

## **Predicting Work Motivation Through Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions: The Explanatory Role of Heavy Work Investment**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates the relationship among job attitudes (job satisfaction and turnover intentions), heavy work investment (work engagement and workaholism), and work motivation (promotion focus and prevention focus). We develop a structural equation model to analyze data collected from a sample of banking employees. Our findings show that job satisfaction is a good predictor of work engagement (positive work investment), which, in turn, is related to progressive motivation (promotion focus). On the other hand, turnover intentions predict workaholism, which leads to preventive focus (waning motivation).*

**Keywords:** heavy work investment, workaholism, work engagement, job satisfaction, prevention focus, promotion focus, turnover intentions.

**JEL classification:** M12, M14, M19.

### **1. Introduction**

*Heavy work investment (HWI) is identified with work engagement (as a positive perspective) and workaholism (as a negative perspective) (Caesens, Stinglhamber, & Luybaert, 2014; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Its significance is evident from the changing ways in which work is carried out. These changes can relate to organizational structure, global competition, the complexity of the work itself, and technological shifts; the latter is probably the most important recent change. What drives employees to work hard, however, remains a largely under-investigated area (van Beek, Taris, Schaufeli, & Brenninkmeijer, 2014).*

The literature focuses on the motivation for individual hard work (van Beek et al., 2014) while HWI is ascribed to a passion for work (Houllfort, Philippe, Vallerand, & Ménard, 2014). Most of the outcomes of HWI are personal, such as stress (Spence & Robins, 1992), burnout

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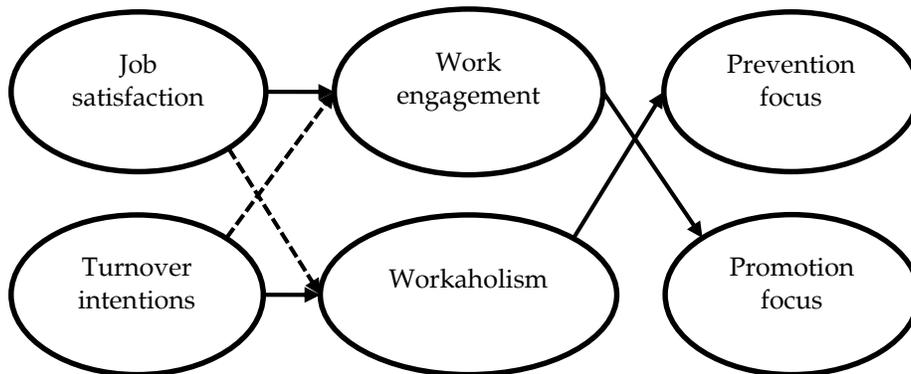
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(Schaufeli et al., 2008), work-life conflict (Bonebright, Clay, & Ankenmann, 2000), job satisfaction (van Beek et al., 2014), and wellbeing (Casesens et al., 2014). However, none of the studies cited above identify these outcomes as possible antecedents of HWI. Against this backdrop, we assume that job satisfaction and low turnover intentions could explain employees' willingness to work with extra effort and persistence. Our conceptual assumptions are based on regulatory focus theory (RFT) (Higgins, 1997, 1998) and affective event theory (Crede et al., 2007). The study seeks to explain the mechanism through which motivated employees engage in HWI and how job satisfaction and low turnover intentions mediate this relationship.

## 2. A Model of HWI

We draw on Snir and Harpaz's (2012) two-dimensional model of HWI. This comprises (i) situational hard work, which is employer-directed, backed by financial incentives and external predictors, and where the absence of these predictors would eliminate the presence of HWI; and (ii) dispositional hard work, which is backed by internal factors, in this case workaholism (an addiction to work) and work devotion (a passion for work). The model stipulates that dispositional factors are associated with steady HWI compared to situational factors. Similarly, individuals guided by situational work are more likely to reciprocate positively through HWI to the benefits offered by their employer. The proposed model is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Hypothesized research model**



Note: Dotted line shows weak-relation hypothesis.

## **2.1. Workaholism**

Schaufeli, Shimazu, and Taris (2009) define workaholism as the “tendency to work excessively hard and being obsessed with work, which manifests itself in working compulsively” (p. 322). It is associated with a number of negative outcomes, including strain and other health complaints (Burke, 2000), and a poor social life and life dissatisfaction (Bonebright et al., 2000). However, the relationship between workaholism and other outcomes needs further investigation. For instance, workaholism is observed to have a positive relationship with job satisfaction (Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009), while other studies point to a negative relationship (Burke & MacDermid, 1999). The means through which job-satisfied individuals become addicted to work, however, remains underexplored.

Turnover intentions are also seen as a positive consequence of workaholism (Burke & MacDermid, 1999; van Beek et al., 2014), but not necessarily as an antecedent of HWI and its two dimensions. This study attempts to fill this gap.

## **2.2. Work Engagement**

Work engagement is defined as the positive, fulfilled state of mind associated with work, which scores high on (i) vigor (level of energy, willingness, resilience, and persistence in work), (ii) dedication (sense of significance, high level of work involvement, enthusiasm at work, pride, inspiration, and challenge), and (iii) absorption (concentration on work) (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá, & Bakker, 2002).

Engagement is seen as a predictor of many positive outcomes, including job satisfaction (van Beek et al., 2014, Schaufeli et al., 2008), organizational commitment (Schaufeli et al., 2008), and willingness to remain with an organization (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus, work engagement is a positive form of HWI. In this context, we examine how various job attitudes can influence engagement.

## **2.3. Work Motivation**

The study looks at two aspects of motivation: prevention focus and promotion focus (see Higgins, 1997, 1998). Prevention focus refers to the intention of avoiding certain tasks and roles. The two perspectives differ in terms of the need being met, goals attained, and psychological states (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). Prevention-focused employees seek to minimize

their chances of failure rather than maximize their chances of success. Thus, they are always sensitive to the pleasurable absence and painful presence of negative outcomes, and more likely, therefore, to be workaholic.

Individuals with a promotional focus tend to deal with promotion and growth-related needs. They are likely to remain goal-focused and sensitive to the pleasurable presence and painful absence of positive consequences. Such individuals may take on extra work roles to attain their goals: success at work increases their enthusiasm and productivity, while failure causes dissatisfaction and disappointment. They are more likely, therefore, to be work-engaged.

RFT suggests that employees with a promotion focus tend to match their desired goals against those obtained, while those with a prevention focus seek to avoid mismatching their desired goals against those obtained.

#### ***2.4. Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intentions, HWI, and Work Motivation***

Job satisfaction refers to the state in which employees respond positively to their work (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005), yielding better outcomes, both personal and professional. Under RFT, employees with higher levels of job satisfaction are more likely to engage with their work than to avoid it. Previous studies have investigated this relationship the other way around (see van Beek et al., 2014; van Beek et al., 2012). The idea can be explained by the job demands–resources (JDR) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2008), which assumes that the provision of job resources motivates employees into producing better results vis-à-vis their job demands; in turn, they feel more satisfied with the work they are doing. Thus, job-satisfied employees will be more inclined toward work engagement than workaholism (H-1).

Employees with high turnover intentions are likely to be in the process of finding an alternative job. This is a negative psychological state in which the worker focuses on avoiding negative consequences rather than facing positive ones. The JDR model posits that turnover intentions are an outcome of excessive job demands and too few job resources, thus creating negative perceptions of the job and reducing its associated self-worth and value. Thus, employees with high turnover intentions are more likely to be associated with workaholism than with work engagement (H-2).

Given that the prevention and promotion aspects of motivation are based on individuals' perception of their goals, RFT is used to explain the correlation between motivation and HWI (van Beek et al., 2014) in the context of workaholism and work engagement. There are two reasons to argue that these constructs are related. The first is that workaholism covers negative personality traits such as neuroticism (Burke, Matthiesen, & Pallesen, 2006). Persons with neurotic traits are likely to report insecurity and a tendency toward stress because they are sensitive to the presence or absence of negative outcomes. Elliot and Sheldon (1998) observe that such individuals also report low levels of motivation. The second reason is that these individuals pursue avoidance-related goals as workaholism develops in the presence of insecurity and low self-worth (Mudrack, 2006). They will seek to avoid negative consequences (Judge et al., 2005; Houliort et al., 2014). Thus, we can expect workaholism to be positively correlated with prevention focus (H-3).

Work engagement, on the other hand, is positively associated with personal resources such as self-efficacy and self-esteem (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). Work-engaged employees are confident of their abilities, optimistic, and focused on self-concordant goals (Elliot & Sheldon, 1998). They are, therefore, more likely to pursue a promotion focus (Judge et al., 2005) (H-4).

### **3. Methodology**

The study sample comprised banking sector employees drawn from eight banks (39 branches). In each case, we sought permission from the bank's HR department or its operation/branch manager to conduct the survey. In all, we contacted 635 employees, of which 479 completed the online survey. Respondents ranged from branch and sales managers to operation and area managers, as well as other managerial and mid-level employees. Of the 479 respondents, 313 were male, with an average age of 35.37 years. The remaining female respondents were 33.63 years old, on average. The large majority had a Master's degree (88.9 percent) and more than ten years' experience (93 percent), on average having worked with that particular bank for 3.1 years.

The survey was designed using well-established measures. The job satisfaction and turnover intentions scales were adapted from Van Veldhoven and Meijman's (1994) three-item scale, containing the items "I am satisfied with my current job" and "I intend to change my job next year." Both were measured on a seven-point scale (where 1 = completely dissatisfied and 7 = completely satisfied).

Work engagement and workaholism were operationalized using the work addiction scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2009), consisting of two dimensions: (i) working excessively (with nine items such as “I seem to be in a hurry and racing against the clock”) and (ii) working compulsively (with seven items such as “I feel there is something inside me that drives me to work hard”). Both measures were recorded on a four-point scale (where 1 = almost never and 4 = almost always).

Work engagement was operationalized using nine items on the Utrecht work engagement scale (see Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006), based on three criteria: (i) vigor (“At work, I feel strong and vigorous”), (ii) absorption (“I am immersed in my work”), and (iii) dedication (“I am enthusiastic about my job”). These were measured on a six-point scale (where 6 = always and 0 = never).

Work motivation was measured by ten items drawn from Lockwood, Jordan, and Kunda (2002), based on two dimensions: (i) “I frequently think about how I can prevent failures in my life” and (ii) “I frequently imagine how I will achieve my hopes and aspirations”). These were measured on a five-point scale (where 1 = “not at all true of me” and 5 = “very true of me”).

The data collected was analyzed using a structural equation model. Following Byrne (2009), we employed maximum likelihood estimation to determine the model’s goodness of fit, estimating the  $\chi^2$  test statistic, the normed fit index, comparative fit index, and root mean square error of approximation. In order to avoid the issues associated with common method variance, the study relied on the guidelines set by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003).

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

As Table 1 shows, the reliability analysis (where Cronbach’s alpha value =  $\infty$ ) indicates that all the measures used are reliable (0.734–0.889 > 0.70) (see Nunnally, 1978). The analysis of bivariate correlation reveals that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of work engagement ( $r = 0.585$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) as well as of workaholism ( $r = -0.346$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); it has a positive relationship with work engagement and a negative relationship with workaholism. Turnover intentions are also significantly correlated with work engagement ( $r = -0.193$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and workaholism ( $r = 0.416$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Again, turnover intentions are, as expected, significantly correlated with workaholism rather than work engagement.

Work engagement is strongly correlated with promotion focus ( $r = 0.521, p < 0.001$ ) instead of prevention focus ( $r = -0.101, p < 0.005$ ), while workaholism is strongly correlated with prevention focus ( $r = 0.469, p < 0.001$ ) instead of promotion focus ( $r = -0.13, p < 0.05$ ). A closer look at the demographic variables shows that none of them is associated with any of the predictors. Very few variables are associated with gender (for turnover intentions,  $r = -0.003, p < 0.05$ ), work engagement ( $r = -0.009, p < 0.05$ ), and prevention focus ( $r = 0.008, p < 0.05^{**}$ ). These relationships are significant but weak, and there is no need to control for these variables because they are unlikely to be relationship predictors (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

N = 379	Mean (SD)	∞	Correlation												
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
Job satisfaction	5.78 (0.88)	0.750	-												
Turnover intentions	5.30 (0.95)	0.734	-0.135**	-											
Work engagement	4.83 (0.72)	0.889	0.585*	-0.193*	-										
Workaholism	4.49 (1.01)	0.921	-0.346**	0.416*	-0.488*	-									
Prevention focus	3.88 (0.83)	0.882	-0.211**	0.109**	-0.101**	0.469*	-								
Promotion focus	4.02 (0.48)	0.826	0.620*	-0.144**	0.521*	-0.13**	-0.329	-							
Age	35.4 (4.85)		-0.001	0.026	0.101	0.043	0.100	0.039*	-						
Gender	1.48 (0.32)		0.024	-0.003**	-0.009**	0.089	0.008**	0.042	0.001	-					
Qualification			0.039	-0.041	0.014**	0.010**	0.042**	0.009	0.021	0.004	-				
Experience	10.9 (1.95)		0.004	0.060**	0.021**	0.040**	0.031**	0.080	0.002	0.006	0.090	-			
Experience with current employer	3.04 (2.42)		0.013**	0.035**	0.032**	0.081	0.002**	0.040	0.011	0.010	0.014	0.06**			

Note:  $p < 0.001^*$ ,  $p < 0.05^{**}$ .

Source: Authors' calculations.

Before testing the model, we carry out a confirmatory analysis (Table 2) to assess the construct and discriminant validity of the measures. This indicates that all the models have an acceptable fit, but the six-factor model, which treats all the variables as independent constructs, has the highest fitness values ( $\chi^2 = 1,759.258$ ,  $df = 494$ ,  $CFI = 0.930$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.04$ ). All the factors are loaded on their constructs at an acceptable level (0.69–0.91,  $p < 0.001$ ). All the constructs meet the need for both convergent validity ( $AVE > 0.50$ ) and discriminant validity (the correlation among the constructs is 0.16–0.31  $< 0.85$ ) (see Kline, 2005). This enables us to move a step further with the path analysis and hypothesis testing.

**Table 2: Measurement models**

	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta\chi^2 (\Delta df)$	SRMR	CFI	RMSEA
One-factor model	1,641.783	473	-	0.10	0.88	0.09
WE + WA as single construct	1,684.861	475	43.078 (2)*	0.10	0.89	0.07
PROM + PREV focus as single construct	1,720.028	477	35.167 (2)*	0.09	0.90	0.06
Six-factor model	1,759.258	481	39.230 (4)*	0.08	0.93	0.04

Note: WE = work engagement, WA = workaholism, PROM = promotion focus, PREV = prevention focus, \*  $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Authors' calculations.

Table 3 shows that the model meets the required fitness indices.

**Table 3: Structural equation model**

	Standard value	Direct effect
$\chi^2$		1,419.66 (df = 478)
$\chi^2/df$	$\leq 3.00$	2.97
$\Delta \chi^2$		-
GFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.960
AGFI	$\geq 0.80$	0.910
CFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.933
NFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.909
NNFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.902
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08$	0.030

Source: Authors' calculations.

Table 4 shows that job satisfaction is more strongly correlated with work engagement ( $\beta = 0.53$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) than workaholism ( $\beta = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This result is in line with van Beek et al. (2014) and Caesens et al. (2014), but our study posits the relationship from a different perspective, where job satisfaction is assumed to be a stronger predictor of engagement than workaholism.

**Table 4: Hypothesis testing**

	Effects	Standardized regression weights	CR	p	Result
H1	JS-WE > JS-WA	0.53 and 0.18	3.790	**	Supported
H2	TI-WA > TI-WE	0.43 and 0.19	5.358	**	Supported
H3	WE-PROM > WE-PREV	0.45 and 0.15	4.993	*, **	Supported
H4	WA-PREV > WA-PROM	0.49 and 0.14	4.303	*	Supported

*Source:* Authors' calculations.

While the literature looks at turnover intentions in relation to workaholism and work engagement, but does not determine whether they predict either variable, we find that turnover intentions predict workaholism more strongly than work engagement. This supports H2.

The results also support H3 and H4. Work engagement increases promotion-focused motivation more strongly than prevention focus ( $\beta = 0.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Workaholism predicts prevention focus more strongly than promotion focus ( $\beta = 0.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and  $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Previous studies have looked solely at the uni-dimensional relationship, while this study proves that both work engagement and workaholism predict motivation.

## 5. Study Limitations and Conclusion

The study's foremost limitation concerns the sample selection. While the results may be representative of the banking industry, how well they can be applied to other sectors needs further investigation. Moreover, we do not consider whether the relationship between HWI and employee outcomes – job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and wellbeing – is strengthened by individual and organizational factors such as personality, person–organization fit, person–job fit, and organizational support.

Workaholism is seen to have negative consequences in the shape of family–job or job–family conflicts. It may also lead to organization-focused negative or unethical behavior, thus harming the public image of the organization. Future research could take this into consideration and link ethical leadership with ethical employee outcomes, given the explanatory role of HWI and the passion and motivation for work (promotion and prevention focus).

This study has sought to explain how management can motivate its employees by looking at job satisfaction and turnover intentions as predictors of motivation. Our findings reveal that employees with higher levels of job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions respond positively to their work and are better motivated. On the other hand, employees with lower levels of satisfaction and higher turnover intention are less involved in and dedicated to their work (workaholism), thus showing low levels of motivation.

The study makes a theoretical and conceptual contribution to the literature by considering the predictive power of job satisfaction and turnover intentions; both constructs are investigated as outcome variables. In terms of affective event theory, we find that positive organizational events increase job satisfaction and yield positive job outcomes (Crede et al., 2007) in the context of HWI. Job satisfaction and turnover intentions influence both HWI and motivation.

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