

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING, AND JOB SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORKAHOLISM

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The aim of this research was to test a model where the workaholism dimensions, identified by Spence and Robbins (1992), have been considered as mediators of the relationships between individual differences (personality traits and personal values) and personal or professional outcomes such as subjective well-being and job satisfaction. Individual dispositions have been recognized as relevant predictors of work addiction, however, only few empirical evidence is available about the role of personal values. Participants were employees who completed a battery of scales. Results indicated that two workaholism dimensions played a mediational role between predictors and criterion variables. Specifically, work enjoyment mediated the relationships between antecedents and the two outcome variables while drive to work mediated only those with well-being. Moreover, results indicate that openness to change and self-enhancement values have relevant and opposed effects on the different facets of workaholism.

Key words: Well-being; Job satisfaction; Workaholism; Personal values; Personality traits.

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The aim of this study was to examine the role of workaholism as a mediator between personality traits, personal values, and outcomes such as subjective well-being and job satisfaction, providing at the same time empirical evidence about the role of relevant but little considered predictors such as personal values. The term workaholism refers to “the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly”; it was coined, in analogy to the term alcoholism, in the early 70’s by Oates (1971, p. 11). Since its onset, this addiction has attracted the interest of researchers, and in the last decades has become a very popular research topic inspiring many studies. The construct, however, has still not reached univocal definitions, even if there is substantial agreement in thinking that it should be conceived as more than overworking (Aziz & Tronzo, 2011; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Spence & Robbins, 1992; Sussman, 2012). In other words, conceiving workaholism only in terms of hours spent at work seems simplistic and misleading because it misses the compulsive nature of the construct. The real workaholic or work addict is an individual who works hard and maybe excessively because pushed by a strong internal compulsion, which the person cannot resist (Schaufeli, Shimazu, & Taris, 2009; Shimazu, Schaufeli, & Taris, 2010; Spence & Robbins, 1992). Workaholics or work addicted individuals are people who work many hours every day and think about their job even when out of their workplace. Workaholics work beyond what could be expected from them and can-

not stop their activities without feeling guilty (Bovornusvakool, Vodanovich, Ariyabuddhiphongs, & Ngamake, 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Scott, Moore, & Miceli, 1997; Spence & Robbins, 1992). These behaviors have become, in recent years, more evident than in the past. The professional field, in fact, has gained a leading position in the life of individuals and thanks also to technological advancements, working activities are eroding growing spaces of personal life. People are constantly “connected” to their jobs and strongly identified with their professional role (Aziz & Tronzo, 2011; Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2007; Shimazu et al., 2010). These conditions have made more undefined the boundaries between the professional and private spheres suggesting that the effects of workaholism may be easily detected in both these fields.

Many studies have framed the question in a mainly negative perspective. This research, conceiving workaholism as a harmful condition, paid great attention to its negative consequences (Falco et al., 2013; Falco, Piccirelli, Girardi, Di Sipio, & De Carlo, 2014; Kravina, Falco, De Carlo, Andreassen, & Pallesen, 2013; Kubota et al., 2010; McMillan, O’Driscoll, Marsh, & Brady, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Shimazu et al., 2010), and came, probably with some exaggeration, to define the problem as a potentially fatal illness (Fassel, 1990). Actually, workaholics are described as people who suffer from many problems, which affect both the personal and occupational fields, such as high perceived stress, low life satisfaction, difficulties in sleeping, career dissatisfaction, and poor performance (Andreassen, Hetland, Molde, & Pallesen, 2011; Burke & Matthiesen, 2004; Burke, Oberklaid, & Burgess, 2004; Graves, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Weber, 2012; Holland, 2008; Kubota et al., 2010; Sussman, 2012).

Other researchers, on the other hand, have dealt with the subject in a more positive way. These authors suggested the existence of different workaholic behaviors or attitudes, each stimulated by different antecedents and related to different outcomes (Burke & Matthiesen, 2004; Burke, Richardsen, & Mortinussen, 2004; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Ng et al., 2007; Scott et al., 1997; Spence & Robbins, 1992).

Spence and Robbins (1992), for instance, in their theory identified several profiles of workaholics defined by different levels of the three main characteristics they supposed to be at the basis of the construct. Interestingly, their workaholic triad comprises not only negative aspects but also two dimensions in some way positive: work involvement and work enjoyment. Specifically, the three dimensions they used to define the construct are: work involvement (WI), work enjoyment (WE), and feeling drive to work (WD). The first two facets reflect, respectively, the desire to spend constructively their own personal or professional time, and the level of pleasure derived from work, while the third facet represents the classic core of the workaholism construct, namely, the feeling of inner pressure to work. High levels of all the three dimensions, in their typology, define an “enthusiastic workaholic” while high levels of WI and WD, linked to a low level of WE, define workaholism. Since their first definition, the dimensions of the triad have appeared to be tied to different antecedents and outcomes. The same Spence and Robbins found significant positive relations between the drive dimension and job stress, perfectionism, and non-delegation but negative relations with work enjoyment. These results have been expanded and substantially confirmed by many authors who extended the knowledge about specific antecedents and outcomes of the different aspects of workaholism.

Many studies have, for instance, demonstrated that workaholism can help to explain several subjective experiences in the personal or professional field and in both a positive or negative way. Specifically, the WD dimension has been found frequently and positively tied to reduced

well-being, health complaints, burnout, stress, and poor job satisfaction. In contrast, the other two dimensions, and particularly the WE dimension, have revealed positive relations with career and job satisfaction, lower intention to quit the organization, reduced burnout, and greater psychological well-being (Burke, 1999; Burke & MacDermid, 1999; Burke, Matthiesen, & Pallesen, 2006a; Burke, Richardsen, et al., 2004; Ng et al., 2007).

The different facets of work addiction are not only tied to different outcomes but are also stimulated by different antecedents. A central role among the precursors of work addiction has been assigned to: individual differences (e.g., personality traits, type A personality, obsessive-compulsive disorder, self-esteem, and personal values), socio-cultural experiences (e.g., stressful family, peer competition), and behavioral reinforcements, such as, tangible and intangible rewards (Ng et al., 2007; Sussman, 2012).

As for other addictions, also for workaholism dispositional traits seem to play a major role, and have been, therefore, carefully studied. Many studies emphasize the existence of significant direct relations between workaholism and several personality traits, even some not necessarily related to the work experience, such as compulsion, self-esteem, obsession, or perfectionism (Falco et al., 2014; Mudrack, 2004; Ng et al., 2007; Seybold & Salomone, 1994; Taris, van Beek, & Schaufeli, 2010; for traits related to work, such as proactivity, see Falvo, Visintin, Capozza, Falco, & De Carlo, 2013). Moreover, also the Big Five traits, and particularly conscientiousness (Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007), have revealed interesting links with work addiction. Conscientious individuals are industrious, diligent, and have good job performances; therefore, it could be possible that having satisfaction from their activities these people tend to become more workaholic (Aziz & Tronzo, 2011). Also other Big Five traits, however, have revealed interesting links with workaholism. Specifically, WI and WE have shown positive relations with conscientiousness and also with agreeableness, extraversion, and openness to experience. Differently, the third facet (WD) has been negatively tied to agreeableness and positively to neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Andreassen, Hetland, & Pallesen, 2010; Aziz & Tronzo, 2011; Burke, Matthiesen, & Pallesen, 2006b; Mazzetti, Schaufeli, & Guglielmi, 2014).

Personality traits have therefore been recognized as important and specific antecedents of the different aspects of workaholism, but also values have been mentioned among the relevant contributors to work addiction (Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007). Although often empirically related, traits and values are constructs conceptually distinct. Traits can be seen as individual differences that reflect stable patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions while values represent more conscious goals or criteria that individuals use to judge the importance and quality of people and events. For instance, open-mindedness, as a personality trait, describes individuals who might be defined as curious, informed, and interested in cultures and experiences, while openness to change as a value reflects the desire of being self-directed and independent rather than looking for order, conformity, and security. Personal values, however, have not been extensively studied and only few empirical evidences have been produced about them. Researchers have actually focused more on motivation and basic needs, exploring and speculating about the relationship between these constructs and the onset of workaholism.

Andreassen et al. (2010), for instance, found interesting links between workaholism and the basic needs for autonomy and competence. Specifically, the basic need for autonomy has been found negatively tied to the WD dimension while the needs for competence and autonomy were positively related to the WE dimension. McMillan, Brady, O'Driscoll, and Marsh (2002),

instead, proved significant links between intrinsic motivation, WE and mostly WD. Schaufeli and colleagues (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Van den Broeck et al., 2011) conversely linked intrinsic motivations to work engagement, arguing also the relevance of extrinsic motivations for workaholism. Researchers more focused on values, on the other hand, pointed the attention to achievement-related values. Liang and Chu (2009), for instance, highlighted that intrinsic work values, reflecting the orientation to achievement, initiative, challenge, responsibility, and ambition, could lead individuals to workaholism. Ng et al. (2007), referring more specifically to Schwartz's typology of values, argued the relevance of achievement and self-direction; these values, while predisposing individuals to become strongly devoted to independence, success, growth, and ambition, could also lead people to the belief that work is one of the most important aspects of life, favoring workaholism. However, to our knowledge, there is not any empirical evidence about this point.

The aim of this study was to give a contribution to this topic, testing at the same time the mediational role of workaholism between specific antecedents and outcomes; structural equation modeling will be used (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). A model will be tested where the workaholism dimensions, identified by Spence and Robbins (1992), are expected to play a mediational role between individual differences (personality traits and personal values) and personal or professional outcomes such as subjective well-being (SWB) and job satisfaction (JS). Prior research has established that individuals exhibiting specific traits and values are more exposed to certain life outcomes, such as JS and SWB (Blood, 1969; Haslam, Whelan, & Bastian, 2009; Hayes & Joseph, 2003; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Moreover, these individual dispositions are tied to workaholism, which, on the other hand, has an effect on personal or professional subjective outcomes. Specifically, we expected that traits and values, such as conscientiousness and achievement, would be strongly tied to different workaholism dimensions, and that these dimensions have opposed effects on the subjective outcomes. The WD facet should be negatively related to JS and SWB, while WI and WE should be positively tied to these outcomes. We believe that the well-known relation between the considered predictors and the outcomes is mediated by the workaholism dimensions. To test our hypothesis, standardized instruments were used.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 191 employees (106 women and 85 men) recruited from the administrative sector of an Italian university. The mean age was 42.35 ($SD = 9.87$). They were recruited in person, completed the questionnaire individually, and returned it anonymously.

Instruments

Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ; Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Borgogni, 1993). The BFQ is a well validated instrument which assesses the Big Five personality traits (energy, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and open-mindedness)¹ through 132 items with a 5-point scale (from *absolutely true for me* to *completely false for me*). In the BFQ the lie scale (14 items)

is also included. Authors provided extensive support for reliability and validity of the scale. Internal consistency reliabilities were in the range from .73 to .90. Factor structure showed a high stability across different groups of participants with different demographic characteristics. The construct validity is supported by strong correlations with standard measures of the Five Factor Model (NEO-PI; Costa & McCrae, 1985) and personality factors of different taxonomies (e.g., Eysenck Personality Questionnaire; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975).

Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ; Schwartz et al., 2001). The PVQ is a 40-item questionnaire, based on Schwartz's values theory. It measures the respondents' values indirectly, through judgments of one's similarity with another person. For each portrait, respondents indicate how similar the person is to themselves on a 6-point scale ranging from *very much like me* to *not like me at all*. It assumes the existence of 10 distinct universal values (power, achievement, stimulation, hedonism, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security). The 10 values are organized according to a circumplex model and grouped into four high-order factors: openness to change, conservatism, self-transcendence, and self-enhancement (Schwartz, 2005). Studies in seven countries have supported the reliability of the instrument as well as its convergent and discriminant validity (Schwartz, 2005; Schwartz et al., 2001). We used the Italian version of the scale (Capanna, Vecchione, & Schwartz, 2005; see also, Di Nuovo, Hichy, & Pirrone, 2011). The internal consistency reliabilities ranged from .60 to .83; furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) supported the original values structure and the existence of a higher-order structure (see also, Vecchione, Casconi, & Barbaranelli, 2009). In the present study, we insert in our model the higher-order dimensions namely, openness to change, conservatism, self-transcendence, and self-enhancement.

Workaholism Battery (Work-Bat; Spence & Robbins, 1992). This tool consists of 25 items and includes three scales measuring three different workaholism dimensions. The drive to work (WD) scale describes the feeling of inner pressure to work and includes seven items (e.g., "I often feel that there's something inside me that drives me to work hard"). The work enjoyment (WE) scale refers to the pleasure of working and comprises 10 items (e.g., "My job is more like fun than work"). Finally, the work involvement (WI) scale measures a generalized attitude of psychological involvement with work; it includes eight items (e.g., "I get bored and restless on vacations when I haven't anything productive to do"). Answers were scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The Work-Bat shows face validity, acceptable internal consistency (alphas = .67-.86), and reasonable convergent validity with organizational and personal variables (Spence & Robbins, 1992). For the Work-Bat an Italian version is not available, so in the present study the scale was translated from English to Italian by the authors and then back-translated by a native English speaker for the assessment of cultural equivalence.

Job satisfaction (JS). We used the Italian version of the Occupational Stress Indicator (Cooper, Sloan, & Williams, 1988) adapted to the Italian context by Sirigatti and Stefanile (2002) and particularly the job satisfaction scale: "What do you think and how do you feel toward your work" (22 items). The reliability of the scale is about .63.

Positive and Negative Affect Scales (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) measure the extent to which positive and negative affective states (PA and NA) are generally experienced, rated from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). In the original version, both scales had excellent psychometric properties: internal consistency ranged from .86 to .90 for PA, and from .84 to .87 for NA. In addition, the test shows good convergent and divergent validity. The two

subscales are poorly correlated (from $-.12$ to $-.23$). We used the Italian version of PANAS, validated by Terracciano, McCrae, and Costa (2003) on a sample of 600 participants (alphas range from $.83$ to $.87$).

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). This 5-item scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) assesses the degree of satisfaction for one's general living conditions, with items rated from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Internal consistency was very good ($\alpha = .87$). For this test, an Italian version is not available, so in the present study the scale was translated and then back-translated by a native English speaker.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

In order to test the factorial structure of the Italian version of Work-Bat, a series of confirmatory factor analyses was performed using LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). The first model tested had three latent variables, corresponding to WI, WE, and WD, and 25 indicators (items), as suggested by the authors (Spence & Robbins, 1992).

The goodness of fit of the model was evaluated with the chi-square. A solution fits the data well when χ^2 is nonsignificant ($p > .05$). This statistic, however, is sensitive to the sample size: it can lead to rejection of a model differing in a trivial way from data, for large samples, and, conversely, it can result in the acceptance of a model with salient differences from data, for small samples. For this reason, three additional indices of fit were used: the comparative fit index (CFI), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). CFI (Bentler, 1990) is an incremental index comparing the hypothesized model with a model in which all variables are uncorrelated (i.e., only error variances are estimated): values for CFI greater than or equal to $.95$ are regarded as satisfactory from a practical viewpoint (Hu & Bentler, 1997, 1999). Concerning SRMR (Bentler, 1995) and RMSEA (Steiger, 1990), the convention is to accept models with values of these indices of $.08$ or smaller (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The results including the three factors showed unsatisfactory indices: $\chi^2(272) = 827.64$, $p \cong .00$; RMSEA = $.10$; CFI = $.86$; SRMR = $.12$; hence it was decided to check, as in previous research (Ersoy-Kart, 2005; Kanai, Wakabayashi, & Fling, 1996; McMillan et al., 2002), for a solution with two dimensions. First, a series of exploratory factor analyses was performed using the principal axes method (PAF). These analyses suggested two dimensions corresponding to the WD and WE facets which explained 35.46% of the total variance. In order to test the adequacy of this structure a new confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. On the basis of exploratory factor analysis, two items were deleted, characterized by high factor loadings in both dimensions, one from WD (item 17) and another from WE (item 25). The CFA model evaluated was thus articulated in two latent variables, corresponding to the dimensions found in exploratory factor analysis, and 15 indicators. The goodness-of-fit indices showed that the model explained the data well, $\chi^2(90) = 204.11$, $p \cong .00$; RMSEA = $.08$; CFI = $.95$; SRMR = $.07$. Loadings were all significant, and the correlation between the two latent variables was lower than the perfect correlation. Thus, in the path analysis models, as mediating variables, we used the two dimensions WD and WE. All the analyses were performed on covariance matrices (Cudeck, 1989). Reliability coefficients were good for all the variables used (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
 Reliability coefficients and number of items for the scales used

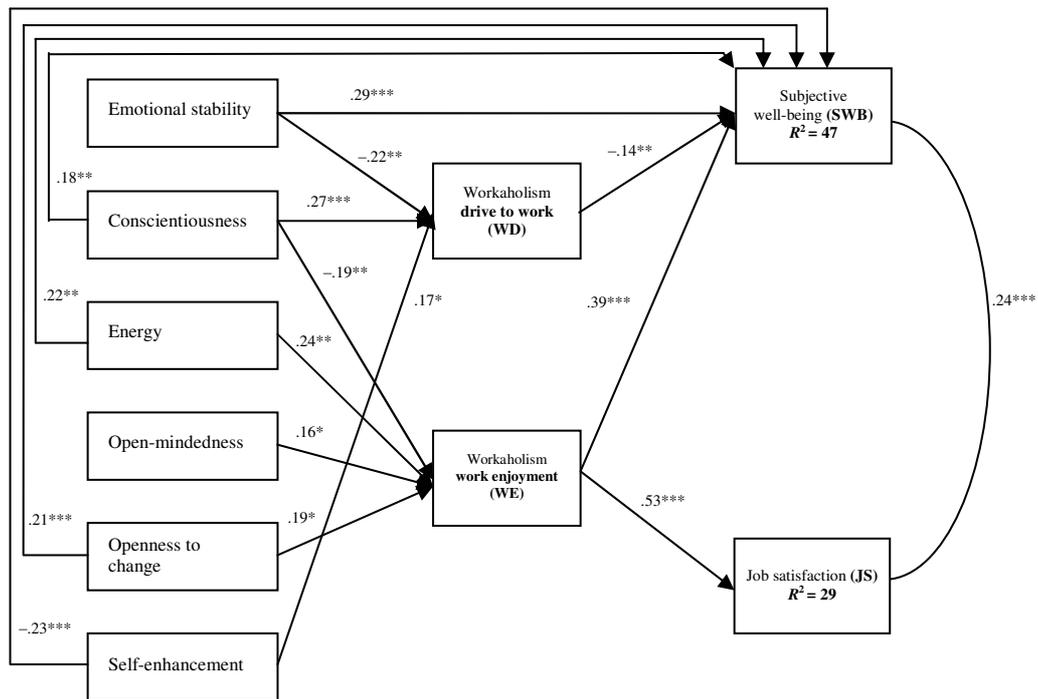
| Scale | Alpha | Item |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------|
| Conscientiousness | .86 | 24 |
| Emotional stability | .84 | 24 |
| Agreeableness | .77 | 24 |
| Energy | .79 | 24 |
| Open-mindedness | .74 | 24 |
| Openness to change | .81 | 10 |
| Conservatism | .81 | 13 |
| Self-transcendence | .87 | 10 |
| Self-enhancement | .89 | 7 |
| Drive to work (WD) | .82 | 6 |
| Work enjoyment (WE) | .89 | 9 |
| Positive affect (PA) | .86 | 10 |
| Negative affect (NA) | .85 | 10 |
| Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) | .91 | 5 |
| Job satisfaction (JS) | .95 | 22 |

Path Analysis

In order to test the mediation role of workaholism between predictors and the criterion variables, which represents the main goal of this research, it was decided to use structural equation modeling (SEM) (LISREL 8.8; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). SEM is ideal for the analysis of potential mediating variables since it allows for the simultaneous examination of both direct and indirect effects. Moreover, multiple mediator variables may be included within the same model.

Initially a saturated model was tested where all variables were included and all parameters were estimated using the maximum likelihood method. This saturated model was composed by: two outcomes, namely, subjective well-being (SWB) and job satisfaction (JS); two mediating variables, namely, work enjoyment (WE) and drive to work (WD); and nine independent variables, that is, five personality traits (conscientiousness, emotional stability, open-mindedness, agreeableness, and energy) and four personal values (openness to change, conservatism, self-transcendence, and self-enhancement). A composite measure of SWB was constructed by standardizing the SWLS (Satisfaction With Life Scale) and the PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Scales) and combining them ($SWB = SWLS + PA - NA$). The final model was obtained by removing the nonsignificant relations from the whole path diagram. Conservatism and self-transcendence values and the agreeableness trait were removed from the model, since they did not show any significant relation with other variables.

The final model as appears in Figure 1 reached a successful fit to the data: $\chi^2(35) = 19.25$, $p = .99$; RMSEA = .00; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = .035. As shown in the path diagram and coherently with the research hypotheses, the two workaholism dimensions played a mediation role between predictors and criterion variables, in the expected direction. However while WE was positively tied with both the two dependent variables and particularly to JS ($\beta = .53$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .39$, $p < .001$ for SWB), WD was negatively related only to SWB ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .01$). Direct and indirect effects are reported in Table 2.



* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

FIGURE 1
 Path diagram of the model.
 Only significant parameters are represented (standardized solution).
 The goodness-of-fit indices for the model are:
 $\chi^2(35) = 19.25, p = .99$; RMSEA = .00; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = .035.

TABLE 2
 Direct and indirect effects of the independent variables

| Scale | Direct effects | | Indirect effects | |
|---------------------|----------------|---------|------------------|--------|
| | JS | SWB | JS | SWB |
| Emotional stability | — | .29*** | — | .03* |
| Conscientiousness | — | .18** | -.10** | -.11** |
| Energy | — | .22** | .13** | .10 |
| Open-mindedness | — | — | .09 | .06 |
| Openness to change | — | .21*** | .10* | .08* |
| Self-enhancement | — | -.23*** | — | -.02 |

Note. JS = job satisfaction; SWB = subjective well-being. Standardized coefficients.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Results indicated that SWB was influenced by many direct effects and also by several indirect effects; some were mediated by WE and others by WD. For the direct effects, excluding

self-enhancement values which were negatively linked to SWB ($\gamma = -.23, p < .001$), almost all the other predictors, and particularly the emotional stability trait ($\gamma = .29, p < .001$), reported positive effects on this variable. Also the indirect effects were mainly positive; indeed, the values of openness to change and the trait of energy were indirectly and positively related to the SWB, via WE, while emotional stability had a positive effect through reduced WD. Conscientiousness, in contrast, was negatively related to SWB through the mediation of both workaholism dimensions.

If on SWB many predictors reported significant direct effects, on JS no direct effect was relevant. Thus, coherently with the hypotheses, this criterion variable was strongly linked to the predictors through the mediation role of workaholism and specifically through WE. The values related to openness to change and primarily the trait of energy had significant and positive indirect effects on JS, differently from the conscientiousness trait that was linked to the dependent variable in a negative way. In general, among the indirect effects the most relevant role was played by the traits of energy and conscientiousness which were associated with both the criterion variables.

Furthermore, conscientiousness was the only predictor related to both the mediating workaholism dimensions ($\gamma = .27, p < .001$ for WD; $\gamma = -.19, p < .01$ for WE). The open-mindedness trait, unlike the others, was related to the outcomes only through the mediation of WE, but these effects were not significant. Finally, it should be noted that personal values, as expected, were significantly associated with workaholism dimensions. Specifically, self-enhancement had a positive effect on WD ($\gamma = .17, p < .05$) while openness to change on WE ($\gamma = .19, p < .05$). Moreover these values had significant direct and/or indirect effects on the criterion variables.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine the mediation effect of workaholism between personality traits, personal values, and personal or professional outcomes, such as, subjective well-being and job satisfaction, providing at the same time empirical evidence about the role of specific workaholism predictors. In the present research, workaholism has been studied looking to both its positive and negative aspects. It was, then, decided to use the Work-Bat (Spence & Robbins, 1992). This instrument, in fact, allows the measurement of both positive and negative facets of the construct. The scale, however, has not been validated in the Italian context. Therefore, before its use in the model, it was decided to test, through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and CFA, the factor structure of the Italian translation of the questionnaire. Results, coherently with other research (Ersoy-Kart, 2005; Kanai et al., 1996; McMillan et al., 2002), suggested a two-factor structure excluding the WI dimension. The remaining dimensions, namely, WE and WD, however, represent respectively the two main positive and negative aspects of the construct.

Among the antecedents of workaholism great attention has been devoted to personal values. Some research argued their relevant contribution on workaholism, however, only few studies provided empirical evidence about their role (Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007). In the present study, the instrument used for the assessment of values was the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ; Schwartz et al., 2001) because it is a well-validated instrument adapted for the Italian context (Capanna et al., 2005). The preference for this questionnaire was due to the desire to examine a specific and poorly studied topic, using a strong theory and a well-known and validated in-

strument. Results indicate that the openness to change and self-enhancement values are the most influential because they revealed both direct and indirect significant effects. Self-enhancement reflect the desire of self-affirmation, success and achievement, while openness to change reflect the desire of being self-directed, independent people, interested in the search for novelty and challenges. In more detail, openness to change revealed positive links with the positive dimension of workaholism (WE), while self-enhancement reported positive relations with the negative facets of work addiction (WD). Results, in other words, suggest that achievement-oriented individuals, interested in power and self-affirmation could develop a compulsive approach to their job (WD); while people oriented to self-directions, independence, novelty, and challenging work experiences could develop a more positive attitude to work, stimulating behaviors less compulsive and more engaged. Self-direction and achievement oriented values, therefore, as suggested by Ng et al. (2007), have revealed to be the most relevant personal values implied with workaholism. Our findings, however, point out the specific role that these values have on the different facets of work addiction, providing in this way a new empirical contribution about a little explored but important topic.

Although only two workaholism dimensions have been included in the model, as mediators, the results of the analysis meet sufficiently the expectations of the research. In fact, while workaholism in its compulsive dimension (WD) revealed to mediate only the relations between individual characteristics (personality traits and personal values) and SWB, the more positive facet (WE) demonstrated to play a mediating crucial role on both personal (SWB) and professional (JS) outcomes. Specifically, the WD dimension had a negative effect on SWB while WE had positive effects on each of the two criterion variables. In other words, being people who work hard because compulsive (WD) is in some way dangerous for the subjective well-being, while working a lot because passionate about own job is a condition that can not only notably improve well-being, but also and primarily job satisfaction. Probably working for passion (WE) is a source of personal accomplishment which benefits SWB and more closely JS. In contrast, working compulsively (WD) is a condition which, although not having appreciable effects on JS, may lead to a waste of energy that limits attention to the other life spheres, essential for the full achievement of SWB. On SWB, indeed, the indirect effects were important but also the direct effects played a central role, in contrast to what happens for JS, where almost exclusively propensity to work with passion (WE) had an effect. This result, in particular, is closely consistent to the expectations of the study. In accordance with previous acquisitions, it was predicted that personality traits and values should affect JS and SWB, but it was also assumed that these effects, well known in literature (Blood, 1969; Haslam et al., 2009; Hayes & Joseph, 2003; Judge et al., 2002; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001), could be better understood looking to the contribution of workaholism. The results of this study suggest that workaholism could be considered a key construct mostly for JS and in general in professional life. SWB, in fact, is only partially accomplishable through job realization. The greater positive effects on JS are mainly tied to the propensity to work with passion and pleasure (WE), which is a typical characteristic of energetic individuals, open-minded, willing to change, and not too rigid (low-conscientiousness). On the contrary, SWB can be undermined by other factors, such as: being emotionally unstable, not too friendly (low-energy) and oriented to self-enhancement rather than looking for values of openness to change, since this can lead to a compulsive (WD) and not enjoyable (WE) attitude toward work.

Finally, it might be interesting to say something about the role of conscientiousness. This trait in previous research has been listed among the most interesting personality predictors of workaholism (Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007), but in the present study, even though demonstrating an important role, it also shows quite controversial paths. Results of the structural equation model indicate that conscientiousness is directly and positively tied to SWB, but its highest relations are with workaholism and particularly with the WD dimension. Furthermore, through the two workaholism dimensions, conscientiousness exerts significant indirect effects on both the outcome variables, demonstrating to be not only the most relevant predictor of workaholism but also of its consequences. However, interestingly the effect of this trait changes direction when mediated by workaholism. The direct path on SWB, in fact, is positive, but the indirect effects on both the final variables mediated by WE and WD are negative. In other words, even if being scrupulous and cautious could be positive for SWB, it could become problematic for JS and mostly for SWB to the extent to which it leads individuals to work compulsively and with little passion in their job.

CONCLUSIONS

Although relatively new, the construct of workaholism has stimulated psychological debate for several decades, provoking questions about its definition, its consequences, and the processes which are involved in it. Furthermore, recently the debate has become more urgent considering the changes concerning the work experience, which nowadays has become increasingly invasive and relevant in the lives of individuals. These considerations have inspired the objectives of this research which are primarily aimed at understanding the role of workaholism in the relationship between individual differences and personal and professional outcomes. The research hypotheses have proved to be sufficiently accurate and even if traits and values reported direct effects on the criterion variables, these relations, as expected, demonstrate to be strongly influenced by workaholism.

This study has some limitations, such as: the cross-sectional nature of the research, the exclusive use of self-report measures rather than more objective indicators, and that sample size which was quite small to apply structural equation modeling with latent variables, which would have improved the control for measurement error. Despite the above limitations the results of this study represent an interesting step in the understanding of the workaholism-related dynamics and a starting point for further studies. For instance, it might be useful to understand how reduced well-being related to compulsive work attitudes could be tied to other important existential aspects.

NOTE

1. Energy, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and open-mindedness are the exact denominations of the scales in the BFQ questionnaire. These dimensions, however, are known in literature also with different labels. Energy, for instance, is better known as extraversion, open-mindedness as openness to experience and emotional stability is frequently labelled neuroticism referring, in other words, to the opposed side of the continuum.

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