

The Dark Side of Ambition: The Relationship between Ambition, Workaholism and Burnout,
and the Role of Recovery Experiences.

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Master Thesis Work and Organizational Psychology

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March 15, 2019

Abstract

Is ambition always a positive characteristic or can ambition also be harmful for employees and/or the organization? This study tried to answer these questions, because almost no attention has been paid to the negative side of ambition. In order to answer these questions, this study examined if there is a relationship between vertical ambition, workaholism and burnout, and if recovery experiences can buffer the negative effects of these relationships. A cross-sectional survey study ($N = 484$) was carried out with a diverse sample of men and women within the Netherlands. Results of this survey supported the direct relationships (vertical ambition related to workaholism and burnout) of this study. However, the hypothesis about recovery experiences as buffer for the negative relationship between vertical ambition, workaholism, and burnout was not supported in the current sample. Therefore future research has to examine if other buffers can decrease the negative effect of vertical ambition on workaholism and burnout. Besides that, it is important for organizations to pay attention to the dark side of ambition. Hiring ambitious employees seems good, but when someone becomes too ambitious this can have harmful consequences for both the employee and the organization.

Keywords: Vertical ambition, workaholism, burnout, recovery experiences, exhaustion, cynicism, professional efficacy, psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery experiences, Job Demands-Resources model.

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Being successful, having a high income, being engaged in activities, and developing skills and abilities are all factors which are becoming more and more important in daily work life (Kuijpers, Schyns, & Scheerens, 2006). Employees strive to increase these factors as much as possible in order to increase career success (Kuijpers et al., 2006). This process is called career ambition. The importance of career ambition can be seen in today's society in the recruitment of new employees. Online databases, such as Indeed, focus most of the time on recruiting ambitious employees. For example a vitamin and supplements store states in their job description that they are searching for employees who are ambitious, result-oriented, and driven to achieve their goals (<https://www.indeed.nl>). We see this preference for ambitious individuals also in the educational field. For example Tilburg University created an education profile which asks for students who are self-aware, engaged, knowledgeable, responsible, solidary, and who want to play a significant role in society (<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/about/profile/educational-profile/tep/>). In other words, this University wants students to become ambitious, be well-trained to further develop their talents, increase their knowledge, and make a contribution to society. Since both organizations and educational institutes ask for ambitious people, this implies that being ambitious is viewed as a positive characteristic. However, the question arises whether ambition is always good. In other words, can ambition be harmful for employees and/or the organization?

Previous research has mainly focused on the positive side of ambition. For example, Desrochers and Dahir (2000) found that ambition within employees may serve as a motivational base of professional and organizational commitment. In addition, ambition can be a drive to achieve work-related goals in order to gain self-development, expertise, and achieving common goals (Schaveling & Van Osch, in progress). However, researchers have hardly paid attention

to the downside of ambition, which is interesting. Therefore this current study suggests that ambition can also have negative outcomes for the employee and the organization. Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007) found that ambitious employees will be more likely to use work-related communication technologies after their working hours. In addition, previous research linked being ambitious to an overachievement in performing tasks (Perez-Garcia & Sanjuán, 1996; Preckel, Von Känel, Kudielka, & Fisher, 2005; Van den Berg & Schalk, 1997). Based on this, this current study assumes that ambitious employees work more than the required working hours in order to become successful. Working long hours can at a certain point in time be negative for the health of the employees (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Because of the importance of these detrimental effects, this current study will focus on the negative consequences of ambition which will be informative for organizations in order to deal with the negative consequences of ambitious employees. This is also an addition to the existing literature, because almost no attention has been paid to the downside of ambition. This leads to the following research question which will be answered:

“To what extent is ambition related to workaholism and burnout and what role does recovery experiences play?”

This current study suggests that highly ambitious employees have to deal with a lot of job demands which is related to the experience of negative health outcomes (e.g. Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Besides that, this current study investigates if recovery experiences can buffer the negative effect of being highly ambitious on experiencing negative health outcomes. In other words, this current study wants to examine what the dark side of ambition is. Because it is good for organizations to search for ambitious employees, because being ambitious is a motivational base of organizational commitment

(Desrochers & Dahir, 2000). However, organizations have to prevent that employees become too ambitious, because this can have harmful consequences for both, the employee and the organization. This expectations will be discussed in detail below.

Vertical ambition and workaholism

Ambition is defined as the persistent and generalized striving for success, attainment, and accomplishment (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). More specific to the work context, Kortekaas-Mertens (2018) defined vertical ambition as a drive to successfully complete work-related goals in order to be rewarded in terms of status, power, promotion, and money. In other words, people who are vertically ambitious want to be successful at their job (Kortekaas-Mertens, 2018), and move their career upwards (Verstraeten, 2017). That is why it is called ‘vertical’ ambition. Besides that, being ambitious is categorized as a type A behavior. Type A behavior describes employees who are anxious engaged in their work (Hallsten, Josephson, & Torgén, 2005). This means that they need approval in their work (Hallsten et al., 2005) and perform more than requested (Perez-Garcia & Sanjuán, 1996; Preckel et al., 2005; Van den Berg & Schalk, 1997).

However, this current study suggest that vertical ambition can lead to workaholism, because of the drive to achieve goals. This suggestion is based on previous research, which found that people who are vertically ambitious overachieve in approaching and managing tasks (Perez-Garcia & Sanjuán, 1996; Preckel et al., 2005; Van den Berg & Schalk, 1997). Besides that, previous research found that working an excessive amount of time is associated with workaholism (McMillan et al., 2003). Based on this information, we can assume that there is an association between being a vertically ambitious employee and being a workaholic, because both concepts describe an employee who does everything to achieve their goals even if they have to work an excessive amount of hours.

To understand these associations it is important to know that workaholism is divided into two different elements: working excessively hard to achieve your personal goals, and the existence of a strong, irresistible inner drive (McMillan et al., 2003). This means that a workaholic works even more than is reasonably accepted to achieve the goals of the organization (McMillan et al., 2003).

As mentioned above, this current study suggests that there is an association between being a vertically ambitious employee and being a workaholic. However, previous research found that workaholics work an excessive amount of time out of an inner drive (Spence & Robbins, 1992), which is contradictory to vertically ambitious employees who are mainly driven by external motivators (Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Thus, based on the findings of Schaufeli, Taris, and Van Rhenen (2008), it can be concluded that a vertically ambitious employee will focus on other goals than a workaholic.

This current study does not agree with this conclusion, because of the ‘working excessively hard to achieve your personal goals’ element of the definition of workaholism of Spence and Robbins (1992). Based on this element, there is an association between being a workaholic and being a vertically ambitious employee, because of the similarity in excessive effort and time that these people spend at their job. In line with this information, the current study expects the same behaviour among workaholics and people who are vertically ambitious, regardless of whether the motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic. In other words, the higher the levels of vertical ambition within an employee, the higher the level of workaholism in that employee. Therefore the first hypothesis is:

H1: ‘Vertical ambition is positively related to workaholism.’

Vertical ambition and burnout

Vertically ambitious employees show type A behaviour, which is associated with anxious engagement (Hallsten et al., 2005). This means that the involvement of employees in their work is negatively charged and completely encouraged by the need for approval (Hallsten et al., 2005). In other words, vertically ambitious employees display overachievement in approaching and managing tasks (Perez-Garcia & Sanjuán, 1996; Preckel et al., 2005; Van den Berg & Schalk, 1997). This is in line with the suggestion of this current study, that vertically ambitious employees take on as many job demands as possible with as few job resources as possible.

However, this can be detrimental for the employee, because having high job demands is related to the experience of burnout (e.g. Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The relationship between job demands and negative health outcomes can be explained by the Job Demands-Resource model (JDR). This model describes different kinds of job demands (mental, emotional, physical) which can lead to negative outcomes for the employee (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands, which can lead to these negative outcomes are for example high work pressure, role ambiguity, and emotional demands (Doi, 2005; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). To make this process more clear, we will explain it with an example of previous literature. So, employees who have to deal with high expectations, will work too hard and do too much at their job. When the employees do not produce the expected results based on their high effort, they will feel exhausted and/or cynical (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001), which are dimensions of burnout (Maslach, 1993).

Burnout is a health problem that employees might have to deal with. A burnout is a three-dimensional construct which consists of: exhaustion, cynicism, and a lack of professional efficacy (Maslach, 1993). Exhaustion is about the depletion of mental resources as a result of work overload. Employees depersonalize from their work in order to create a distance between oneself and their work (Maslach et al., 2001). Depersonalization is also related to the second

construct, cynicism. This construct is about holding a distant attitude towards one's job (Maslach, 1993), which can be caused by social conflicts in the work setting (Maslach et al., 2001). The last construct is the lack of professional efficacy, which is associated with the lack of relevant resources for the employee (Maslach et al., 2001). The lack of resources causes negative feelings about the performance at one's job (Maslach, 1993).

Thus, based on the JDR model, we can assume that employees who use work performance as a measurement of personal value are more susceptible to burnout than employees who do not use their self-worth as measurement (Hallsten et al., 2005). In other words, employees who are highly vertically ambitious are more vulnerable to burnout and will therefore show higher levels of burnout than employees who are less or even not vertically ambitious. This leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: 'Vertical ambition is positively related to burnout.'

The impact of recovery experiences

Recovery experiences are of great importance for employees in order to be away from the work environment (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005), and mitigate negative health outcomes (Etzion et al., 1998). There are several ways in which someone can recover, such as psychological detachment, relaxation, and taking part in mastery experiences. First, employees have to be away from their work environment, but also have to stop thinking about work-related problems when they want to psychologically detach from their work (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). In addition, meditation, muscle relaxation, or other ways to relax body and mind can help to decrease sympathetic activation which employees experience during the day (Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008), which also helps to recover. At last, activities such as sport, hobbies, or volunteer work can help to recover from the work environment by causing

feelings of competence and proficiency. These activities are called mastery experiences (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002).

But the question is: ‘Why are recovery experiences of such a great importance?’. The importance of recovery experiences can be explained by the Effort-Recovery model. This model describes that working long hours without enough recovery can be negative for the health of the employees (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Feelings of fatigue, long term losses, and physical and mental impairment can arise when someone not engages in recovery (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Not enough recovery is also harmful, because this will lead to a vicious cycle, where employees have to put extra effort in their work in order to maintain their level of performance (Sluiter, Van der Beek, & Frings-Dresen, 1999; Sluiter, Frings-Dresen, Van der Beek, & Meijman, 2001). However, the other way around, taking part in recovery experiences will help to manage stress and mitigate negative health outcomes (Etzion et al., 1998).

Previous research found that workaholics neglect their social life and spend the evening working at home or even at the office (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Recovery experiences can help employees to be away from their work instead of working during leisure time (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). Therefore this current study suggests that recovery experiences can help to reduce the impact of vertical ambition on becoming a workaholic, because employees learn to distance themselves from their job and spend time at social activities (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). Thus, the more an employee is vertically ambitious, the higher the level of workaholism expressed by the employee. However, recovery experiences can buffer the negative effect of vertical ambition on workaholism, which leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: ‘The relationship between vertical ambition and workaholism is moderated by recovery experiences.’

Another assumption that can be made on the content of recovery experiences is that it can help to reduce the detrimental effects of ambition on burnout. Recovery experiences during leisure time can help to reduce the negative health outcomes of being vertically ambitious, because these experiences help employees to recuperate and unwind from their work. This will lead to less negative health outcomes and lower feelings of burnout (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Thus, it is expected that the more an employee is vertically ambitious, the higher the level of burnout expressed by the employee. However, recovery experiences can buffer the negative effect of vertical ambition on burnout and decrease the levels of negative health outcomes of the employee (Etzion et al., 1998). Therefore the fourth and last hypothesis is:

H4: 'The relationship between vertical ambition and burnout is moderated by recovery experiences.'

Summarizing the hypothesis, figure 1 shows the conceptual model with the direct effects of vertical ambition on workaholism and burnout. In addition, the conceptual model takes the effect of recovery experiences on the relationship between vertical ambition and workaholism, and between vertical ambition and burnout into account.

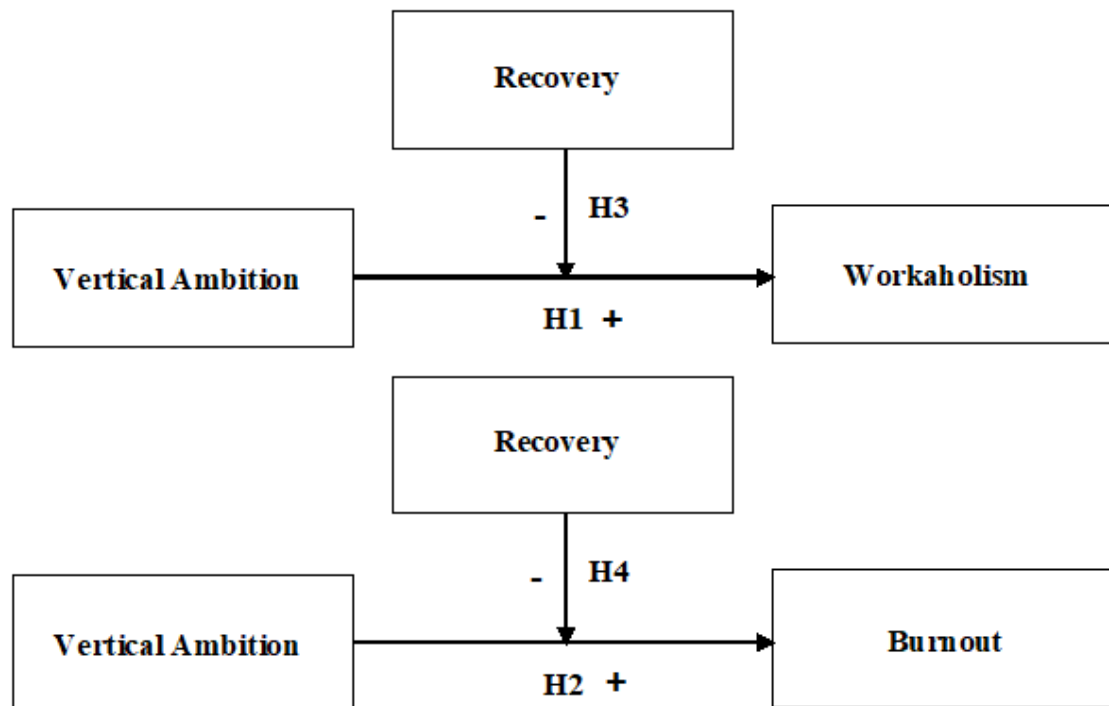


Figure 1. Conceptual model

Method

Sample and Participant Selection

This current study was a cross-sectional study with a diverse sample of men and women. Data was collected in two ways. First of all, acquaintances of the researcher working in organizations in the Netherlands were invited via e-mail or in person to fill out the survey. This is a form of snowball sampling which was used in person or in an online format. Besides that, different organizations were approached with the question whether they want to distribute the survey in the organization, including a national bank and an organization in the healthcare sector. This contributes to getting the largest possible variety of organizations. The population of interest included participants who are employed, because the questions in this survey were work-related. Besides that, the focus was on employees from the Netherlands, because

including other countries will reduce the generalizability of the results. Participants were asked how well they speak Dutch. When the answer was fluent or native language, they were included in the sample.

Based on a G*Power 3.0.10 test (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2008), 107 participants had to take part in this survey. This amount is based on an effect size of .15, which is labelled as a medium effect size by Cohen. Besides that, an alpha of .05, and a power of .95 was used. The statistical test used was the 'Multiple Regression: Special (R^2 increase)', which is part of the family of F-tests. Two direct effects and one interaction effect were included in this test, with a R^2 of .1 and a F^2 of .11. In total, the survey was opened by 497 participants. All participants who did not fill out one specific variable of this research were deselected from further analysis ($n = 210$). In addition, participants who mentioned that they did not have a job ($n = 2$) were deleted from the dataset. They do not meet the criterion of being employed and can therefore not answer the work-related questions in a reliable way. Besides that, respondents with an age below 18 were deleted from the dataset ($n = 1$), because they also did not meet the requirements of this study. This resulted in a final sample of 284 participants. This sample consisted of 102 males (35.92%), 175 females (61.61%), and 7 missing values (2.56%). The average age of the participants was 39.20 years ($SD = 13.64$), ranging between 18 and 69 years old. On average, participants worked 8.79 years ($SD = 10.10$) in their organization. At last, 140 participants mentioned that they work in a fulltime job (49.29%), 135 participants mentioned that they work in a parttime job (47.54%), and 9 values about type of contract were missing (3.17%).

Procedure and Design

This was a correlational study in which the participants firstly had to agree with the informed consent before starting the questionnaire. They were provided with information about

the aim of the current study, and the confidentiality and anonymity of the survey. To prevent manipulation of the answers, ambition was not included in the explanation of the survey. Participants were told that the survey was about attitudes in the work setting. Thereafter, participants were presented with 47 items about ambition (24 about vertical ambition and 23 about horizontal ambition), 6 items about organizational identification, 1 item about perceived availability of promotion opportunities, 15 items about organizational commitment, 10 items about stress, 4 items about success, 17 items about workaholism, 15 items about burnout, and 12 items about recovery experiences respectively. At last, participants were presented with 5 items about demographics. After completing the questionnaire, participants were debriefed about the real meaning of this study and thanked for their participation. The whole questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Measures

Vertical ambition. This construct is measured with a 22-items scale set by Schaveling and Van Osch (in progress). Some example items of the 22-items scale were: “I spend a great deal of energy on securing a promotion”, “My goal is to outperform my colleagues”, and “I work hard so that I can ask for higher wages every year”. Answers were given through a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). Factoranalysis of this questionnaire gave five factors with an Eigenvalue above 1. This first factor explained 9.28% of the variance, the second 1.83%, the third 1.22%, the fourth 1.17%, and the fifth and last 1.02%. However, a cut off after one factor was indicated by the scree plot, which means that all items may be taken together in one vertical ambition scale. The Cronbach’s alpha for the vertical ambition scale was .93, which means that the internal consistency is excellent.

Workaholism. This construct was measured with a combined 16-item scale set up by Schaufeli et al. (2008). The scale was created out of two questionnaires relatively about working

excessively and drive. On the one hand, the working excessively scale of Taris, Schaufeli, and Verhoeven (2005) was used for items related to working excessively. This scale is a short version of the Work Addiction Risk Test (WART; Robinson, 1999). On the other hand, the scale of Workaholism Battery of Spence and Robbins (1992) was used for items related to drive. Both scales consisted of eight items. Some examples of these items were: “I seem to be in a hurry and racing against the clock” and “I feel that there is something inside me that drives me to work hard”. Respectively, the first item mentioned is about working excessively and the second item is about being pushed by an inner drive. All the items were measured through a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 4 (*totally agree*). Factoranalysis with all 16 items of the workaholism scale indicated five factors with an Eigenvalue above 1. The first factor explained 4.98% of the variance, the second 1.48%, the third 1.17%, the fourth 1.10%, and the fifth and last factor 1.07%. However, a cut off after one factor was indicated by the scree plot, which means that the two scales of workaholism may be taken together. The Cronbach’s alpha of this workaholism scale was .84, which means that the internal consistency was good.

Burnout. For the measurement of burnout, a Dutch version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory Survey of Schaufeli and Van Dierendonck (2000) was used. This scale consisted of 15 items which can be subdivided into three subscales which contribute to the three constructs of the definition of burnout by Maslach (1993). Five items about exhaustion, four items about cynicism, and six items about professional efficacy which were reverse-scored. For all the three constructs, some example items were: “I feel emotionally drained from my work”, “I have become more cynical about whether my work contributes anything”, and “At my work, I feel confident”. These items are about exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of efficacy respectively. Burnout was measured through a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). Factoranalysis with all 15 items of the burnout scale indicated three factors with an Eigenvalue

above 1. The first factor explained 5.23% of the variance, the second 2.60%, and the third 1.10%. However, a cut off after two factors was indicated by the scree plot, which means that the burnout scale consisted of two different parts which may not be taken together. In line with this, factoranalysis showed that the items of exhaustion and cynicism were loading on the first factor, and that the items of professional efficacy were loading on the second factor. Therefore, two new variables were created: one for the items of exhaustion/cynicism, and for the items of professional efficacy. These new variables were included separately in further analyses. The Cronbach's alpha was .88 for exhaustion/cynicism, and .81 for professional efficacy, which means that the internal consistency was good.

Recovery. To measure recovery experiences some items of the Recovery Experience Questionnaire (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007) were used. This scale takes the concepts of psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences into account which are examples of recovery experiences. Originally, the Recovery Experience Questionnaire (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007) consisted of 37 items with 8 items about psychological detachment, 9 items about relaxation, 11 items about mastery experiences, and 9 control items. Out of these items Sonnentag, Binnewies, and Mojza (2008) made a shorter version of the Recovery Experience Questionnaire which consisted of 12 items, 4 items for each of the concepts mentioned above. Some example items were: "I distance myself from my work", "I use the time to relax", and "I do something to broaden my horizons". Respectively, the first item mentioned is about psychological detachment, the second item is about relaxation, and the last item is about mastery experiences. All the items were measured through a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*do not agree at all*) to 5 (*I fully agree*). Factoranalysis with all 12 items of the recovery experiences scale indicated three factors with an Eigenvalue above 1. The first factor explained 4.59% of the variance, the second 2.80%, and the third 1.23%. Factoranalysis showed that the items of psychological detachment loaded on the first factor, items of relaxation

loaded on the second factor, and items of mastery experiences loaded on the third factor. Besides that, the scree plot indicated a cut off after three factors was indicated by the scree plot, which means that the recovery experiences scale consisted of three parts which may not be taken together. Therefore, three new variables were created: one for the psychological detachment items, one for the relaxation items, and one for the mastery experiences items. These new variables were included separately in further analyses. The Cronbach's alpha was .87 for psychological detachment, .86 for relaxation, and .85 for mastery experiences, which means that the internal consistency was good.

Demographic and control variables. At the end of the survey some demographic and control variables were included. First of all, *gender* was included as control variable, because previous research found that women are more likely to report burnout than men (Purvanova & Muros, 2010). To measure *gender* of the participants a dummy variable was created with men as reference category ($0 = men$, $1 = women$). Besides that, previous research found that older employees experience less burnout levels than younger employees (Brewer & Shapard, 2004). Therefore participants were asked to answer a question about their *age* which was measured in years. Furthermore *years in the organization* was included, because previous research found that employees who have worked in the organization for longer periods of time experience less burnout levels than employees who have worked in the organization for a shorter period (Brewer & Shapard, 2004). *Years in the organization* was measured in years. At last, previous research found that employees with a parttime contract felt that the workload was not reduced in line with their working hours (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010) which in the worst case can lead to burnout. To take this into account, *type of contract* was included which was measured in contractual working hours of the employee.

Statistical Analysis

In the first hierarchical multiple regression, which consisted of three different steps, workaholism was included as dependent variable. In the first step only the control variables were included. The direct effect of vertical ambition, psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences were added in the second step, and the interaction effects psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences were added in the third step. This interaction effects were added in order to test the moderation. In the second hierarchical multiple regression, which also consisted of three different steps, exhaustion/cynicism was included as dependent variable. The three steps of this analysis were conducted and consisted of the same variables as the analysis before. Only the dependent variable was changed from workaholism to exhaustion/cynicism. The third and last hierarchical multiple regression consisted of three different steps with the same variables as the analysis before. Only the dependent variable was changed to professional efficacy. For the analyses a significance level of .05 was set, which means that a p -value below .05 indicated a very high reliability with a confidence interval of 95%.

Results

Correlations

The means (M), and standard deviations (SD) of the variables, and all correlations between the variables are reported in table 1. It was found that vertical ambition was positively related to workaholism ($r [284] = .31, p < .000$), and exhaustion/cynicism ($r [284] = .19, p = .002$), and negatively related to professional efficacy ($r [284] = -.13, p = .029$). Workaholism was positively related to exhaustion/cynicism ($r [284] = .37, p < .000$), and negatively related to psychological detachment ($r [284] = -.50, p < .000$), and relaxation ($r [284] = -.46, p < .000$). In addition, exhaustion/cynicism was positively related to professional efficacy ($r [284] = .30, p < .000$), and negatively related to relaxation ($r [284] = -.13, p = .024$), and mastery

experiences ($r [284] = -.19, p = .001$). Besides that, professional efficacy was negatively related to mastery experiences ($r [284] = -.24, p < .000$). Finally, table 1 showed that psychological detachment was positively related to relaxation ($r [284] = .59, p < .000$).

Concerning the control variables, this study found that age was negatively related to vertical ambition ($r [277] = -.37, p < .000$), workaholism ($r [277] = -.13, p = .030$), exhaustion/cynicism ($r [277] = -.13, p = .028$), and professional efficacy ($r [277] = -.20, p = .001$). Besides that, years in organization was negatively related to vertical ambition ($r [276] = -.19, p = .001$), professional efficacy ($r [276] = -.13, p = .035$), psychological detachment ($r [276] = -.13, p = .033$), and relaxation ($r [276] = -.13, p = .028$). However, years in organization was positively related to age ($r [276] = .57, p < .000$). The correlation of .57 means that these two control variables are highly correlated, so one of these had to be excluded in further analysis. Because of the correlations with all the independent and dependent variables, this study chose to exclude years in organization and include age in further analysis. In addition, gender was positively related to professional efficacy ($r [277] = .21, p = .001$), and psychological detachment ($r [277] = .13, p = .025$), and negatively related to mastery experiences ($r [277] = -.19, p = .001$). At last, type of contract was positively related to vertical ambition ($r [275] = .17, p = .005$), and negatively related to professional efficacy ($r [275] = -.14, p = .020$). However, type of contract was negatively related to gender ($r [275] = -.49, p < .000$). The correlation of -.49 means that these control variables are highly correlated, so one of these had to be excluded in further analysis. Because of the amount of correlations with other variables, this study chose to exclude type of contract and include gender in further analysis.

Workaholism

It was found that the control variables had a significant effect on workaholism ($R^2 = .02$; $\Delta F = 2.38, p = .094$), which was caused by the effects of age ($\beta = -.00, p = .031$). In step 2, the

main effects of vertical ambition, psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences were entered, which did add significantly to the model ($R^2 = .40$; $\Delta F = 42.68$, $p < .000$). This was caused by adding vertical ambition ($\beta = .12$, $p < .000$), psychological detachment ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .000$), and relaxation to the model ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .000$). In the third and last step, the interaction terms were entered, which did not add to the model ($R^2 = .40$; $\Delta F = .12$, $p = .948$). Coefficients can be found in table 2.

Exhaustion/Cynicism

The control variables had a significant effect on exhaustion/cynicism ($R^2 = .02$; $\Delta F = 3.44$, $p = .033$), which was caused by age ($\beta = -.01$, $p = .039$). In step 2, the main effects of vertical ambition, psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences were entered, which did add significantly to the model ($R^2 = .11$; $\Delta F = 6.09$, $p < .000$). This was caused by adding vertical ambition ($\beta = .17$, $p = .007$), relaxation ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .045$), and mastery experiences to the model ($\beta = -.22$, $p = .003$). Entering the interaction terms in the third step did not add to the model ($R^2 = .11$; $\Delta F = .80$, $p = .493$). Coefficients can be found in table 2.

Professional Efficacy

It was found that the control variables had a significant effect on professional efficacy ($R^2 = .08$; $\Delta F = 11.29$, $p < .000$), caused by age ($\beta = -.01$, $p = .002$), and gender ($\beta = .33$, $p = .001$). In step 2, the main effects of vertical ambition, psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences were entered, which did add significantly to the model ($R^2 = .16$; $\Delta F = 7.10$, $p < .000$). This was caused by adding vertical ambition ($\beta = -.18$, $p = .001$), and mastery experiences to the model ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .000$). In the third and last step, the interaction term was entered, which did not add to the model ($R^2 = .18$; $\Delta F = 1.31$, $p = .272$). Coefficients can be found in table 2.

Discussion

Based on the research question of this current study “To what extent is ambition related to workaholism and burnout and what role does recovery experiences play?”, it was expected that vertical ambition will lead to workaholism and burnout. In other words, a positive relationship between vertical ambition, workaholism and burnout was expected. Recovery experiences were included as a buffer for this negative relationship, in order to decrease the effects of workaholism and burnout on the employee. To find out if these expectations were correct, a hierarchical regression analysis was done. Workaholism, Exhaustion/Cynicism, and professional efficacy were included as dependent variable. Vertical ambition, psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences were included as independent variables. Besides that, it was decided to include the control variables age and gender in the hierarchical regression analysis.

Based on the results, we can conclude that employees who are highly vertically ambitious will act more like workaholics than employees who are less or even not vertically ambitious (confirming *Hypothesis 1*). In other words, when someone becomes more vertically ambitious this will result in higher levels of workaholism. This finding is in line with previous research which found that ambitious employees perform more than requested (e.g. Perez-Garcia & Sanjuán, 1996). Thus, workaholics and vertically ambitious show the same working behaviour, because both do everything to achieve their goals even if they have to work an excessive amount of hours.

In addition, results showed that employees who are highly vertically ambitious will experience higher levels of exhaustion/cynicism and lower levels of professional efficacy than less or even not vertically ambitious employees (confirming *Hypothesis 2*). This findings are in line with our expectation that highly vertically ambitious employees will experience higher levels of burnout, because high levels of exhaustion/cynicism and low levels of professional

efficacy are associated with high levels of burnout. Besides that, these findings are confirmed by previous research which found that employees who use work performance as a measurement of personal value (vertically ambitious employees) are more susceptible to burnout than employees who do not use their self-worth as measurement (Hallsten et al., 2005).

Unfortunately, no significant results were found for the interaction effect of psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences (rejecting *Hypothesis 3 and 4*). In other words, the separate parts of recovery experiences (psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences) do not act like a buffer for the negative relationship between vertical ambition, workaholism, and burnout.

However, results indicated that employees who engage in psychological detachment and relaxation after their work will act less like workaholics than employees who do not engage in psychological detachment and relaxation after their work. In other words, it is found that there is a direct relationship between psychological detachment, relaxation, and workaholism. This finding is not in line with the expectation of this study that psychological detachment and relaxation will act as a buffer between vertical ambition and workaholism. However, this finding is in line with previous research, which found that psychological detachment helps employees to be away from their work instead of working during leisure time (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). Besides that, it is in line with previous research, which suggested that employees will show lower levels of workaholism when they learn to distance themselves from their job and spend time at social activities (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005).

In addition, it was found that employees who relax after their work will experience lower levels of exhaustion/cynicism than employees who do not relax after their work. In other words, when employees can distance themselves from their job and spend time at social activities this will result in lower levels or even no exhaustion/cynicism. This finding is not in line with the expectation of this study relaxation will act as a buffer for the negative relationship between

vertical ambition and exhaustion/cynicism. In contrast with this, a direct relationship between relaxation and exhaustion/cynicism was found. This direct relationship is in line with previous research which found that employees who recuperate and unwind from their work will experience less negative health outcomes (Sonnentag et al., 2008).

At last, results showed that employees who engage in mastery experiences will experience lower levels of exhaustion/cynicism, and higher levels of professional efficacy than employees who do not engage in mastery experiences. This means that a direct relationship was found between mastery experiences, exhaustion/cynicism and professional efficacy. This finding is not in line with the expectation of this study that mastery experiences will act as a buffer between vertical ambition, exhaustion/cynicism and professional efficacy. These findings are in line with previous research which found that activities such as sport, hobbies, or volunteer work can help cause feelings of competence and proficiency (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002) instead of negative health outcomes (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Thus, despite the fact that these findings are not described by the conceptual model of this current study, they are still important for employees, organizations, and future research.

Limitations and future research

At first, this study has a limitation concerns the amount of respondents. The final sample of this study consisted of 463 respondents, which is a good sample size. However, in most of the analysis it was found that approximately 200 respondents did not fill out the question, which resulted in a lot of missing values. These missing values deducted from the final sample size result in a group of approximately 263 respondent. For this current study, this is a small sample size (Aguinis & Stone-Romero, 1997). So, future research has to collect a higher amount of

respondents, because this will result in more reliable, generalizable, and significant results of this study (Agunis & Stone-Romero, 1997).

In addition, this study has a limitation based on the use of self-reported data. In other words, this study makes use of information about the different variables (vertical ambition, workaholism, burnout, recovery experiences) which is based on perceptions of the respondents and not on the actual situation of the employees. Therefore, future research has to focus on objective data instead of subjective data. They have to collect information about the actual level of vertical ambition, workaholism, burnout, and recovery experiences. For example burnout, it could be that one employee can experience higher levels of burnout than another employee within the same work setting. So measuring their actual level of burnout is more objective than asking employees to their level of burnout, which will result in more reliable results.

Besides this, there are also some other suggestions for future research not linked to the limitations of this study. It could be that other buffers (e.g. sleep quality, use of medicines, supervisory coaching, performance feedback) instead of recovery experiences will buffer the negative effects of the relationships between vertical ambition, workaholism, and burnout. This can be further investigated by using the JDR model. As in the current study, vertical ambition can be seen as a job demand which leads to negative outcomes such as workaholism and burnout. However, the buffer (e.g. sleep quality, use of medicines, supervisory coaching, performance feedback) for this relationship can be seen as a job resource which will reduce the negative consequences of this relationship.

Practical implications

Instead of focusing on the positive side of ambition, this study focused on the negative side of ambition and therefore filled a gap of missing research. It was really strange that there was a lack of research on the negative side of ambition. Because the negative side of ambition

can have negative consequences for the employee, such as becoming a workaholic, or experiencing a burnout. Therefore this study introduced recovery experiences as a buffer for this negative consequences. Despite the fact that it was not supported that recovery experiences can buffer the negative consequences of being vertically ambitious, it was found that recovery experiences have a direct influence on workaholism and burnout. This provides a base for future research, because they should focus on why recovery experiences can not buffer this relationship and if there are other buffers which can reduce these negative consequences. Therefore, this findings and future research are of great importance to the scientific literature.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study found that vertical ambition was positively related to workaholism and exhaustion/cynicism. This means that highly vertically ambitious employees act more like workaholics and experience more negative health outcomes than employees who are less vertically ambitious. Besides that, it was found that vertical ambition was negatively related to professional efficacy, which means that highly vertically ambitious employees experience lower levels of professional efficacy than less vertically ambitious employees. This findings are in line with the expectations of the current study. However, in contrast with the expectation that psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery experiences will act like moderators, it was found that there is a direct relationship between these variables and the dependent variables.

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TablesTable 1. *Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations*

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	39.20	13.64	1										
2. Gender ^a	-	-	-.09	1									
3. Type of contract ^{aa}	32.13	9.39	-.03	-.49**	1								
4. Years in Organization	8.79	10.10	.57**	.01	-.01	1							
5. Vertical ambition	3.47	.99	-.37**	-.11	.17**	-.19**	(.93)						
6. Workaholism	2.35	.44	-.13*	.01	.05	-.05	.31**	(.84)					
7. Exhaustion/Cynicism	1.45	.95	-.13*	.10	.01	.02	.19**	.37**	(.88)				
8. Professional efficacy	1.97	.85	-.20**	.21**	-.14*	-.13*	-.13*	.00	.30**	(.81)			
9. Psychological detachment	3.26	.87	-.11	.13*	-.06	-.13*	-.07	-.50**	-.09	-.00	(.87)		
10. Relaxation	3.88	.69	-.08	.12	-.04	-.13*	.01	-.46**	-.13*	-.07	.59**	(.86)	
11. Mastery experiences	2.78	.77	.05	-.19**	.06	-.04	.01	-.03	-.19**	-.24**	-.04	-.03	(.85)

Note. $N = 284$ | ^aGender is dummy coded (men = reference category) | ^{aa}Type of contract is dummy coded (parttime = reference category) | * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed) | Cronbach Alphas can be found between brackets on the diagonal

Table 2. *Hierarchical multiple regression coefficients.*

	Predictor	Workaholism	Exhaustion/Cynicism	Professional efficacy
		β	B	β
Step 1	Age	-.00*	-.01*	-.01**
	Gender ^a	-.00	.16	.33**
	ΔF	2.38	3.44*	11.29**
	R^2 (Adj. R^2)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.08 (.07)
	ΔR^2	.02	.02	.08
Step 2	Age	-.00	-.00	-.02**
	Gender ^a	.10*	.19	.23*
	Vertical ambition	.12**	.17**	-.18**
	Psychological detachment	-.18**	-.03	-.01
	Relaxation	-.18**	-.20*	-.13
	Mastery experiences	-.02	-.22**	-.22**
	ΔF	42.68**	6.09**	7.10**
	R^2 (Adj. R^2)	.40 (.38)	.11 (.09)	.16 (.15)
	ΔR^2	.38	.08	.09
Step 3	Age	-.00	-.00	-.02**
	Gender ^a	.10*	.20	.22*
	Vertical ambition	.10	.52	-.62
	Psychological detachment	-.14	-.33	-.37
	Relaxation	-.19	.20	.03
	Mastery experiences	-.07	.05	-.55*
	VA x PSYD	-.01	.08	.10
	VA x RELAX	.00	-.11	-.04
	VA x MASEXP	.01	-.08	.09
	ΔF	.12	.80	1.31
	R^2 (Adj. R^2)	.40 (.38)	.11 (.08)	.18 (.15)
	ΔR^2	.00	.01	.01

Note. $N = 284$ | ^aGender is dummy coded (men = reference category) | VA x PSYD = Vertical ambition x Psychological detachment | VA x RELAX = Vertical ambition x Relaxation | VA x MASEXP = Vertical ambition x Mastery experiences | * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed) | β is the standardized beta

Appendices

Appendix A.

The full questionnaire of this study is shown below. This is the questionnaire which is send to the participants. However, only the questions about vertical ambition, workaholism, burnout, and recovery experiences were included in the analysis of this current study. Besides this questions, also four questions about the demographics (age, gender, type of contract, years in the organization) were included.

Dear Participant,

First of all we would like to thank you for participating in this study.

On behalf of Tilburg University we conduct research on the different aspects of your work. In this research we ask you to complete a questionnaire consisting of various statements about your opinion and attitude to your work, together with some demographic information. It takes about 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. Participating in this research gives you the chance to win a bol.com gift card worth 20 euros.

Thank you again for taking part in this study.

After this, we will provide you with information and explain your rights associated with participation in this study.

Kind Regards,

Lisa Clement

Gielke Beerkens

Chiara Diepstraten

Thimo van der Wijst

Before starting the questionnaire, it is important that you have read the following information and agree to it:

- I give permission for the statistical analyses of my anonymous answers.
 - I understand that my anonymous answers will only be used for research purposes and that my answers will not be read by anyone other than the researchers.
 - I understand that the collected data will be stored in the Tilburg University database for a minimum of 10 years.
 - I understand that all information will be processed completely anonymously.
 - I am aware that I have the freedom to stop the questionnaire at any time, without this having any consequences.
-
- I hereby declare that I have read the above information and agree with these terms and conditions.
 - I hereby declare that I have read the above information and do not agree with the above conditions.

Part 1:

This is the first part of a total of three parts.

Please note, part one is the longest part of this questionnaire. When you are done with this, you are already halfway through the questionnaire!

Indicate below to what extent the statements apply to you:

I spend a great deal of energy on securing a promotion

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My aim is to increase my income

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I am careful not to lose my status

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My goal is to outperform my colleagues

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I would rather earn more money doing less interesting work than earn less money doing more interesting work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

It is my constant wish to earn more and more money

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I want to move up in order to be seen

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

When I accept tasks, I give priority to tasks that increase my chances of promotion

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My goal is to receive higher rewards than my colleagues

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

It is important for me to hold a position that is higher than the positions of others

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My goal is to achieve the highest possible position

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I like to be respected for my work status

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My aim is to achieve a higher position

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

If the wages were lower, I would make less of an effort

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My aim is to be in my manager's good books

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I expect others to give me recognition for what I have done

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

For me, wage level is an important expression of appreciation

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I attach great value to obtaining the highest possible status

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

If I reach my goals, I find that I should be rewarded for it

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I find it important that others can see what I have achieved

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I always make sure that my name is clearly connected to a successful project

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

If I perform better than others, I want this to be publicly known

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

In my opinion, good work should be rewarded with a higher wage

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I work hard so that I can ask for higher wages every year

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I like working with others on achieving goals

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I like to choose tasks in which I learn something new

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I strive for succeeding my projects, regardless of a promotion being attached to it

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I strive to help my colleagues with their tasks in the best way possible

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I strive for inner growth

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I invest in further deepening my knowledge

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

The contribution that I can make to an organization is an important motivator for me

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

When I see an opportunity to learn new skills, I seize it with both hands

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I look for inspiration in my work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I want my success to contribute to the success of everyone in the organization

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My goal is to help the organization further develop

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I strive to develop myself

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I am mostly focused on developing myself

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I strive to be able to train others

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I would like to contribute to a better world through my work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I prefer to focus on tasks in which I gain new knowledge

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I like to choose challenging projects in which I learn something new

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I would like to share my knowledge and transfer it to the next generation

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I am very happy when a project succeeds, regardless of whether a promotion is attached to it

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My goal is to contribute to the development of others

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

My goal is to improve myself

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

When I have completed my task I feel satisfied, whether I get paid for it or not

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

During a project, the process is more important for me than the end goal

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

This was part 1.

By clicking on the blue arrow below, you can start part 2.

Indicate below to what extent the statements apply to you:

When someone criticizes the organization I am working for, it feels like a personal insult

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

I am very interested in what others think about the organization I am working for

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

When I talk about the organization I am working for, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

The successes of the organization I am working for, are my success

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

When someone praises the organization I am working for, it feels like a personal compliment

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

If a story in the media criticized the organization I am working for, I would feel embarrassed

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

How likely is it that you will be promoted in the near future at the organization where you currently work?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Likely

☐ Very likely

Below you will find a number of statements that represent possible feelings that people may have about the company or organization for which they work. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below **regarding your own feelings** for the specific organization for which you work now:

I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I feel very little loyalty to this organization

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work were similar

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for, over others I was considering at the time I joined

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

I really care about the fate of this organization

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my Part

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strongly
disagree								agree

Indicate below to what extent the statements apply to you. The following questions are about **last month**:

How often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you felt nervous and stressed?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you felt that things were going your way?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you felt that you were on top of things?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Never	1	2	3	4	5	Very often
-------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Indicate below to what extent you think the statements apply **to the people in your surrounding:**

According to the people around me someone is successful when that person earns a lot of money

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

According to the people around me someone is successful when that person has a lot of material possessions

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

According to the people around me someone is successful when that person has a high status job

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

According to the people around me someone is successful when that person is often promoted

Strongly	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly
disagree						agree

Indicate below to what extent the statements apply to you:

I am in a hurry and race against the clock

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I keep myself busy and have many plans that are still unknown to the outside world

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I do two or more things at the same time, such as eating lunch and writing a memo while answering the phone

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I take on too much during my work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I continue working after my colleagues have stopped working

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I put myself under pressure with self-imposed deadlines

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

It's hard for me to relax when I'm not working

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I spend more time on working than on my friends

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

It is important for me to work hard, even if I don't like it

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I often feel that there is something in me that makes me work hard

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I feel obliged to work hard even when it's not fun

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I notice that I often think about my work, even if I don't want to be busy with it for a while

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

Between my work and other activities that I am involved in, I don't have much leisure time

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I feel guilty if I take a day off

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I wish I wasn't that committed to my work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

Sometimes I enjoy my work so much that I find it hard to quit

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

I am bored and restless on vacation if I don't have something productive to do

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

Indicate below to what extent the statements apply to you:

I feel mentally exhausted in my work

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

Working a whole day is a heavy burden for me

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

I feel burned out by my work

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

I feel empty at the end of a working day

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

I feel tired when I get up in the morning and there is another working day ahead for me

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

I doubt the usefulness of my work

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

I notice that I have distanced too much from my work

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--------

I am not as enthusiastic about my work as before

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

I have become more cynical about the effects of my work

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

I know how to solve problems in my work well

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

I feel that I make a positive contribution to the functioning of the organization with my work

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

I think I am doing well in my job

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

If I finish something at my work, it will cheer me up

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

I have achieved many valuable things in this job

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

At my work, I am full of self-confidence

Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

Indicate below to what extent the statements apply to you:

I forget my work in the evening

Strongly 1 2 3 4 Strongly
disagree agree

In the evening I don't think about my work

Strongly 1 2 3 4 Strongly
disagree agree

In the evening I distance myself from my work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I distance myself from the demands of my work

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I sit back and relax

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I use my time to relax

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I do relaxing things

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I take the time to relax

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I learn new things

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I look for intellectual challenges

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I do challenging things

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

In the evening I do things that broaden my horizon

Strongly	1	2	3	4	Strongly
disagree					agree

This was part 2.

By clicking on the blue arrow, you can start part 3.

This will consist of only five short questions.

Are you a freelancer?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

The number of contractual hours that I have to work per week is:

.....

How long have you been working for the organization you are currently working for?

Round this off to whole years. if you have been working less than 6 months, you can enter '1'.

If you are unemployed, you can enter '0'.

.....

What is your gender?

- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women

☐ Other

What is your age (in years)?

.....

You have now come to the end of the questionnaire.

The purpose of this study is to distinguish between two types of ambition. We make a distinction between vertical ambition, where people are driven by status, promotion, and money, and horizontal ambition, where people are driven by inner growth, helping others, and gaining expertise.

With this research we also want to look at:

- Whether and how ambition changes the longer someone works at the same organization.
- Whether the social norm of success (having a high income, a high status job and many possessions) causes stress in people, and whether this stress is higher in people who are low vertically ambitious.
- Whether vertically ambitious people have a higher chance of a burnout and whether recovery periods outside work can reduce this effect.
- Whether older people are more horizontally ambitious than younger people and whether this is due to their dedication to the organization.

Thank you for participating!

Please click on the blue arrow in the lower right to complete the questionnaire and save your response!

If you have any questions regarding this research, you are free to send an email to:

----- or leave your comment in the text box below.

We greatly value your contribution, which is why we want to give something in return!

We will draw a bol.com gift card to the value of 20 euro among all participants. If you want to win this gift card, you can click on the blue arrow below to leave your e-mail address. This e-mail address is not linked to the answers you have just given. Your answers remain completely anonymous.

If you do not want to win a gift card, you can close this window.

Thank you for your participation!