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Organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout: a cross-sectional study of age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements

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Abstract. This study investigates the relationships between organizational identification (OI), workaholism, and burnout among employed individuals in Latvia, with a focus on how gender, age, and tenure moderate these relationships. Data were collected from May 29 to October 27, 2024, using the QuestionPro platform, resulting in 954 total responses, of which 879 were completed (completion rate: 92.14%). The results demonstrate that high OI significantly predicts burnout ($\beta = 1.167$, $p = 0.002$), particularly when combined with workaholism ($\beta = 2.045$, $p = 0.001$). Employees exhibiting both high OI and workaholism reported the highest levels of burnout. A negative association between tenure and burnout ($\beta = -1.3419$, $p = 0.020$) suggests that experienced employees develop better coping strategies. Gender differences were also observed: women in the high OI group reported significantly higher burnout levels ($\beta = 2.2538$, $p = 0.045$), whereas women in the low OI group experienced lower burnout levels ($\beta = -3.2624$, $p = 0.020$). These findings highlight the complex interplay between organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout, emphasizing the need for organizational interventions targeting workaholism and gender-specific challenges. Future research should further explore the impact of cultural and organizational factors in shaping these dynamics.

Key words: burnout, organizational identification, workaholism, stress, gender, tenure, age.

INTRODUCTION

The interplay between organizational identification (OI), workaholism, and burnout has been a critical focus in organizational psychology (Caprar et al., 2022; Dunning et al., 2024; Filippi et al., 2024; Presbitero & Aruta, 2024; Teresi et al., 2024). Organizational identification refers to the extent to which employees align their self-concept with the values, goals, and mission of their organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). High levels of OI are generally linked to positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, loyalty, and performance (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). However, recent research suggests that while OI drives workaholism, it does not always result in burnout, indicating that additional factors moderate this relationship (Caprar et al., 2022). This paradox remains an area of ongoing inquiry, with emerging evidence suggesting that individual and organizational factors, including age, gender, tenure, and work

arrangements, may play a crucial role in determining whether strong organizational identification results in burnout. Thus, exploring these moderating factors is essential to understanding the complexities of the OI-workaholism-burnout relationship.

How organizational identification drives workaholism

Organizational identification is a key motivator for employee behavior, as it creates a sense of belonging and attachment to the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 2024). Employees who identify strongly with their organization may work excessively to contribute to its success, which can lead to workaholism - characterized by an uncontrollable urge to work long hours at the expense of other life domains (de Beer et al., 2022). This excessive dedication stems from employees' internalization of organizational values, leading them to prioritize professional commitments over personal well-being.

High OI fosters this compulsive need to work, as employees may internalize the organization's values and perceive its success as a reflection of their own worth (Ashforth & Mael, 2024). Research has shown that employees with high OI are often driven to meet organizational expectations, which can result in excessive work behaviors, even when those behaviors are not always rewarded by the organization (Mazzetti et al., 2023). Furthermore, in organizations with a strong performance-driven culture, employees with high OI may feel compelled to work excessively to align with perceived expectations, further reinforcing workaholic behaviors. This dynamic underscores the paradox: OI fosters workaholism but does not necessarily result in burnout (Caprar et al., 2022).

The key question arises - why does organizational identification drive workaholism without consistently leading to burnout? Demographic factors such as age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements may provide insights into why this occurs, and exploring these variables may help explain the observed discrepancy in the relationship between OI, workaholism, and burnout.

How age moderates the relationship between organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout

Age plays a significant role in how organizational identification influences workaholism and burnout. Younger employees may have a stronger desire to prove themselves within the organization, making them more susceptible to workaholism as they strive to meet organizational standards (Ng & Feldman, 2010). As a result, they may internalize organizational values more deeply and engage in excessive work behaviors, driven by a sense of obligation to demonstrate their commitment. However, this same group may also face higher risks of burnout due to limited coping resources and lack of experience in managing work demands (Muteshi et al., 2024). On the other hand, older employees may have developed more effective coping strategies and may be less likely to experience the compulsive need to overwork despite high organizational identification. They may focus more on work-life balance or have a clearer sense of boundaries between their professional and personal lives (Zwack & Schweitzer, 2013). Additionally, older employees may be more selective in how they engage with work, using strategies such as task prioritization and delegation to reduce stress while maintaining high OI. This could protect them from the negative effects of workaholism,

even if they strongly identify with their organization. Furthermore, as Waligóra (2024) highlights, age-inclusive HR practices can buffer the effects of workaholism by providing targeted resources that support both younger and older employees' well-being. Thus, the relationship between organizational identification and burnout may be moderated by age, with younger employees being more vulnerable to burnout due to their workaholic tendencies, while older employees benefit from experience and supportive HR practices in managing work demands.

How gender shapes the link between organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout

Gender also influences the way OI impacts workaholism and burnout. Gendered expectations in the workplace can shape how employees with high OI behave. For instance, women often face higher levels of work-life conflict, especially when they identify strongly with an organization that prioritizes long working hours and high commitment (Muteshi et al., 2024). This added pressure can exacerbate workaholism, as women may feel compelled to meet both organizational expectations and traditional caregiving roles outside of work. In contrast, men may experience different pressures where organizational success is closely tied to their professional identity. Men with high OI may engage in workaholism due to societal expectations that equate professional success with personal worth. High OI can lead to workaholism as men might feel an intense need to meet organizational goals at the expense of personal life, but they may not face the same work-life conflict as women (Akçakese et al., 2024). The impact of OI on burnout can also vary across genders, as women may experience higher burnout rates due to greater work-life conflict and societal pressures, while men may face burnout due to the stress of overwork and the pressure to maintain high performance. These gendered experiences highlight how demographic factors shape the relationship between OI, workaholism, and burnout.

The role of tenure in mitigating the effects of workaholism on burnout

Tenure, or the length of time an employee has been with an organization, can influence the effects of OI on workaholism and burnout. Employees with longer tenure often have a stronger sense of organizational commitment and identity (Porter et al., 2024). However, this stronger identification may not necessarily lead to workaholism. Long-tenured employees may have developed a deeper understanding of balancing work with personal life, and they may be more adept at managing their work hours and responsibilities (Caines & Treuren, 2024). In contrast, employees with shorter tenure may still be in the process of socializing into the organization and may feel a stronger need to demonstrate their loyalty through overwork, increasing their susceptibility to workaholism. Employees with shorter tenure may also be at greater risk of burnout if they have not yet established the coping mechanisms or resources needed to manage high job demands. Their eagerness to prove themselves, combined with a lack of experience in handling organizational pressures, could lead to both workaholism and burnout, especially if the organizational culture supports overwork as a measure of commitment. Tenure may, therefore, play a moderating role in the relationship between OI, workaholism, and burnout.

Work arrangements as a buffer against workaholism and burnout

Work arrangements, including remote work and flexible work hours, have increasingly become a significant factor in shaping the relationship between OI, workaholism, and burnout. Remote or flexible work arrangements can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, making it more difficult for employees to disengage from work and take necessary breaks (Mazzetti et al., 2023). Employees with high OI may be particularly vulnerable to this, as they may feel compelled to continue working beyond standard hours to prove their commitment to the organization, especially when their work is not subject to the usual time and space boundaries of an office environment. However, work arrangements may also have protective effects, particularly if they offer employees greater autonomy and control over their schedules. For example, employees working in environments that promote work-life balance and provide autonomy may be able to engage in high levels of work without experiencing burnout, as they can set their own boundaries and manage their work demands more effectively (Schaufeli et al., 2020; Bakker & Demerouti, 2024). Flexible work arrangements may allow employees to maintain high organizational identification and engagement while mitigating the risks of burnout (Geidelina-Lugovska & Cekuls, 2023), provided they have the support and resources necessary to maintain balance.

The role of demographic factors in the workaholism-burnout paradox

While organizational identification often leads to workaholism, it does not always result in burnout. Demographic factors such as age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements can provide valuable insights into why this paradox exists. Age and gender may influence how strongly employees feel the need to align their personal identity with organizational values, affecting both their likelihood of engaging in workaholic behaviors and their susceptibility to burnout. Employees with longer tenure may have developed the skills to manage their work demands more effectively, while those with shorter tenure may feel more compelled to overwork. Similarly, work arrangements, especially flexible or remote work, can either exacerbate or mitigate the effects of workaholism on burnout, depending on the support structures and autonomy available to employees.

The relationship between organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout is complex and influenced by several demographic factors, including age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements. While high OI can lead to workaholism, the risk of burnout is not a guaranteed outcome. Age and gender differences, along with the length of time an employee has been with an organization and their work arrangements, all play crucial roles in determining whether workaholism leads to burnout. Understanding these demographic influences is essential for developing strategies that can help mitigate the risks associated with strong organizational identification, enabling organizations to foster healthy, engaged employees without compromising their well-being.

This study seeks to clarify the complex interplay between OI, workaholism, and burnout by examining the role of demographic and workplace factors. By investigating these relationships, this study contributes to the ongoing discussion on sustainable work practices and provides practical insights for organizations aiming to balance employee commitment with well-being. Understanding how to foster healthy organizational identification - where employees remain engaged without succumbing to workaholism

or burnout - can inform policies that enhance both productivity and well-being in modern workplaces.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected between May 29, 2024, and October 27, 2024. The target population consisted of employed individuals in Latvia, estimated to be 889,900 in 2023 (OSP, NBL020 database). The sample included 954 respondents, who were recruited through the QuestionPro platform. Participants completed an online survey assessing various workplace-related factors, including organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout.

The survey received a total of 976 views, and the response rate was high, with 954 total responses recorded. After cleaning the data, a final sample of 879 completed was included in the analysis. This represents 92% of the surveys that were started. Of the respondents, 63 surveys were marked as incomplete (with partial responses), and 12 responses were terminated due to technical issues or other non-response reasons. When considering the number of participants who actually viewed the survey, the completion rate drops slightly to 90% of the views, while the rate of responses completed relative to those who started the survey was notably higher, at 98%. Table 1 represents survey participation overview.

Table 1. Survey participation overview

Survey stage	Number/Percentage
Viewed	976
Started	954
Completed	879
Viewed/started	98%
Viewed/completed	90%
Started/completed	92%

Source: Author's compilation based on collected survey data.

These statistics demonstrate a high level of engagement and completion, ensuring that the dataset provides a robust basis for analysis. The gender distribution of respondents is 57% male and 43% female. Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents across different age groups.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by age group

Age group	Amount of respondents	Share, %
15–24 years old	49	6%
25–34 years old	195	22%
35–44 years old	205	23%
45–54 years old	182	21%
55–64 years old	205	23%
65–74 years old	43	5%
TOTAL	879	100%

Source: Author's compilation based on collected survey data.

The data was gathered from a diverse group of employed individuals, allowing for valuable insights into the dynamics of organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout among workers in Latvia.

Data cleaning and preprocessing

Before conducting the analyses, we performed initial data cleaning by checking for missing values in key variables. Rows with missing data were removed, resulting in a final sample of 868 observations. Variables related to OI, workaholism, burnout, age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements were retained for analysis.

Grouping by organizational identification (OI)

To better understand the impact of OI on workaholism and burnout, the sample was split into two groups based on the median value of OI (35.00). Respondents with scores above the median were categorized as the high OI group, while those below the median formed the low OI group. The distribution of OI scores shows a left-skewed pattern, indicating that most respondents identify strongly with their organization, while fewer report very low OI levels. This suggests that the median split does not reflect two naturally distinct groups but rather provides a statistically balanced way to compare individuals with relatively higher and lower OI levels. Alternative grouping methods, such as quartile-based classification, were considered but were not implemented to maintain group comparability and statistical power.

Descriptive statistics

The descriptive analysis revealed the following key insights:

- High organizational identification group. This group exhibited higher mean levels of workaholism and burnout, suggesting that employees with strong identification with their organization tend to work excessively and experience more burnout.
- Low organizational identification group. Employees with lower OI exhibited lower mean levels of workaholism and burnout, indicating that reduced organizational identification may be associated with less workaholic behavior and lower burnout risks.

Statistical analysis confirmed that these differences are significant. Independent *t*-tests showed that the high organizational identification group exhibited significantly higher workaholism ($t = 19.02$, $p < 0.001$) and burnout ($t = 19.78$, $p < 0.001$) levels compared to the low organizational identification group. These findings suggest that stronger organizational identification is associated with increased work intensity and emotional exhaustion.

These descriptive analyses provide a foundational understanding of the study sample, highlighting key demographic variables and their potential influence on the relationships among organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout. With a clear distinction between high and low OI groups, the subsequent analyses explore the impact of these factors on employee well-being. The following section presents the regression results, shedding light on how demographic variables and work behaviors contribute to burnout.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regression and moderation analyses were conducted to further examine the relationships between organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout. These models assess how demographic factors - age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements - moderate the effects of OI and workaholism on burnout. The results provide critical insights into the conditions under which high OI leads to increased burnout risks and the extent to which workaholism exacerbates these effects.

Regression Analysis

Separate regression analyses were conducted for the high OI and low OI groups to assess the relationships between OI, workaholism, and burnout. Burnout was the dependent variable, and the independent variables included OI, workaholism, age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements.

The regression model for the high OI group indicated that both OI (coef = 1.1670, $p = 0.002$) and workaholism (coef = 2.0450, $p < 0.001$) were significant positive predictors of burnout. This suggests that employees who strongly identify with their organization and engage in workaholic behaviors are at a higher risk of burnout. Tenure was negatively associated with burnout (coef = -1.3419, $p = 0.020$), indicating that longer tenure within the organization is associated with reduced burnout. Additionally, gender was found to have a significant positive effect (coef = 2.2538, $p = 0.045$), suggesting that female employees in the high OI group may experience higher levels of burnout compared to their male counterparts.

In the low OI group, both OI (coef = 0.6581, $p < 0.001$) and workaholism (coef = 1.2589, $p < 0.001$) were still significant predictors of burnout, though the effect sizes were smaller compared to the high OI group. Gender had a negative impact on burnout in this group (coef = -3.2624, $p = 0.020$), suggesting that female employees in the low OI group tend to experience lower levels of burnout. Tenure also showed a significant negative relationship with burnout (coef = -1.4780, $p = 0.017$), similar to the high OI group.

Moderation Analysis

To explore whether gender moderated the relationship between OI and burnout, as well as the relationship between workaholism and burnout, we conducted interaction analyses by creating interaction terms between OI and gender, and between workaholism and gender.

The interaction term between OI and gender (coef = 0.1743, $p = 0.249$) was not significant, suggesting that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between OI and burnout.

The interaction term between workaholism and gender (coef = 0.2434, $p = 0.121$) was also not statistically significant, although the effect was marginally positive. This suggests that while gender may influence the relationship between workaholism and burnout, the effect is not strong enough to reach statistical significance.

These findings suggest that organizational identification and workaholism play a crucial role in predicting burnout, but gender can influence the strength and direction of these relationships.

Fig. 1 presents the conceptual model illustrating the relationships between organizational identification, workaholism, burnout, gender and tenure. The model is based on the statistical findings from the study and provides a visual representation of the key relationships identified in the regression analysis.

This conceptual model serves as a theoretical foundation for understanding how demographic and work-related factors influence the OI-workaholism-burnout relationship, providing insights into potential intervention strategies aimed at mitigating burnout risks in organizational settings.

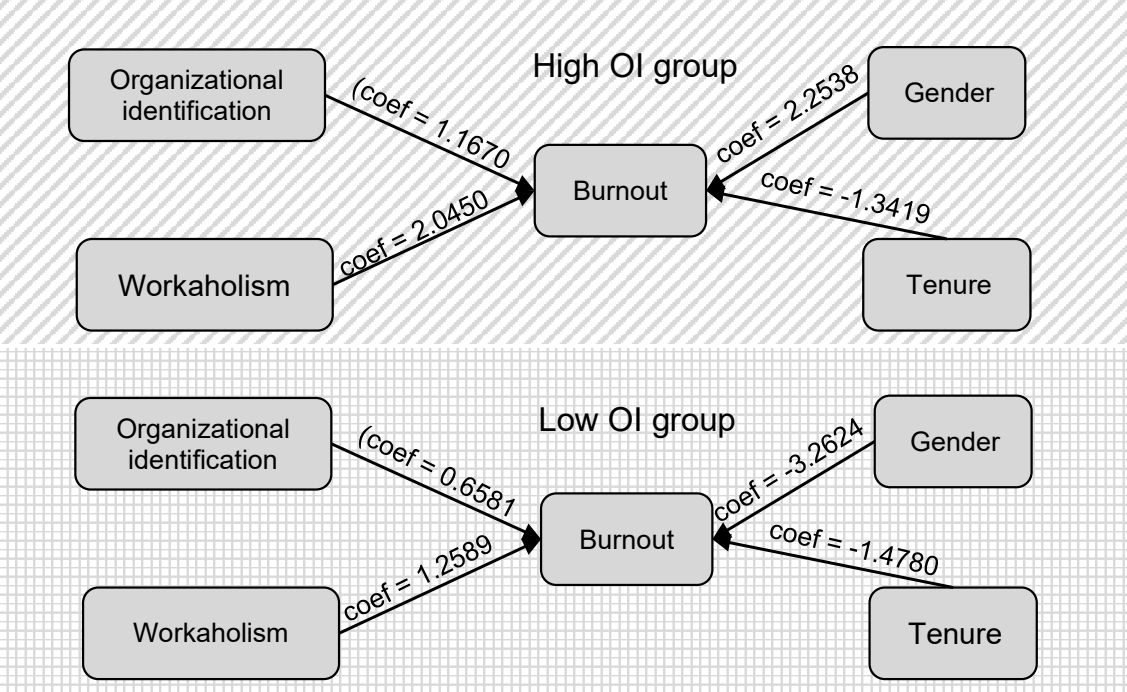


Figure 1. Conceptual model of organizational identification, workaholism, burnout, gender and tenure with regression values.

The data analysis yielded several key findings regarding the relationships between organizational identification (OI), workaholism, and burnout. These findings have important implications for understanding employee well-being in organizational settings. They align with and expand upon the existing literature on these constructs while offering new insights into the moderating role of gender.

Our analysis revealed that employees with high OI are more likely to experience burnout, particularly when they also exhibit workaholism. This finding is consistent with recent studies suggesting that strong organizational identification may contribute to workaholism (Caprar et al., 2022; Dadaboyev et al., 2023), leading to negative outcomes such as burnout. Specifically, employees who internalize organizational values and goals to an extreme may feel compelled to overwork, aligning with Schaufeli et al.'s (2008) finding that workaholism often arises from an obsessive need to meet organizational demands, thus leading to increased stress and burnout. In high-commitment environments, this psychological identification can intensify the pressure to succeed, exacerbating feelings of burnout.

Consistent with the literature, workaholism was found to be a strong and consistent predictor of burnout across both high and low OI groups. This finding underscores the well-established link between excessive work and emotional exhaustion (Andreassen et al., 2018). The stronger relationship observed in the high OI group aligns with Taris et al. (2020), who suggested that employees with strong organizational identification are more likely to exhibit workaholic behaviors and, in turn, suffer from higher levels of burnout due to their inability to disengage from work demands. This aligns with the broader perspective that workaholism, when left unchecked, leads to negative health and well-being outcomes, including burnout.

The analysis revealed distinct gender effects: in the high OI group, women reported higher levels of burnout, whereas in the low OI group, women reported lower levels of burnout. While the literature highlights gendered experiences in the workplace, this finding contributes to understanding how organizational context (i.e., high vs. low OI) can shape gendered experiences of burnout (Liu et al., 2024). In high OI environments, the pressure to perform may be exacerbated for women, especially in cultures where overwork is rewarded, leading to higher stress and burnout. Gendered expectations in the workplace, as suggested by Morkevičiūtė & Endriulaitienė (2022), could explain why women with high OI feel a stronger need to demonstrate their commitment, which can, in turn, heighten their burnout risk. In contrast, women in organizations with lower OI may not experience the same pressures, potentially reducing their burnout levels.

Our findings also suggest that longer tenure is associated with lower burnout levels, aligning with prior research (Varol et al., 2021), which posited that more experienced employees develop better coping strategies and have more resources to manage work stress. This is particularly relevant in high-OI organizations, where the intense identification with the organization could otherwise amplify stress. Tenure allows employees to acclimatize to organizational demands and to find ways to balance work and personal life, thus mitigating burnout over time.

These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout by emphasizing the role of gender and tenure in shaping the strength of these relationships.

Avanzi et al. (2012) support that highly identified employees may work intensively to achieve organizational goals, but an excessive attachment can lead to workaholism, where over-identified employees may underestimate job demands, overestimate their coping abilities, and spend excessive time working, ultimately compromising their psychological well-being and health due to insufficient recovery time. Our results reinforce this by showing that high-OI employees experience higher burnout, particularly when workaholism is present. However, our findings also extend Dadaboyev et al.'s (2023) research by demonstrating that gender plays a significant role, particularly in high-OI contexts where female employees experience heightened burnout.

Andreassen et al. (2018) and Schaufeli et al. (2009) strongly support workaholism as a predictor of burnout. Both highlighted the negative effects of excessive work on employee health. Our analysis provides further evidence that workaholism remains a robust predictor of burnout across organizational contexts, with the strongest effects in organizations where employees report high levels of organizational identification.

Ramos et al. (2016) discussed the role of tenure in moderating burnout, finding that younger employees with longer tenure are more vulnerable to burnout due to increased job demands, while older employees, especially those in managerial roles, exhibit greater resilience. Our findings confirm this by showing that tenure negatively correlates with burnout, suggesting that more experienced employees are better equipped to manage organizational stressors, particularly in high-organizational identification (OI) contexts.

These findings suggest that organizational identification can have both positive and negative effects on employee well-being. While it fosters commitment and engagement, it may also increase the risk of workaholism and, consequently, burnout. This study highlights that workaholism is a key driver of burnout and that demographic and work-related factors, such as age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements, shape these relationships in different ways.

From an organizational perspective, these results underscore the need for strategies that balance strong employee commitment with well-being initiatives. Organizations should consider interventions such as clear work boundaries, flexible work arrangements, and mental health support programs to reduce the negative effects of workaholism and burnout.

While this study provides valuable insights, further research should examine the cultural and contextual factors that may influence these relationships. Future studies could explore how organizational culture, leadership styles, and job resources impact the dynamics of OI, workaholism, and burnout, particularly in cross-cultural settings. Additionally, investigating how individual factors and resilience moderate these relationships could provide a deeper understanding of how employees with varying characteristics respond to organizational demands.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the relationships between organizational identification, workaholism, and burnout, considering the moderating effects of age, gender, tenure, and work arrangements. The findings suggest that organizational identification can be both beneficial and detrimental, as it fosters strong commitment and motivation but may also encourage workaholic tendencies, which in turn contribute to burnout.

The results highlight the importance of individual and work-related factors in shaping burnout risk. Employees with longer tenure may develop coping strategies that protect against burnout, while younger employees may be more vulnerable due to higher work demands and fewer established resilience mechanisms. Gender differences suggest that women in highly identified roles may experience greater work-life conflict, making them more susceptible to burnout. Additionally, work arrangements, particularly flexible options, may play a crucial role in moderating these effects by allowing employees to manage workload pressures more effectively.

From a practical perspective, organizations should focus on creating supportive work environments that maximize the benefits of organizational identification without fostering excessive work engagement. Strategies such as promoting work-life balance, discouraging overwork, and offering tailored well-being initiatives can help mitigate burnout risks while maintaining employee engagement and productivity.

Future research should further investigate the long-term effects of organizational identification on well-being, as well as the role of cultural and organizational contexts in shaping these relationships. A deeper understanding of these dynamics can help organizations develop more sustainable and employee-centric work cultures that balance commitment, performance, and well-being.

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