Passion for work: Relationships with general and maladaptive personality traits and work-related outcomes

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Abstract

It has been argued that passion can take both harmonious and obsessive forms (Vallerand et al., 2003). This paper examines this dualistic model of passion specifically for passion in relation to work and contributes to this literature in two ways. First, an extensive set of both general (Big Five) and maladaptive personality traits are related to harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP) for work. Second, HP and OP are linked to three relevant work-related outcomes, namely job satisfaction, burnout and job performance. In Study 1 (N = 213), a distinctive pattern of relationships with general and maladaptive traits was found for HP and OP for work, although the relative importance of maladaptive traits to understand work passion was not higher for OP, as compared to HP. Further, both HP and OP were positively related to job satisfaction even after controlling for Big Five traits. Only HP was related (negatively) to burnout. In Study 2 (N = 208), only HP remained significantly related to job satisfaction after controlling for OP. Moreover, HP was positively related to job performance as rated by supervisors (more specifically contextual and adaptive performance). Implications of these findings for the dualistic model of passion are discussed.

Keywords: harmonious passion; obsessive passion; personality; FFM; PID-5; job satisfaction; burnout; job performance
1. Introduction

While some people merely see their work as labor, others see it as part of who they are (e.g., “a scientist”, “a carpenter”) and can refer to it as a passion (Vallerand & Houfort, 2003). Passion has been defined as a strong tendency toward an activity one likes, invests time and energy in, and that is found to be important (Vallerand et al., 2003). Although passion fuels motivation, and provides meaning in everyday life, passion may also arouse negative emotions, lead to inflexible persistence and interfere with achieving a successful, balanced life. Therefore, Vallerand et al. (2003) introduced the dualistic model of passion (DMP), which distinguishes harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP). Both forms of passion have been shown to display different and at times even opposing relations with affective (e.g., positive affect), cognitive (e.g., concentration) and behavioral outcomes (e.g., rigid persistence). In general, the more positive/adaptive nature of HP is emphasized, compared to the more negative/maladaptive nature of OP (see Vallerand (2015) for a review).

Recently, research has also started to investigate the relationships between passion and Big Five personality traits (Balon et al., 2013; Dalpé et al., 2019). The picture that emerges here supports a view in which HP is considered more adaptive in nature compared to OP (Vallerand, 2015). More specifically, research showed that HP is related to ‘adaptive’ characteristics such as high conscientiousness and low neuroticism, whereas an inverse, more ‘maladaptive’ pattern has been observed for OP (e.g., Dalpé et al., 2019). The current study aims to contribute to this research on personality and passion in two ways. First, in contrast to previous work, which has mainly looked at how Big Five traits relate to passion for activities such as hobbies or sports (Balon et al., 2013; Dalpé et al., 2019), the current study focuses specifically on passion in the context of work, a topic that has gained increasing attention recently (e.g., Astakhova & Ho, 2018). Second, in order to clarify the distinction between obsessive and harmonious forms of passion further, we will include maladaptive personality
traits as well as general (Big Five) traits in this study. If OP is indeed more ‘maladaptive’ in nature compared to HP, then this might also be visible in differential associations with more maladaptive/dysfunctional personality tendencies.

Further, in addition to personality antecedents, this study will also investigate the relationships between passion and relevant outcomes at work. Previous studies have produced a mixed pattern of findings in this regard, with some studies clearly showing a distinction between adaptive and maladaptive outcomes for HP and OP (e.g., Vallerand et al., 2010), and other studies not supporting this general conclusion (e.g., Astakhova & Ho, 2018; Ho et al., 2011). Whereas HP consistently relates to healthy adaptation at work (e.g., higher job satisfaction and lower burnout; Chen et al., 2019); OP was sometimes found to be maladaptive (e.g., lower satisfaction; Chen et al., 2019), adaptive (e.g., higher satisfaction; Ho et al., 2011), or neither (e.g., unrelated to satisfaction; Houlfort et al., 2014). Similar to these affective outcomes, substantial inconsistencies have also emerged with regard to the relationship between OP and the actual performance of people at work (e.g., Astakhova & Ho, 2018; Burke et al., 2015). So, irrespective of their attitudes and feelings towards work, how effective are passionate people at work? The present study aims to contribute to our understanding of work passion by considering its relationships with a range of relevant outcomes at work, including job satisfaction, burnout and job performance.

1.1 The Dualistic Model of Passion

The DMP (Vallerand et al., 2003) is partially grounded in self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) that assumes that people engage in activities to satisfy the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When the activity becomes so valuable that it is incorporated in the person’s identity, the activity becomes a passion and serves to define the person (Vallerand et al., 2003). According to the DMP, the types of passion are distinguishable in terms of how the beloved activity is internalized into one’s
identity. HP results from an autonomous internalization into one’s identity, which leads individuals to freely choose to engage in the activity. The passionate activity takes a significant space in the person’s identity but is in harmony with other aspects of life. In contrast, OP would result from a controlled internalization into one’s identity, which creates an internal pressure to engage in the beloved activity. Here, the passion occupies an overpowering space in the person’s identity and causes conflict with other aspects of life (Vallerand et al., 2003). The empirical support for the two-factor structure, the validity (convergent/divergent), and reliability of the DMP is substantial and transcends different life domains (e.g., leisure, sport, work, education) and cultures (e.g., Bester et al., 2020; Marsh et al., 2013; Vallerand et al., 2003; Zhao et al., 2015).

1.2 Passion for Work and Personality

The relationship between personality traits and passion for an activity was previously examined in different contexts: Passion for internet activities (Tosun & Lajunen, 2009), for online shopping (Wang & Yang, 2008), and for activities in general (Balon et al., 2013; Dalpé et al., 2019). Only two of these studies used the widely accepted five-factor model (FFM) framework, and differentiated between HP and OP (Balon et al., 2013; Dalpé et al., 2019). In Balon et al. (2013), HP was positively related to extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness ($r = .18, .20, .23, \text{ and } .30 \text{ respectively, } p < .05$), while OP was only negatively related to agreeableness ($r = -.19, p < .01$). In Dalpé et al. (2019), similar associations were found in relation to HP, although an additional negative relationship was found with neuroticism ($r = -.30, p < .01$). Next to the negative association between OP and agreeableness ($r = -.19, p < .05$), OP was also negatively related to conscientiousness and openness ($r = -.21 \text{ and } -.13 \text{ respectively, } p < .01$) and positively to neuroticism ($r = .32, p < .01$).
Taken together, HP and OP generally displayed opposing relationships with Big Five traits, if there were any (Balon et al., 2013; Dalpé et al., 2019). This already suggests that the personality building blocks for both forms of passion might indeed be different. Moreover, these opposing patterns also provide some support for the notion that HP might indeed be characterized as more adaptive in nature as compared to OP. For instance, research has shown that higher conscientiousness, higher agreeableness and lower neuroticism (associated with HP; Dalpé et al., 2019) are predictive of beneficial outcomes such as a higher level of subjective well-being (Soto, 2015) and a lower likelihood of developing clinical symptoms (Malouff et al., 2005).

These previous studies, however, asked participants to think about their “favorite activity” (Dalpé et al., 2019) or an activity “that is dear to their heart” (Balon et al., 2013), resulting in the assessment of all different kinds of passions (e.g., hobbies, sports). To the best of our knowledge, the relationship between personality and passion for work in particular has not yet been investigated, and one goal of the current study is to evaluate whether the same pattern of relationships with general Big Five traits can be recovered for this type of passion.

In addition, the current study broadens the scope of personality variables by also taking into account more maladaptive tendencies. Doing so allows us to test the assumption that OP in particular might be more maladaptive in nature as compared to HP. Especially in Balon et al. (2013), OP was barely related to Big Five traits. If the nature of OP is truly more maladaptive, as suggested by previous results, one potential explanation is that the FFM is not extreme/maladaptive enough in nature to capture its underlying building blocks (Samuel & Widiger, 2011). Therefore, both general and maladaptive personality traits will be examined in relation to HP and OP in this study. The Personality Inventory for DSM-5 (PID-5; Krueger et al., 2012) maps the maladaptive variants of the Big Five traits (De Fruyt et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2013): negative affectivity (cf. extreme neuroticism), detachment (cf. extreme
opposite of extraversion), antagonism (cf. extreme opposite of agreeableness), disinhibition (cf. extreme opposite of conscientiousness), and psychoticism (cf. extreme openness). Further, PID-5 obsessive-compulsive personality traits will also be considered, because of their potential relevance for work passion (e.g., rigid persistence during task engagement; Vallerand et al., 2003). Hence, as a second research goal, this study explores how HP and OP are related to maladaptive/dysfunctional tendencies as captured by the PID-5.

1.3 Passion for Work and Work-related Outcomes

In addition to focusing on personality building blocks, the distinction between HP and OP can also be examined by looking at their respective outcomes. Although both harmoniously and obsessively passionate individuals have a long lasting love for the activity in which they engage, previous research has systematically emphasized the more positive/adaptive consequences of HP in comparison to those of OP (e.g., Mageau & Vallerand, 2007; Ratelle et al., 2004; Vallerand, 2015). Similarly, in the work context, HP is thought to promote healthy adaptation whereas OP is thought to thwart it (Vallerand & Houlefort, 2003).

Drawing on SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985), a clear distinction between HP and OP in terms of work-related outcomes is also what can be expected. SDT assumes that people engage in activities to satisfy three psychological needs. The need for autonomy concerns the experience of choice and feeling like the initiator of one’s own actions; the need for competence is about succeeding at challenging tasks and being able to attain desired outcomes; and the need for relatedness concerns achieving a sense of mutual respect and reliance with others (Baard et al., 2004). SDT posits that psychological need satisfaction provides the necessary nutriments for human growth as it facilitates psychological adjustment and the internalization of extant values. Therefore, psychological need satisfaction will facilitate self-motivation and effective functioning (Baard et al., 2004; Ryan, 1995). In the
context of passion, it can be assumed that HP leads to adaptive work outcomes because need satisfaction is more likely.

Harmonious work passion results from an autonomous internalization into one’s identity, which leads one to freely choose to engage in its work (Vallerand et al., 2003). As such, the person controls the passion and the need for autonomy is satisfied. On the other hand, obsessive work passion results from a controlled internalization into one’s identity, which creates an internal pressure to engage in the work they love (Vallerand et al., 2003). Here, the passion controls the person and the need for autonomy is thwarted. Further, the need for relatedness is also endangered as the work passion occupies an overpowering space in the person’s identity and causes conflict with other aspects of life.

In line with these ideas, abundant research has shown that HP is positively related to job satisfaction (Carbonneau et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2019; Houlfort et al., 2014; Thorgren et al., 2013; Vallerand et al., 2010) and job performance (Burke et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2018 (Study 1); Ho et al., 2011; Vallerand et al., 2007); while a negative relationship with burnout has also been demonstrated (Chen et al., 2019; Lavigne et al., 2012; Vallerand et al., 2010). The picture that emerges for OP, however, is far less conclusive. For instance, Chen et al. (2019) and Thorgren et al. (2013) reported negative relationships between OP and job satisfaction, whereas other research found OP to be unrelated to job satisfaction (Carbonneau et al., 2008; Houlfort et al., 2014; Vallerand et al., 2010), or positively related to job satisfaction (Burke et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2011). Similarly, studies have produced mixed findings with regard to the association with burnout (e.g., Carbonneau et al., 2008; Chen et al., 2019; Vallerand et al., 2010) and job performance (Astakhova & Ho, 2018; Astakhova & Porter, 2015; Burke et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2011, 2018; Vallerand et al., 2007). The third research goal of the current study is to readdress these inconsistencies and explore how HP
and OP are related to (un)healthy adaptation at work, as measured by job satisfaction and burnout symptoms, and to job performance.

1.4 The Present Study

The overall objective of the present study is to contribute to our understanding of passion, testing fundamental ideas of the DMP. In doing so, we firstly focus explicitly on passion for work (rather than passion for activities in general), given the recent attention for this phenomenon in organizational contexts. Secondly, we reconsider the personality building blocks of work passion and contribute to this literature by considering general (Big Five) as well as maladaptive (PID-5) trait correlates. Thirdly, we aim to further clarify the difference between harmonious and obsessive forms of work passion by investigating the relationships with a broad set of work-related outcomes. These study objectives will be addressed in two independent studies. Study 1 contains self-reports only and focuses on the relationship between passion for work on the one hand and personality, job satisfaction and burnout on the other hand. Next, Study 2 introduces supervisor-ratings for job performance, and focuses on the relationship between passion for work on the one hand, and job satisfaction (self-rated) and job performance (supervisor-rated) on the other hand.

All research was conducted according to the ethical rules presented in the General Ethical Protocol of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Ghent University. Both data collections predate the corona pandemic (i.e., 2016 and 2018 for Study 1 and Study 2 respectively).

2. Study 1

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Participants and Procedure

A sample of Belgian working adults ($N = 213$) participated voluntarily and anonymously in this study, among which 200 completed the entire survey. In the context of a
master’s thesis research, an open call was launched on social media to all Dutch-speaking individuals who were at least 21 years old, and had employment at that time. All questionnaires (self-reports only) were provided on an online platform that could be reached through a web link that was distributed via the social media call. The mean age was 37.14 years ($SD = 11.29$) and 64% of the participants were female. With regard to educational level, 46.6% finished secondary school while 53% of the sample obtained a higher education degree. The mean organizational tenure was 9.72 years ($SD = 8.88$), and participants worked an average of 8.75 hours ($SD = 1.97$) per day. Further, 69% of the sample were white-collar workers, 11% were laborers, 13% occupied a management position, and 7% was self-employed.

### 2.1.2 Measures

Except for the assessment of maladaptive personality and burnout, the respondents were asked to endorse all survey-items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Passion for work.** The 12-item version of the Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2003) was used to measure HP (6 items; e.g., “My work is in harmony with other things in my life”) and OP (6 items; e.g., “I have the impression that my work controls me”). For each of the items, we replaced “the activity” of the original Passion Scale by “my work” to have a specific frame of reference in the work context (cf. Ho et al., 2011). The internal consistencies of the scales were good; $\alpha = .84$ for HP, and $\alpha = .70$ for OP.

**General personality.** Participants completed the 60-item NEO Five Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3; De Fruyt et al., 2009) to measure their standing on the Big Five personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness). The Big Five traits were each surveyed by means of 12 items (neuroticism: e.g., “When I'm under a great deal of stress, sometimes I feel like I'm going to pieces”; extraversion: e.g., “I
like to have a lot of people around me”; openness to experience: e.g., “Sometimes when I am reading poetry or looking at a work of art, I feel a chill or wave of excitement”; agreeableness: e.g., “I try to be courteous to everyone I meet”; conscientiousness: e.g., “I have a clear set of goals and work toward them in an orderly fashion”). The internal consistencies of the five personality domains were good, ranging between .74 (for both extraversion and agreeableness) and .83 (for neuroticism).

**Maladaptive personality.** The PID-5 – Brief From (PID-5-BF; Krueger et al., 2013) was used to measure participants’ standing on the maladaptive variants of the general Big Five traits (Thomas et al., 2013), namely negative affectivity (extreme neuroticism; e.g., “I worry about almost everything”), detachment (extreme introversion; “I don’t like to get too close to people”), antagonism (extreme disagreeableness; e.g., “It’s no big deal if I hurt other peoples’ feelings”), disinhibition (extreme opposite of conscientiousness; “Others see me as irresponsible”), and finally psychoticism (extreme openness; e.g., “Things around me often feel unreal, or more real than usual”). These maladaptive personality domains were each surveyed by means of five items. As recommended by De Caluwé et al. (2014), obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) scores were obtained by combining the rigid perfectionism subscale with the perseveration subscale of the PID-5 (18 items; e.g., “I check things several times to make sure they are perfect” and “It is hard for me to stop an activity, even when it’s time to do so”, respectively). Although obsessive-compulsive personality traits do not represent a separate PID-5 domain (i.e., a maladaptive variant of a general Big Five trait), this compound trait could be particularly relevant in the context of work passion. Taken together, 43 PID-5 items were rated on a 4-point Likert-scale ranging from 0 (very false of often false) to 3 (very true or often true). Cronbach’s alpha was somewhat lower for negative affectivity (α = .65), detachment (α = .57), antagonism (α = .67), and disinhibition (α = .66). For psychoticism (α = .72) and OCPD (α = .87), the internal consistency was good.
**Job satisfaction.** The three-item scale from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann et al., 1979) was used to measure overall job satisfaction (e.g., “All in all, I am satisfied with my job”). Cronbach’s alpha was .89.

**Burnout.** The Utrecht Burnout Scale (UBOS; Schaufeli & Vandierendonck, 2000), i.e., the Dutch version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), was used to measure burnout and taps into three dimensions (i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment). The 15 UBOS-items were rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always) (e.g., “I feel emotionally drained from my work”). Cronbach’s alpha of the burnout scale was .85.

### 2.1.3 Data Analysis

To investigate the relationship between personality traits and passion for work, a three-step approach was taken. First, the bivariate *correlations* between personality and work passion were inspected, allowing for the comparison with prior studies. Next, a series of four *regression analyses* was conducted. Taking into account the interrelations between general traits, the Big Five traits were entered as a set and related to HP (Model 1) and OP (Model 2). Further, the maladaptive PID-5 traits were entered as a set and related to HP (Model 3) and OP (Model 4). Finally, *hierarchical regression analyses* were conducted to investigate whether maladaptive traits explain additional variance in work passion above and beyond Big Five traits. In these analyses, Big Five traits were entered in Step 1 and the relevant PID-5 traits in Step 2. Here, HP and OP were the dependent variables of separate regression analyses. Further details regarding the incremental validity analyses can be found in the respective results sections below.

To investigate the association between passion for work and work outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and burnout), *correlations* were first inspected. Next, two *hierarchical regression analyses* were conducted to investigate the relationship between passion for work and job
satisfaction (Model 1) and burnout (Model 2). Given that the Big Five traits are associated with both passion (e.g., Dalpé et al., 2019) and these work outcomes (Judge et al., 2002; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010), we controlled for overlap with Big Five traits, such that unique relationships between work passion and the outcomes could be investigated. In each of the analyses, Big Five traits were entered in Step 1, followed by HP and OP in Step 2.

2.2 Results

All descriptive statistics, variable intercorrelations, and internal consistencies of the Study 1 variables are reported in Table 1.
Table 1

Descriptive statistics and variable intercorrelations: Study 1 (N = 213)

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<td>6. Agreeableness</td>
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<td>.31***</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.26***</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>-.71***</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Bold values on the diagonal show the internal consistency of the relevant variable; OCPD = obsessive-compulsive personality disorder; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
2.2.1 Personality Traits and Passion for Work

**Correlations.** Regarding the correlations between *HP* and Big Five traits (see Table 1), significant relationships were found with neuroticism (*r* = -.23, *p* < .01), extraversion (*r* = .28, *p* < .001), agreeableness (*r* = .14, *p* < .05), and conscientiousness (*r* = .22, *p* < .01), while no significant association was found with openness to experience. When focusing on the relationships with maladaptive traits, a significant negative correlation was found with detachment (*r* = -.33, *p* < .001).

Regarding the correlations between *OP* and Big Five traits, only a significant relationship was found with agreeableness (*r* = -.17, *p* < .05). With regard to maladaptive personality traits, OP was positively related to detachment (*r* = .17, *p* < .05), antagonism (*r* = .16, *p* < .05), and obsessive-compulsive traits (*r* = .24, *p* < .01).

**Regression analyses.** Next, Big Five traits (Model 1 and 2) and PID-5 traits (Model 3 and 4) were each entered as a set into a regression model and related to both forms of passion (see Table 2). Taking into account the interrelations between Big Five traits, the results in Model 1 indicate significant relationships between *HP* and neuroticism (*β* = -.15, *p* < .05) and extraversion (*β* = .19, *p* < .01). The results in Model 3 further show that the association between HP and PID-5 traits remained unchanged when controlling for the interrelationships between the maladaptive traits (*β* = -.33, *p* < .001 for detachment).

Regarding the relationships between *OP* and the Big Five traits as a set, Model 2 shows not only a significant negative association with agreeableness (*β* = -.16, *p* < .05), but also positive associations with neuroticism and conscientiousness (*β* = .17 and .16 respectively, *p* < .05). When considering the PID-5 domains as a set, regression results in Model 4 show that the positive relationships between OP and both detachment and antagonism remain intact (*β* = .15 and .16 respectively, *p* < .05).
Regression analyses examining the associations between (general and maladaptive) personality traits and work passion (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Five personality</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harmonious Passion</td>
<td>Obsessive Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
<td>SE(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PID-5 personality</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harmonious Passion</td>
<td>Obsessive Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
<td>SE(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affectivity</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment</td>
<td>-.33***</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonism</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disinhibition</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoticism</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001; \( N = 213 \) in Model 1 and 2; \( N = 205 \) in Model 3 and 4.

Incremental validity. To test whether maladaptive traits had incremental validity above Big Five traits, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted in which Big Five traits were entered in Step 1 and the relevant PID-5 traits in Step 2 (i.e., detachment for HP; and detachment and antagonism for OP). Interestingly, detachment added significantly to the prediction of both HP (\( \beta = -.23, \Delta R^2 = .04, p < .01 \)) and OP (\( \beta = .16, \Delta R^2 = .03, p < .05 \)) beyond Big Five traits. Antagonism was not significantly related to OP after controlling for Big Five traits (\( \beta = .11, p = .19 \)).

A final incremental validity analysis was also conducted with Big Five traits in Step 1 and obsessive-compulsive traits in Step 2. The results showed that OCPD was related to OP
PASSION FOR WORK

(β = .19, p < .01) and added significantly to its prediction above Big Five traits (ΔR² = .03, p < .01), while this was not the case for HP (β = .00, ΔR² = .00, p = .94).

2.2.2 Passion and Work-related Outcomes

Correlations. As expected, HP was positively related to job satisfaction (r = .61, p < .001) and negatively related to burnout (r = -.62, p < .001; see Table 1). Interestingly, we also found a positive association between OP and job satisfaction (r = .23, p < .01), while no significant relationship was found between OP and burnout (r = -.12, p > .05).

Regression analyses. Next, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to investigate the relationship between passion for work and job satisfaction (Model 1) and burnout (Model 2) (see Table 3). The results in Model 1 show that HP (β = .52, p < .001) and OP (β = .15, p < .05) were both positively related to job satisfaction and accounted for 28% of the explained variance in job satisfaction (ΔR² = .28) above and beyond Big Five traits (R² = .19). Further, Model 2 shows that HP was negatively related to burnout after controlling for Big Five traits (β = -.48, p < .001), while OP was not significantly related to burnout (β = -.05, p > .05). Passion for work – especially HP – accounted for 21% of the explained variance in burnout (ΔR² = .21) beyond Big Five traits (R² = .36).

Table 3

Regression analyses examining the associations between work passion and job satisfaction and burnout (Study 1: N = 200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1: Job satisfaction</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2: Burnout</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>SE (b)</td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-.36***</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.19***</td>
<td>.47***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.22***</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>.52***</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.28***</td>
<td>- .48***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001; HP = harmonious passion, OP = obsessive passion
2.3 Conclusion

Some evidence was found for the idea that HP for work is mainly characterized by an adaptive trait profile while OP is primarily characterized by a maladaptive trait profile. More specifically, HP was positively related to extraversion while negatively related to neuroticism, and only one PID-5 trait related negatively to HP (i.e., detachment). On the other hand, OP was negatively related to agreeableness while positively related to neuroticism and three maladaptive traits (i.e., detachment, antagonism, and obsessive-compulsive traits). An exception here was the positive relationship between OP and conscientiousness, indicating that employees with higher OP levels generally scored higher on conscientiousness. It is also relevant to note that, in general, Big Five traits explained more of the variance in OP ($R^2 = .08$) compared to the variance explained by PID-5 traits ($R^2 = .06$), whereas Big Five and PID-5 traits each accounted for 12% of the explained variance in HP. Based on this, it cannot be concluded that maladaptive traits are more relevant to understand OP for work.

With regard to the work-related criteria, the results show that not only employees scoring higher on HP are inclined to be more satisfied with their jobs. Although the strength of the relationship is weaker, employees scoring higher on OP also tend to score higher on job satisfaction – even after controlling for Big Five traits. Moreover, our findings do not suggest that obsessively passionate employees are by definition more prone to feelings of burnout. In sum, the patterns of associations with work-related outcomes do not support the idea that HP and OP are clearly different in terms of adaptive versus maladaptive work outcomes.

3. Study 2

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Participants and Procedure

A second, independent sample of Belgian working adults ($N = 208$) and their supervisors ($N = 182$) participated voluntarily in this study, resulting in a sample of 182
complete (employee-supervisor) dyads. For Study 2, an open call was launched via social media to all Dutch-speaking contacts who were at least 21 years old, had employment at that time, and were willing to —confidentially— report the email address of their superior to ask for their participation in a one-minute survey about their work behavior. Through a web link that was distributed via the social media call, employees first provided their name and the email address of their direct supervisor, enabling us to contact the respective supervisors. Next, the employees provided self-reports of work passion and job satisfaction. Supervisors were contacted by email to provide ratings on job performance of their employee. In the email, we referred to the name of the target employee. Both employees and supervisors were ensured that their ratings would be kept confidential (e.g., the performance rating of the supervisor could not be seen by the employee). When the data of the employees and their respective supervisors were merged, all names and email addresses were removed.

The mean age was 40.17 years ($SD = 13.03$), and 60% of the participants were female. The mean organizational tenure was 8.98 years ($SD = 9.49$), and participants worked on average 7.75 hours ($SD = 1.76$) per day. Further, 76% of the sample were white-collar workers, 5% were laborers, 16% occupied a management position, and 3% was self-employed. Supervisors indicated to be highly familiar with the targets’ behavior at work ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .69$; on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (a bit familiar) to 4 (very familiar)) and they worked together with their respective employees for on average 5.24 years ($SD = 5.09$).

3.1.2 Measures

**Passion for work and job satisfaction.** The same measures were used as in Study 1 to assess passion for work and job satisfaction. Cronbach alphas were good: $\alpha = .80$ for both HP and OP, and $.84$ for overall job satisfaction.

**Job performance.** Supervisors evaluated the job performance of their employees using a comprehensive performance scale in which three performance areas are covered (see
Vergauwe et al., 2017). Task performance (3 items) refers to quality of work regarding one's job responsibilities (see Renn & Fedor, 2001; e.g., “Performs duties thoroughly and to perfection”). Contextual performance (4 items) taps into the interpersonal facilitation dimension by Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996), including cooperative acts that assist coworkers' performance (e.g., “Helps someone without being asked”). Finally, adaptive performance (4 items) refers to dealing appropriately with uncertain, unpredictable, or crisis situations at work (see Pulakos et al., 2000; e.g., “Effectively adjusts plans, actions, or priorities to deal with changing situations”). The 11 items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not characteristic) to 5 (very characteristic). Both the overall performance scale (α = .79) as well as the underlying performance domains demonstrated high levels of internal consistency (α = .81, .80, and .74 for task, contextual, and adaptive performance respectively).

3.1.3 Data Analysis

To investigate the relationship between work passion (HP and OP) and both job satisfaction and job performance, we first inspected the bivariate correlations between these constructs. Next, a series of five regression analyses was conducted, i.e., for each of the five work criteria. In each of these regression models, HP and OP were entered as a set to control for their interrelationship. Job satisfaction was the dependent variable in Model 1, overall job performance was the dependent in Model 2, and the three performance dimensions, task-, contextual-, and adaptive performance, were the dependents in Model 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

3.2 Results

Descriptive statistics, variable intercorrelations and internal consistencies of the Study 2 variables are reported in Table 4.
Table 4

Descriptive statistics and variable intercorrelations: Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
<th>6.</th>
<th>7.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Harmonious passion</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Obsessive passion</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Job satisfaction</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.70***</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Job performance</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Task performance</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.63***</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Contextual performance</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.80***</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Adaptive performance</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.71***</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. aN = 208 self-reports; bN = 182 supervisor-reports;
Bold values on the diagonal show the internal consistency of the relevant variable;
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Correlations. Consistent with what was found in Study 1, both HP (r = .70, p < .001)
and OP (r = .17, p < .05) were significantly and positively correlated to job satisfaction (see
Table 4). Regarding the relationship with job performance, Table 4 shows that employees
with higher scores on HP generally received higher overall performance ratings by their
supervisor (r = .18, p < .05). Looking at the underlying performance dimensions separately, a
similar trend can be observed for contextual (r = .17, p < .05) and adaptive (r = .15, p < .05)
performance. In contrast, no significant relationships were found between OP and job
performance (e.g., r = -.07, p > .05 with overall job performance).

Regression analyses. When conducting a regression analysis in which HP and OP
were entered as a set (see Model 1 in Table 5), HP remained significantly related to job
satisfaction (β = .65, p < .001), while OP did not (β = .09, p > .05). Together, passion for work
accounted for 45% of the variance explained in job satisfaction (R² = .45).

Similar to the correlational pattern, regression results in Model 2 (Table 5) show a
positive relationship between HP and job performance (β = .20, p < .05) and no significant
relationship between OP and performance (β = -.11, p > .05). Work passion accounted for 4%
of the variance in job performance (R² = .04). Model 3 to 5 further demonstrate that HP is not
significantly related to task performance (β = .07, p > .05), although we did find a significant
and positive association with contextual ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) and adaptive performance ($\beta = .17, p < .05$).

### Table 5

**Regression analyses examining the associations between work passion and job satisfaction and job performance (Study 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1: Job satisfaction</th>
<th>Model 2: Job performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>SE (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HP</strong></td>
<td>.65***</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OP</strong></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 3: Task performance</th>
<th>Model 4: Contextual performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>SE (b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HP</strong></td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OP</strong></td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 5: Adaptive performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HP</strong></td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OP</strong></td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$; $N = 208$ in Model 1; $N = 182$ in Model 2-5;*

HP = harmonious passion, OP = obsessive passion.

### 3.3 Conclusion

Consistent with Study 1, employees scoring high on work passion are inclined to be more satisfied with their jobs. When controlling for the relationship between both forms of passion, however, only HP remained significantly related to job satisfaction. Moreover, HP in particular was positively associated with performance ratings provided by supervisors, especially with regard to contextual and adaptive performance. As such, harmoniously passionate employees are more inclined to perform extra-role behavior towards their colleagues and are thought to be better at dealing with uncertain and unpredictable situations at work. Taken together, the results of Study 2 provide evidence for the adaptive features of HP, whereas OP was found to be neither adaptive or maladaptive as far as relationships with job satisfaction and performance are concerned.
4. General Discussion

4.1 Personality and Passion for Work

There is increasing interest in the literature for different forms of passion and how this relates to personality. A first research goal of the present study was to readdress these relationships, hereby specifically focusing on passion for work activities. Our results were more or less consistent with those reported in earlier studies (Balon et al., 2013; Dalpé et al., 2019), which did not contextualize passion in this manner, although some noteworthy differences were found as well. Similar to Dalpé et al. (2019), we found that HP was negatively correlated with neuroticism and positively with extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. In contrast to the previous studies that investigated passion for ‘activities’ (Balon et al., 2013; Dalpé et al., 2019), passion for work was not significantly correlated with openness in the current study. One possible explanation is that the subject of passion was generally more creative (e.g., hobbies and sports), compared to (most types of) work, attracting samples with higher scores on openness. Further, when Big Five traits were examined as a set, only neuroticism (-) and extraversion (+) remained significantly related to HP in our study, while neuroticism was the only trait that did not significantly relate to HP in Dalpé et al.’s (2019) more advanced analysis. Taken together, only extraversion consistently relates to HP across studies targeting different foci of passion, although it is clear that when significant associations are found, a relatively ‘adaptive’ trait profile seems to appear (i.e., low N, high E, O, A, C; cf. Malouff et al., 2005).

Regarding OP, our results are in line with Balon et al. (2013) who found only a significant (negative) correlation with agreeableness. However, when Big Five traits were examined as a set, positive associations were additionally found with neuroticism and conscientiousness. Given that OP generally relates to negative affectivity (Vallerand et al., 2003), a positive association with neuroticism can be expected and was also found in Dalpé et
al. (2019). However, the positive relationship with conscientiousness has not been found in the previous studies. This might in fact be something unique for passion in relation to work. After all, work is a context where conscientiousness is highly valued and OP has indeed been related to persistent involvement and deliberate practice (e.g., Vallerand et al., 2003, 2007). In any case, the exact role of conscientiousness for HP and OP in the context of work deserves further research attention.

The second goal of the present study was to expand the scope of the personality correlates and also consider the relationships between passion and maladaptive personality traits. The underlying idea was that this could potentially help to further delineate the level of (mal)adaptivity of both forms of work passion. The results showed that only one PID-5 trait related negatively to harmonious work passion (i.e., detachment), while three maladaptive traits (i.e., detachment, antagonism, and obsessive-compulsive traits) related positively to OP. However, Big Five traits explained more variance in OP (8%) compared to the PID-5 traits (6%), whereas both Big Five and PID-5 traits accounted for 12% of the explained variance in HP. The relative importance of maladaptive traits (as a set) to understand work passion is therefore not higher for OP, as compared to HP.

Nevertheless, our study suggests that maladaptive traits can indeed be relevant to take into account when investigating the personality building blocks of (work) passion. Especially the maladaptive trait detachment was identified as a significant correlate of both forms of passion, explaining additional variance in HP and OP above and beyond Big Five traits. Extreme introversion was related to lower levels of HP, but also to higher levels of OP. This could suggest that the quality of social and emotional interactions with others, at work and beyond work settings, could be important for the development of (different forms of) work passion. Furthermore, obsessive-compulsive traits were particularly related to OP for work. This perfectly aligns with research showing that OP is associated with rigid persistence in the
beloved activity, even when the situation makes such behavioral persistence ill-advised (Vallerand et al., 2003).

### 4.2 Passion for Work and Work-related Outcomes

Building on SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985) it has been suggested that HP would relate to adaptive outcomes, whereas OP would relate to maladaptive outcomes at work. However, empirical research is relatively scarce and previous studies addressing this topic have produced mixed findings. As a third research goal, the current study related passion for work to job satisfaction, burnout and job performance. The pattern of results was less straightforward as would be expected based on SDT.

First, across both our studies, it was found that HP as well as OP was positively related to job satisfaction. Study 1 further showed that the association between OP and job satisfaction also held after Big Five traits were taken into account. In Study 2, it was found that only HP remained significantly related to job satisfaction after controlling for the interrelationship between both forms of passion.

Second, the present results (Study 1) showed that HP was negatively related to burnout. This is consistent with previous research (Chen et al., 2019; Lavigne et al., 2012; Vallerand et al., 2010) that identified HP as a factor potentially protecting against burnout. Importantly, and in line with previous work (Carbonneau et al., 2008), we found no support for the idea that OP is systematically accompanied by higher levels of burnout (Vallerand et al., 2010). The fact that this finding now seems to replicate across studies is important to take into account when thinking/theorizing about the consequences of OP.

Finally, consistent with earlier findings (e.g., Burke et al., 2015), our results showed that HP was related to higher performance ratings, especially for ratings of contextual and adaptive performance. OP, on the other hand, was unrelated to job performance in this study,
which is also in line with most of the previous studies (Astakhova & Porter, 2015; Burke et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2011, 2018).

Taken together, the results of the present study further substantiate an adaptive perspective on HP in the work context, as it may fuel satisfaction, performance, and feelings of personal accomplishment while suppressing feelings of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. With regard to OP, a fair conclusion of this study could be that it is “less adaptive” in the work context as compared to HP, but our findings do not support a labelling of this construct as “maladaptive”. Obsessive passion for the job may as well fuel job satisfaction, but it does not foster nor suppress burnout or job performance.

4.3 Research Implications

In terms of theoretical implications, our findings offer some suggestions to fine-tune the DMP to bring its assertions more in line with the available data. On one hand, our findings are in agreement with the DMP insofar as this model describes two forms of passion that relate differently to personality traits and work criteria. HP generally relates to personality traits (such as higher extraversion, lower neuroticism) which have been related to higher levels of overall subjective well-being (Soto, 2015), and also the associations with work criteria support the adaptive nature of this form of passion. However, our findings do not support labeling OP as the negative or maladaptive variant of passion. Overall, the contribution of maladaptive traits to explain OP was quite modest, and no evidence was found of the malfunctioning related to OP in the work context. We echo other researchers’ call (e.g., Astakhova & Ho, 2018) to move away from the distinction of “good versus bad” in the passion literature, in which similar but opposite effects are hypothesized for HP and OP. This perspective is not supported by the available data at present.

Our findings also have practical implications. Passion for work accounted for a (very) large amount of the explained variance in job satisfaction (i.e., 28% beyond Big Five traits in
Study 1, and 45% in Study 2) and burnout (i.e., 21% beyond Big Five traits). In addition, passion accounted for 4% of the variance in job performance as rated by supervisors. These findings point to the relevance of identifying and, if possible, nurturing harmonious forms of passion in the workplace.

4.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Some limitations of the present study should be mentioned. First, due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, firm conclusions regarding the causality of findings cannot be made. For instance, it is possible that highly detached people are more prone to develop an obsessive form of passion for work, although it is also possible that being obsessively passionate about one’s job may lead to increased avoidance of social-emotional experiences. In a similar vein, HP may lead to higher job performance, but higher performance may as well lead to increased feelings of HP for the job. Future research can investigate such spiral effects.

Second, several PID-5 domains have an internal consistency lower than the commonly held threshold of .70. Although other studies using the PID-5-Brief Form (Krueger et al., 2013) find similar Cronbach alpha’s, even when using larger sample sizes (e.g., Fossati et al., 2013; N = 877), future research could replicate our findings using the original PID-5 (Krueger et al., 2012). Detachment in particular turned out to be a relevant trait in relation to both forms of passion. Research using the original PID-5 could further investigate the relationships with detachment’s facets (i.e., withdrawal, anhedonia, intimacy avoidance, depressivity, restricted affectivity, and suspiciousness), although explorative research relating all PID-5 facets to passion could provide new and valuable insights.

One strength of the present study was that, for the first time, maladaptive traits were considered in relation to passion for work in addition to general Big Five traits. However, all personality variables together explained only a relatively small share in work-related passion (e.g., max. 16% for HP; 12% (Big Five) + 4% (detachment)). This indicates that many other
factors still contribute to passion for work that were not considered in the current study. Future research could investigate the role of other individual differences (e.g., core-self evaluations, perfectionism), include contextual variables such as organizational culture and prevalent leadership, and investigate the impact of person-environment (PE) fit on passion for work.

Finally, questions remain regarding the mechanisms that explain any associations between passion for work and relevant criteria. Future research could consider, for instance, need satisfaction (i.e., need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness) as one potential mediating factor explaining how HP contributes to higher job satisfaction and performance, or lower burnout.

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