



The Italian version of the Passion for Work Scale: First psychometric evaluations

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ABSTRACT

Passion is a strong inclination toward an activity that people like and find important, characterized by harmonious passion and obsessive passion. This study aims to provide a psychometric evaluation of the Italian version of the Passion Scale developed by Vallerand and colleagues, applied to work. To assess the factorial validity of the Italian scale, an exploratory factor analysis ($N = 101$) and a confirmatory factor analysis ($N = 234$), along with correlations to assess the validity, were performed. The exploratory factor analysis revealed a two-factor structure, in line with the original study, and one item from the harmonious passion dimension was deleted. The confirmatory factor analysis that was conducted confirmed the two-factor structure. Results suggest that the Italian version of the Passion Scale applied to work can be used in research, allowing to detect an important individual factor influencing well-being and the quality of working life.

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La versión italiana de la Escala de Pasión por el Trabajo: primeras evaluaciones psicométricas

RESUMEN

La pasión es la fuerte inclinación hacia una actividad que gusta a las personas y que consideran importante, teniendo dos vertientes, la pasión armoniosa y la pasión obsesiva. Este estudio se centra en la evaluación psicométrica de la versión italiana de la Escala de Pasión, desarrollada por Vallerand y colaboradores, aplicada al ámbito del trabajo. Con el fin de obtener la validez factorial de la escala italiana, se realizó un análisis factorial exploratorio ($N = 101$) y un análisis factorial confirmatorio ($N = 234$) y se calcularon las correlaciones para evaluar la validez. El análisis factorial exploratorio descubrió una estructura de dos factores, como en el estudio original, suprimiéndose un elemento de la dimensión pasión armoniosa. El análisis confirmatorio confirmó la estructura de dos factores. Los resultados indican que la versión italiana de la Escala de Pasión aplicada al trabajo puede utilizarse en investigación, permitiendo descubrir un importante factor individual que influye en el bienestar y en la calidad de vida laborales.

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In the last fifteen years, psychology developed a new field of interest named Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Contrary to “traditional” studies, that generally apply psychology to negative experiences and to what impedes a good

quality of life, this perspective particularly focuses on individual well-being. Recognizing positive experiences and factors making life worth living, also through the improvement of social and cultural environments, in fact characterizes this new positive view. According to this theoretical framework, which is more and more interesting psychologists, the concept of *passion* is also increasingly assuming relevance, since it can contribute to answering what leads to a better life (Marsh et al., 2013). Vallerand et al. (2003) define passion as a strong inclination toward an activity which the individual

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likes (or loves), finds important, and spends energy and time in it. Therefore, the passionate activity is very significant in the individual's life and becomes an essential feature of an individual's identity (Carpentier, Mageau, & Vallerand, 2012; Mageau et al., 2009). In line with the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), Vallerand et al. (2003) suggest that this centrality of activity in the individual's identity occurs because of the basic human inclination to a higher order organization taking place through the integration process between the individual and the context. According to Vallerand et al. (2003), in fact, the activity that the individual likes (or loves) engages him/her regularly so that such activity is internalized in the person's identity and highly valued. This process flows into passion toward the activity and is functional to define the individual. According to the Dualistic Model of Passion proposed by Vallerand et al. (2003), indeed, depending on the way and on the context in which the activity is internalized in the individual's identity, it is possible to live a Harmonious Passion (HP) or an Obsessive Passion (OP) for the activity. Vallerand et al. (2003) operationalized this dualistic model in a 14-item scale which provides 7 items for HP and 7 items for OP. More specifically, HP occurs when the individual acts an autonomous internalization of the activity in his/her identity. This autonomous internalization arises when the participation in the activity is felt as free, without pressure, and is performed because it is important for the individual. This type of internalization produces motivation and engagement in carrying out the activity, which is significant for the individual, but not pervasive in his/her identity. While experiencing HP, in fact, the activity results as in harmony with other elements of the individual's life. An example of HP item of the scale proposed by Vallerand et al. (2003) is "this activity is in harmony with the other activities in my life". On the contrary, OP occurs when the internalization of the activity in the individual's identity is controlled. It is characterized by intrapersonal/interpersonal pressures and contingencies linked to the activity (such as emotional states referred to social acceptance or self-esteem, or to the uncontrollable enthusiasm to engage the activity) that drives obsessively the individual to participate in the activity. As it is a passionate activity, the individual likes the activity, but it is as if he/her is forced to do it because of the internal forces and connections controlling him/her. This lack of control makes the activity pervasive in the individual's identity and the activity can be in conflict with the other elements of the individual's life. An example of OP item of the scale proposed by Vallerand et al. (2003) is "the urge is so strong, I can't help from doing this activity".

Some studies applied the concept of passion also to work activity (Donahue et al., 2012; Lavigne, Forest, & Crevier-Braud, 2012; Marsh et al., 2013; Vallerand & Houffort, 2003), and for the crucial role of the topic in the field of work and organizational psychology, other studies applied the Scale of Passion for general activity (Vallerand et al., 2003) to the work activity, such as the Spanish version of the scale (Orgambidez-Ramos, Borrego-Alés, & Gonçalves, 2014) or the Portuguese adaptation (Gonçalves, Orgambidez-Ramos, Ferrão, & Parreira, 2014). The translations of the scale to different languages, moreover, are a sign of the growing relevance of the topic. Work, indeed, is one of the most important and durable activities along the individual's life and requires time and energy. As highlighted by Vallerand and Houffort (2003), work is a central aspect and contributes to defining individuals, and can become a part of the person's identity. Therefore, as other activities, the dualistic model of passion can be applied to the work experience and both dimensions are described as crucial for understanding the individual's engagement in his/her work (Lavigne et al., 2012). Moreover, in this view, passion for work can also be a key individual factor that can affect the perception of well-being or distress (Vallerand et al., 2003; Lavigne et al., 2012) and, therefore, the quality of working life.

Considering the importance of the topic for studies detecting factors related to well-being at work and to the perception of the quality of working life, the aim of this study was to provide a first psychometric evaluation of the Italian version of the Passion Scale developed by Vallerand et al. (2003) and applied to work activity. The study shows the factorial validity of the Italian Passion for Work Scale through two steps of analyses: an exploratory factor analysis performed on a sample of 101 workers, and a confirmatory factor analysis performed on a sample of 234 workers. The two dimensions composing the dualistic model of passion, HP and OP, are expected to be found, in line with the original study by Vallerand et al. (2003). Moreover, in order to assess the validity of the construct, the study performed also correlations between the two dimensions of passion and other constructs that literature indicates as related.

The Italian research lacks this measure, that seems to be crucial in understanding the dynamics of well-being at work. Having a reliable measure of passion for work activity can be a very important source, since it is an individual factor able to influence how individuals live a very important and predominant piece of their life: work.

Method

Participants

To assess the factorial validity of the scale, the two steps of analyses of this study considered two different samples of workers. Both groups of participants are random samples.

The first sample used to perform the exploratory factor analysis is a heterogeneous sample and is composed by 101 participants: 54.5% female, average age 42.29 years ($SD = 12.86$), 79.2% work full-time, average seniority 15 years ($SD = 11.70$). Moreover, 76% are employees, 13% workers (working class), and 11% managers.

Two hundred and thirty-four participants belonging to a professional association of project managers compose the second sample, used to perform the confirmatory factor analysis. In particular, 77.3% are male, average age 44.82 years ($SD = 6.90$), 90.5% work full-time, average seniority 11 years ($SD = 6.55$). Moreover, 65.3% of them are supervisors, 20.5% employees, and 14.2% directors.

Measures

Participants completed a self-report questionnaire composed by the following scales:

Passion. As mentioned, to measure passion, the Passion Scale by Vallerand et al. (2003) and adapted to work activity was used. The scale was assessed by 14 items (7 items for HP and 7 items for OP) on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 means *not agree at all* and 7 *very strongly agree* (HP: $M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.39$; OP: $M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.01$).

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was assessed with the scale by Pejtersen, Kristensen, Borg and Bjoner (2010) with a 4-item Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 means *strongly disagree* and 5 *strongly agree*. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study is .82 ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.72$).

Life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was assessed with the scale by Pavot and Diener (1993) with a 4-item Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 means *strongly disagree* and 7 *strongly agree*. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study is .91 ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.29$).

Positive emotions at work. Positive emotions at work were assessed with the scale by Warr (1990) and operationalized as psychological well-being. They were measured with a 6-item Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6, where 1 means *never* and 6 *always*. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study is .75 ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.01$).

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