. The specific structural relationships of M3 reveal that in Dutch as well as in Spanish sample, when both are independently analysed, all the indicators of WkE and WkC have loadings on the intended latent factor higher than .53 and .46 in Dutch and Spanish samples, respectively. It also revealed that covariance between WkE and WkC is .53 and .79 for Dutch and Spanish, respectively (see Figure 4.1).

Since MLG analyses imply that the same items are forced to load onto the same factors, but factor loading estimates themselves are allowed to vary between samples, more analyses are made in order to test if there are differences in the estimation of the item parameter. Thus, M4 (the constrained model in which all the parameters were fixed in both samples) show the best fit compared to M3 [ $\Delta\chi^2(11) = 149.85, p < .001$ ]. These results reveal that some factor loadings and/or the covariance between the two latent factors are equal among samples. Hence, the process of constraining successive covariances and factor loadings was then applied (M5, M6). Significant differences were obtained among the free model (M3), the model with equal covariances (M5) [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 36.98, p < .001$ ] and the model with equal factor loadings (M6) [ $\Delta\chi^2(8) = 76.07, p < .001$ ]. The results showed a final model (M7) in which the two factorial structures of workaholism were equal across countries but with some minor differences, i.e., the covariance between the both workaholism dimensions and also in one factor loading (item 14).

**Table 4.2.** *Fit indices of the CFA DUWAS versions in the Dutch sample (N = 2,164).*

Models	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	AIC	ECVI	$\chi^2$ diff	$\Delta$ GFI	$\Delta$ RMSEA	$\Delta$ TLI	$\Delta$ CFI	$\Delta$ AIC	$\Delta$ ECVI
M1 (17 items)	1605.99	115	.91	.08	.86	.88	1681.99	.78							
M2 (10 items)	595.52	34	.94	.09	.89	.91	637.52	.29							
M3(10 items revised)	471.68	32	.96	.08	.90	.93	517.68	.24							
Difference between M2 & M1									-	.03	.01	.03	.06	1044.47	.96
Difference between M3 & M2									123.84***	.02	.01	.01	.02	119.84	.05

Notes.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; AIC = Akaike's information criterion; ECVI = Expected Cross-Validation Index;  $\Delta$  = difference test, \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.3.** *Fit indices of the CFA DUWAS versions in the Spanish (N = 550) sample.*

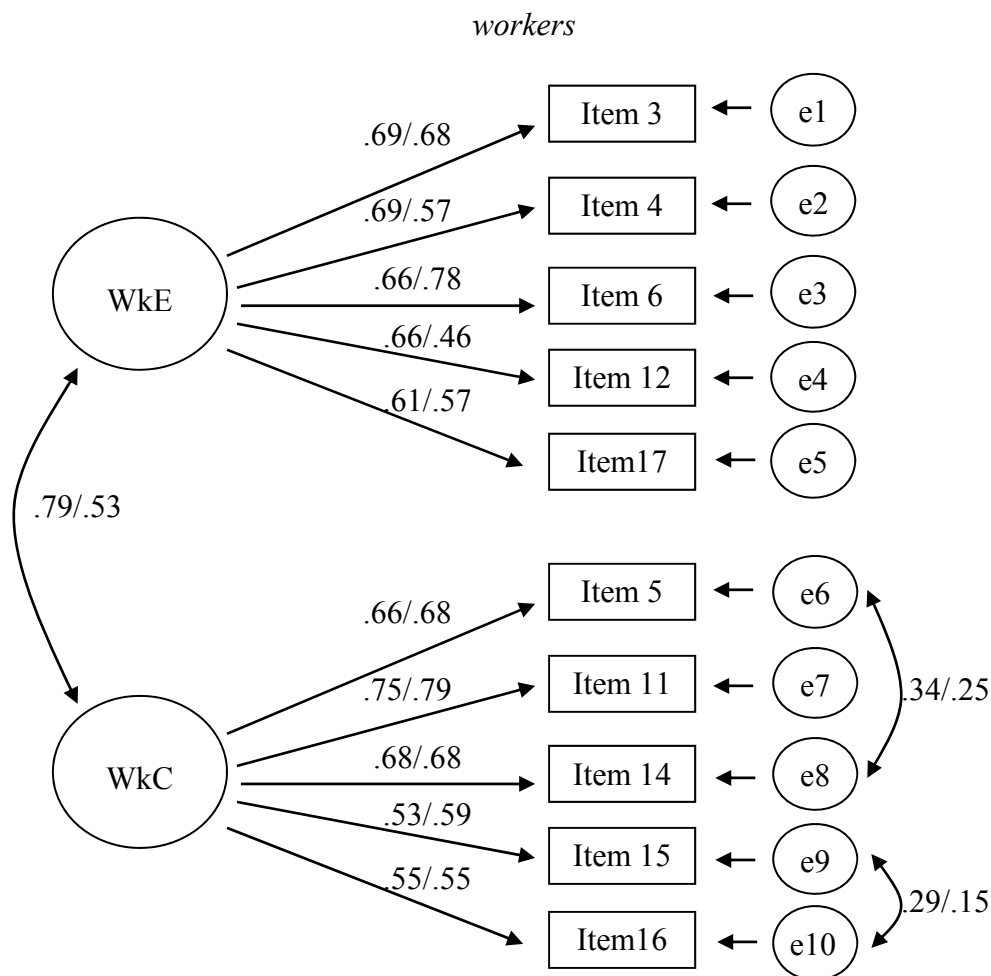
Model	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	AIC	ECVI	$\chi^2$ diff	$\Delta$ GFI	$\Delta$ RMSEA	$\Delta$ TLI	$\Delta$ CFI	$\Delta$ AIC	$\Delta$ ECVI
M1 (17 items)	707.34	117	.86	.09	.82	.84	779.35	1.42							
M2 (10 items)	213.36	34	.93	.10	.87	.90	255.36	.46							
M3(10 items revised)	124.90	32	.96	.07	.93	.95	170.92	.31							
Difference between M2 & M1									-	.07	.01	.05	.06	523.99	.96
Difference between M3 & M2									88.56***	.03	.03	.06	.05	84.44	.15

Notes.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; AIC = Akaike's information criterion; ECVI = Expected Cross-Validation Index;  $\Delta$  = difference test.; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.4.** Fit indices of the MLG of the factor structure of workaholism including both the Dutch ( $N = 2,164$ ) and Spanish ( $N = 550$ ) samples.

Models	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	ECVI	$\chi^2$ diff	$\Delta$ GFI	$\Delta$ RMSEA	$\Delta$ TLI	$\Delta$ CFI	$\Delta$ ECVI
M3. Free	596.61	64	.96	.05	.90	.94	.25						
M4. All constrained	746.46	75	.94	.06	.89	.92	.30						
M5. Equal covariance	623.59	65	.95	.06	.90	.93	.26						
M6. Equal factor loadings	672.68	72	.95	.05	.90	.94	.28						
M7. Final model	602.42	65	.96	.05	.90	.93	.25						
Difference between M4 & M3								149.85***	.02	.01	.01	.02	.05
Difference between M5 & M3								36.98***	.01	.01	0	.01	.04
Difference between M6 & M3								76.07***	.01	0	0	0	.03
Difference between M7 & M3								5.81	0	0	0	.01	0

Notes.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; ECVI = Expected Cross-Validation Index;  $\Delta$  = difference test; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Figure 4.1.** Multi-group final model in Dutch ( $N = 2,164$ ) and Spanish ( $N = 550$ )

Note. Spanish (first coefficient) and Dutch (second coefficient) employees. All factor loadings and covariances are significant at .001

#### *Relationships between workaholism and psychosocial well-being*

In order to test the negative nature of workaholism, correlations were made among workaholism and psychosocial well-being operationalized such as perceived health and happiness, in both the Dutch and Spanish samples. As expected, the results show a significant and negative relationship between workaholism dimensions and perceived health (mean  $r = -.24/-.29$ ) and happiness (mean  $r = -.20/-.31$ ) in both Dutch and Spanish, respectively. More specifically, the correlations in the Dutch sample between WkC and perceived health ( $r = -.28$ ) and, happiness ( $r = -.25$ ), and between WkE, perceived health ( $r = -.20$ ) and with happiness ( $r = -.15$ ) were lower than the correlations between these variables in the Spanish sample ( $r = -.28, -.31, -.31, -.32$ , respectively). A Fisher z-transformation was computed in order to verify if these differences in the

correlations between items in both countries: the Netherlands and Spain were significant. Results showed that the differences between countries in the relationships among WkC and perceived health ( $z = 0$ ), WkC and happiness ( $z = 1.08$ ), as well as among WkE and perceived health ( $z = 1.88$ ) were non-significant. Whereas the relationship between WkE and happiness was significantly different ( $z = 3$ ). Accordingly, the higher the scores in workaholism, the lower the perception of health and happiness are. These results give evidence about the negative nature of workaholism independently of the country (see Table 4.1).

## Discussion

The aim of this study was twofold: (1) to test the factor structure of a brief self-report DUWAS version by verifying the two-factor structure obtained in previous studies (Schaufeli et al., 2006; 2008) in two samples from different countries: the Netherlands and Spain; and (2) to assess the nature of workaholism comparing it with perceived health and happiness to confirm that workaholism may be considered as a negative concept.

According to the first objective, the results of the CFA in both the separately analysed samples showed that the short DUWAS version fits the data better than the original questionnaire. Although these results are congruent with previous research findings (Schaufeli et al., 2006; 2009), they imply that workaholism, irrespectively of the country involved, could be assessed by only 10 items divided into the aforementioned two main dimensions. The first refers to a great deal of time that the workaholic spends doing work activities. The second implies that working compulsively refers to the workaholic being reluctant to disengage from work when he/she persistently and frequently thinks about work even when he/she is not at work. Moreover, the differences in the inter-correlations in both the dimensions between the Netherlands and Spain were not significant. All in all, these results give evidence of the internal validity of the DUWAS questionnaire's structure.

To confirm the invariance in the factor structure, covariance and factor loadings of DUWAS across the Dutch and Spanish samples, MLG analyses were computed. When we analysed both samples simultaneously, the results confirmed the two-factor structure of workaholism measured by DUWAS. These findings confirm the robustness of the two-factor structure of DUWAS, irrespectively of the country involved. This is in line of previous results obtained by different scholars in which the factorial structure of



workaholism also revealed no invariance between other countries such as Dutch and Japanese employees (Schaufeli et al., 2009). This result may suggest that the factorial DUWAS structure is similar among these countries.

The second objective was to confirm the negative nature of workaholism relating it with psychosocial well-being, such as perceived health and happiness. Correlations confirmed that workaholism relates negatively to both positive concepts. The higher the scores in workaholism, the poorer the perceived health and happiness are. These results indicate that potentially workaholism is a negative psychological construct. Moreover, this result is consistent with the considerable consensus in the workaholism literature about the association of workaholism and poorer psychological and physical well-being (Burke, 2000a; 2000b). In fact, some definitions of workaholism incorporate aspects of diminished health as their central elements (Burke, 2000a). More specifically, a study with 530 MBA graduates from Canada, found a positive relationship between workaholism and poorer emotional and physical well-being (Burke, 2000b). Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that, from this questionnaire, we can understand workaholism only as a negative phenomenon.

#### *Theoretical, technical and practical implications*

Two main theoretical implications relate to the workaholism concept. Firstly, an advance in knowledge and understanding about workaholism occurs because we have confirmed that workaholism may be measured with a negative approach. Secondly, the factor structure of DUWAS is quite similar in the Netherlands as in Spain, which may suggest the possibility of considering these two factors of workaholism for theoretical and research purposes irrespectively of the country involved, and which also suggests the robustness of the short version of the DUWAS structure.

From a technical point of view, this study shows that the short DUWAS version has the same factorial structure proposed in the longer version (Schaufeli et al., 2006) with a Spanish sample. This is the first study of the factorial structure of DUWAS in Spain and it confirms the factor structure of this short measure of workaholism. And also, from a practical point of view, the results suggest that a brief DUWAS questionnaire can be used for practitioners to test workaholic dimensions on companies from different countries.

*Weaknesses and challenges for further research*

One of the weaknesses concerns sample selection. As we used convenience samples, they may not be representative, and we do not know whether the observed differences are due to the country or to professional groups. Moreover, it is possible to consider that the use of the Internet as a research tool is a weakness because Internet surveys usually attract participants of a higher socio-economic status and level of education (Smith & Leigh, 1997) and may, therefore, suffer a selection bias. Nonetheless, comparing the samples with others using paper-and-pencil methods may overcome this weakness. Finally, a frequency scale may not be appropriate to evaluate all the items of DUWAS (e.g., “*I dislike overwork*”), although it was used in this study based on the original scale (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2006; 2009). In future studies would be interesting to use another alternative scale more fitted to the items, e.g., an agreement scale.

The next logical step in future research is to examine the construct validity of the WkE and WkC scales in greater detail. For instance, do both dimensions of workaholism have similar antecedents and consequences? We can assume that the scores in WkE relate positively to (objective) indicators of working time, such as the number of hours spent at work, allocating leisure time to work, and thinking about work when not working. On the other hand, we can expect WkC relates to personality factors, such as perfectionism, consciousness, obstinacy, rigidity, orderliness, dominance, and also to obsessive thinking and ruminating (Killinger, 2006; Mudrack, 2004)

*Final note*

Findings from this study are relevant since they represent a valid and short instrument which contributes to the understanding and measuring of workaholism. All in all, and based on the parsimony, results evidence that the measure of workaholism *is better when shorter*.

## Chapter 5

### **Are workaholics ‘Engaged employees’? About the relationship among workaholism, work engagement, positive outcomes and personality<sup>7</sup>**

#### **Summary**

The main objective of this study is to show that workaholism and engagement are two different and work-related states of mind. To achieve this objective: (1) we tested the factorial validity of workaholism and engagement, and (2) assessed the discriminant validity of both vis-à-vis positive psychological constructs (i.e. happiness and perceived health), as well as personality traits (i.e. extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience). The sample includes 2,825 Spanish and Dutch employees. Results show that workaholism and engagement are two partially overlapping factors. Moreover, workaholism and engagement negatively and positively relate, respectively, to perceived health and happiness. Finally, workaholism negatively relates to emotional stability and agreeableness, while engagement relates positively to all the *Big Five* personality dimensions.

*Key words:* workaholism, work engagement, personality

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## Introduction

Nowadays, competitiveness is a key factor in organizations which strive to achieve the best results. One key factor to obtain these results is having engaged and motivated employees. However, this form of work engagement sometimes becomes excessive and compulsive, and could have negative consequences on the work and/or on the non-work context. This excessive and compulsive kind of over-engagement has been called: workaholism. Although workaholics may be productive and organizations may set them as behaviour examples in the short term, they apparently have serious problems as time goes by (Del Libano et al., 2006).

Conceptually speaking, workaholism and work engagement are different psychosocial constructs. As far as workaholism is concerned, there is still no consensus on its negative vs. positive nature. Some researchers, like Buelens and Poelmans (2004), considered that workaholism has positive connotations and they write about some workaholics as "*Happy, hard workers*". However, it has negative connotations for others, for example, Porter (1996) stated that "*whereas an alcoholic neglects other aspects of life for the indulgence in alcohol, the workaholic behaves the same for excessive indulgence in work*" (pp. 70-71). Finally, other scholars considered that workaholism has both negative and positive connotations and they distinguished between different types of workaholics (e.g., Spence & Robbins, 1992).

Despite the different points of view regarding the conceptualization of work engagement (i.e., Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004), this term has generated less controversies in the scientific community than workaholism in terms of its negative or positive nature. So far, some authors consider work engagement to be the theoretical opposite pole of job burnout, such as a: "*persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption*" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 72). The current study follows this conceptualization of work engagement, which emerged from burnout research, namely as an attempt to cover the entire spectrum, ranging from employee unwell-being (burnout) to employee well-being (engagement) (Maslach et al., 2001). According to this, it is considered a purely positive concept.

Therefore, the main objective of the current study is to show that workaholism and engagement are two different, yet work-related states of mind. Firstly, we assess the factorial validity of both workaholism and work engagement by distinguishing them as

two different but partially overlapping factors. Secondly, we test the discriminant validity of both vis-à-vis positive psychological constructs, such as perceived health, happiness and personality traits (i.e., extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience).

The current study has been carried out in two countries, Spain and the Netherlands, for two main reasons. Firstly, cross-cultural generalization is necessary to obtain results which can be applied in several countries, and not only in the United States where no less than 75% of the research on workaholism has been conducted (McMillan et al., 2001). Consequently, our understanding of workaholism could become culturally biased. Therefore, validating the results obtained in more than one different country should minimize this risk. Secondly, Spain and the Netherlands differ in terms of the number of working hours and the value attached to work. According to Hofstede's (1980) classic survey, essentially, the Netherlands is extremely individualistic compared to Spain (i.e., the Dutch define their identity in terms of personal choices and achievement). The results obtained in a study about 11,000 business employees from 43 nations (Smith, Dugan, & Tompenaars, 1996) agreed with Hofstede's arguments and showed that Dutch employees are more autonomous than Spanish employees. This characteristic could prove to be a risk for becoming a workaholic since the employee has more opportunities to work hard. However, Spain ranks near the top of all the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries when it comes to working hours, whereas the Netherlands rank at the bottom. Specifically, Spanish employees work 394 hours more each year than their Dutch counterparts (OECD, 2007). Hence, despite the Netherlands' characteristically having strong protestant ethics where hard working is an important value, it seems that hard work, as a dimension of workaholism, is more of a social norm in Spain than it is in the Netherlands.

#### *About the nature of Workaholism and Work Engagement*

Oates (1968), an American minister and psychologist, used the term workaholism for the first time to refer to his relationship with his own job. He compared it with other addictions, i.e., alcoholism. Subsequently, Oates (1971) defined the concept in the first book about workaholism as "*an excessive and uncontrollable need to work incessantly that disturbs health, happiness, and relationships*" (p.11). Since then, many workaholism definitions have been proposed. Although the popular press widely uses

the term 'workaholism', there is no consensus about its meaning beyond that of its core element: a substantial investment at work. So far, there are many definitions of workaholism, some of which consider it a negative phenomenon (Killinger, 1991; Porter, 1996). For example, Robinson (1999) defined the concept as overindulgence in and preoccupation with work, often to the exclusion and detriment of the workaholic's health, intimate relationships, and participation in caring for one's children.

As noted above, other authors understand workaholism as a positive psychological construct from an organizational perspective (Korn, Pratt, & Lambrou, 1987; Machlowitz, 1980). For instance, Peiperl and Jones (2001; p. 388) stated that "*we see workaholics as hard workers who enjoy and get a lot out of their work*". Moreover, different patterns of workaholism have been proposed depending on the employee's scores on several dimensions (e.g., Scott et al., 1997; Spence & Robbins, 1992). Based on these scores, people's perception of workaholism may be either positive or negative. For example, Naughton (1987) discriminated "good" job-involved workaholics – who are high on work commitment and low on compulsion – from "bad" compulsive workaholics – who are high on work commitment and high on compulsion. Kiechel (1989) distinguished between happy versus dysfunctional workaholics, while Spence and Robbins (1992) differentiated among 'real' workaholics, 'relaxed workers' (similar to 'engaged' workers) and 'disenchanted workers'. From this positive perspective, workaholism could overlap with work engagement in some cases which would prove interesting to know.

But conceiving workaholism only as a substantial investment at work is not totally adequate. The most obvious characteristic of workaholics is that they work far beyond what people require of them. Consequently, they devote an excessive amount of time and energy to their work, thereby neglecting other spheres of life such as leisure and family time (e.g., Buelens & Poelmans, 2004; Mudrack & Naughton, 2001). For instance, North-American workaholics work an average of 50-60 hours per week (Brett & Stroh, 2003). However, conceiving workaholism only exclusively in terms of the number of working hours would be wrong because it would neglect its addictive nature. After all, people may work long hours without being addicted to work for many reasons: financial problems, poor marriage, social pressure, or career advancement. Rather than being motivated by such external factors, an obsessive internal drive motivates a typical work addict that she/he cannot resist. A workaholism review

(McMillan, & O'Driscoll, 2004) indicated that working excessive hours and being propelled by an obsessive inner drive are core characteristics in 7 of the 9 workaholism definitions listed. Hence, we conceive workaholism as an irresistible inner drive to work excessively hard.

Based on these two main characteristics and considering the addictive nature of workaholism as originally used by Oates (1971), we define workaholism as a 'negative psychological state' characterized by working excessively which is essentially due to an internal drive that one cannot resist (Del Libano et al., 2006; Salanova et al., 2008). Accordingly, and unlike some other authors (Buelens & Poelmans, 2004; Maslowitch, 1980), we consider workaholism a negative phenomenon since it is an addiction after all, and addictions are negative by definition (Porter, 1996).

Although compelling on the surface, the meaning of the work engagement concept also remains unclear (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This we can mainly attribute to the "bottom-up" manner in which the engagement notion has quickly evolved within the practitioner community. Despite this fact, we briefly expose the main contributions in the study of work engagement to focus on the topic.

Kahn (1990) was the first researcher to provide a conceptual basis for work engagement, but he did not develop an operational definition of it. Some years afterward, Maslach and Leiter (1997) argued that energy, involvement and sense of efficacy characterize work engagement, and they considered these dimensions to be the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy, respectively. By implication, they assess work engagement as low scores on exhaustion, cynicism and high scores on professional efficacy, as measured by the three Maslach Burnout Inventory dimensions (MBI; Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996).

Subsequently, Schaufeli et al., (2002) took a different approach to work engagement as they asserted that work engagement is the antithesis of burnout; that is, it is an independent state of mind which is totally separate from burnout, thereby requiring a different operational definition and a distinct measurement instrument. They defined the concept as a persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. According to this last definition, rather than engagement being a momentary and specific state, it refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state

that does not focus on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour. *Vigor* indicates high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. *Dedication* refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Finally, *absorption* involves being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. This last dimension has been a highly controversial issue because mounting evidence suggests that absorption should be considered a consequence of work engagement, rather than one of its components (Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martínez, & Schaufeli, 2003).

As already mentioned, the controversy about the workaholism concept and its nature has led to numerous and different definitions of the concept. In relation to this fact, some authors really consider positive workaholism to be another concept, that is, work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006). To date, a qualitative study about work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2001) concluded that engaged workers work hard because they enjoy doing things while at work and, for them, work is fun. As opposed to workaholics, engaged employees report an intrinsic motivation to work and not an obsessive inner drive that they cannot resist. Thus, despite the fact that workaholics and engaged employees may work hard, their motivation to do so is apparently different.

If we compare the definitions of both constructs and their main dimensions, these differences between workaholism and work engagement become more evident. Workaholics could have high levels in vigor, dedication and absorption, but with the inner drive that propel them to work. However, engaged employees do not work compulsively because they know how to maintain a balance in their lives. They work because they love their job. In one study which examines the relationships among burnout, work engagement and workaholism, Schaufeli et al. (2008) found that work engagement and workaholism share some variance that the 'absorption' dimension accounts for.

In this sense, research is necessary to measure the factorial validity of these terms, that is, distinguishing whether workaholism and work engagement constitute one general well-being factor, they are two independent factors or if they are partially overlapping factors (absorption dimension).



*Workaholism, Work engagement and Positive outcomes*

We may use the relationship that workaholism and work engagement show with other constructs to distinguish them better and to obtain values of their discriminant validity. Specifically in this study, we consider two positive outcomes to compare them with workaholism and work engagement: perceived health and happiness. Following our arguments that workaholism is negative and work engagement is positive, along with the results obtained in some studies (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2006), we can assume that workaholics are unhappy while engaged employees are happy in their jobs. Regarding the relationship between both the concepts with perceived health, some studies have produced interesting results. In the workaholism field, psychosomatic symptoms, lifestyle behaviours and emotional well-being measure the drive component of workaholism as it usually relates positively to poorer perceived health (Burke, 1999d). In addition, Schaufeli et al. (2006) show that the two workaholism dimensions (working excessively and working compulsively) relate negatively to perceived health, measured in terms of perceived health and happiness. Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Janssen, and Schaufeli (2001) also find moderate negative correlations between work engagement (particularly vigor) and psychosomatic health complaints (e.g. headaches, chest pain). Furthermore, the study of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) among four different Dutch service organizations notes how engaged workers suffer less self-reported headaches, cardiovascular problems, and stomach aches. Other studies also argue that engagement, particularly vigor, not only relates positively to mental and physical health in terms of positive emotions, but also lowers the risk of burning out (Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2008; Shirom, 2003). Apparently therefore, positive states like happiness and a good mental and physical health are aspects which characterize engaged workers, while the opposite pattern of relationship, for example unhappiness and poorer health, characterizes workaholics.

*Workaholism, Work engagement and Personality*

In psychology, there has never been a consensus on the creation of a scientifically reasonable taxonomic structure for measuring human personality traits (see Goldberg, 1995). Fortunately in recent years, a standard taxonomic model has emerged, referred to as the Big-Five factor structure or the *Five-Factor Model* (FFM, Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993; John, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992). This Big-Five personality theory attempts to integrate diverse personality concepts and measures within one general

framework. It proposes individual characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, behaving and responding to environmental demands, described in terms of their scores on five personality domains: extraversion (E), emotional stability (ES), agreeableness (A), conscientiousness (C), and openness to experience (O) (McCrae & Costa, 2003). Indeed, E associates with sociability, dominance, ambitiousness, and assertiveness. ES negatively associates with instability, stress proneness, personal insecurity and depression. A relates to being cooperative, caring and likeable. C links with persistence, dependability and being organized. Finally, O associates with being intellectual, imaginative and nonconforming.

In the present study, we used the FFM to study the personality profile that characterizes workaholics and engaged workers. Little research has been conducted into the relationship of personality traits with workaholism and work engagement. In the workaholism literature, only one study has been conducted based on the FFM (Burke et al., 2006) which found a negative relationship between ES and feeling driven to work (equivalent to work compulsively). In addition, C and O also related to feeling driven, but differently and not as strongly: the former relates positively and the latter negatively. Regarding the other two dimensions, some predictions exist about their relationship with workaholism. In this sense, A reflects individual differences in warmth, friendliness, kindness, and empathy in social interactions, which helps inhibit interpersonal conflicts with other individuals. Workaholics usually have conflicts with their co-workers because they have an intense dedication to work that few of their peers can match, and this may lead to relations that are adversarial or even hostile (Greenberger, Porter, Miceli, & Strasser, 1991; Scott et al., 1997). Thus we may expect a negative relationship between A and workaholism. Likewise, O represents individual differences pertaining to intelligence, breadth of interests, and creativity. Workaholics usually need to control their job and organizational context (Mudrack, 2006), and they prefer non changing environments to make sure that they can work at any time and can control their surroundings. Thus, we may also expect a negative relationship between O and workaholism.

Empirical evidence about the relationship with personality is also lacking in the work engagement literature, except for the study of Langelaan et al. (2006). This particular study, whose hypotheses do not include A, C, and O, found that high levels of extraversion and low levels of neuroticism characterize engaged workers. In addition,

we know that E predicts performance in sales occupations requiring high levels of energy and social skills (Barrick & Mount, 1991), and that vigor is one of the main engagement dimensions (characterized by high energy). Thus, it makes sense to expect a positive relationship between work engagement and E because both concepts share the characteristic of high energy. Regarding the other three dimensions, some predictions about their relationship with work engagement could be argued. People with high levels in C tend to display a high achievement motivation, and one of the main characteristics of work engagement is the motivation to achieve a certain goal. Therefore, we can expect C to positively affect work engagement through the internal motivational process. Likewise, we may also predict positive relationships among engagement and A and O. Engagement relates to job demands, such as social support from co-workers and supervisors (Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2007b), which could suggest a possible relationship with A. In addition, a high level of mobility (i.e., the ability to respond adequately to changes in stimulus conditions, adapt quickly to new surroundings and switch easily between activities) is a typical trait of engaged employees, and this characteristic is a key aspect of O (Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2007b).

#### *The current study*

The objectives of the present study are twofold. The first objective is to show that workaholism and engagement are two different, work-related states of mind. In order to achieve this objective, we carried out different steps. The first is to assess the factorial validity of both workaholism and work engagement. For this purpose, we study whether they constitute one general well-being factor, they are two independent factors, or if they are two partially overlapping factors. We hypothesize that the absorption dimension loads in both workaholism and engagement in the simultaneously analysed Spanish and Dutch samples (Hypothesis 1).

The second objective is to examine the discriminant validity of workaholism. More specifically, we expect workaholism to relate negatively to work engagement as well as positive outcomes in the simultaneously analysed Spanish and the Dutch samples (Hypothesis 2).

On the other hand, we also expect empirical differences between both constructs when compared with personality traits. Specifically, we hypothesize that workaholism will positively relate to conscientiousness (Hypothesis 3a), and will negatively relate to emotional stability (Hypothesis 3b), agreeableness (Hypothesis 3c) and openness to

experience (Hypothesis 3d). Work engagement will positively relate to extraversion (Hypothesis 4a), emotional stability (Hypothesis 4b), conscientiousness (Hypothesis 4c), agreeableness (Hypothesis 4d) and openness to experience (Hypothesis 4e). These last hypotheses extend the study of Langelaan et al. (2006; see above). Therefore, they not only constitute a replication of their results, but are also an extension of them.

Establishing the discriminant validity between these two constructs is important because of their interconnectedness. For instance Spence and Robbins (1992) with their workaholism triad, describe the types of workers who are remarkably similar to work engagement, the so-called 'work enthusiasts', while Schaufeli et al. (2006) conclude that it is possible to differentiate between both the workaholism components (i.e., work excessively and work compulsively) for work engagement.

## **Method**

### *Participants and procedure*

Our study sample comprises 2,825 Spanish and Dutch employees. The Spanish sample includes 661 workers (54% females) who responded to the on-line questionnaire elaborated to measure workaholism, work engagement, positive outcomes and personality. It is a heterogeneous sample composed of workers who pertain to many occupational sectors (e.g., services 18%, education 15%, industry 11% or commerce 10%). Ages ranged from 16 to 78 years old, and the mean age of this sample was 34.1 ( $SD = 9.8$ ). A Spanish popular psychology journal published one theoretical article about workaholism in order to diffuse one link to an on-line questionnaire. This journal invited its readers to learn more about their work-related well-being, specifically workaholism and work engagement, by completing a 70-item questionnaire that included socio-biographical background variables, questions about their job, and the questionnaires discussed below. This practice ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. After completing the survey, participants not only received online-calculated information about their engagement and workaholism scores, but also automatically customized feedback of their own workaholism and engagement scores.

The Dutch sample included 2,164 employees (64% females), who also answered an online questionnaire by means of a web site. The method selected to make people aware of the questionnaire and the response procedure was similar to the Spanish sample. As in Spain, the largest Dutch popular psychology journal included a survey in its web site. It also invited the visitors to its homepage to learn more about their work-

related well-being by completing a questionnaire with the same items according to the same procedure as the Spanish sample (except for personality items which it did not include). Likewise, the employees worked in heterogeneous jobs, which also included different occupational sectors (i.e., services 18%, education 16%, industry 15% or commerce 12%). Ages ranged from 16 to 69, and the mean age of this sample was 37.9 ( $SD = 11.2$ ).

### *Measures*

*Workaholism* was assessed by the short version of the DUWAS (Dutch Work Addiction Scale; Schaufeli et al., 2009). This questionnaire includes 10 items divided into two dimensions: Work Excessively (WkE) and Work Compulsively (WkC). Specifically, WkE was measured with 5 items (e.g., “*I stay busy and keep my irons in the fire*”), and WkC was evaluated with 5 other items (e.g., “*I often feel that there’s something inside me that drives me to work hard*”). The answer categories ranged from 1 (‘almost never’) to 4 (‘almost always’).

*Work engagement* was measured by the short version of UWES (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). The questionnaire includes 9 items which score on a 7-point Likert scale and range from 0 (‘almost never’) to 6 (‘always’). This scale has three item dimensions: vigor (3 items; e.g., “*At my work, I feel bursting with energy*”), dedication (3 items; e.g., “*I am enthusiastic about my job*”) and absorption (3 items; e.g., “*I feel happy when I am working intensely*”).

*Positive outcomes* were evaluated by perceived health and happiness. Perceived health with one self-constructed item (“*Generally speaking, do you feel healthy?*”) which measured from 1 (‘almost never’) to 4 (‘almost always’). Finally, *happiness* was measured by one other self-constructed item which measured from 1 ‘unhappy’ to 4 ‘very happy’. An item example is: “*By taking everything in account, how happy are you with your life?*” Despite we used only 1 item, if the construct being measured is sufficiently narrow or is unambiguous to the respondent, a single-item measure may suffice, as pointed out by Sackett and Larson (1990). Moreover, following Harman (1967, pp.16-19), we used factor analysis for estimating single-item reliability. According to this author, communality can be considered a conservative estimate of single-item reliability. Results showed that the single-item of perceived health had a communality of .71 and the single-item of happiness had a communality of .72. Thus, both items are reliable.

*Personality* was measured with the TIPI (*Ten-Item Personality Inventory*) which is a short scale based on the FFM (Goldberg, 1990) developed by Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003). It includes 10 items consisting of two descriptors, separated by a comma, which use the common stem “*I see myself as:*” (e.g., “*extraverted, enthusiastic*”). It measures five dimensions: 1) extraversion, 2) emotional stability, 3) conscientiousness, 4) agreeableness and 5) openness to experience. All five items rate on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (‘strongly disagree’) to 6 (‘strongly agree’). This questionnaire is a perfect tool to assess personality together with other variables and obtains adequate levels of reliability (Gosling et al, 2003). We only handed out the questionnaire to the Spanish sample because of temporal reasons.

#### *Data analyses*

Firstly, we computed internal consistencies (Cronbach’s alpha), descriptive analyses and correlations (see Table 5.1). Secondly, we used Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) implemented by the AMOS computer package (version 16) to test the relationship between workaholism and work engagement in the Spanish and Dutch samples which we analysed separately. Thirdly, we computed Multi-group Analyses (MLG) to measure whether the relationships found in the CFA were invariant across the two countries when we simultaneously analysed both samples. One advantage of MLG is that they provide a test for the significance of any differences found between the groups and also the more efficient parameter estimates than single-group models (Byrne, 2001; 2006; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

Subsequently, we implemented Structural Equation Models (SEM) to test the relationship among workaholism, work engagement and positive outcomes in the separately analysed Spanish and Dutch samples. Following the SEM, we carried out additional MLG to test whether the relationships found in the SEM were invariant across the two countries when we simultaneously analysed both samples. Afterward, we computed a final SEM to test the relationship between workaholism and work engagement with the five personality dimensions in the Spanish sample.

We used maximum likelihood estimation methods, and the input for each analysis was the covariance matrix of the variables. We tested different fit indices: the  $\chi^2$  Goodness-of-Fit Statistic, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and the Tucker-Lewis

Index (TLI). According to Browne and Cudeck (1993) values smaller than .08 for RMSEA indicate an acceptable fit. For the rest of indices, values greater than .90 indicate a good fit. In order to compare models that are not in a nested sequence, we used the Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI; Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Models that fit the data well, presented low scores, while complicated and poorly fitting models scored highly.

## Results

### *Descriptive Statistics*

As a first step, we computed internal consistencies for the dimensions of workaholism, work engagement and positive outcomes (perceived health and happiness) in each sample separately. We also computed internal consistencies for the personality dimensions in the Spanish sample. Table 5.1 shows the mean values, standard deviations, internal consistencies, and inter-correlations in both samples. All the alpha values meet the criterion of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994), ranging from .75 to .88. Correlations were as expected. Thus, the inter-correlations between WkE and WkC with vigor, dedication and absorption are positive and significant in both samples, except for the inter-correlations between WkC with vigor and dedication in the Dutch sample which are negative and non-significant. The inter-correlations between WkE and WkC with positive outcomes are negative and significant in both samples, while the inter-correlations with the personality dimensions show two negative and significant relationships with agreeableness and emotional stability, and WkE also shows a positive and significant correlation with openness to experience. Finally, vigor and dedication (but not absorption) positively and significantly correlate with positive outcomes, while the three dimensions of work engagement positively and significantly correlate with extraversion and conscientiousness, as do dedication and absorption with openness to experience.

The test for the common method variance for the variables by using the Harman's single factor test with CFA (e.g., Iverson & Maguire, 2000) reveal that one single factor could not account for the variance in the data [ $\Delta\chi^2(19) = 1953.02, p < .001$ ]. Consequently, the common method variance is not a deficiency in this dataset and the variables are related but *different*.

**Table 5.1.** Means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), correlations (*r*), and internal consistencies (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for Spanish/Dutch employees on the diagonal) in the Spanish ( $N = 661$ ; below the diagonal) and Dutch samples ( $N = 2,164$ ); personality dimensions only in the Spanish sample.

Dimensions	Spanish		Dutch		Correlations										
	M	SD	M	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
1. Working Excessively	2.70	.77	2.44	.59	.80/.75	.46**	.26**	.26**	.34**	-.09**	-	-	-	-	-
2. Working Compulsively	2.15	.77	2.01	.64	.67**	.81/.81	-.10	-.04	.11**	-.32**	-	-	-	-	-
3. Vigor	3.89	1.35	3.69	1.18	.22**	.20**	.83/.84	.78**	.78**	.41**	-	-	-	-	-
4. Dedication	4.17	1.38	4.01	1.33	.24**	.13**	.71**	.88/.84	.82**	.36**	-	-	-	-	-
5. Absorption	4.21	1.27	3.56	1.26	.41**	.39**	.70**	.67**	.78/.82	.29**	-	-	-	-	-
6. Positive outcomes	2.92	.70	3.07	.58	-.32**	-.36**	.21**	.23**	.05	.42**/.42**	-	-	-	-	-
7. Extraversion	4.35	1.27	-	-	.03	.01	.13**	.14**	.10*	.12**	.34**	-	-	-	-
8. Agreeableness	4.17	.90	-	-	-.10**	-.12**	.03	.03	.01	.17**	.06	.24*	-	-	-
9. Conscientiousness	4.60	1.21	-	-	.03	.06	.13**	.09*	.14**	-.01	-.06	-.06	.20*	-	-
10. Emotional Stability	4.05	1.37	-	-	-.10**	-.19**	.06	.07	-.005	.31**	-.05	.27**	-.03	.43**	-
11. Openness to Experience	5.01	1.19	-	-	.08*	-.03	.06	.16**	.08*	.08	.26**	.02	.03	.11**	.39**

Notes, \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$



*Relationship between workaholism and engagement*

In order to test Hypothesis 1 (H1), which proposed that workaholism shares the absorption dimension with work engagement, we computed CFA in the independently analysed Spanish and Dutch samples. We tested three different models. In Model 1 (M1), we include the work engagement and the workaholism dimensions in one general factor. In model 2 (M2), work engagement relates to vigor, dedication and absorption, while workaholism relates to WkE and WkC. Finally in Model 3 (M3), we assume the double loading of the absorption dimension in work engagement and workaholism. According to the Spanish sample, compared to M1 [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 329.48, p < .001$ ] and M2 [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 81.82, p < .001$ ], the CFA shows that M3 is the model that fits the data the best, that all the fit indices are higher than .90, and that the RMSEA index is equal to .09. Regarding the CFA results for the Dutch sample, they also show that M3 is the best model compared to M1 [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 3009.65, p < .001$ ] and M2 [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 67.07, p < .001$ ]. Moreover, all the M3 fit indices are higher than .90 and the RMSEA is equal to .08. The latent work engagement and workaholism factors correlate positively and significantly in both the Spanish ( $r = .29$ ) and Dutch ( $r = .30$ ) samples (see Table 5.2).

Moreover, H1 assumes that there are no significant differences in the double loading of absorption dimension in both samples. We computed MLG in the simultaneously analysed Spanish and Dutch samples to test this hypothesis. The best fitting model (M3), which is composed of work engagement and workaholism sharing the absorption dimension, adequately fits the data when we analysed the two samples simultaneously. Moreover, we significantly improved the fit of M3 when we assumed the factor loadings and the covariance between the latent factors to be equal for both samples (M4) [ $\Delta\chi^2(5) = 240.36, p < .001$ ] (see Table 5.3 and Figure 5.1).

Hence, we applied the process of constraining successive factor loadings and covariances (Models 4, 5, 6) (see Byrne, 2001). We also obtain significant differences between the freely estimated model (M3) and the model with equal factor loadings (M5) [ $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 235.99, p < .001$ ], but we note no differences between M3 and the model with equal covariances (M6) [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 179.50, p < .001$ ].

**Table 5.2.** Fit indices of the CFA-based workaholism-engagement models in the Spanish ( $N = 661$ ) and Dutch ( $N = 2,164$ ) samples.

Spain	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	IFI	ECVI	Delta $\chi^2$	Delta df
M1. 1 factor	432.699	5	.80	.36	.45	.73	.73	.69		
M2. 2 factors	103.216	4	.94	.19	.84	.94	.94	.19	M1-M2 = 329.48***	1
M3. Double loading absorption	21.304	3	.99	.09	.96	.99	.99	.06	M2-M3 = 81.82***	1
The Netherlands	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	IFI	ECVI	Delta $\chi^2$	Delta df
M1. 1 factor	3234.945	6	.56	.50	.06	.43	.43	1.50		
M2. 2 factors	225.291	5	.96	.11	.96	.96	.92	.14	M1-M2 = 3009.65***	1
M3. Double loading absorption	158.216	4	.97	.08	.97	.97	.93	.13	M2-M3 = 67.07***	1

Notes.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; ECVI = Expected Cross-Validation Index; Delta  $\chi^2$  = difference of chi-square; Delta df = difference of degrees of freedom; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The results show a final model (M7) whose structure in which work engagement and workaholism share the absorption dimension, is invariant across the two countries, except for the minor differences obtained in one-factor loading (i.e., dedication). Thus, these results confirm H1, that is, workaholism shares the absorption dimension with work engagement in the Spanish and Dutch samples when we analysed the samples simultaneously (see Table 5.3).

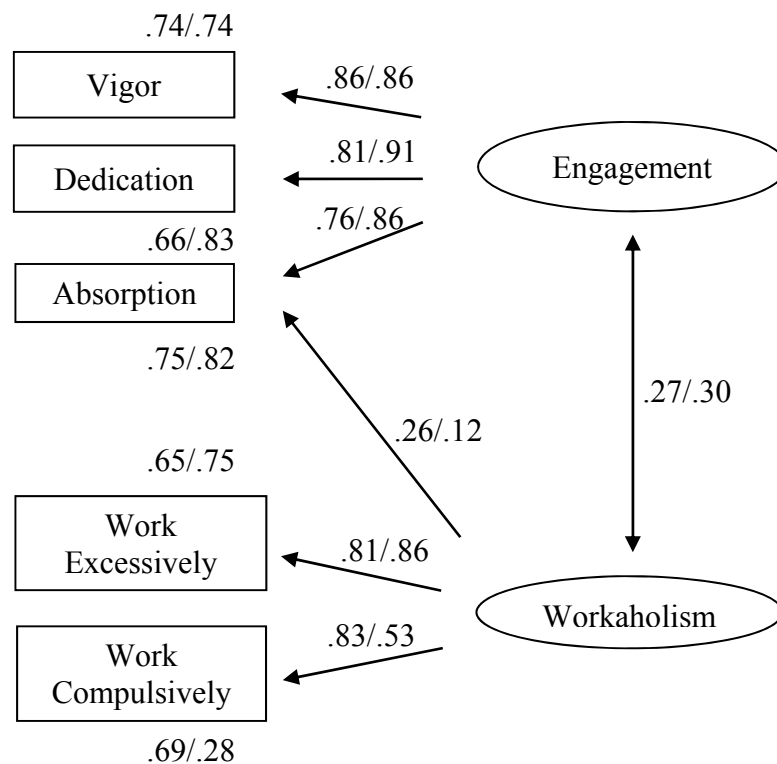
*Relationship among workaholism, engagement and positive outcomes*

In order to test Hypothesis 2 (H2), which assumes different relationships among workaholism, engagement and positive outcomes, we performed a series of SEM in the independently analysed Spanish and Dutch samples. The Mw1 model fits the data well in both the Spanish ( $\chi^2= 63.74$ ,  $df= 11$ ,  $GFI= .97$ ,  $RMSEA= .08$ ,  $TLI= .95$ ,  $CFI= .97$ ,  $IFI= .97$ ,  $ECVI= .14$ ) and Dutch ( $\chi^2= 332.83$ ,  $df= 11$ ,  $GFI= .96$ ,  $RMSEA= .11$ ,  $TLI= .91$ ,  $CFI= .95$ ,  $IFI= .95$ ,  $ECVI= .17$ ) samples. Only the RMSEA index presents a worse fit in the Dutch sample ( $RMSEA=.11$ ). The latent work engagement and workaholism factors positively correlate in both the Spanish ( $r = .28$ ) and Dutch ( $r = .19$ ) samples, whereas positive outcomes negatively correlate with workaholism in the Spanish ( $r = -.70$ ) and Dutch samples ( $r = -.52$ ), as expected. In contrast, we find a positive correlation between positive outcomes and work engagement (Spanish,  $r = .53$  and Dutch,  $r = .61$ ).

**Table 5.3.** *Fit indices of MLG with the engagement and workaholism dimensions, including both the Spanish (N = 661) and Dutch (N = 2,164) samples.*

Model	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	IFI	ECVI	Delta $\chi^2$	Delta df
M3. Free	179.497	7	.98	.09	.93	.98	.98	.08		
M4. All constrained	240.359	12	.97	.08	.95	.97	.97	.10	M3-M4 = 60.862***	5
M5. Equal factor loadings	235.988	11	.97	.09	.94	.97	.97	.10	M3-M5 = 56.491***	4
M6. Equal covariances	179.498	8	.98	.09	.94	.98	.98	.08	M3-M6 = 0.001	1
M7. Final model	184.116	9	.98	.08	.95	.98	.98	.08	M3-M7 = 4.619	2

Notes.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; ECVI = Expected Cross-Validation Index; Delta $\chi^2$  = difference of chi-square; Delta df = difference of degrees of freedom; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Figure 5.1.** Multi-group Model 4 in Spanish ( $N = 661$ ) and Dutch ( $N = 2,164$ ).

Note. Spanish (first coefficient) and Dutch (second coefficient) employees. All the values are significant at .001

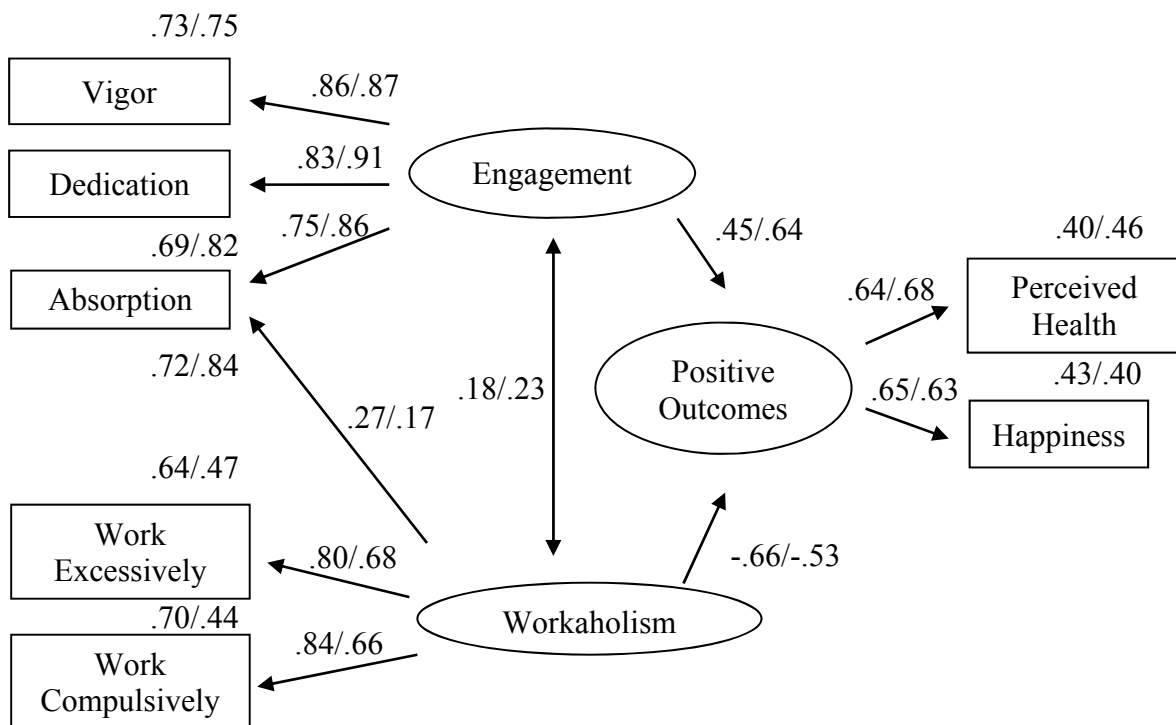
Moreover, H2 assumes that there are no significant differences between both samples. We computed MLG with the simultaneously analysed Spanish and Dutch samples. The best fitting model (Mw1), which comprises the relationships among work engagement, workaholism, and positive outcomes, fits the data well when we analysed the two samples simultaneously. In addition, we significantly improve the fit of Mw1 when we assume the factor loadings and the regression weights between the latent factors to be equal for both samples (Mw1) [ $\Delta \chi^2(7) = 336.581, p < .001$ ].

Hence, we then applied the process of constraining successive factor loadings and regression weights (Models w2, w3, w4). We obtain significant differences between the free model (Mw1) and the model with the equal factor loadings (Mw3) [ $\Delta \chi^2(5) = 372.402, p < .001$ ], but we find no differences between Mw1 and the model with the equal regression weights (Mw4) [ $\Delta \chi^2(3) = 344.118, p < .001$ ].

**Table 5.4.** Fit indices of MLG with engagement, workaholism and positive outcomes, including both the Spanish ( $N = 661$ ) and Dutch ( $N = 2,164$ ) samples.

Model	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	IFI	ECVI	Delta $\chi^2$	Delta df
Mw1. Free	336.581	20	.97	.07	.92	.96	.96	.14		
Mw2. All constrained	379.825	28	.96	.07	.94	.96	.96	.15	Mw1-Mw2 = 43.24***	8
Mw3. Equal factor loadings	372.402	25	.96	.07	.93	.96	.96	.15	Mw1-Mw3 = 35.821***	5
Mw4. Regression weights	344.118	23	.97	.07	.93	.96	.96	.14	Mw1-Mw4 = 7.537	3
Mw5. Final model	347.418	25	.97	.07	.94	.96	.96	.14	Mw1-Mw5 = 10.837	5

Notes.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; ECVI = Expected Cross-Validation Index; Delta  $\chi^2$  = difference of chi-square; Delta df = difference of degrees of freedom; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Figure 5.2.** Multi-group Model w1 in Spanish ( $N = 661$ ) and Dutch ( $N = 2,164$ )

Note. Spanish (first coefficient) and Dutch (second coefficient) employees. All the values are significant at .001

The results show a final model (Mw5) where the relational model among work engagement, positive outcomes and workaholism is invariant across the countries (see Table 5.4 and Figure 5.2), except for the minor differences obtained in two factor loadings (vigor and dedication). Thus, these results confirm H2, that is, we can consider workaholism a negative concept without significant differences between both samples. It shows a positive relationship ( $r = .20$ ) with work engagement, probably because they both share the absorption dimension, and a negative relationship with positive outcomes ( $r = -.52$ ). Work engagement and positive outcomes relates positively ( $r = .63$ ).

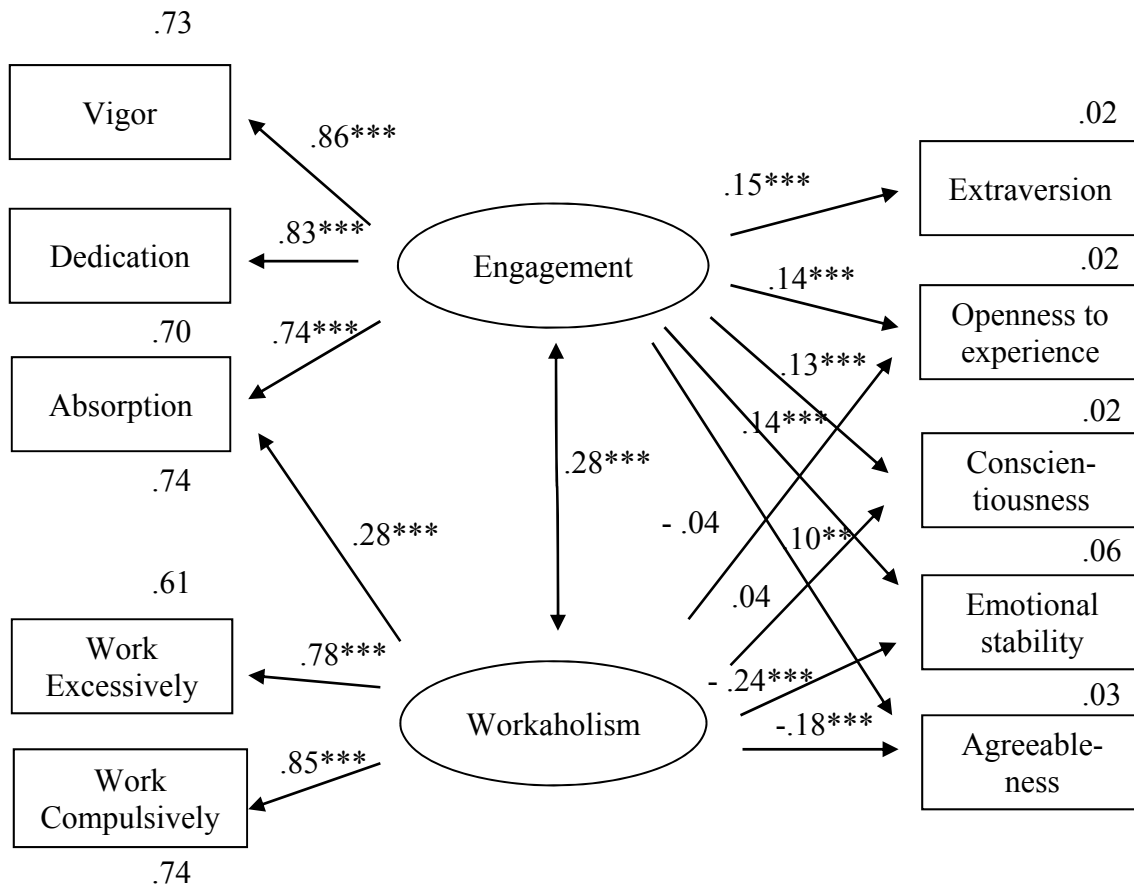
#### *Relationship among Workaholism, Work engagement and Personality*

In order to confirm Hypotheses 3 (H3) and 4 (H4), which predict that workaholism relates positively to conscientiousness (H3a) and negatively to emotional stability (H3b), agreeableness (H3c) and openness to experience (H3d), and which also predicts that work engagement relates positively to extraversion (H4a), emotional stability (H4b), conscientiousness (H4c), agreeableness (H4d) and openness to experience (H4e), we performed a series of SEM with the workaholism, work engagement and personality dimensions. We tested two competitive models. In

Personality Model 1 (PM1), we tested the hypothesized relationships. In Personality Model 2 (PM2), workaholism and work engagement relate to all the personality dimensions.

As Table 5.5 displays, and compared to PM2, the best fitting model is PM1, whose fit indices are all higher than .90 [Delta  $\chi^2(1) = 159.078, p < .001$ ]. In addition, we obtained the squared multiple correlations with SEM. Specifically, these results are .02 (extraversion), .02 (openness to experience), .02 (conscientiousness), .06 (emotional stability) and .03 (agreeableness). They allow us to know the variance explained by each personality dimension in work engagement and workaholism. The results show that workaholism negatively and significantly relates to emotional stability and agreeableness, while work engagement positively and significantly relates to all the personality dimensions. Thus these results partially confirm H3 because we find no significant relationships among workaholism, conscientiousness (H3a) and openness to experience (H3d), which fully confirms H4 (see Figure 5.3).

**Figure 5.3.** Model 1 of Personality (MPI) in Spanish workers ( $N = 661$ ).



Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .025$



**Table 5.5.** *Fit indices of SEM-based workaholism-engagement-personality models in the Spanish sample (N = 661).*

Model	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	IFI	ECVI	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$
PM1	159.078	29	.95	.08	.88	.92	.93	.32		
PM2	158.793	28	.95	.08	.88	.92	.92	.32	PM1-PM2 = 0.285	1

Notes.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; ECVI = Expected Cross-Validation Index; Delta  $\chi^2$  = difference of chi-square; Delta df = difference of degrees of freedom

## Discussion

The general purpose of this study was to show that workaholism and work engagement are two different, work-related states of mind. Firstly, we tested the factorial validity of both workaholism and work engagement by distinguishing them as two different but partially overlapping factors. Secondly, we assessed the discriminant validity of both patterns vis-à-vis positive psychological constructs such as happiness, perceived health and personality traits (i.e., extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience).

The first aim of the study was to distinguish between workaholism and engagement (factorial validity) by identifying whether we may consider absorption dimension a workaholism dimension. According to H1, the CFA results of both the separately analysed samples show that workaholism shares the absorption dimension with work engagement. This result confirms past research about the relationship between workaholism and work engagement (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008), where absorption loads in workaholism, although less strongly than in work engagement. One possible explanation of this double loading of absorption is that one characteristic of workaholism is being reluctant to not only disengaging from work (McMillan et al., 2001), but also compulsorily indulging in work (Porter, 1996). Such descriptions clearly overlap with absorption, characterized by being fully immersed in one's work and having difficulties with detaching from it (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Despite our analyses confirming that workaholism and work engagement share the feeling of being absorbed in one's work, the underlying motivation of this feeling is different: in the case of workaholism, this motivation relates to the compulsion that leads workaholics to work hard ("*I have to work*"), whereas the motivation in the case of work engagement relates more to enjoyment ("*I love working*"). This different motivation orientation is the principal difference between both constructs and is the main reason to help us understand that one is negative (workaholism) and the other is positive (work engagement).

Moreover, the MLG results of both simultaneously analysed samples show that the model in which absorption loads in work engagement and workaholism fits the data in both the Spanish and Dutch samples very well. This result implies that, irrespectively of the country, the absorption dimension may play an important role in not only work engagement, but also workaholism. Note that in another similar study (Schaufeli et al.,

2009), which compares workaholism to work engagement in Japanese and Dutch samples, the Japanese workaholic employees feel more engaged than other groups of employees (i.e., hard workers, compulsive workers and relaxed workers). Therefore, we should carefully consider the results obtained in this article. Based on these results, we may state they confirm H1.

In relation to H2 which, on the one hand, proposes a negative relationship between workaholism and positive outcomes and, on the other hand, a negative relationship between workaholism and work engagement, the CFA results of both the separately analysed samples show that workaholism relates negatively to positive outcomes, but positively to work engagement. The negative relationship with positive outcomes is consistent with the considerable consensus in the workaholism literature about the association of workaholism with poorer psychological and physical well-being (e.g., Burke, 1999d; 2000c). In addition, some definitions of workaholism include aspects of diminished health as their central elements (Burke, 2000b). Moreover, a study with 530 MBA graduates from Canada finds a positive relationship between workaholism and poorer emotional and physical well-being (Burke, 2000a).

Contrary to expectations however, workaholism and work engagement relate positively. We could speculate that this positive relationship is due to both concepts sharing some variance, accounted for by the absorption dimension, exactly as we explained in H1. Moreover, we propose that the model where workaholism relates negatively to work engagement and positively to outcomes is invariant across the Spanish and Dutch samples. We computed MLG analyses to confirm the invariance in the structure, regression weights and the factor loadings across countries. The results show that we can confirm the relationship model where workaholism positively relates to work engagement and negatively relates to positive outcomes when we simultaneously test both samples. These findings confirm the robustness of the model obtained. Despite the positive relationship found between workaholism and work engagement, we can argue that workaholism is a negative concept because of its consequences with outcomes, such as poorer perceived health and less happiness. This negative relationship between workaholism and positive outcomes, together with the positive link between work engagement and positive outcomes, are sufficient arguments. In addition, these results could explain the lack of consensus about the meaning of workaholism (Harpaz & Snir, 2003). As mentioned in the Introduction,

there are three alternative views concerning workaholism: the positive view, the negative view, and the types of workaholics view. We could interpret these different ways of explaining workaholism with the model obtained in this article: workaholism is negative by nature but it can relate to positive constructs because it shares some features with them (in our case, the absorption dimension with engagement). Accordingly, these results partially confirm H2.

With regard to the various H3 and H4, the model that best fits the data shows that workaholism relates significant and negatively to emotional stability (H3b) and agreeableness (H3c), while work engagement relates significant and positively to extraversion (H4a), emotional stability (H4b), conscientiousness (H4c), agreeableness (H4d) and openness to experience (H4e). Emotional stability and agreeableness specifically explain 2% of the workaholism variance. This low variance shows that there are other variables that explain workaholism which this study does not contemplate, for example, levels of self-efficacy, type-A personality or the worker's age. We found some unexpected results regarding conscientiousness and openness to experience. We are able to explain the non-significant relationship with conscientiousness since workaholics could present medium scores in this dimension due to them probably not being persistent and having problems to get organized in other contexts than work, such as family or friendships. Regarding openness to experience, we hypothesize that workaholics prefer non changing environments to ensure they can work at any time. This could be the key aspect for workaholics to control the context, rather than this environment changing or not.

The results also show that engaged workers are extraverted people who are emotionally stable and have high levels of conscientiousness who are prone to innovate and feel new experiences. Specifically, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, emotional stability and agreeableness explain 7% of the work engagement variance. As in workaholism, this low variance shows that other variables, which we do not include, can help us to explain engagement more. The results are similar to those in Langelaan et al., (2006) which demonstrates that traits such as emotional stability and extraversion promote engagement inclinations. Therefore, the results confirm H4 and partially confirm H3 because not all conditions were accomplished, and despite all the relationships being as expected, conscientiousness (H3a) and openness to experience (H3d) do not significantly relate to workaholism.

*Theoretical implications*

This study offers some important implications for future workaholism research. Firstly, it conceives workaholism only as a negative concept and explains the reasons why other authors understand that workaholism can be positive for workers. This result is important toward obtaining not only a consensus about the concept of workaholism in the scientific community, but also a necessary consensus to advance in the knowledge of this phenomenon. Secondly, our study suggests that absorption is also a dimension of workaholism, and confirms the notion that vigor and dedication are core dimensions of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Finally, our study contributes to the research in the personality field with two different personality profiles for workaholics and engaged workers. Negative relationships with emotional stability and agreeableness characterize workaholism, while positive relationships with extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience characterize work engagement. These two different profiles could help us in two ways: to know more about the mechanisms that affect workaholism and work engagement, and to have more chances to prevent or promote them based on the differences observed.

*Practical implications*

Our findings suggest that we must prevent workaholism in the job context in order to reduce its negative effect on employees' health. Despite the absorption dimension also being considered a workaholism dimension, our findings show that work engagement relates to a good perceived health and, thus, organizations must implement measures to promote it. The personality profiles obtained in our study may prove useful to apply these measures correctly because they can play the role of indicators of the possibilities of developing workaholism or work engagement in the future. Therefore, organizations can use them to study if employees are more prone to become workaholics or engaged workers.

*Weaknesses and challenges for future research*

One of the study weaknesses is sample selection. The convenience samples we used may not be representative, and we do not know whether the observed differences are due to the country or to the composition of the samples. Future research should include specific professional groups to control the effect of this variable on the results. Another potential weakness is that we could not compare the personality model to the data obtained from the Dutch workers. It would be useful if future studies compared the

results obtained with samples from other countries to validate the robustness of the model. Finally, as we obtained different results with a Japanese sample in terms of the relationship between workaholism and work engagement, the next logical step in future research would be to examine this relationship using samples from other countries.

*Final remark*

The current study has contributed to the workaholism study by explaining the lack of consensus about the existing term. Apparently, the key question to disagree on its conceptualization relates to the absorption dimension because the relationships found with other positive outcomes, such as perceived health and happiness, are negative. Therefore, we have to consider workaholism a negative concept. Moreover, we can conclude that personality makes a difference as far as workaholism and work engagement are concerned. Overall, the different personality profiles obtained for workaholics and engaged workers show that both are two different states of mind.

## Chapter 6

### About the dark and bright sides of self-efficacy: workaholism and work engagement<sup>8</sup>

#### Summary

Taking the *Resources-Experiences-Demands Model (RED Model)* by Salanova and colleagues as our starting point, we tested how work self-efficacy relates positively to negative (i.e., work overload and work-family conflict) and positive outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment), through the mediating role of workaholism (*health impairment* process) and work engagement (motivational process). In a sample of 386 university administrative staff (65% women), Structural Equation Modelling provided full evidence for the research model. In addition, Multivariate Analyses of Variance showed that self-efficacy was only related positively to one of the two dimensions of workaholism, namely, working excessively. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical contributions in terms of the *RED Model*.

*Key words:* self-efficacy, workaholism, work engagement

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## Introduction

Globalization of markets, demands from the environment, and the economic crisis are all indicators that society is in a state of continuous change. Those who are able to adapt to the changes taking place have more opportunities to improve their skills and perceive these changes as challenges. The extent to which people believe in their own capabilities is a crucial aspect in order to achieve this adaptation, especially in organizations which are continuously optimizing their procedures to obtain maximum profits. In this context, employees need to have confidence in themselves in order to perform and feel well. This confidence in one's capabilities has been called self-efficacy and, according to *Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)*, it is defined as the “*beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments*” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Self-efficacious people are those who believe that they have the power to produce the desired effects by their own actions, to be motivated to act, to persevere in the face of difficulties, and to be resilient in the face of adversity.

A growing body of research attests the impact of self-efficacy on positive consequences such as performance (Stajkovic et al., 2009), affect (Salanova et al., in press) and work engagement (Llorens et al., 2007; Salanova et al., in press; Salanova, Lorente, Chambel, & Martínez, in press). However, although past research has confirmed the existence of links between self-efficacy and positive consequences, other scholars are focusing on the impact of self-efficacy on negative consequences. For example, Vancouver et al. (2002) conducted two studies which show that by manipulating self-efficacy in an analytic game, it negatively relates to performance in the next trial. The explanation is that self-efficacy leads to overconfidence and, hence, increases the likelihood of committing cognitive errors during the game. In a similar vein, Vancouver and Kendall (2006) take control theory as their basis to claim that when self-efficacy is relatively high it is likely to play a negative role on resource allocation, which may adversely affect performance.

More research is required to investigate the simultaneous relationships between self-efficacy and its potential positive *as well as* negative consequences. The current study is innovative because we show how work self-efficacy positively relates to an intrinsically positive construct such as work engagement, but also to an intrinsically negative concept like workaholism. Work engagement is defined as “*a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and*



*absorption in the activity*” (Salanova et al., 2000, p. 119; Schaufeli et al., 2002), while workaholism is defined as “*the tendency to work excessively hard in a compulsive way*” (Schaufeli et al., 2008, p. 204).

Moreover, for the very first time, we investigate how work self-efficacy relates to positive (e.g., job satisfaction and organizational commitment) and negative outcomes (e.g., work overload and work-family conflict) through the mediating role of work engagement and workaholism, respectively. Another innovation of this study is that it proposes an extension of the *Resources-Experiences-Demands (RED) Model* (it will be explained below, p. 5) (Salanova et al., 2007; Salanova et al., in press), since we specify the relationship among work self-efficacy, work engagement, workaholism, and positive as well as negative outcomes. More particularly, we include two proximal consequences of self-efficacy (i.e., work engagement and workaholism) as well as four distal outcomes (i.e., work overload, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment). In addition, again for the first time, we test the relationship among self-efficacy and two different psychological constructs (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008), namely work engagement and workaholism, which are analysed simultaneously.

To sum up, the objective of this study is to analyse the role of work self-efficacy in these two different phenomena (i.e., work engagement and workaholism) and positive (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment) as well as negative outcomes (i.e., work overload and work-family conflict), respectively, under the assumptions of the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., 2007; Salanova et al., in press).

#### *Explaining self-efficacy, workaholism and work engagement: the RED Model*

The *RED Model* (Salanova et al., 2007; Salanova et al., in press) constitutes an extension of previous models, such as the *Job Demands-Control Model (JDC)* (Karasek, 1979) and the *Job Demands-Resources Model (JDR)* (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The distinctive element of the *RED Model* is that it considers that the psychological health of employees depends not only on job demands (e.g., role conflict) and job resources (e.g., social support), but also on personal resources. In fact, the *RED Model* considers personal resources in general, and (work) self-efficacy in particular, as the cornerstone in the perception of job demands and job resources: employees interpret their social and work environment (i.e., job demands and job resources) in terms of their levels of work self-efficacy (Salanova, Lorente, & Vera, 2009).

In accordance with the *RED and the JD-R Models*, job demands are those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of work that require a physical and/or psychological effort (cognitive or emotional) and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. Inversely, job resources refer to those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may: (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, (2) be functional for achieving work goals, or (3) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. Finally, personal resources are defined as such aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully (Hobfoll et al., 2003).

Based on the assumptions of the *RED Model*, the combination of job demands as well as job and personal resources (i.e., self-efficacy) evokes two relatively independent psychological processes (i.e., health impairment and motivation). According to the *health impairment* process, when employees have low levels of self-efficacy, they believe that they do not control the work environment in an effective way. This situation requires a sustained effort and consequently may exhaust employees' resources and lead to energy depletion and subsequent health problems (see Caplan et al., 1975). For example, different scholars have argued that, in accordance with the *health impairment process*, employees in various occupational groups with low levels of self-efficacy perceive more specific job demands in the work context (e.g., work overload or emotional demands), which in turn predict *exhaustion* (i.e., severe fatigue) among various occupational groups (e.g., Bakker et al., 2005; Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003).

In contrast, in accordance with the *motivational* process, the availability of self-efficacy acts as a motivational mechanism which leads to the perception of more job resources. When self-efficacy is high, employees believe that they are controlling their environment in a correct way and they are more likely to experience fewer demands and more resources. Thus, the higher work self-efficacy is, the more likely it is that job demands will be seen as challenges (and not as hindrances or stressors) and the more favourable the perception of the job will be. The (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivational potential of job resources pushes employees to meet their goals and to experience positive outcomes such as work engagement, which is exemplified by high effort, persistence, dedication and absorption at work (Llorens et al., 2006; Salanova et al.,

2010). It also encourages them to be committed to their job because they derive fulfilment from it (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

In conclusion, self-efficacy appears in the *RED Model* as a key element predicting employees' psychological health (e.g., workaholism and work engagement) as well as positive and negative outcomes, and it plays a crucial role in both parallel processes: the health impairment and the motivational processes.

#### *The health impairment process of self-efficacy and workaholism*

In accordance with the *RED Model*, work self-efficacy relates to workaholism by the health impairment process. Although various definitions of workaholism have been proposed since the term was coined by Oates (1971), we agree with those who proposed that workaholism can be considered as being negative in nature (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Also Kanai (2009) refers to it as an undesirable consequence, and Killinger (1991) states that it is a complex negative process that eventually affects the person's ability to function properly. We adopt the definition of Schaufeli et al. (2008) that describes workaholism as "*the tendency to work excessively hard in a compulsive way*" (p. 204). More specifically, workaholism is composed of two dimensions, namely: working excessively and working compulsively. On the one hand, *working excessively* (the behavioural component) points to the fact that workaholics tend to allocate an exceptionally large amount of time to work and that they work beyond what is reasonably expected of them in order to meet organizational or economic requirements. On the other hand, *working compulsively* (the cognitive component) refers to the fact that workaholics are obsessed with their work and persistently and frequently think about work, even when they are not working.

Even though the literature shows that self-efficacy generates well-being through appropriate responses to the demands (e.g., Salanova, Grau, Llorens, & Schaufeli, 2001), the relationship between work self-efficacy and workaholism seems to be positive, and high levels of self-efficacy could be related to high levels of workaholism (Ng et al., 2007). Only one study has been conducted to investigate the influence of self-efficacy on workaholism. Burke et al. (2006) examined the effects of self-efficacy (i.e., a generalized measure of self-efficacy) on workaholism (measured by work involvement, feeling a drive to work because of internal pressures and work enjoyment, as proposed by Spence and Robins, 1992). Results showed that self-efficacy related

positively and significantly to workaholism, i.e., the more self-efficacious the employee is, the more workaholic, and vice versa.

Given the scarcity of studies conducted on the relationship between self-efficacy and workaholism, more specific studies are needed to determine the process behind the development of workaholism. According to Bandura (2001), rather than general measures of self-efficacy specific measures of self-efficacy should be used because , these show more consistent and robust relationships with psychosocial health variables (Grau, Salanova, & Peiró, 2000; Salanova, Peiró, & Schaufeli, 2002). Hence, in the present study we tested the relationship between specific self-efficacy (i.e., work self-efficacy) and workaholism. Furthermore, and following the health impairment process proposed by the *RED Model*, the relationship between workaholism and two relevant negative outcomes, i.e. work overload and work-family conflict, was also tested. Research (e.g., Kanai & Wakabayashi, 2001; Kanai et al., 1996; Snir & Harpaz, 2004) has shown that workaholics perceive these two job demands as negative consequences of their excessive and compulsive work, and thereby they are considered as outcomes in our study.

Hence, in accordance with previous research and our theoretical model (see Figure 6.1) we expect to find that:

*Hypothesis 1.* Work self-efficacy relates positively to workaholism, which in turn relates positively to work overload and work-family conflict through the health impairment process.

#### *The motivational process of self-efficacy and work engagement*

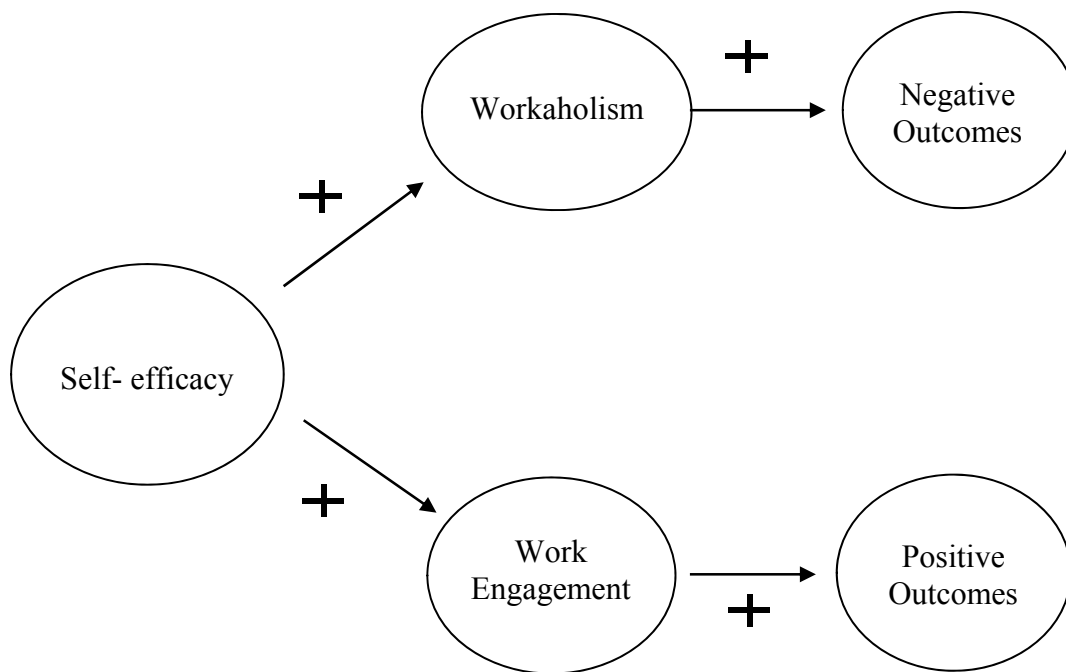
According to the second proposition of the *RED Model*, self-efficacy could regulate work engagement by means of a motivational process. Despite the existence of different meanings of the concept of work engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008), the most widely accepted definition is the one which considers work engagement as “*a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in the activity*” (Salanova et al., 2000, p. 119; Schaufeli, et al., 2002). Vigor is characterized by willingness to invest effort in one’s work, persistence in the face of difficulties, and high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. Dedication refers to a particularly strong work involvement and identification with one’s job. And finally, absorption denotes being fully concentrated and engrossed in

one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties detaching oneself from work (see also Salanova & Schaufeli, 2009).

Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job. Unlike workaholics, they enjoy doing things outside work, they do not feel guilty when they are not working, and they do not work hard because of a strong and irresistible inner drive, but because for them work is fun (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Thus it seems that the correlates of workaholism and work engagement are different. Engaged employees usually have good social relationships, they do not have any problems with their family derived from the long hours they spend working, and they do not have any physical or mental health problems derived from their job (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2008).

There are many studies that link self-efficacy with positive outcomes and consequences. For instance, Latham (2005) found positive relationships among self-efficacy, motivation, commitment and job performance. In another study, Salanova et al. (in press) revealed that efficacy beliefs were associated with positive emotions (especially enthusiasm) and work engagement. Thus, due to high levels of self-efficacy, the levels of work engagement in the workplace can be increased in the long term via positive affect (i.e., enthusiasm, comfort and enthusiasm) in gain cycles and spirals of efficacy beliefs, affect and engagement.

The relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement has received more attention (e.g., Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2007a) than the relationship between self-efficacy and workaholism. Different scholars have revealed that self-efficacy and work engagement are positively related (Llorens et al., 2007; Salanova et al., 2003; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). For instance, in a longitudinal study, Llorens et al. (2007) found that the higher self-efficacy was, the higher work engagement was three weeks later. Furthermore, in a sample of highly skilled Dutch technicians, Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) found evidence that engaged employees are highly self-efficacious. Results showed that they believe they are able to meet the demands they face in a broad array of contexts. These findings were replicated and expanded in a 2-year follow-up study (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2008). For a review of recent research on self-efficacy and work engagement, see Salanova et al. (2010).

**Figure 6.1.** *Research model*

Despite the evidence for the positive relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement, further research is necessary to confirm the results obtained in these previous studies and to understand the process of work engagement by using the *RED Model*. In order to gain a better understanding of this process, in the present study we tested the relationship between work self-efficacy and work engagement. Furthermore, and following the motivational process proposed by the *RED Model*, we also tested the relationship between work engagement and two relevant positive outcomes, i.e. job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Thus, in accordance with previous research and our theoretical model (see Figure 6.1) we expect to find that:

*Hypothesis 2.* Work self-efficacy relates positively to work engagement (i.e., vigor, dedication and absorption), which in turn relates positively to job satisfaction and organizational commitment through a motivational process.

## Method

### *Participants and procedure*

The sample consisted of 386 university administrative staff. Employees had work experience ranging from 1 to 45 years and the mean number of years worked was 14 ( $SD = 7.2$ ). They answered an on-line questionnaire drawn up in order to implement an evaluation of psychosocial risks. Firstly, we met with the stakeholders of employees in

order to explain the phases of the evaluation (e.g., objectives, procedure, diagnosis, etc.). Secondly, we generated several user-identifications and passwords that were confidentially and anonymously distributed among employees. Finally, we informed the stakeholders of the results by means of a professional report and they explained the main conclusions to the rest of the employees.

### *Measures*

*Work self-efficacy.* We measured work self-efficacy using 4 items from RED.es (Salanova et al., 2007), which reflect specific staff beliefs in their future capacities to produce accurate levels of performance. An example of the items is: *'I can do my job well although I have to solve difficult problems'*. Workers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each sentence on a seven-point rating scale ranging from 0 ('never') to 6 ('always/everyday').

*Workaholism.* We measured workaholism by the short Spanish version (10 items) (Del Líbano, Llorens, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2010) of the DUWAS (DUtch Work Addiction Scale; Schaufeli et al., 2009), which includes two dimensions: working excessively (5 items; e.g., *'I stay busy and keep my irons in the fire'*) and working compulsively (5 items; e.g., *'I often feel that there's something inside me that drives me to work hard'*). Scores ranged from 1 ('almost never') to 4 ('almost always').

*Work engagement.* We measured work engagement using the short Spanish version (9 items) of the UWES (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; Schaufeli et al., 2006), which includes three dimensions: vigor (3 items; e.g., *'At my work, I feel bursting with energy'*), dedication (3 items; e.g., *'I am enthusiastic about my job'*) and absorption (3 items; e.g., *'I feel happy when I am working intensely'*). Scores ranged from 0 ('never') to 6 ('always').

*Negative outcomes.* We measured negative outcomes by two dimensions: work overload and work-family conflict. We assessed *work overload* using an adapted version of the Beehr et al. (1976) scale composed of 4 items. An example of the items is *'I have more work that I can do'*. *Work-family conflict* was measured using the RED.es scale by Salanova et al. (2007) composed of 4 items. An example of the items is *'I am so worried about work matters that I forget my personal affairs'*. Scores ranged from 0 ('never') to 6 ('always').

*Positive outcomes.* We measured positive outcomes by job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Job satisfaction* was measured by 4 items from the RED.es

questionnaire (Salanova et al., 2007) referring to satisfaction with job, colleagues, and supervisor. To answer the items a 7-face scale was used (Kunin, 1955), an affect-based measure. An example of the items used is: ‘*What is your level of satisfaction with the work you do in your job?*’ *Organizational commitment* was measured by 3 items from RED.es (Salanova et al., 2007). An example of the items is: ‘*The problems I have in my company are “my” problems*’. Scores ranged from 0 (‘never’) to 6 (‘always’).

#### *Data analyses*

Firstly, we computed the internal consistencies (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ), descriptive analyses, and intercorrelations among the variables with the PASW 18.0 program. Secondly, we computed Harman’s single factor test with Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) (e.g. Iverson & Maguire, 2000; cf. Podsakoff et al., 2003) using the AMOS (Analysis of MOment Structures) software package (v. 18.0) for the study variables in order to test for bias due to common method variance. Thirdly, the AMOS was employed to implement Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) methods by using Maximum Likelihood Estimation methods to establish the relationships between the model variables (Byrne, 2001). . We used 7 variables (i.e., self-efficacy, workaholism, work overload, work-family conflict, work engagement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment) as latent variables in our model. Each latent variable was composed of two or more observed variables.

We tested the fit of the research model to the data by means of the chi-square difference test (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1986). In addition to the chi-square statistic, the analyses also assessed the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). Furthermore, AMOS provides several fit indices that reflect the discrepancy between the hypothesized model and the baseline Null model. We also included the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Marsh, Balla and Hau (1996) recommended the latter because it is less dependent on sample size than the chi-square statistics and the GFI. Since the distribution of the GFI is unknown, there is no statistical test or critical value available (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1986). In general, models with fit indices greater than .90 and an RMSEA smaller than .08 indicate a good fit (Hoyle, 1995).



## Results

### *Descriptive statistics*

Table 6.1 displays the results of the descriptive analyses; that is, means, standard deviations, internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) and intercorrelations of the scales. All alphas meet the .70 criterion (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), except job satisfaction, which nevertheless approaches that criterion with a value of .66. As expected, the pattern of correlations shows that variables correlate significantly with each other in 75% of the cases, that is to say, work self-efficacy is positively and significantly related to workaholism (i.e., working excessively), to work engagement (i.e., vigor, dedication and absorption), and to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and it is negatively related to work overload and to work-family conflict. Only one unexpected result is obtained, that is, the non-significant relationship between work self-efficacy and one of the dimensions of workaholism, i.e. working compulsively. Furthermore, The results of Harman's single factor test with CFA (e.g., Iverson & Maguire 2000; cf. Podsakoff et al., 2003) reveal a significantly lower fit to the data [ $\chi^2(35) = 2047.55$ , RMSEA = .23, CFI = .34, IFI = .35, TLI = .23, AIC = 2107.55]. In order to avoid the problems related to the use of Harman's single factor test (see Podsakoff et al., 2003), we compared the results of the one latent factor (M1) with multiple latent factors (M2) (i.e., work self-efficacy, workaholism, work engagement, work overload, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and commitment). Results show significantly lower fit of the model with one single factor when compared to the model with multiple latent factors [Delta  $\chi^2(10) = 1780.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. Hence, one single factor could not account for the variance in the data. Consequently, it seems that common method variance is not likely to have occurred in our dataset.

**Table 6.1.** Means (*M*), Standard Deviations (*SD*), Internal Consistencies (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  on the diagonal) and zero-order correlations in the sample ( $N = 386$ ).

Dimension	University Staff		Correlations									
	M	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1. Work Self-efficacy	4.48	.91	.94	.20**	.04	.41**	.22**	.32**	.08	.08	.15**	.12*
2. Working Excessively	2.28	.62	-	.73	.49	.14**	.19**	.21**	.65**	.61**	.15**	.08
3. Working Compulsively	3.6	1.8	-	-	.74	.07	-.10*	.14**	.35**	.42**	-.22**	.62
4. Vigor	4.63	.87	-	-	-	.84	.59**	.51**	.07	.07	.49**	.33**
5. Dedication	3.74	1.24	-	-	-	-	.92	.51**	.11*	.08	.57**	.35**
6. Absorption	3.66	1.02	-	-	-	-	-	.79	.09	.18**	.28**	.27**
7. Work Overload	3.3	1.15	-	-	-	-	-	-	.90	.48**	-.16**	-.05
8. Work-Family conflict	2.16	1.45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.72	-.21**	-.04
9. Job satisfaction	3.74	1.04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.66	.43**
10. Org. Commitment	3.64	1.08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.76

Notes. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

*Model fit: Testing the hypotheses*

In order to test our hypotheses, the hypothesized model was tested using SEM. First, we tested the proposed model (Model 1; M1), which assumed that, on the one hand, work self-efficacy relates positively to workaholism, which in turn relates positively to work overload and work-family conflict (the health impairment process). On the other hand, work self-efficacy relates positively to work engagement, which in turn relates positively to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (the motivational process). Second, based on the Modification Indexes, we significantly improved [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 40.26, p < .001$ ] the hypothesized model (Model 2; M2) by assuming an extra direct relationship between workaholism and job satisfaction. Thus workaholism is negatively related to the employees' perception of the workplace in terms of satisfaction.

Table 6.2 displays the overall fit indices of the models. The results show that M2 fits the data better than M1 [ $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 40.26, p < .001$ ]. The SEM show a best model (M2), in which work self-efficacy relates positively to both workaholism and work engagement via the health impairment and the motivational processes. All indicators of the variables included have loadings on the intended latent factors ranging from .14 to .97. Specifically, high work self-efficacy relates positively to workaholism ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ), which in turn relates positively to negative outcomes (i.e., work overload [ $\beta = .75, p < .001$ ] and work-family conflict [ $\beta = .74, p < .001$ ]), following the health impairment process. Furthermore, work self-efficacy also relates positively to work engagement ( $\beta = .40, p < .001$ ), which in turn relates positively to positive outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction [ $\beta = .86, p < .001$ ] and organizational commitment [ $\beta = .48, p < .001$ ]) through the motivational process. As previous research has shown (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2008), the double loading of absorption on workaholism ( $\beta = .14, p < .001$ ) and work engagement ( $\beta = .59, p < .001$ ) is also assumed. Moreover, an unexpected relationship was also obtained, that is, the negative relationship between workaholism and job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.34, p < .001$ ).

**Table 6.2.** *Fit indices of two Structural Equation models (N = 386)*

Model	$\chi^2$	df	GFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	$\chi^2$ diff	$\Delta$ df	$\Delta$ GFI	$\Delta$ RMSEA	$\Delta$ TLI	$\Delta$ CFI
1. M1. Hypothetical model	342.08	83	.90	.09	.89	.91						
2. M2. Final model	301.82	82	.91	.08	.91	.93						
Difference between M2 & M1							40.26***	1	.01	.01	.02	.02

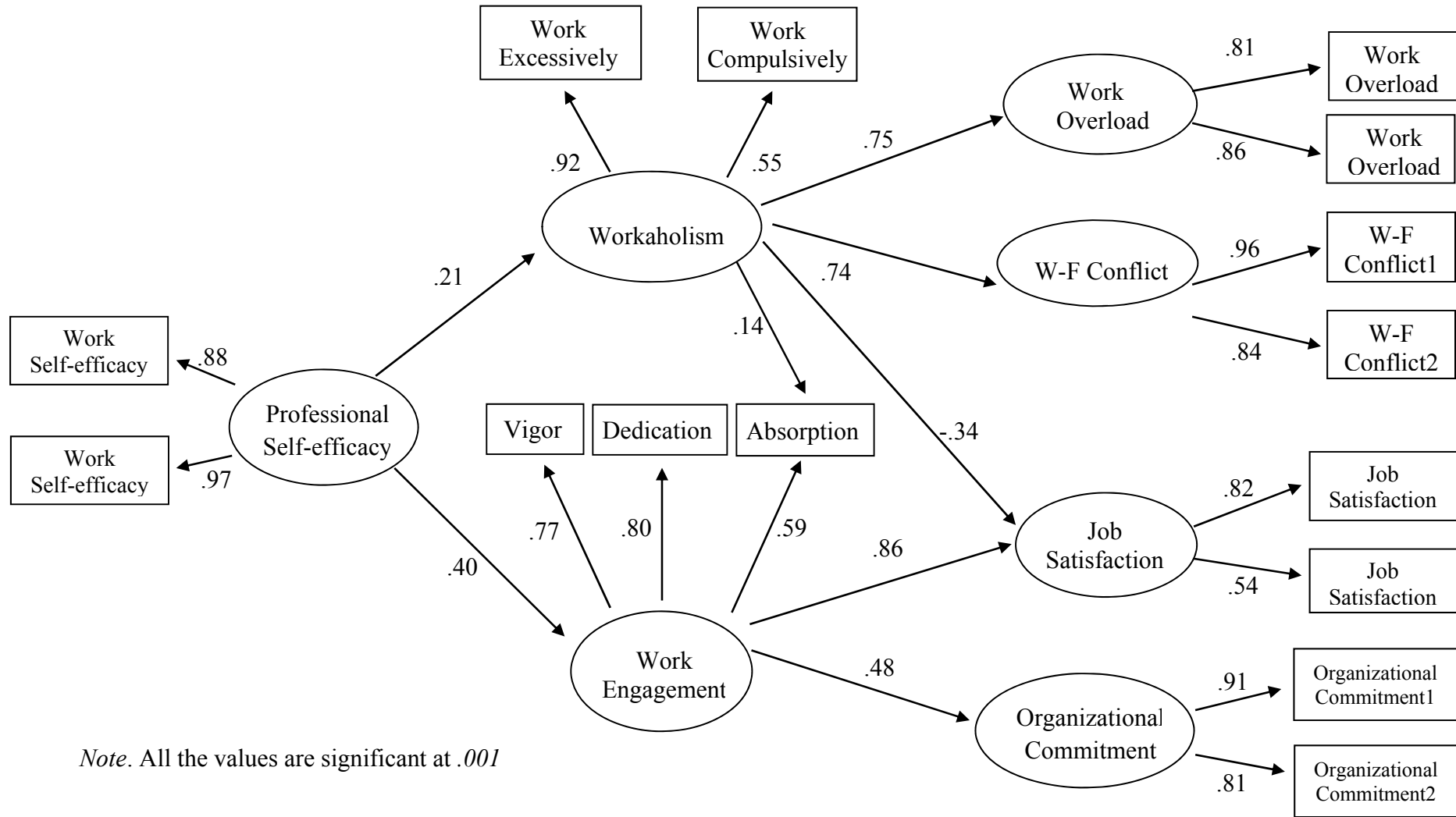
*Notes.*  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square; df = degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index.

It is interesting to note that, although the effect of work self-efficacy on workaholism and work engagement is significant in both cases, the impact of work self-efficacy on work engagement is higher ( $R^2 = 14\%$ ) than on workaholism ( $R^2 = 4\%$ ). The analysis of the explained variance also reveals workaholism accounts for 55% of work overload and 56% of work-family conflict variances, while work engagement accounts for 23% of organizational commitment and 53% of job satisfaction (workaholism accounts for 27% of job satisfaction) variances. The final model with only the significant paths is depicted in Figure 6.2.

#### *Further analyses*

Finally, in order to conduct an in-depth study of the relationship between self-efficacy and the dimensions of workaholism and work engagement, MANOVAs were performed, using work self-efficacy as the independent variable and vigor, dedication, absorption, working excessively and working compulsively as the dependent variables (see Table 6.3). Two groups of self-efficacious employees were created, the first consisting of employees with levels of self-efficacy above the mean and the second including those with self-efficacy levels below the mean. Analyses show significant multivariate effects in vigor [ $F(1, 385) = 36.11, p < .001$ ], dedication [ $F(1, 385) = 12.05, p < .001$ ], and absorption [ $F(1, 385) = 20.69, p < .001$ ]. Employees with above-average levels of self-efficacy score higher in these three dimensions than employees who score below average. There are also significant multivariate effects in the *working excessively* dimension [ $F(1, 385) = 8.77, p < .05$ ]. Employees with above-average levels of self-efficacy score higher in this dimension than employees who score below average. A non-significant multivariate effect is found with the *working compulsively* dimension [ $F(1, 385) = 1.92, p = .17$ ].

Figure 6.2. Structural Equation Model 2 (N = 386).



**Table 6.3.** *Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with self-efficacy as the independent variable (N = 386)*

Variable	df	F	P	$\eta^2$
1. Vigor	1, 385	36.11	.000	.086
2. Dedication	1, 385	12.05	.001	.030
3. Absorption	1, 385	20.69	.000	.051
4. Work Excessively	1, 385	8.77	.003	.022
5. Work Compulsively	1, 385	1.92	.167	.005

Notes. df = degrees of freedom, F = Effect size, p = probability,  $\eta^2$  = Eta

### Discussion

In this study, we tested a structural model of work self-efficacy, workaholism, and work engagement, as well as negative and positive outcomes in a sample of university administrative staff following the expectations from the *RED Model*. Specifically, the aim of this study was to analyse the role of work self-efficacy as a possible antecedent of two different psychological constructs: workaholism (an intrinsically negative construct) and work engagement (an intrinsically positive construct), and some of its positive (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment) and negative (i.e., work overload and work-family conflict) outcomes under the assumptions of the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press). Generally speaking, the results of the present study contribute to our understanding of the key role of work self-efficacy in workaholism and work engagement and its outcomes, following the health impairment and the motivational processes of the *RED Model*.

Our findings obtained by SEM show that work self-efficacy relates positively to workaholism, which in turn relates positively to negative outcomes (i.e., work overload and work-family conflict) through the health impairment process. Consequently, our results confirm *Hypothesis 1*. More specifically, work self-efficacy relates positively and significantly to workaholism, which is characterized by high levels of working excessively and working compulsively. Interestingly and as expected, workaholism in turn relates positively to two negative outcomes, i.e., work overload and work-family conflict. Specifically, the more self-efficacious an employee is, the more workaholic he or she is and, consequently, the greater the perception of work overload and work-family conflict. Interestingly, and unexpectedly, we found a negative relationship

between workaholism and job satisfaction, which again shows the negative quality of this health impairment process. Workaholics work so hard and so compulsively that they have not time to enjoy of their job.

The positive relationship between work self-efficacy and workaholism is in line with studies that claim that efficacy beliefs not only have positive consequences for employees' well-being, but might also have negative consequences depending on the context and the level of analysis used (Salanova, Lorente, Martínez, & Schaufeli, 2010; Vancouver & Kendall, 2006; Vancouver, Thompson, & Williams, 2001). For instance, recent studies showed that self-efficacy relates to low performance and low resource allocation (Vancouver & Kendall, 2006; Vancouver et al., 2002).

But how is work self-efficacy associated with the two dimensions of workaholism? Our findings showed that high levels of work self-efficacy in workaholics imply that they work more hours (excessively), without –apparent-relationship with working in a compulsive way. This result leads us to ask whether the excess of self-efficacy will be a possible cause triggering the process of workaholism.

Based on the predictions by Ng et al. (2007) and Bandura (1997), we could speculate that those individuals who have higher levels of self-efficacy in work activities than in non-work activities are more likely to become workaholics. Because these individuals believe that they are better at dealing with work than with non-work activities, they may devote as much time as they can to work activities and thereby avoid non-work activities at which they are less skilled. Thus, although on the basis of evidence from previous research we cannot assure that the excess of self-efficacy is an important factor that is related to workaholic, it seems that the difference between self-efficacies in different contexts plays an important role.

In a similar way, it is also necessary to consider what psychological mechanism is explaining working compulsively. Compulsive behaviour has been studied extensively, especially in the field of clinical psychology, and the general conclusion indicates that its presence depends on personality traits (e.g., McRae & Costa, 2003). For instance, there is evidence that low conscientiousness is associated with obsessive-compulsive disorder (Rector, Hood, Ritcher, & Bagby, 2002). This link between compulsive behaviour and personality leads us to the possible relationship between workaholism and a Type A behaviour pattern of personality. Seybold and Salomone (1994) argued that people who exhibit a Type A behaviour pattern and also obsessive-compulsive



traits are the most likely to become workaholics. Schwartz (1982) also linked compulsive behaviour, Type A behaviour and workaholism and he stated that people with a Type A behaviour pattern and with an obsessive style are commonly workaholics. Thus, future studies would have to take a renewed look at the assessment of personality traits to confirm whether they can be responsible for the compulsive behaviour of workaholics.

Furthermore, results confirm the notion that work overload and work-family conflict are considered negative outcomes for workaholics (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2008; Snir & Harpaz, 2004). They also confirm that workaholics, in their attempts to continue working, may go as far as to actively create more work for themselves. For instance, they may make projects more complicated than necessary or refuse to delegate work (Machlowitz, 1980). They are able to increase their work overload day by day and devote less time to social and recreational activities, which are sacrificed in return for spending more time on work (Bonebright, Clay, & Ankenmann, 2000). This implies that they will often have problems with their families and thus perceive a work-family conflict. Related to this, Bonebright et al. (2000) also found that workaholics had greater work-family conflicts than other non-workaholic employees. Robinson, Flowers and Carrol (2001) also found that workaholism was associated with more marital problems. Moreover, work overload and work-family conflict can result in other problems such as poor physical health or exhaustion (e.g., Frone, 2003). Therefore, events (both positive and negative) which happen within work and non-work contexts affect one another (e.g., MacEwen & Barling, 1994), although the interference of work with non-work activities appears to be more common (e.g., Grzywacz & Marks, 2000).

In sum, we have extended the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press) by including work self-efficacy as an antecedent of workaholism, that is, following the propositions of the model, we can explain how work self-efficacy relates to workaholism, which is also related to work overload and work-family conflict following the health impairment process.

With regard to *Hypothesis 2*, which proposed that work self-efficacy was positively related to work engagement, which in turn relates positively to job satisfaction and organizational commitment through a motivational process, the results of the SEM showed the expected relationships and thus the second hypothesis was confirmed. On the one hand, work self-efficacy relates positively and significantly to

work engagement. According to the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press), people with higher levels of self-efficacy perceive more job resources, fewer job demands and they experience more work engagement than people with low levels of self-efficacy. In fact, the positive relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement has been found in previous studies (e.g., Llorens et al., 2007; Schaufeli, & Salanova, 2007b), which confirms the robustness of our results. Therefore, our analyses confirm that work self-efficacy may produce work engagement following a motivational process in accordance with the *RED Model*.

On the other hand, work engagement relates positively and significantly to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Work-engaged employees are more satisfied and more committed in their jobs than workers who are not engaged, thus showing the positive effects of promoting work engagement in the workplace. This result is similar to others found in recent research where it has been shown that engaged employees often experience positive emotions (Schaufeli & Van Rhenen, 2006). Happy people are more sensitive to opportunities at work, more outgoing and helpful to others, as well as more confident and optimistic (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). These aspects impact positively on the organization and must therefore be taken into account by managers in order to implement policies that promote work engagement and job satisfaction.

#### *Theoretical implications*

Our findings suggest two main implications. The first one is that we extend the *RED Model* to explain the role of work self-efficacy on workaholism and thus, we contribute to the better understanding of the construct, which clearly has a place within the spectrum of occupational health, following the health impairment process. Overall, our results show that work self-efficacy is associated with workaholism and work engagement, which are associated with work overload and work-family conflict, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment, respectively. In this way, although the nature of the analyses performed does not allow us to establish causal relationships, the logical reasoning is that, on the one hand, the higher the levels of work self-efficacy are, the more workaholism, work overload and work-family conflict there will be. On the other hand, the higher the levels of work self-efficacy are, the more work engagement there will be, which in turn will enhance job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

The second implication of the study refers to the negative condition of workaholism. Our results show a negative relationship between workaholism and job satisfaction, which has also been found in previous studies (e.g., Brady et al., 2008; Burke, 1999c). At the same time this adds weight to other results obtained in this study concerning the effects of work self-efficacy on workaholism, because it proves that workaholism is actually a negative concept with negative consequences (e.g., Porter, 1996, 2001). In addition, this result means that work self-efficacy may also have negative effects on the psychosocial health of employees. Therefore, promoting self-efficacy in the job context does not always have to be a good strategy to improve well-being, particularly if organizations are not aware of the possibly negative role of self-efficacy (for example, also generating workaholism), depending on the circumstances.

In conclusion, this study shows that work self-efficacy can be considered an important variable in understanding and predicting the development of workaholism using the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press).

#### *Challenges for future research and for practice*

It is important for future research to examine the effects of work self-efficacy in the workplace. Although in many studies self-efficacy relates positively to positive constructs, our results indicate that it can also be positively related to negative constructs such as workaholism. It is very important for organizations to complete self-efficacy training with information about its possible negative consequences and also with instruction in other relevant aspects such as how to maintain a healthy balance between work and non-work environments. Hence, this result contributes to the study of workaholism by showing how self-efficacy also has a dark side that can become the ‘on button’ in the workaholism process.

#### *Weaknesses and strengths of the study*

One weakness of this study is that the results were obtained by self-report measures, and consequently may be contaminated by the common method variance and by the wish to answer consistently (Conway, 2002). In order to control for this, we checked the potential impact of common method variance in our data (see Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although we cannot completely rule out the possibility that the common method variance bias is playing a role, our check for it proved negative.

Another weakness of this study is that we assumed a unidirectional view of the relations among the variables measured. Structural models such as the *RED Model* focus on specific aspects of the complex psychosocial work environment in order to explain how individuals perceive and react to their job and to postulate that the relations between personal resources and workaholism or work engagement, for instance, are unidirectional. Therefore, it would be useful to develop longitudinal designs instead of cross-sectional designs in order to uncover reciprocal causal relationships. This type of studies would also be useful to examine the spirals proposed by the *RED Model* (see Salanova et al., in press).

Finally, despite the remarkable importance of our findings in relation to work self-efficacy effects on workaholism, future research might find other variables that have an influence on workaholic behaviour, such as the Type A behaviour pattern, for instance. It can be speculated that underlying psychological mechanisms, such as motivational systems, would exert an influence on workaholism. More particularly, and considering workaholism and work engagement, workaholics are likely to be motivated by so-called performance goals, whereas engaged workers are motivated by mastery goals (Elliot, 2005). The former are competitive, other-referenced, and extrinsic, whereas the latter are directed at self-enhancement, self-referenced, and intrinsic. Similarly, it can be argued that the behaviour of workaholics is primarily regulated by a prevention focus, whereas the behaviour of engaged employees is regulated by a promotion focus. Based on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 2005), it can be speculated that workaholics work excessively and compulsively because they want to avoid feeling bad (i.e., guilty or worthless) when they are not working (avoidance motivation). However, engaged workers work because it fosters possibilities for learning and development (approach motivation).

#### *Final Note*

To sum up, the current study shows the twofold role of work self-efficacy. It is related not only to work engagement and its positive outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction and organizational commitment), but also to workaholism and its negative outcomes (e.g., work overload and work-family conflict) following the motivational and the health impairment process. Thus, this study contributes to our understanding about the *potential* dark and bright sides of self-efficacy: workaholism and work engagement

## Chapter 7

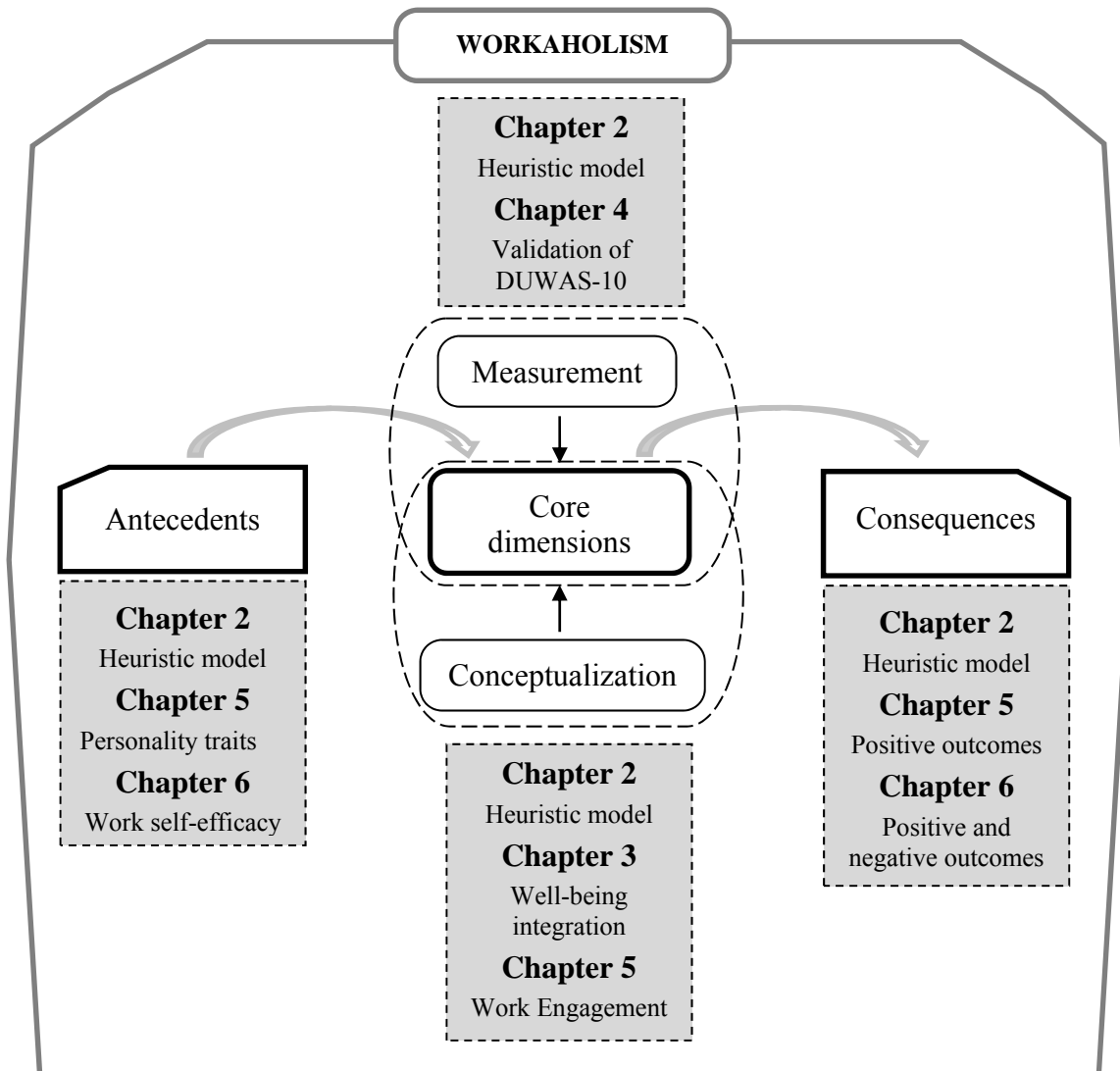
### General Discussion

The main objective of the current dissertation was to provide an in-depth understanding of when work could become “the only reason to live”: workaholism, a phenomenon which is suffering for modern societies. In other words, to study workaholism in depth in order to answer some of the research questions that requires further research. Specifically, the main dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of workaholism have been described, operationalized and explored throughout six chapters (i.e., one theoretical chapter and five empirical studies). The five empirical studies have been carried out in different occupational domains (e.g., education, health and social work, industry, commerce, civil service, etc.) and countries (i.e., Spain, The Netherlands). Moreover, in order to fulfil the main research objectives, different statistical methods (i.e., qualitative analyses with the N-Vivo software, Confirmatory Factor Analyses, Multi-group Analyses, Structural Equation Modelling, Multivariate Analyses of Variance, and Clusters Analyses) have been used.

In particular, the eight research objectives of this dissertation can be summarized as follows: (1) to review the state of the art of workaholism to know the most well-known research issues in the workaholism field, and to bridge the knowledge gaps found in workaholism research, (2) to propose a heuristic workaholism model based on narrated experiences by workaholics, (3) to integrate workaholism into three different taxonomies of well-being at work: (a) Warr’s (1990; 2007) affective approach; (b) Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) cognitive approach, (c) and González-Romá et al.’s (2006) affective-cognitive approach (4) to validate the factorial structure of the new and brief version of the DUWAS tool by using Spanish and Dutch samples, (5) to examine whether there were differences in the psychometric properties of the questionnaire depending on the country (i.e., Spain vs. The Netherlands), (6) to confirm that workaholism and work engagement were two different, yet work-related, states of mind, (7) to examine typical personality patterns in both constructs (engagement and workaholism), and (8) to analyse the predictive role played by work self-efficacy in workaholism and work engagement in relation to negative outcomes (i.e., work overload and the work-family conflict) and positive outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment), respectively.

The empirical results that pertain to these eight research questions are discussed in the sections below. Subsequently, the theoretical and practical implications, the limitations and strengths, and the challenges for future research are discussed in this concluding chapter. Figure 7.1 shows what aspects of workaholism are covered by which chapter.

**Figure 7.1.** Structure of the chapters



## Summary of the main findings

### *(1) Workaholism literature review*

In order to achieve the first objective of this dissertation, **Chapter 1** showed the development of the workaholism conceptualization throughout time, which included: (1) 13 of the most relevant workaholism definitions, (2) the typical workaholism profile according to past research (i.e., excess of work, compulsive work, deny, need of control, high importance and meaning of work; high vitality, energy and competitiveness; extra-labour problems, and performance problems), and (3) the relationship between workaholism and other constructs that previous research had occasionally confused with the term (i.e., organizational commitment, work involvement, job involvement, work engagement and passion).

Secondly, the main existing theoretical perspectives to study workaholism (i.e., the conclusions of the McMillan, O'Driscoll, Marsh, and Brady (2001) study; the effort-reward model of Peirpel and Jones (2001); the model of affect, cognition and behaviour of Ng, Sorensen and Feldman (2007); the role conflict model of Schaufeli, Bakker, Van der Heijden and Prins (2009); and the personality traits and inducements of Liang and Chu (2009)), were reviewed to know more about the construct from different points of view. Thirdly, the main workaholism antecedents (i.e., family, personal and job values, self-esteem, personality, job satisfaction, organizations, and job places), were classified into two groups (i.e., individual and organizational factors). Fourthly, the most important consequences of workaholism (e.g., stress, burnout, physical problems, problems with co-workers, performance problems, and family problems) according to previous research were shown in three different categories (i.e., consequences in relation to the person, organizations and extra-work relationships). The fifth point described the more widely used evaluation tools to measure workaholism (i.e., the Work Addiction Risk Test of Robinson (WART, 1989); the Workaholism Battery of Spence and Robbins (Workbatt, 1992), and the Dutch Work Addiction Scale of Schaufeli et al. (DUWAS, 2006)). Finally, general conclusions about all the points explained in the review were presented, along with the research questions that this dissertation attempted to deal with.

### *(2) Qualitative study of workaholism*

Providing a description of workaholism could mean having to resort to a larger number of the definitions and studies found in the literature (see McMillan &

O'Driscoll, 2006). Most workaholism definitions and descriptions had been generated deductively, and had been investigated by using quantitative frameworks and cross-sectional designs. Some qualitative studies were highlighted (e.g., Machlowitz, 1980) but, as mentioned in the Introduction, these were largely anecdotal in nature and had not been tested by peer review processes. For this reason, the main objective of the first empirical qualitative study (**Chapter 2**) was to propose a heuristic workaholism model based on direct experiences narrated by workaholics.

To meet this objective, we raised two main research questions: (1) what were the main dimensions of workaholism as experienced by workaholics in their own words? and (2) what were the most prominent antecedents and consequences of workaholism? Based on the Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the main symptoms, antecedents and consequences of workaholism were identified by interviewing 19 workaholics. The candidates to be interviewed (N= 47) were selected on the basis of the criterion of real number of hours worked (i.e., if they worked more hours than those required by contract).

Regarding the second research question, different possible antecedents and consequences of workaholism were also identified. To obtain a better understanding of the emerging domains, antecedents were classified into three different groups in accordance with their impact (i.e., individual, organizational, and social). Specifically, the following factors emerged as individual antecedents of workaholism: (1) vicarious learning (i.e., the observation of others' addictive behaviours can induce workaholism through the learning of behaviours that are typical of them; Barnes, 1990), (2) work values (i.e., the way in which people evaluate work activities or outcomes, the work centrality they have), (3) work self-efficacy, and (4) time-based autonomy (i.e., freedom to decide how much time to work and how much time not to work). Furthermore, the following were identified as organizational antecedents: (1) company pressure and (2) non-work anhedonia (i.e., the lack of hobbies or other personal interests that workaholics seem to have). Finally, social reinforcement (i.e., the social profits that working hard affords employees) was identified as a social antecedent. The main consequences of workaholism were classified into two groups in accordance with the nature of their impact (i.e., positive vs. negative). Three domains emerged as positive consequences: (1) job satisfaction, (2) flow, and (3) respect; whereas also three possible types of negative consequences were observed: (1) social (i.e., colleagues, family and



friends problems), (2) physical (i.e., no rest, sleeping problems, exhaustion, and health problems), and (3) emotional (i.e., anxiety, guilt, and sadness). Finally, two self-regulatory mechanisms of workaholic behaviour (i.e., those mechanisms that workaholics use to justify themselves for the excessive amount of time devoted to work) were also detected: (1) denial, and (2) justification.

### *(3) Patterns of employee well-being*

The second empirical study of this thesis (**Chapter 3**) attempted to answer research question 3: was workaholism a differentiated type of employee well-being? In order to answer this question, the well-being taxonomies of Warr (1990; 2007), Csikszentmihalyi (1990), and González-Romá et al. (2006) were integrated by using cluster analyses. The objective here was to investigate whether workaholism could be identified as one of the different types of employee well-being that could be distinguished according to this integration. Moreover, as employee well-being has been studied from quite different theoretical frameworks (e.g., Busseri, Sadava, & Decourville, 2007; Fredrickson, 2001) this integration of taxonomies allowed us to include a wider range of well-being dimensions in the study.

These authors' three different approaches (e.g., affective, cognitive, and affective-cognitive in this order) were integrated in order to classify the particular aspects of work-related well-being into a multi-axial classification system including four axes: (1) pleasure and arousal; (2) depressed-enthusiastic; (3) challenge and skills; and, finally, (4) energy and identification. Cluster analyses revealed four different employee well-being patterns with significant and discriminant power, which were called: (1) 9-to-5 employees, (2) work-engaged employees, (3) workaholics, and (4) burned-out employees. Each pattern was characterized by different scores on the four dimensions. While 9-to-5 employees were characterized by medium levels in all the dimensions, work-engaged employees presented the highest levels. Strikingly workaholics presented high levels of energy and very low levels of pleasure, whereas burned out employees displayed the lowest levels on all dimensions. Subsequent Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVAs) using other variables (i.e., job demands, job resources, personal resources, and positive and negative outcomes) demonstrated the strength of the four employee well-being patterns (each pattern was characterized by the different relationships with these variables).

#### *(4) Measurement of workaholism*

With the third empirical study of this dissertation (**Chapter 4**), the fourth research question about whether the factorial structure of DUWAS-10 was valid and reliable to measure the construct in Spain, was answered. In this study, workaholism was measured by using the short version (DUWAS-10; Schaufeli et al., 2009) of the DUWAS questionnaire (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The results obtained by Multi-group Analyses confirmed that DUWAS-10 was a valid bi-dimensional brief self-report instrument to assess workaholism across different countries (i.e., Spain and The Netherlands). Thus workaholism may be explained by using two main dimensions: working excessively and working compulsively. In addition, this chapter studied the relationship between workaholism and two positive outcomes (i.e., happiness and perceived health). The negative relationships between workaholism and positive outcomes (i.e., the higher the levels of workaholism, the lower the levels of happiness and perceived health) confirmed that workaholism should be considered a negative concept.

#### *(5) Workaholism, work engagement and personality*

The fourth empirical study (**Chapter 5**) looked at whether workaholism and work engagement were two different work-related states of mind (research question 5). First at all, the Confirmatory Factor Analyses results showed that absorption dimension not only loaded on work engagement (as expected) but also on workaholism (albeit that the latter factor loading was relatively weaker). On the other hand, and as expected, Structural Equation Models (SEM) demonstrated that workaholism related negatively to positive outcomes, whereas work engagement related positively. Both relationships were consistent with previous research (e.g., Burke, 1999b; Schaufeli et al., 2008; Shimazu et al., 2010). In addition, workaholism and work engagement were also positively related. Yet the positive relationship between both constructs tested as latent factors was unexpected, and we argued that this positive relationship was due to the double loading of absorption.

In this chapter, we also asked (research question 6) whether both constructs were characterized by different patterns of personality relationships according to the Five Factor Model of Personality (FFM; Goldberg, 1990; McRae & John, 1992). The results of the different SEM analyses carried out presented differences between both profiles. On the one hand, as expected, emotional stability and agreeableness correlated significantly and negatively with workaholism. However, unexpectedly, extraversion,

conscientiousness and openness to experience did not correlate with the construct. On the other hand, all five dimensions of personality significantly and positively correlated with work engagement.

*(6) Workaholism, work engagement and work self-efficacy*

Finally, the fifth empirical study (**Chapter 6**) attempted to answer the last two research questions as to whether (7) work self-efficacy was positively related to workaholism, and whether (8) work self-efficacy played the same role in workaholism as in work engagement experiences. Specifically, we studied the relationship of work self-efficacy with workaholism and work engagement by using the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press) as theoretical framework. It is interesting to note that the SEM analyses showed that, as predicted, work self-efficacy related positively to both concepts. Moreover, following the predictions of the health impairment process (one of the two psychosocial processes that the RED Model predicts), workaholism related positively to work overload and the work-family conflict (i.e., negative outcomes), and negatively to job satisfaction. However, following the predictions of the motivational process (the second psychosocial process explained by the model), work engagement related positively to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (i.e., positive outcomes). Additional MANOVAs revealed that work self-efficacy actually related to the working excessively dimension, but not to the working compulsively dimension.

### **Theoretical implications**

*(1) Heuristic workaholism model*

Different interpretations of how workaholism is structured and how it develops have been proposed, where the following frameworks have been used: addiction theories, cognitive theories, family-system theories or learning theories (Burke et al., 2006, McMillan et al., 2003). Although all these theories should not be considered exclusive because they could prove useful in explaining the multiple factors that help explain the development of workaholism, research on workaholism would need a sound theoretical basis and not just a variety of disconnected paradigms. However, it also should be taken into account that workaholism is perhaps a complicated phenomenon to be explained when using only one framework.

One of the most important theoretical contributions of this thesis is that it improves the understanding of the factors affecting workaholism. In order to acquire this better understanding, the first empirical chapter offers a set of hypotheses about the

possible antecedents (e.g., work values, work self-efficacy, company pressure or social reinforcement) and consequences (e.g., social, health or emotional problems) of the construct, which is not only based directly on past research, but emerged from the qualitative analyses of workaholism itself. Therefore, the most significant contribution of this chapter is offering a general and inductive interpretation of workaholism by including all these variables together. Thus a heuristic model emerged with several hypotheses, some of which have been tested in this thesis.

### *(2) Measurement of workaholism*

The qualitative study of workaholism confirmed two main findings: (1) the similarities found between workaholism and work engagement, which indicate that it is recommendable to study them in more detail in order to discriminate them properly; and (2) workaholism could be considered a bi-dimensional construct, which coincides with the perspective of other studies showing that workaholism may be defined as the combination of working excessively and working compulsively (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008).

With the DUWAS-10 validation (Schaufeli et al., 2009), the underlying bi-dimensional structure of workaholism was confirmed, and it can be considered as other important theoretical implication of this dissertation. As we explained in the review chapter, the measurement of workaholism has been mainly characterized by the use of two instruments at the scientific level: the WART (Robinson, 1989), and the Workbatt (Spence & Robbins, 1992). Some deficiencies related to these two instruments have been described and DUWAS-10 was created to remedy them. Furthermore, DUWAS-10 validation was the first study to validate the factorial structure of this brief measure in Spain, thus it contributed to improving the concept measurement. Moreover, although some country-relating differences were expected, DUWAS-10 showed that its two-factor structure was quite similar in both Spain and The Netherlands, thus suggesting the possibility of considering both the working excessively and working compulsively factors for theoretical and research purposes. The study also provided evidence for the robustness of the short DUWAS structure version. Therefore with this study, both knowledge and an understanding of workaholism have advanced because there is confirmation that workaholism may be measured from a *negative and bi-dimensional approach* by DUWAS-10.

### *(3) Personality in workaholism and work engagement*

Other important theoretical implication of this dissertation concerned the findings about the relationship between personality and workaholism (and work engagement). Chapter 5 was the first study to include predictions for all five FFM dimensions by considering workaholism and work engagement together. The results suggested a different personality pattern for each construct. For workaholism, emotional stability and agreeableness came over as the most important dimensions (i.e., low levels of these dimensions relate to high levels of workaholism), whereas all five FFM dimensions were seen to be important for work engagement, (i.e., the higher the levels in the five dimensions, the greater work engagement). Drawing upon these results, one can speculate that excessive and compulsive work, without experiencing joy from doing so, rely on stable and underlying neurotic traits of insecurities, fear of failure, and fear of success (Kets de Vries, 2005), which correspond with low scores for emotional stability. We also can argue that workaholics reflect low cooperation and social harmony (Graciano & Eisenberg, 1997), and that they place self-interest above getting along with others and have a tendency to be manipulative in their job and social relationships.

The results obtained for workaholism were similar to those in the study of Burke et al. (2006), in which two FFM dimensions also related to workaholism (i.e., high levels of extraversion related to high levels of work involvement, and low levels of emotional stability related to high levels of compulsiveness). Recently, Andreassen, Hetlan and Pallesen (2010) also investigated the role played by the FFM dimensions in workaholism. Their results confirm the findings encountered in Chapter 5; that is, the relevance of emotional stability and agreeableness dimensions. In addition, they stress that workaholism is also characterized by high levels of conscientiousness. Although the results about the relationship between workaholism and personality are generally similar, there are some differences in the patterns found. For this reason, future research should consider the role played by extraversion and conscientiousness in order to show their impact on workaholism. On the other hand, the results obtained for work engagement were similar to those reported in the study of Langelaan et al. (2006), which demonstrated that emotional stability and extraversion (only these two traits were analysed) are related to work engagement. Work engaged employees are more extraverted and emotionally stable than not work engaged employees.

(4) *Work self-efficacy, the RED Model and workaholism*

As the review chapter of this dissertation indicates (see Chapter 1), current explanations of workaholism emphasize individual dispositional, socio-cultural and reinforcing antecedents, which range from learning and personality factors to more or less subconscious motives (e.g., McMillan et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2007). One of these antecedents of workaholism is work self-efficacy which, according to the results provided in Chapter 6, correlates positively with workaholism and work engagement. To explain the role played by work self-efficacy in workaholism, the *RED Model* (Salanova et al., in press) was extended by including workaholism in the predictions of the health impairment process. The overall results revealed that work self-efficacy was positively associated with workaholism and work engagement which, in turn, were positively associated with work overload and work-family conflict, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment, respectively. Therefore, on the one hand, the higher work self-efficacy is, the greater workaholism becomes; in turn, the greater work overload and the work-family conflict. In other words, feeling competent at work may result in working too much, and the probabilities of becoming a workaholic may increase. Accordingly, work self-efficacy might be considered a vulnerability factor to becoming a workaholic. In addition, workaholism leads to work overload and to the work-family conflict because workaholics are able to increase their workload day after day, and devote less time to social and recreational activities, which are sacrificed for more work time (Bonebright et al., 2000). On the other hand, the higher work self-efficacy is, the greater work engagement becomes; in turn, the more job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In fact, empirical evidence suggests that efficacy beliefs act as a self-motivating mechanism: people perceive their own level of competences to be high and, consequently, they set themselves goals and are motivated to invest considerable effort and persist in overcoming obstacles (Bandura, 2001; Garrido, 2000).

According to these opposite effects, it seems that the consequences of self-efficacy could have a twofold effect and could also significantly differ. Self-efficacy could enhance work engagement and then job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which represents a kind of positive path of consequences. But however, self-efficacy could also enhance workaholism whose consequences could include work overload and the work-family conflict. The positive or negative effect of work self-efficacy could depend on the other variables such as personality traits. For instance,

according to the Five Factor Model of Personality (McRae & John, 1992), high levels in the compulsiveness dimension comprises the tendency to be self-disciplined, reliable and orderly, and this is closely linked to what is considered to be ‘good work morale’ and ‘work ethics’ (Andreassen et al., 2010). Thus, an employee with these traits and high levels of work self-efficacy is more likely to become a workaholic than employees with other predominant traits. Furthermore, another circumstance that may affect workaholism is the imbalance between the levels of self-efficacy in different domains; that is, having higher self-efficacy at work than in other contexts such as family or friend circles. Along these lines, Bandura (1997) explains that people with high efficacy beliefs invest more time and effort in those activities in which they feel self-efficacious, which could explain the relationship between work self-efficacy and excess of work (see Chapter 6). Like an engaged employee, who has high levels of work self-efficacy (e.g., Llorens et al., 2007), a workaholic could feel very self-efficacious at work, thus spending more time working than managing other things. In short, this finding is another significant theoretical contribution because it means that work self-efficacy has not only positive effects on employees, but also negative effects depending on its interaction with other variables.

##### (5) *Conceptualization of workaholism*

Generally speaking, this dissertation has provided empirical evidence to clarify the conceptualization of workaholism. Firstly, workaholism constitutes *a type of employee well-being in itself* according to the combination of the most relevant - at scientific level - affective and cognitive taxonomies of employee well-being proposed in Chapter 3. The profile resulting from this combination was very similar to the profile that could be created if we accepted the results of previous studies on workaholism (e.g., McMillan et al., 2003; Porter, 2006).

Secondly, this dissertation has clarified the relationship between workaholism and work engagement. The results obtained confirmed past research into the differences between both constructs (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). Thus now we have enough evidence to assert that both can be considered overlapping factors given the role of the work engagement *absorption* dimension. As another study showed (i.e., Schaufeli et al., 2008), *absorption* in this dissertation loaded on both constructs and not only on work engagement, which confirmed that workaholics and work-engaged employees are characterized by their high levels of absorption when at work. In fact,

workaholism is characterized by a reluctance to disengage from work (McMillan et al., 2001) and by a compulsory indulgence in work (Porter, 1996), and such descriptions clearly overlap with absorption. In addition, this result reinforced the idea that vigor and dedication can be considered the core dimensions of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Although there are some common characteristics between workaholism and work engagement (i.e., not only absorption, but also work self-efficacy), their different relationships with personality traits and outcomes, such as happiness or perceived health, were indicators that both constructs are two independent work-related states of mind, where workaholism is a negative experience and work engagement a positive experience at work.

Therefore, since workaholism relates negatively to positive outcomes (e.g., low levels of happiness and job satisfaction), the negative condition of this psychological experience at work can be emphasized. At this point, it is worth paying special attention to the results obtained in Chapter 2 as regards the positive consequences of workaholism. Although this chapter identified some positive consequences (i.e., job satisfaction, flow, and respect), most of the time the interviewed workaholics spoke about the negative consequences (e.g., physical problems, anxiety or guilty) caused by their excessive and compulsive work. To understand workaholism as a negative construct, the clear differences in those interpretations or definitions that consider the concept may be positive are emphasized (e.g., Buelens & Poelmans, 2004; Maslowitch, 1980). Specifically throughout the chapters, workaholism relates negatively to perceived health and happiness, and reveals a positive relationship with negative outcomes, such as work overload and the work-family conflict. These results corroborate the evidence found in previous studies for the negative nature of workaholism (e.g., Brady, Vodanovich, & Rotunda, 2008; Burke, 1999b).

Finally, a fourth important contribution of the conceptualization of workaholism may be identified. In Chapter 2, the role played by the self-regulatory mechanisms of workaholism (i.e., denial and justification) was remarkable. It seems that workaholics deny their workaholism and experience greater disturbances in close relationships outside the work environment than non-workaholics. Although denial in previous research was considered a possible obstacle in the treatment of workaholism (e.g., Porter, 1996), evidence for this mechanism was empirically obtained for the first time in the study of the concept in this chapter. However our findings should be carefully



considered according to the results obtained in the study of McMillan et al. (2004). In this study, workaholics appeared to possess a reasonably accurate perception of their levels of workaholic behaviour. From a theoretical point of view, and given the mere possibility of denial and justification, some authors like Mudrack and Naughton (2001) sought to minimize its potential impact on survey responses by proposing that it would be better to ask about specific work activities (and not obviously suggesting 'workaholism') instead of generally asking whether work behaviours were optional (workaholics under denial might simply say 'no'). Basically, it seems that both mechanisms (i.e., denial and justification) should be controlled to avoid employees being misled in self-report measures. One possibility to control them it could be to obtain information about the employee (e.g., time that he or she spends working, his or her relationship with co-workers, etc.) by using alternative reports of co-workers or family members.

### **Practical implications**

Although several ideas on how to prevent workaholism exist (i.e., Llorens, Del Libano, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2006; Poppelreuter, 2006), there is virtually no research on this topic, so it is difficult to draw upon any empirical evidence of the effectiveness of preventive measures. This dissertation offers practitioners several cues to guide their professional work in the field of workaholism diagnosis and interventions, such as measuring workaholism and its prevention in the workplace.

Firstly, the results of this dissertation offer practitioners evidence for two different ways of measuring workaholism. One of them is the traditional self-questionnaire method in which each employee answers depending on his or her - subjective - opinion. DUWAS-10 has shown that it has appropriate psychometric properties to reliably measure workaholism. Moreover from a practical viewpoint, the results obtained suggest that the brief version of the DUWAS questionnaire can be used by practitioners as a screening instrument for identifying workaholics (Salanova et al., 2008). The second method corresponds to the qualitative methodology; that is, semi-structured interviews which were used to obtain employee-related information on work dedication (Chapter 2). This dual approach into the construct measurement provides scientific benefits because it uses different measures that allow researchers to understand workaholism from a much broader perspective. This qualitative design attempted to study workaholism according to new trends and advises. According to McMillan and

O'Driscoll (2006), it is timely to leave behind the simplistic pen-and-paper studies and to adopt more sophisticated research methodologies such as triangulated data sources, composite qualitative-quantitative designs, and epistemologies that elucidate the factors perpetuating and maintaining workaholism. Thanks to these two ways of measuring workaholism, this dissertation affords more useful and applied information about this work psychological experience.

And last but not least, the findings of this dissertation indicate that workaholism should be prevented in the job context to reduce its negative effect on employees' health. In contrast, work engagement should be promoted to contribute to employees' welfare and health. Primary prevention of workaholism -that is, the reduction of the risk of workaholism among healthy, non-workaholic employees- boils down to changing organizational culture. In essence, the culture in which employees who work 60-plus hours per week are the "heroes" who are displayed as role models should be replaced by a culture which stimulates working smart rather than working hard and which values a healthy work-life balance. This is not an easy task to accomplish because those who are in charge of that culture change are often workaholics themselves (Van Wijhe, Peeters, & Schaufeli, 2010).

In terms of secondary prevention - which focuses on those who are at risk of workaholism - basically two kinds of strategies may be followed according to the results obtained in this thesis. First, in personnel selection procedures, job candidates may be screened on personality characteristics that make them vulnerable for workaholism, such as conscientiousness, need for achievement, low emotional stability, compulsiveness, and low assertiveness. However, for the time being, we would advise against such screening of employees because - a part from the ethical issues involved - more research is needed to establish the links between workaholism and personality factors. This leaves us with the second, more feasible and realistic option: increasing the levels of self-efficacy not only at work, but also in other domains. Promoting self-efficacy only in the job context may not always be a good strategy to improve well-being, particularly when organizations are not aware of the possible negative role played by self-efficacy in certain circumstances (e.g., as a potential predictor of workaholism). For this reason, it would be significant for organizations to complete self-efficacy training with information about its possible negative consequences, and also with instructions in other relevant aspects such as how to maintain a healthy

balance between work and non-work environments. Furthermore, this dissertation provides practitioners evidence for the main underlying psychological mechanisms that maintain workaholism behaviours (i.e., denial and justification). They should consider both mechanisms with a view to preventing workaholism from developing.

Therefore, the negative nature of workaholism is a relevant point that should be considered not only by employees themselves, but also by managers of organizations. Only those organizations that are concerned about their employees' well-being will meet all their goals and offer excellent performance. In the scientific community, this type of organizations has been named 'healthy organizations' (Salanova, 2008), which are characterized by being organizations that make systematic, planned and proactive efforts to improve employees' health through better practices relating to improved tasks (e.g., with job design and job re-design), the social environment (e.g., open communication channels), and organization (e.g., work/family balance strategies) (Salanova, 2008; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2009).

In sum, with all this information practitioners might be able to propose more specific intervention strategies to prevent workaholism, and also to propose more accurate means of promoting positive work behaviours and attitudes in the workplace.

### **Limitations, strengths and challenges for future research**

The current dissertation has resolved previous questions that exist in workaholism research, but we should point out that the current series of studies are not without their limitations. The first limitation is the number of experts who analysed the qualitative data obtained from interviewing workaholics in Chapter 2. Only one expert analysed the data obtained with the interviews, and the subjectivity factor was not as controlled as to whether these interviews had been rated by more than one expert. However, this limitation was overcome by analysing interviews in two different periods, and by using an innovative and more neutral methodology: the NVivo-8 software. This software systematizes and classifies everything more objectively than the traditional qualitative analyses methods, and thereby ensures reliable results.

Secondly, the four quantitative studies exclusively used self-reported data, which raises questions of a common method bias. This is a recurrent issue in research on Work and Organizational Psychology. Self-reports are considered to be influenced by subjective factors (Spector, 1992), well-being (Coyne, 1994), and individual differences (Burke, Brief, & George, 1993). In order to overcome this limitation, Harman's single-

factor test was used in each study, and the results revealed that a common method variance bias did not prove to be a serious limitation for any chapter (e.g., Iverson & Maguire, 2000). Another possibility that could be considered to overcome this limitation is using peer ratings.

The third limitation involves the convenience samples used in all the studies. These samples may not be representative, and make it difficult to know if the results obtained are due to samples composition or to the controlled study factors. Consequently, the results could be biased by the sample's characteristics. Future research should include specific professional groups to control the effect of this variable on the results.

The last limitation of this dissertation concerns the structural models used to assess some of the hypotheses. As all the studies were cross-sectional, the tested models assumed a unidirectional view of the relationships among the measured variables, so no direction of causality can be established. We offer a perfect example in the last empirical study (see Chapter 6) which extended the *RED Model*. The *RED Model* focuses on specific aspects of the complex psychosocial work environment to explain how individuals perceive and react to their job. Therefore, it attempts to postulate that the relationships between personal resources and other constructs such as workaholism or work engagement are unidirectional; that is, personal resources relates directly to the likelihood of becoming a workaholic or a work-engaged employee. To uncover any reciprocal causal relationships, it would be useful to do longitudinal designs instead of this type of cross-sectional designs. This type of studies would also be very useful to examine, for instance, the psychosocial spirals proposed by the *RED Model* (see Salanova et al., in press). Taken RED Model as framework, it would be also interesting to evaluate what kind of variables are responsible for that work self-efficacy has positive or negative effects. Perhaps variables like personality or the type of job can play an important role that future research should be studied.

Another challenge for future research implies the understanding of more antecedents and the consequences of workaholism. Although some of these antecedents and consequences have been debated in the qualitative study (see Chapter 2) and, consequently, in the next chapters, more empirical studies are needed to study antecedents such as work values and vicarious learning, or consequences such as respect and anxiety more thoroughly. Moreover, it has been speculated (i.e., Schaufeli et al.,

2008) that underlying psychological mechanisms, such as motivational systems, would influence workaholism. Such systems could be partially related to work values, thus facilitating the explanation of the role they play in workaholism. More particularly, and by considering workaholism compared to work engagement (just as this dissertation has done consistently), workaholics are likely to be motivated by performance goals, whereas work-engaged employees would be motivated by mastery goals (Elliot, 2005). Similarly, it could be argued that workaholics' behaviour could be primarily regulated by a prevention focus, whereas that of work-engaged employees could be regulated by a promotion focus. Based on the regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 2005), it could be speculated that workaholics work excessively and compulsively because they want to avoid feeling bad (i.e., guilty or worthless) when they are not working (avoidance motivation). However, work-engaged employees work hard because it fosters possibilities for learning and development (approach motivation). Therefore, for future research it would be highly advisable to explore the motivational systems of workaholism more meticulously.

A separate remark should be made for the study of flow in workaholism. In Chapter 2, most workaholics explained that they often experienced flow when they were working. Hence, the first question to be answered is whether flow acts as either an antecedent or a consequence of workaholism. Both interpretations are feasible. Flow could act as "*the fuse that lights the fire*" in the first stages of workaholism, but it could also occur as a result of working, and could be more common among workaholics than among other types of employees. According to flow theorists, the first option seems more likely. There is evidence to suggest that addictive behaviours form when behavioural repetition triggers a flow state (Chou & Ting, 2003). Yet the main contradiction here is that flow is typically defined in terms of pleasure, whereas workaholics feel negative about it. Future research should explore the role played by flow in the workaholism process in more detail to elucidate this contradiction with the empirical data and the theoretical explanations.

Finally, I would like to conclude this section by highlighting the variety of methodologies, samples and statistical analyses used to perform each chapter in this dissertation. The weight of the review chapter on workaholism is also remarkable, mainly because it ascertained the need to perform a dissertation on workaholism.

*Final Note*

This dissertation began by raising several research questions on workaholism, which had to be answered study by study. As the main objective of this work, I expected to obtain an in-depth understanding of when work could become “the only reason to live”. With this dissertation, it is possible to state that I have contributed to the understanding and measurement of workaholism by analysing its main dimensions (i.e., working excessively and working compulsively) by validating a new and brief workaholism measure (i.e., DUWAS-10), and by studying the relationship between workaholism and other related variables (e.g., work engagement, positive outcomes, personality, work self-efficacy) which, according to previous research works, could prove relevant in explaining the construct. However, further research is still necessary from both the practical and theoretical viewpoints. On the one hand, this dissertation provides practitioners relevant information about workaholism, which they should use to diminish its expansion in organizations by especially considering the turbulent times that most companies (and people) are currently facing. On the other hand, researchers have to be aware that it is very important to continue in advancing in the workaholism study, mainly because it is necessary to contribute to the enrichment of employees’ psychosocial health.

Times change and, with them, people will have still more opportunities to work in “wherever and whenever”. As one of their main challenges, in the current changeable context, researchers and practitioners will have to achieve that employees can work hard, but not in a compulsive way. The journey into the heart of workaholism has begun with this thesis, but workaholism research still has a long way to go.

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## Appendixes

### *Appendix 1: semi-structured interview to evaluate workaholism*

The following questions are only for guidance. It is the interviewer who decides which of the questions are necessary, depending on the course of the interview.

1. Demographic data: the interviewer asks for the information that he/she does not know (e.g., age, studies, previous jobs).
2. Questions about work aspects:
  - a. The interview starts with a general question about **what a normal work-day is like for the worker**. The idea is that the interviewee explains in detail some things such as: when he or she arrives at the workplace, what type of things he or she does, etc. Depending on the description given by the worker, other possible questions in this section are the following:
  - b. Why do you work in this job?
  - c. Do you take a break when you have been working for several hours? NO (reasons), YES: how do you feel in these breaks?
  - d. Why do you think that you work so much? (The interviewer knows that the worker works more time than she/he is required to by contract because this is the criterion for selecting interviewees).
  - e. Do you achieve your work goals?
  - f. What is your relationship with your co-workers like? It is recommendable that he or she explains a little bit.
  - g. If you had absolute freedom, how would you distribute your work time?
  - h. Do you know what is meant by self-efficacy? (The interviewer explains what it is if the interviewee does not know). Do you feel self-efficacious in your work? And in other areas of your life?
  - i. In general, how do you feel in your job? (e.g., stressed, happy)
3. Questions about outside-work aspects:
  - a. When the work field is analysed, the interviewer asks the worker **what a normal day is like when he or she finishes his or her work**. The idea is for interviewees to explain in detail what they usually do when they finish their

working day. Depending on the description given by the worker, other possible questions in this section are the following:

- b. Do you work when you arrive home? YES: reasons.
  - c. When did you take your last vacation? Did you do anything related to your work during that time?
  - d. How many times do you usually meet friends in a normal week? Have you reduced the number of this type of meetings? YES: Reasons. Since when?
  - e. Do you usually think about work matters when you are with your friends or your family? YES: Reasons and time spent on these thoughts.
  - f. How many hobbies do you have? Do you have time to practice them?
4. Questions about family aspects:
- a. When the outside-work field is analysed, the interviewer asks the worker **what the relationship with his or her relatives is like**. Although in the previous section some questions about the family can be asked, in this section more personal themes are usually addressed. Depending on the description given by the worker, other possible questions in this section are the following:
    - b. Do you live with your parents, a partner or alone?
    - c. If the relationship with the relatives (or some/one of them) is not good, it would be interesting to know what the worker thinks about it (e.g., does he or she think that it is because of his or her high level of dedication to work?).
    - d. Do you think that you spend less time with your family than you should? Think about the last time you did something together and tell me how you felt that day.

The best way to close the interview is with a positive tone and with some advice to improve the interviewee's day-to-day routine. Moreover, by the end of the interview the worker has sometimes become aware of his or her work problems and the interviewer must not allow him or her to end up feeling bad.

*Appendix 2: DUWAS Questionnaire*

(Almost) Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost (always)			
1	2	3	4			
1. I dislike overwork. (WkE) <sup>9</sup>			1	2	3	4
2. I often wish I weren't so committed to my work. (WkC)			1	2	3	4
<b>3. I seem to be in a hurry and racing against the clock.</b> <sup>1011</sup> (WkE)*			1	2	3	4
<b>4. I find myself continuing work after my co-workers have called it quits.</b> (WkE)*			1	2	3	4
<b>5. It's important for me to work hard even when I don't enjoy what I'm doing.</b> (WkC)			1	2	3	4
<b>6. I stay busy and keep my irons in the fire.</b> (WkE)*			1	2	3	4
7. I often find myself thinking about work even when I want to get away from it for a while. (WkC)			1	2	3	4
8. I overly commit myself by biting more off than I can chew. (WkE)			1	2	3	4
9. I seem to have an inner compulsion to work hard, a feeling that it's something I have to do whether I want to or not. (WkC)			1	2	3	4
10. I put myself under pressure with self-imposed deadlines when I work. (WkE)			1	2	3	4
<b>11. I often feel that there's something inside me that drives me to work hard.</b> (WkC)			1	2	3	4
<b>12. I spend more time working than socializing with friends, on hobbies, or on leisure activities.</b> (WkE)*			1	2	3	4
13. I feel guilty when I am not working on something. (WkE)			1	2	3	4
<b>14. I feel obliged to work hard, even when it's not enjoyable.</b> (WkC)			1	2	3	4
<b>15. I find myself doing two or three things at one time such as eating lunch and writing a memo, while talking on the phone.</b> (WkE)*			1	2	3	4
<b>16. I feel guilty when I take time off work.</b> (WkC)			1	2	3	4
<b>17. It is hard for me to relax when I'm not working.</b> (WkE)			1	2	3	4

Note: Items in bold have to be printed in bold.

<sup>9</sup> In brackets: the dimensions from the original 17-item DUWAS version

<sup>10</sup> Items in bold correspond to items from the short version of DUWAS.

<sup>11</sup> Items with asterisks pertain to the Work Excessively dimension in the short DUWAS version



## Resumen

### (Summary in Spanish)

El principal objetivo de esta tesis ha sido ir un paso más allá en el conocimiento de ese fenómeno caracterizado por hacer del trabajo la principal (sino única) razón para vivir: la adicción al trabajo. Este objetivo general se ha traducido en el planteamiento de diversas preguntas de investigación en función de los vacíos de conocimiento detectados en la literatura. Concretamente, a través de los seis capítulos de esta tesis (i.e., uno teórico y cinco empíricos) se han descrito, operacionalizado y explorado las principales dimensiones, antecedentes y consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo. Los cinco estudios empíricos se han basado en diferentes áreas ocupacionales (e.g., educación, salud, trabajos sociales, industria, comercio, etc.), y en trabajadores de distintos países (i.e., España y Holanda). Además, para llegar a las conclusiones de cada capítulo se han utilizado métodos estadísticos muy diversos (i.e., análisis cualitativos utilizando el programa N-Vivo, análisis factoriales confirmatorios, análisis multi-grupo, análisis de ecuaciones estructurales, análisis multivariados, y análisis de clusters).

En concreto, los ocho objetivos de investigación de esta tesis se pueden resumir como sigue: (1) revisar el estado de la investigación en adicción al trabajo y responder a algunas de las preguntas que todavía quedan por estudiar, (2) proponer un modelo heurístico de adicción al trabajo basado en las experiencias narradas por los propios adictos al trabajo, (3) integrar la adicción al trabajo dentro de tres taxonomías diferentes de bienestar en el trabajo: (a) la perspectiva afectiva de Warr (1999; 2007), (b) la perspectiva cognitiva de Csikszentmihalyi (1990), (c) y la perspectiva afectiva-cognitiva de González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, y Lloret (2006); (4) validar la estructura factorial de la nueva versión breve del cuestionario DUWAS (Schaufeli, Shimazu, & Taris, 2009) utilizando muestra española y holandesa, (5) examinar si existían diferencias en las propiedades psicométricas del cuestionario dependiendo del país (i.e., España vs. Holanda), (6) confirmar que la adicción al trabajo y el engagement eran dos estados relacionados con el trabajo diferentes, (7) examinar los patrones de personalidad típicos en los dos constructos (adicción al trabajo y engagement), y (8) analizar el rol predictivo ejercido por la autoeficacia laboral, tanto en la adicción al trabajo como en el engagement, en relación con diversas variables negativas (i.e., sobrecarga cuantitativa y conflicto trabajo-familia), y con diversas variables positivas (i.e., satisfacción laboral y

compromiso organizacional), respectivamente. Los resultados empíricos que se corresponden con estas ocho preguntas de investigación, así como las implicaciones teóricas y prácticas, las limitaciones, las fortalezas y los retos para la investigación futura, se discuten en los apartados que se presentan a continuación.

### **Resumen de los principales hallazgos**

#### *(1) Revisión de la literatura sobre adicción al trabajo*

Con la finalidad de alcanzar el primer objetivo de esta tesis, el **Capítulo 1** analizó el desarrollo de la conceptualización de la adicción al trabajo a lo largo del tiempo, lo que incluyó: (1) 13 de las definiciones más relevantes sobre adicción al trabajo, (2) el perfil de la adicción al trabajo típico según la investigación previa (i.e., exceso de trabajo, trabajo compulsivo, negación, necesidad de control, alta importancia y significado del trabajo; alta vitalidad, energía y competitividad, problemas extralaborales, y problemas de rendimiento), y (3) la relación entre adicción al trabajo y otros constructos que la investigación previa había confundido en alguna ocasión con el término (i.e., compromiso organizacional, implicación con el trabajo, implicación con el puesto, engagement y pasión).

En segundo lugar, para estudiar la adicción al trabajo desde diferentes puntos de vista se revisaron las principales perspectivas teóricas que la han intentado analizar (entre ellas las de autores como Peirpel y Jones (2001), o el modelo de afecto, cognición y conducta de Ng, Sorensen y Feldman (2007)). En tercer lugar, los principales antecedentes de la adicción al trabajo (i.e., factores familiares, valores personales y laborales, niveles de autoestima, rasgos de personalidad, satisfacción laboral, tipos de organizaciones, y tipos de puesto de trabajo) se clasificaron en dos grupos diferentes (i.e., factores individuales y factores organizacionales). En cuarto lugar, las consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo más importantes (e.g., estrés, burnout, problemas físicos, problemas con compañeros de trabajo, de rendimiento, y problemas familiares) según la investigación previa fueron expuestas en tres categorías diferentes (i.e., consecuencias que afectan a la persona, consecuencias organizacionales y extra-organizacionales). El quinto punto describió las herramientas de evaluación que más se han utilizado para medir la adicción al trabajo (i.e., el *Work Addiction Risk Test* de Robinson (WART, 1989), el *Workaholism Battery* de Spence y Robbins (Workbatt, 1992), y el *Dutch Work Addiction Scale* de Schaufeli, Taris, y Bakker (DUWAS, 2006)). Finalmente, se presentaron las conclusiones generales que se extrajeron de la



revisión teórica realiza a lo largo de todos los puntos tratados, junto con las preguntas de investigación que esta tesis ha intentado responder.

*(2) Estudio cualitativo de la adicción al trabajo*

Para realizar una buena descripción de la adicción al trabajo sería necesario revisar un gran número de definiciones y estudios previos (ver McMillan y O'Driscoll, 2006). La mayoría de las definiciones y descripciones que existen se han generado de forma deductiva, y se han investigado utilizando marcos teóricos cuantitativos y diseños transversales. Tan solo se podrían destacar algunos estudios de corte cualitativo (e.g., Machlowitz, 1980) pero, como se menciona en la introducción, este tipo de estudios han sido en general anecdóticos, y no han sido evaluados por un proceso de revisión de pares. Por esta razón, el principal objetivo del primer estudio empírico y cualitativo (**Capítulo 2**) fue proponer un modelo heurístico basado en las experiencias directas vividas por los adictos al trabajo.

Para alcanzar este objetivo, formulamos dos preguntas de investigación: (1) ¿cuáles eran las principales dimensiones de la adicción al trabajo en función de las experiencias vividas y contadas por los propios adictos al trabajo?, y (2) ¿cuáles fueron los antecedentes y las consecuencias más destacadas de la adicción al trabajo? Tomando como base teórica la “Grounded Theory” (Glaser y Strauss, 1967), se identificaron los principales síntomas, antecedentes y consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo a través de las entrevistas realizadas a 19 adictos al trabajo. Los candidatos a ser entrevistados (N=47) se seleccionaron en función del número real de horas trabajadas (i.e., si trabajaban más horas de lo que requería su contrato).

Respecto a la segunda pregunta de investigación, se identificaron diversos posibles antecedentes y consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo. Para alcanzar una mejor comprensión de los dominios que emergieron, los antecedentes se clasificaron en tres grupos diferentes en función de su impacto (i.e., individual, organizacional, y social). Específicamente, como antecedentes individuales de la adicción al trabajo emergieron los siguientes factores: (1) aprendizaje vicario (i.e., observar las conductas adictivas de otras personas podría inducir adicción al trabajo a través del aprendizaje de las conductas que son más típicas de los adictos; Barnes, (1990)), (2) valores laborales (i.e., la forma en la que la gente evalúa las tareas laborales o los resultados, la centralidad laboral que tienen), (3) autoeficacia laboral, y (4) la autonomía basada en el tiempo (i.e., libertad para decidir cuánto tiempo trabajar y cuánto tiempo no hacerlo). Además, se

identificaron los siguientes antecedentes organizacionales: (1) la presión de la compañía y (2) la anhedonia no laboral (i.e., la ausencia de hobbies u otros intereses personales que son típicos de los adictos al trabajo). Finalmente, el refuerzo social (i.e., los beneficios sociales que trabajar duro tiene para los trabajadores) se identificó como un antecedente de tipo social. Las principales consecuencias de la adicción al trabajo se clasificaron en dos grupos en función de la naturaleza de su impacto (i.e., positiva vs. negativa). Tres dominios emergieron como consecuencias positivas: (1) satisfacción laboral, (2) flow, y (3) respeto; mientras que también se observaron tres tipos de consecuencias negativas: (1) sociales (i.e., problemas con los compañeros, amigos y familiares), (2) físicas (i.e., falta de descanso, problemas de sueño, agotamiento, y problemas de salud), y (3) emocionales (i.e., ansiedad, culpabilidad y tristeza). Finalmente, también se detectaron dos mecanismos auto-reguladores de la conducta laboro-adictiva (i.e., aquellos mecanismos que los adictos al trabajo utilizan para justificarse a sí mismos por la excesiva cantidad de tiempo dedicado a trabajar): (1) la negación y (2) la justificación.

### *(3) Patrones de bienestar laboral*

El segundo estudio empírico de esta tesis (**Capítulo 3**) intentó responder a la pregunta de investigación 3: ¿se podía considerar la adicción al trabajo un tipo de bienestar laboral con entidad propia? Para responder a esta pregunta las taxonomías de bienestar de Warr (1990; 2007), Csikszentmihalyi (1990), y González-Romá et al. (2006) fueron integradas utilizando análisis de clusters. El objetivo fue investigar si la adicción al trabajo se podía identificar como uno de los diferentes tipos de bienestar laboral distinguibles según esa integración. Además, dado que el bienestar laboral se ha estudiado desde distintos marcos teóricos (e.g., Busseri, Sadava, y Decourville, 2007; Fredrickson, 2001), esta integración de taxonomías nos permitió incluir en el estudio un rango más amplio de dimensiones de bienestar.

Estas tres aproximaciones diferentes (e.g., afectiva, cognitiva, y afectiva-cognitiva en este orden) se integraron con la finalidad de clasificar aquellos aspectos característicos del bienestar en un sistema de clasificación multi-axial compuesto por cuatro ejes: (1) placer y arousal; (2) depresión-entusiasmo; (3) reto y competencias; y finalmente, (4) energía e identificación. El análisis de clusters reveló cuatro patrones diferentes de bienestar laboral que tenían poder discriminante y significativo, y que se denominaron: (1) trabajadores de 9 a 5, (2) trabajadores vinculados o ‘engaged’, (3)

adictos al trabajo, y (4) trabajadores quemados o ‘burned-out’. Cada patrón se caracterizó por diferentes valores en las cuatro dimensiones consideradas. Mientras los trabajadores de 9 a 5 se caracterizaron por niveles medios en todas las dimensiones, los trabajadores engaged presentaron los niveles más altos. Curiosamente, los adictos al trabajo presentaron altos niveles de energía y bajos niveles de placer, mientras que los trabajadores quemados mostraron los niveles más bajos en todas las dimensiones. Posteriores análisis multivariados de varianza (MANOVAs) utilizando otras variables (i.e., demandas laborales, recursos laborales, recursos personales, y resultados positivos y negativos) demostraron el peso de los cuatro patrones de bienestar laboral (cada patrón se caracterizó por presentar diferentes relaciones con esas variables).

#### *(4) Medición de la adicción al trabajo*

En el tercer estudio empírico de esta tesis (**Capítulo 4**) se respondió a la cuarta pregunta de investigación sobre si la estructura factorial del DUWAS-10 era válida para medir el constructo en España. En este estudio, la adicción al trabajo se midió utilizando la versión corta (DUWAS-10; Schaufeli et al., 2009) del cuestionario DUWAS (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Los resultados obtenidos a través de análisis factoriales confirmatorios (CFA) confirmaron que el DUWAS-10 era un instrumento breve válido para medir de forma bi-dimensional la adicción al trabajo en diferentes países (i.e., España y Holanda). De esta forma la adicción al trabajo se podía explicar utilizando dos dimensiones principales: trabajar excesivamente y trabajar compulsivamente. Además, este capítulo estudió la relación entre la adicción al trabajo y dos resultados positivos (i.e., felicidad y salud percibida). La relación negativa entre la adicción al trabajo y los resultados positivos (i.e., a mayores niveles de adicción al trabajo, menores niveles de felicidad y salud percibida) confirmaron que la adicción al trabajo debería ser considerada un concepto negativo.

#### *(5) Adicción al trabajo, engagement y personalidad*

El cuarto estudio empírico (**Capítulo 5**) analizó si la adicción al trabajo y el engagement eran dos estados mentales diferentes relacionados con el trabajo (pregunta de investigación 5). En primer lugar, los resultados del CFA mostraron que la dimensión de absorción no solo saturaba en el engagement (como se esperaba), sino que también lo hacía en la adicción al trabajo (aunque el peso en este último caso fue relativamente menor). Por otro lado, como se esperaba, los Modelos de Ecuaciones Estructurales (SEM) mostraron que la adicción al trabajo se relacionaba negativamente

con los resultados positivos, mientras que el engagement se relacionaba de forma positiva. Estas relaciones fueron consistentes con resultados similares obtenidos en investigaciones previas (e.g., Burke, 1999b; Schaufeli, Taris, y Van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu, Schaufeli, y Taris, 2010). Además, la adicción al trabajo y el engagement también se relacionaron de forma positiva. Esta relación, sin embargo, fue inesperada y para tratar de interpretar el resultado argumentamos que la relación positiva era debida a la doble saturación de la dimensión de absorción.

En este capítulo, también nos preguntamos (pregunta de investigación 6) si ambos constructos se caracterizaban por diferentes patrones de personalidad según el Modelo de lo Cinco Grandes de personalidad (Goldberg, 1990; McRae y John, 1992). Los resultados de los diferentes SEM realizados mostraron que existían diferencias entre los dos perfiles. Por una parte, como se esperaba, estabilidad emocional (también neuroticismo) y afabilidad correlacionaron significativa y negativamente con la adicción al trabajo. Sin embargo, inesperadamente, extraversión, responsabilidad y apertura a la experiencia no correlacionaron con el constructo. Por otra parte, las cinco dimensiones de personalidad correlacionaron de forma significativa y positiva con el engagement.

*(6) Adicción al trabajo, engagement y autoeficacia laboral*

Finalmente, el quinto estudio empírico (**Capítulo 6**) intentó responder a las dos últimas preguntas de investigación, esto es, si (7) la autoeficacia laboral se relacionaba positivamente con la adicción al trabajo, y si (8) la autoeficacia laboral ejercía el mismo rol en la adicción al trabajo que en el engagement. Concretamente, estudiamos la relación de la autoeficacia laboral con la adicción al trabajo y el engagement utilizando el *Modelo RED* (Salanova, Cifre, Martínez, Llorens, y Lorente, en prensa) como marco teórico. Es interesante destacar que los análisis SEM mostraron que, como se había predicho, la autoeficacia laboral se relacionaba positivamente con ambos conceptos. Además, siguiendo las predicciones del proceso de erosión (uno de los dos procesos psicosociales que predice el Modelo RED), la adicción al trabajo se relacionaba positivamente con la sobrecarga laboral y con el conflicto trabajo-familia (i.e., resultados negativos), y negativamente con la satisfacción laboral. Sin embargo, siguiendo las predicciones del proceso motivacional (el otro proceso que predice el modelo), el engagement se relacionaba positivamente con la satisfacción laboral y con el compromiso organizacional (i.e., resultados positivos). MANOVAs adicionales

revelaron que la autoeficacia laboral se relacionaba realmente con la dimensión trabajar excesivamente, pero no con la otra dimensión, esto es, trabajar compulsivamente.

### **Implicaciones teóricas**

#### *(1) Modelo heurístico de la adicción al trabajo*

Se han propuesto diferentes interpretaciones de cómo la adicción al trabajo se estructura y cómo se desarrolla, basándose en marcos teóricos como: teorías de la adicción, cognitivas, de sistema-familiar o de aprendizaje (Burke, Matthiesen, y Pallesen, 2006; McMillan, O'Driscoll, y Burke, 2003). Aunque esas teorías no deberían considerarse exclusivas porque todas podrían ser útiles a la hora de explicar los múltiples factores que influyen en el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo, la investigación sobre el constructo necesitaría una base teórica consolidada y no solo diversos paradigmas sin aparente conexión. Sin embargo, también debería considerarse que la adicción al trabajo quizás sea demasiado compleja para ser explicada por un único marco teórico.

Una de las contribuciones teóricas más importantes de esta tesis es que mejora la comprensión de los factores que afectan a la adicción al trabajo. Con la finalidad de alcanzar esta mejor comprensión, el primer capítulo empírico ofrece un conjunto de hipótesis sobre los posibles antecedentes (e.g., valores laborales, autoeficacia laboral, presión de la empresa o refuerzo social) y consecuentes del constructo (e.g., problemas sociales, de salud o emocionales), conjunto que no está basado solo en la investigación previa, sino que también emergió del análisis cualitativo de la adicción al trabajo en sí mismo. Por tanto, la contribución más significativa de este capítulo es que ofrece una interpretación general e inductiva de la adicción al trabajo que incluye todas esas variables en un mismo conjunto. De esta forma, emergió un modelo heurístico con diversas hipótesis, algunas de las cuales han sido contrastadas en esta tesis.

#### *(2) Medición de la adicción al trabajo*

El estudio cualitativo de la adicción al trabajo confirmó principalmente dos resultados: (1) las semejanzas encontradas entre la adicción al trabajo y el engagement, las cuales indican que es recomendable estudiar ambos constructos con más detalle para poder discriminarlos correctamente; y (2) que la adicción al trabajo se podría considerar como un constructo bi-dimensional, lo cual coincide con la perspectiva de otros estudios que mostraron que la adicción al trabajo puede ser definida como la combinación de

trabajar excesivamente y trabajar compulsivamente (e.g., Schaufeli et al, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008).

Con la validación del DUWAS-10 (Schaufeli et al., 2009), la subyacente estructura bi-dimensional de la adicción al trabajo fue confirmada, lo que puede considerarse como otra implicación teórica importante de esta tesis. Como se ha explicado en el capítulo de revisión teórica, la medición de la adicción al trabajo a nivel científico se ha caracterizado principalmente por la utilización de dos instrumentos: el WART (Robinson, 1989), y el WorkBATT (Spence y Robbins, 1992). Las deficiencias que algunos estudios encontraron con respecto a estos dos cuestionarios hicieron que surgiera otra herramienta de medición de la adicción al trabajo, el DUWAS-10. Además, la validación de este cuestionario reducido fue el primer estudio que validó la estructura factorial del mismo con muestra española, lo que ha contribuido notablemente a la mejora de la medición del concepto. Así mismo, aunque se esperaban algunas pequeñas diferencias en función del país, el DUWAS-10 mostró que su estructura de dos factores era bastante similar independientemente del país (España u Holanda), lo que sugiere la posibilidad de considerar a las dos dimensiones para propósitos teóricos y de investigación. El estudio también proporcionó evidencia sobre la solidez de la versión breve del DUWAS. Por tanto, con este estudio se ha avanzado tanto en el conocimiento como en la comprensión de la adicción al trabajo, ya que confirma que la adicción al trabajo se puede medir desde una aproximación *negativa y bi-dimensional* utilizando el DUWAS-10.

### *(3) Personalidad en la adicción al trabajo y en el engagement*

Otra implicación teórica importante de esta tesis está relacionada con los descubrimientos sobre la relación entre personalidad y adicción al trabajo (y engagement). El Capítulo 5 fue el primer estudio que incluyó predicciones para todas las dimensiones de los Cinco Grandes de personalidad teniendo en cuenta a la adicción al trabajo y al engagement juntos. Los resultados mostraron patrones diferentes de personalidad para cada constructo. En el caso de la adicción al trabajo, estabilidad emocional y afabilidad resultaron ser las dimensiones más importantes (i.e., bajos niveles en esas dimensiones se relacionan con altos niveles de adicción al trabajo), mientras que todas las dimensiones de los Cinco Grandes fueron importantes para el engagement (i.e., a mayores niveles en las cinco dimensiones, mayores niveles de engagement). Si se interpretan estos resultados, se podría especular que el trabajo

excesivo y compulsivo, sin experimentar disfrute por hacerlo, depende de rasgos subyacentes neuróticos y estables que hacen referencia a inseguridades, a miedo al fracaso o incluso a miedo al éxito (Kets de Vries, 2005), lo que se correspondería con bajos niveles de estabilidad emocional. También podemos argumentar que los adictos al trabajo se caracterizarían por ser poco cooperativos y poco armoniosos socialmente (Graciano y Eisenberg, 1997), por mostrar interés por estar por encima de los demás, y por tener una tendencia a manipular tanto en su trabajo como en sus relaciones sociales.

Los resultados obtenidos en cuanto a la adicción al trabajo fueron similares a aquellos que se obtuvieron en el estudio de Burke et al. (2006), en el que dos de las dimensiones de los Cinco Grandes también se relacionaron con la adicción al trabajo (i.e., altos niveles de extraversión se relacionaron con altos niveles de implicación laboral, y bajos niveles de estabilidad emocional se relacionaron con altos niveles de compulsividad). Recientemente, Andreassen, Hetlan y Pallesen (2010) también han investigado el rol que ejercen las dimensiones de los Cinco Grandes en la adicción al trabajo. Sus resultados confirman los hallazgos encontrados en el Capítulo 5, esto es, la relevancia de las dimensiones de estabilidad emocional y afabilidad. Además, estos autores recalcan que la adicción al trabajo también se caracteriza por altos niveles de responsabilidad. Aunque en general los resultados sobre la relación entre adicción al trabajo y personalidad son bastante similares, hay algunas diferencias en los patrones encontrados. Por esta razón, la investigación futura debería considerar el rol ejercido por la extraversión y la responsabilidad con el fin de mostrar cuál es su impacto real en la adicción al trabajo. Por otro lado, los resultados obtenidos para el engagement fueron similares a los obtenidos en el estudio de Langelaan et al. (2006), el cual mostró que la estabilidad emocional y la extraversión (solo se analizaron estos dos rasgos) se relacionaban con el engagement. Los trabajadores engaged serían más extravertidos y emocionalmente estables que los trabajadores no engaged.

#### *(4) Autoeficacia laboral, el Modelo RED y la adicción al trabajo*

Tal y como indica el capítulo de revisión teórica (ver Capítulo 1), las explicaciones actuales sobre adicción al trabajo enfatizan las disposiciones individuales, socio-culturales y refuerzan los antecedentes, que van desde factores de aprendizaje y de personalidad a motivos menos conscientes (e.g., McMillan et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2007). Uno de esos antecedentes de la adicción al trabajo es la autoeficacia laboral, que de acuerdo con los resultados obtenidos en el Capítulo 6, correlaciona positivamente

con la adicción al trabajo y con el engagement. Para explicar el rol ejercido por la autoeficacia laboral en la adicción al trabajo, se extendió el *Modelo RED* (Salanova et al., en prensa) incluyendo la adicción al trabajo dentro de las predicciones del proceso de erosión. Los resultados revelaron que la autoeficacia laboral se relacionaba positivamente con la adicción al trabajo y con el engagement, que a su vez se relacionaron positivamente con la sobrecarga de trabajo y el conflicto trabajo-familia, y con la satisfacción laboral y el compromiso organizacional, respectivamente. Por tanto, por una parte, a mayor autoeficacia mayor adicción al trabajo, y a su vez, mayor sobrecarga de trabajo y mayor conflicto trabajo-familia. En otras palabras, sentirse competente en el trabajo se podría traducir en trabajar demasiado e incrementar las probabilidades de convertirse en una persona adicta al trabajo. En este sentido, la autoeficacia laboral se podría considerar un factor de vulnerabilidad para la adicción al trabajo. Además, la adicción al trabajo lleva a la sobrecarga de trabajo y al conflicto trabajo-familia porque los adictos al trabajo son capaces de aumentar su trabajo día a día, dedicando cada vez menos tiempo a actividades sociales y de ocio, actividades que sacrifican para poder disponer de más tiempo para trabajar (Bonebright, Clay, y Ankenmann, 2000). Por otro lado, a mayor autoeficacia laboral mayor engagement, y a su vez mayor satisfacción laboral y compromiso organizacional. De hecho, existe evidencia empírica que indica que las creencias de eficacia actúan como un mecanismo auto-motivador: las personas que perciben un alto nivel de competencias, se establecen metas más altas y se motivan más para superar los obstáculos (Bandura, 2001; Garrido, 2000).

De acuerdo con estos efectos opuestos, parece que las consecuencias de la autoeficacia podrían tener un efecto doble que también podría ser significativamente diferente. La autoeficacia aumentaría el engagement y por consiguiente la satisfacción laboral y el compromiso organizacional, lo que representaría la parte referida a las consecuencias positivas. Pero, sin embargo, la autoeficacia podría también aumentar la adicción al trabajo, cuyas consecuencias podrían incluir sobrecarga de trabajo y conflicto trabajo-familia. Que la autoeficacia laboral tenga un efecto positivo o negativo puede depender de otras variables como los rasgos de personalidad. Por ejemplo, de acuerdo con el modelo de los Cinco Grandes (McCrae y John, 1992), altos niveles en la dimensión de compulsividad suponen la tendencia a ser auto-disciplinado, fiable y ordenado, lo que está muy relacionado con lo que se considera como tener ‘buena moral en el trabajo’ o ‘ética del trabajo’ (Andreassen et al., 2010). De esta forma, un



trabajador con estos rasgos y altos niveles de autoeficacia laboral puede llegar a ser adicto al trabajo con mayor probabilidad que aquellos trabajadores con otro tipo de rasgos predominantes. Además, otra circunstancia que podría afectar a la adicción al trabajo es el desequilibrio entre los niveles de autoeficacia en diferentes dominios, esto es, tener mayor autoeficacia en el trabajo que en otros contextos como los familiares. Con respecto a esto último, Bandura (1997) explica que las personas con creencias de eficacia altas dedican más tiempo y esfuerzo en aquellas actividades en las que se sienten autoeficaces, lo que podría explicar la relación entre autoeficacia laboral y exceso de trabajo (ver Capítulo 6). Al igual que un trabajador engaged, que tiene altos niveles de autoeficacia laboral (e.g., Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker, y Salanova, 2007), un adicto al trabajo podría sentirse muy autoeficaz en su trabajo y, de esta forma, dedicar más tiempo a trabajar que a realizar otro tipo de tareas. En conclusión, este resultado constituye otra contribución teórica significativa porque indica que la autoeficacia laboral no solo tiene efectos positivos en los trabajadores, sino que también puede tener efectos negativos dependiendo de su interacción con otras variables.

#### *(5) Conceptualización de la adicción al trabajo*

En términos generales, esta tesis ha proporcionado evidencia para clarificar la conceptualización de la adicción al trabajo. En primer lugar, la adicción al trabajo constituye un tipo de bienestar laboral en sí misma según la combinación de las taxonomías afectivas y cognitivas de bienestar más relevantes – a nivel científico – propuestas en el Capítulo 3. El perfil resultante de esta combinación fue muy similar al perfil que se podría haber confeccionado si hubiésemos puesto en común los resultados obtenidos en estudios previos (e.g., McMillan et al., 2003; Porter, 2006).

En segundo lugar, esta tesis ha clarificado la relación entre adicción al trabajo y engagement. Los resultados obtenidos confirmaron la investigación previa sobre las diferencias entre ambos conceptos (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). De esta forma, ahora tenemos evidencia suficiente para afirmar que los dos pueden ser considerados factores que se solapan por el rol que ejerce la dimensión de absorción. Al igual que ocurrió en otro estudio (i.e., Schaufeli et al., 2008), en esta tesis la absorción saturó en ambos constructos, y no solo en el engagement, lo que confirmó que los adictos al trabajo y los trabajadores engaged se caracterizan por sus altos niveles de absorción cuando trabajan. De hecho, la adicción al trabajo se caracteriza por no poder desconectar del trabajo (McMillan, O’Driscoll, Marsh, y Brady, 2001) y por un deseo

compulsivo por trabajar (Porter, 1996), y estas descripciones claramente se solapan con la absorción. Además, este resultado reforzó la idea de que el vigor y la dedicación se pueden considerar como las dimensiones centrales del engagement (Schaufeli y Bakker, 2004). Aunque hay algunas características comunes entre la adicción al trabajo y el engagement (i.e., no solo la absorción, también la autoeficacia laboral), el hecho de que presenten relaciones diferentes con los rasgos de personalidad y con variables como la felicidad o la salud percibida, fueron indicadores de que ambos constructos son dos estados mentales independientes relacionados con el trabajo, donde la adicción al trabajo se puede considerar una experiencia negativa y el engagement una experiencia positiva.

Por tanto, dado que la adicción al trabajo se relaciona negativamente con variables positivas (e.g., bajos niveles de felicidad y satisfacción laboral), se puede destacar la condición negativa de esta experiencia psicosocial. En este punto, merecen atención especial los resultados obtenidos en el Capítulo 2 con respecto a las consecuencias positivas de la adicción al trabajo. Aunque en este capítulo se identificaron algunas consecuencias positivas de la misma (i.e., satisfacción laboral, flow y respeto), los adictos entrevistados hablaron sobre las consecuencias negativas que genera esta adicción (e.g., problemas físicos, ansiedad o culpabilidad) durante más tiempo. Para entender mejor la adicción al trabajo como un constructo negativo, a lo largo de la tesis se han destacado las diferencias que existen en las interpretaciones o definiciones que consideran que el concepto puede ser positivo (e.g., Buelens y Poelmans, 2004; Maslowitch, 1980). Además, en los diferentes capítulos la adicción al trabajo se ha relacionado negativamente con la salud percibida y la felicidad, y de forma positiva con variables negativas como la sobrecarga de trabajo y el conflicto trabajo-familia. Estos resultados corroboran la evidencia encontrada en estudios previos sobre la naturaleza negativa de la adicción al trabajo (e.g., Brady, Vodanovich, y Rotunda, 2008; Burke, 1999b).

Finalmente, se puede identificar una cuarta contribución importante en la conceptualización de la adicción al trabajo. En el Capítulo 2 fue remarcable el rol ejercido por los mecanismos de auto-regulación de la adicción al trabajo (i.e., negación y justificación). Parece que los adictos al trabajo niegan su adicción y que experimentan mayores problemas en sus relaciones íntimas fuera del ambiente laboral que las personas no adictas. Aunque en la investigación previa la negación ya se consideró

como un posible obstáculo en el tratamiento de la adicción al trabajo (e.g., Porter, 1996), en este capítulo se obtuvo evidencia empírica sobre este mecanismo por primera vez. Sin embargo, nuestros descubrimientos deberían ser considerados con cautela de acuerdo a los resultados obtenidos en el estudio de McMillan, O'Driscoll, y Brady (2004). En este estudio, los adictos al trabajo parecían poseer una percepción razonablemente precisa de sus niveles de adicción al trabajo. Desde un punto de vista teórico, y dada la mera posibilidad de negación y justificación, algunos autores como Mudrack y Naughton (2001) proponen que para minimizar el impacto de estos dos mecanismos en las respuestas a los ítems de los cuestionarios, sería mejor preguntar sobre actividades de trabajo específicas (y obviamente no sobre adicción al trabajo), en lugar de preguntar sobre conductas de trabajo que fueran optativas (los adictos al trabajo que nieguen lo que les sucede simplemente contestarían 'no'). Ambos mecanismos (i.e., negación y justificación) deberían ser controlados para evitar que los trabajadores falsearan sus medidas de autoinforme. Una posibilidad para controlar estos sesgos podría ser a través de la obtención de información del trabajador (e.g., la cantidad de tiempo que pasan trabajando, el tipo de relación que mantienen con otros trabajadores), utilizando informes alternativos procedentes de compañeros de trabajo o de familiares.

### **Implicaciones prácticas**

Aunque existen diversas propuestas sobre cómo prevenir la adicción al trabajo (i.e., Llorens, Del Líbano, Salanova, y Schaufeli, 2006; Poppelreuter, 2006), no hay prácticamente investigación al respecto, por lo que es difícil aportar evidencia empírica sobre la efectividad de alguna medida de prevención. Esta tesis ofrece a los profesionales diversas pistas que los pueden orientar en el campo del diagnóstico y la intervención de la adicción al trabajo.

En primer lugar, los resultados de esta tesis ofrecen evidencia de dos formas diferentes de evaluar la adicción al trabajo. Una de ellas es el método tradicional de autoinforme en el que cada trabajador responde en función de lo que opina. El DUWAS-10 ha mostrado que tiene unas propiedades psicométricas apropiadas para medir la adicción al trabajo con fiabilidad. Además desde un punto de vista más aplicado, los resultados obtenidos sugieren que la versión breve del cuestionario DUWAS puede ser utilizada por los profesionales como un instrumento para identificar a los adictos al trabajo (Salanova, Del Líbano, Llorens, Schaufeli, y Fidalgo, 2008). El segundo método hace referencia a la metodología cualitativa; esto es, a las entrevistas

semi-estructuradas que se utilizaron para obtener información relacionada con la dedicación laboral (Capítulo 2). Esta aproximación dual de la medición del constructo beneficia a la comunidad científica porque utiliza diferentes medios para recabar información, lo que permite a los investigadores entender la adicción al trabajo desde una perspectiva mucho más amplia. Además, la utilización de un diseño cualitativo permitió estudiar la adicción al trabajo según las nuevas tendencias y consejos de investigación. De acuerdo con McMillan y O’Driscoll (2006), es tiempo de dejar atrás los estudios de papel y lápiz, y adoptar metodologías de investigación más sofisticadas tales como la triangulación de fuentes de información, los diseños compuestos (cualitativos y cuantitativos), y epistemologías para dilucidar los factores que mantienen y perpetúan la adicción al trabajo.

Y por último, aunque no por ello menos importante, los resultados de esta tesis indican que la adicción al trabajo se debería prevenir en el contexto laboral para reducir sus efectos negativos sobre la salud de los trabajadores. Inversamente, el engagement se debería promocionar para contribuir al bienestar y a la salud de éstos. La intervención primaria de la adicción al trabajo – esto es, la reducción del riesgo de adicción al trabajo entre trabajadores saludables, no adictos al trabajo – se limita básicamente a cambiar la cultura organizacional. En esencia, la cultura en la que los trabajadores que dedican más de 60 horas a trabajar por semana son considerados como “héroes”, y además actúan como modelos de conducta, debería reemplazarse por una cultura que estimule trabajar de forma inteligente más que de forma excesiva y que, a la vez, valore un equilibrio saludable trabajo-vida privada. Esta tarea no es fácil de llevar a cabo porque aquellos que son responsables de este cambio de cultura son muchas veces adictos al trabajo (Van Wijhe, Peeters, y Schaufeli, 2010).

Por lo que se refiere a la intervención secundaria – que se centra en aquellas personas que tienen riesgo de ser adictas al trabajo – básicamente se pueden aplicar dos tipos de estrategias según los resultados obtenidos en esta tesis. En primer lugar, en los procedimientos de selección de personal, los candidatos al trabajo pueden ser evaluados a nivel de las características de personalidad que los hacen más vulnerables para desarrollar adicción al trabajo, tales como responsabilidad, necesidad de logro, baja estabilidad emocional, compulsividad y baja afabilidad. Sin embargo, en la actualidad desaconsejamos utilizar este tipo de evaluación, ya que – al margen de los problemas éticos que pueda conllevar – se necesita más investigación para establecer los nexos de

unión concretos entre adicción al trabajo y factores de personalidad. Esto nos lleva a la segunda opción, más realista: aumentar los niveles de autoeficacia, no solo en el trabajo, sino también en otros dominios. Promover la autoeficacia solo en el contexto de trabajo puede no ser siempre una buena estrategia para aumentar el bienestar, particularmente cuando las organizaciones no sean conscientes del posible rol negativo que puede ejercer la autoeficacia bajo ciertas circunstancias (e.g., como predictor potencial de la adicción al trabajo). Por este motivo, sería interesante para las organizaciones complementar el entrenamiento tradicional en autoeficacia con información sobre sus posibles consecuencias negativas, y también con instrucciones en otros aspectos relevantes tales como cómo mantener un equilibrio saludable entre los contextos de trabajo y no-trabajo. Además, esta tesis ofrece a los profesionales evidencia sobre los principales mecanismos psicológicos que mantienen las conductas adictivas (i.e., negación y justificación). Estos mecanismos deberían tenerse siempre en cuenta para aumentar las probabilidades de prevenir el desarrollo de la adicción al trabajo.

Por lo tanto, la naturaleza negativa de la adicción al trabajo es un punto relevante que debería ser considerado no solo por los propios trabajadores, sino también por los dirigentes de las organizaciones. Solo aquellas organizaciones que se preocupen por el bienestar de sus trabajadores alcanzarán todas sus metas y ofrecerán un rendimiento excelente. En la comunidad científica, este tipo de organizaciones ha recibido el nombre de ‘Organizaciones Saludables’ (Salanova, 2008), y se caracterizan por ser organizaciones que realizan esfuerzos sistemáticos, planificados y proactivos para mejorar la salud de los trabajadores a través de buenas prácticas relacionadas con la mejora de las tareas (e.g., con el diseño y rediseño de puestos), del ambiente social (e.g., canales de comunicación abiertos), y de la organización (e.g., estrategias de conciliación trabajo-familia) (Salanova, 2008; Salanova y Schaufeli, 2009).

En definitiva, con toda esta información los profesionales serán capaces de proponer estrategias de intervención específicas para prevenir la adicción al trabajo, y también de ofrecer herramientas más precisas para promocionar conductas y actitudes positivas en el ambiente de trabajo.

### **Limitaciones, fortalezas y retos para la investigación futura**

Aunque esta tesis ha obtenido resultados muy interesantes para seguir avanzando en el estudio de la adicción al trabajo, no es menos importante mencionar también las limitaciones que se han de intentar superar en futuros estudios. La primera limitación se

refiere al número de expertos que analizaron los datos cualitativos obtenidos con las entrevistas a los adictos al trabajo en el Capítulo 2. Solo un experto analizó los datos obtenidos con las entrevistas, por lo que el factor de la subjetividad no estuvo tan controlado como si esas entrevistas hubiesen sido analizadas por más de un experto. Sin embargo, esta limitación se superó a través del análisis de las entrevistas en dos periodos temporales diferentes, así como utilizando una metodología innovadora y más neutral: el programa de análisis cualitativo NVivo-8. Este programa sistematiza y clasifica toda la información cualitativa de forma más objetiva que a través de los métodos cualitativos tradicionales y asegura, por tanto, la fiabilidad de los resultados.

En segundo lugar, los cuatro estudios que utilizaron metodología cuantitativa se basaron exclusivamente en información proveniente de autoinformes, lo que implicaba que podía existir un sesgo producido por la varianza común. Éste es un tema recurrente en la investigación en el campo de la Psicología Organizacional y del Trabajo. Las medidas de autoinforme se consideran que están influidas por factores subjetivos (Spector, 1992), por el bienestar (Coyne, 1994), y por diferencias individuales (Burke et al., 1993). Para superar esta limitación, se calculó el test de Harman en todos los estudios, y los resultados revelaron que el sesgo por la varianza común no era una limitación en ninguno de los capítulos (e.g., Iverson y Maguire, 2000).

La tercera limitación se refiere a la utilización de muestras de conveniencia en todos los estudios. Las muestras podrían no ser representativas, y hacer difícil saber si los resultados obtenidos se deben a la composición de la muestra o a los factores controlados del estudio. Consecuentemente los resultados podrían estar sesgados por las características de la muestra. Investigaciones futuras deberían incluir grupos profesionales específicos para controlar el efecto de esta variable en los resultados.

La última limitación de esta tesis se refiere a los modelos estructurados utilizados para contrastar alguna de las hipótesis. Como todos los estudios fueron transversales, en los modelos evaluados se asumía una perspectiva unidireccional de las relaciones entre las variables, por lo que no se pudo inferir ningún tipo de causalidad. Para poder inferir causalidad sería útil utilizar, como un reto para el futuro, diseños de corte longitudinal en lugar de transversal.

Otro reto para la investigación futura implica la comprensión de un número mayor de antecedentes y consecuentes de la adicción al trabajo. Aunque algunos de ellos se han debatido en el estudio cualitativo (ver Capítulo 2) y, por consiguiente, en los

capítulos siguientes, se necesitan más estudios empíricos que estudien con mayor profundidad antecedentes como los valores laborales y el aprendizaje vicario, o consecuencias como el respeto y la ansiedad. Además, se ha especulado (i.e., Schaufeli et al., 2008) que mecanismos psicológicos subyacentes como los sistemas motivacionales, podrían influir en la adicción al trabajo. Tales sistemas podrían estar parcialmente relacionados con los valores laborales, y de esta forma facilitar la explicación del rol que ejercen en la adicción al trabajo. Más concretamente, y considerando la adicción al trabajo en comparación con el engagement (como se ha venido haciendo en esta tesis de forma consistente), los adictos al trabajo probablemente estén motivados por *metas de rendimiento*, mientras que los trabajadores engaged es probable que estén motivados por *metas de dominio* (Elliot, 2005). De forma parecida, se podría argumentar que la conducta de los adictos al trabajo podría estar regulada principalmente por el denominado como ‘foco de prevención’, mientras que los trabajadores engaged estaría regulados por el ‘foco de promoción’. Si nos basamos en la teoría del foco de regulación (Higgins, 2005), se podría especular que los adictos al trabajo trabajan de forma excesiva y compulsiva porque necesitan evitar sentirse mal (i.e., culpables o inútiles) cuando no están trabajando (*motivación de evitación*). Sin embargo, los trabajadores engaged trabajarían duro porque con ello aumentarían sus oportunidades para aprender y desarrollarse (*motivación de aproximación*). Por tanto, sería aconsejable que la investigación futura explorara los sistemas motivacionales de la adicción al trabajo con mayor meticulosidad.

Mención aparte se tendría que hacer para el estudio del flow en la adicción al trabajo. En el Capítulo 2, muchos de los adictos al trabajo explicaron que ellos experimentaban flow a menudo cuando estaban trabajando. Ello hace que la primera cuestión que se nos plantea es si el flow actúa entonces como antecedente o consecuente de la adicción al trabajo. Ambas interpretaciones son posibles. El flow podría actuar como “*la llama que prende la mecha*” en las primeras etapas de la adicción al trabajo, pero también se podría producir como resultado del trabajo y ser más habitual en adictos al trabajo que en otro tipo de trabajadores. Según los teóricos del flow, la primera opción parece ser la más probable. Existe evidencia que sugiere que las conductas adictivas se forman cuando la repetición de una conducta genera experiencias de flow (Chow y Ting, 2003). En cualquier caso, la principal contradicción aquí es que el flow se define en términos de placer, mientras que los adictos al trabajo se sienten mal debido a su adicción. Investigación futura debería explorar con mayor detalle el rol que ejerce

el flow en el proceso de adicción al trabajo para tratar de dar luz a esta contradicción con datos empíricos y explicaciones teóricas.

Finalmente, me gustaría concluir esta sección destacando la variedad de metodologías, muestras y análisis estadísticos utilizados para desarrollar cada uno de los capítulos de esta tesis. También es remarcable el peso del capítulo de revisión teórica, principalmente porque determinó la necesidad de realizar una tesis sobre adicción al trabajo.

### *Nota Final*

Esta tesis empezó planteando diversas preguntas de investigación sobre adicción al trabajo que tenían que ser contrastadas estudio por estudio. El principal objetivo de esta tesis me llevo a pretender obtener una comprensión más profunda de cuándo el trabajo puede llegar a ser “la única razón para vivir”. Con esta tesis he contribuido a la comprensión y medida de la adicción al trabajo analizando sus dimensiones principales, he validado un nuevo cuestionario breve para evaluar la adicción al trabajo, y he estudiado la relación entre la adicción al trabajo y otras variables relacionadas, que según investigación previa, podían ser relevantes a la hora de explicar el constructo. Sin embargo, todavía se necesita más investigación tanto desde el punto de vista práctico como desde el punto de vista teórico. Por un lado, esta tesis ofrece a los profesionales información relevante sobre adicción al trabajo, que deberán utilizar para disminuir su expansión en las organizaciones, sobre todo considerando los tiempos difíciles que muchas organizaciones (y personas) están actualmente viviendo. Por otro lado, los investigadores han de ser conscientes de que es muy importante continuar avanzando en el estudio de la adicción al trabajo, principalmente porque es necesario contribuir en la mejora de la salud psicosocial de los trabajadores.

Los tiempos cambian y, con ellos la gente tendrá cada vez más oportunidades de trabajar “en cualquier momento y en cualquier lugar”. Como uno de sus principales retos, en el actual contexto de cambio, los investigadores y profesionales tendrán que conseguir que los trabajadores puedan trabajar duro, pero sin caer en la compulsión. El viaje hacia el corazón de la adicción al trabajo se ha iniciado con esta tesis, pero la investigación sobre adicción al trabajo todavía tiene un largo camino por recorrer.



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