International Journal of Organizational A

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Journal:	*International Journal of Organizational Analysis*
Manuscript ID	IJOA-08-2020-2372.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Conditions of employment, Motivation, Well-being, Human resource management, Human resource planning, Employees

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to test the direct effect of the perceived overqualification on the burnout syndrome and the indirect effect through the workers' autonomous and controlled motivation.

Design/methodology/approach – The hypotheses were tested with a sample of 3,256 contact center operators from one Portuguese company and data was analyzed using the software package Mplus to conduct structural equation models.

Findings – The results revealed that workers' perceived overqualification is positively related to burnout and that both autonomous and controlled motivation partially mediates this relationship.

Originality – This study provides evidence concerning the mediating role of both workers' autonomous and controlled motivation to explain the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout.

Research limitations/implications – The cross-sectional design should be regarded as a limitation. Moreover, each variable was only assessed with self-reported measures, the sample comprised call center employees from only one company and one country (Portugal), and the workers were all employed in commercial services of telecommunications, energy, banking or insurance companies, which may constrain the generalization of these results.

Practical implications – Workers' perceived overqualification should be avoided to prevent their burnout. Furthermore, an increase in workers' skills and competencies, enhanced decision latitude, and the task variety and quality should be crucial for employees to develop more autonomous motivation to work in a contact center and the promotion of their well-

being at work. More precisely, since overqualification concerns the employees' perceptions of surplus education, experience, and knowledge, from a practical perspective, enhancing the decision latitude, task variety, and quality of these individuals' work may contribute to decreasing individuals' perception of overqualification and, therefore, contribute to increasing workers' autonomous motivations and well-being.

Keywords - Overqualification, Motivation, Self-determination theory, Burnout, Contact Center.

Paper type - Research paper.

Introduction

According to OECD (2018) statistics, the latest data available from 2016 indicated that, on average, unemployment has primarily affected individuals with secondary education (6.85%), however, the unemployment rate among those with higher education increased from 3.46% in 2006 to 4.56% in 2016 (OECD, 2018). Thus, the labor market seems to not always have the capacity to fully absorb the increased supply of qualified workers, and many individuals are forced to accept jobs that require fewer skills than they possess to avoid unemployment (Congregado *et al*., 2016). One of these options is working in a contact center. In Portugal, following a similar pattern to the one observed in other European countries, this sector has expanded considerably over recent years, and the number of employees is around eighty-one thousand (APCC, 2018). In fact, we observed that despite the educational requirements for employment in the contact center industry being elementary or secondary school, around 50% of employees in this industry hold a graduate degree (APCC, 2019). Consequently, there is a likelihood of these individuals perceived themselves as being overqualified for the held job. In other words, contact center workers may perceive themselves as having more

qualifications (e.g., education, skills, and experience) that exceed their job requirements (i.e., subjective overqualification; Liu and Wang, 2012).

Working in a job that subjectively is perceived by the employee as being below their skills and capabilities has negative consequences for individual and organizational outcomes (Erdogan *et al*., 2011), and this is the reason why overqualification is being an emergent topic worldwide concerning the HR management (Chu, 2020; Van Dijk *et al*., 2020). Research has highlighted that this situation fosters a negative relationship with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, extra-role behaviors and well-being, and a positive relationship to turnover (Erdogan *et al*., 2018, 2020; Zheng, and Wang, 2017). However, the implications of this overqualification are far-reaching and require further investigation involving the exploration of more complex models, including mediation (McKee-Ryan and Harvey, 2011). Particularly, as Liu and Wang noted "*studies exploring processes linking overqualification to its possible consequences have been very rare*" (Liu and Wang, 2012, pp. 18). Thus, through the present study, we aim to contribute to filling this gap in the literature by analyzing the relationship between workers' perceived overqualification and burnout including the analysis of the mediating role of motivations as a mechanism to explain this relationship.

This work has the potential to make several contributions to literature and practice. First, it is expected to contribute to the overqualification literature by analyzing the relationship between perceived overqualification and an indicator of very low individuals' well-being at the workplace, namely burnout (Fisher, 2014). To what we know, up to now, few studies have analyzed the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout. Some exceptions are the study of Oki (2013) and Navarro *et al*. (2010). However, they have analyzed staff members of a USA university and professors from Spain, respectively, and with the current research, we will focus on Portuguese contact center workers. Burnout is an unpleasant condition that is detrimental for both individuals and organizations and is a well-

known problem within the contact center work setting (Srivastava and Dey, 2020; Gonçalves *et al*., 2019). Thus, studies like the current one, analyzing burnout predictors could offer an important contribution to the literature (Gonçalves *et al*., 2019). Second, we explore the link between perceived overqualification and workers' motivation for having this employment. We argue that this relationship could be explained using the theoretical background of the self-determination theory (SDT; Deci and Ryan, 2000). By using SDT, it is expected to contribute to answering the call of Harari *et al*. (2017) for integrating perceived overqualification into established theoretical models and test its role in these models to advance the literature about overqualification (see, pp. 43). Third, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study including into the same model the analysis of perceived overqualification, autonomous and controlled motivations, and burnout. Thus, the present study also has the potential to contribute to the literature by testing a more complex model that includes the analysis of both a determinant (i.e., perceived overqualification) and an outcome (i.e., burnout) of workers' motivation. Fourth, we propose with the current study that workers' motivations are a critical factor that contributes to explain the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout. In other words, with the current study, we hope to shed a light on the mediating role of workers' motivation in the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout. Finally, based on the results obtained, we aim to contribute to indicate a set of Human Resource management policies that could be implemented by managers.

Perceived overqualification and workers' burnout

Overqualification is a dimension of underemployment and occurs when workers have surplus education, experience, and/or knowledge, skills, abilities, and capabilities, relative to the requirements of their job (Maynard *et al*., 2006, 2009). It has been operationalized in many different ways, however, we can group the measures developed to access

overqualification into objective versus subjective measures (Arvan *et al*., 2019). Objective measurement has been typically in studies of over education and compares levels of ability and preparation to the demands of the job (Arvan *et al*., 2019). In contrast, subjective overqualification or perceived overqualification captures employees' perceptions that they possess surplus qualifications relative to the requirements of their job, i.e., it is the individuals' subjective experience of being overqualified for the present job (Erdogan *et al.*, 2011; Lee *et al*., 2020). In the present study, we will analyze the perception of overqualification. A perceptual measure tends to be a better predictor of attitudes and behaviors because it reflects reality as it is experienced by the individual (Arvan *et al*., 2019; Lee *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, perceived overqualification may be a more proximal predictor of employees' attitudes, behaviors, and well-being levels than objective overqualification (Erdogan *et al*., 2011). In fact, recently Erdogan *et al.* (2018), with a two-wave study design, also showed that perceived overqualification has a negative effect on subjective well-being (i.e., positive affect and life satisfaction). As such, by analyzing subjective overqualification we also expect to observe significant relationships with employees'motivations and burnout.

Person–job fit typically refers to the match between employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities and the demands of their jobs (Kristof-Brown, 1996), which leads to more positive work outcomes (Kristof- Brown *et al*., 2005). Overqualification represents poor demands–abilities fit, as the employee experiences a discrepancy in the form of excess education, experience, and/or skill relative to the job demands (Maynard and Parfyonova, 2013). This discrepancy is thus expected to result in negative outcomes, such as very low well-being at work. Various studies corroborated the negative health effects of overqualification. For example, Johnson and Johnson (1992) showed that perceived overqualification, significantly and positively predicted psychosomatic symptoms, depression, frustration, hostility, and insecurity. Johnson *et al*. (2002) also verified that perceived

overqualification was negatively related to job satisfaction and positively related to somatization.

As previously noted, studies who have analyzed the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout are scarce. Burnout is a psychological syndrome that comprises exhaustion (i.e., diminished emotional and physical energy) and cynicism (i.e., distancing and negative feelings and a lack of compassion towards the work recipients) (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Originally, professional efficacy (i.e., self-evaluation of competence and productivity at work) was considered as the third dimension of burnout, more recently this dimension has been considered a relatively independent dimension (Lee and Ashforth, 1996), that is developed in a parallel way (Maslach *et al*., 2001). Thus, it is currently believed that exhaustion and cynicism should be considered the core dimensions of burnout (Demerouti *et al*., 2001). Following this framework, we conceptualized burnout as a strain syndrome that is characterized by exhaustion and cynicism.

Two previous studies confirmed that perceived overqualification relates to burnout. More precisely, Navarro *et al*. (2010) study showed that perceived overqualification was positively related to emotional exhaustion (i.e., a burnout dimension). Additionally, Oki (2013) observed a positive relationship between perceived overqualification and cynicism (i.e., a burnout dimension). In line with these previous studies we hypothesized:

H1. Perceived overqualification relates positively to burnout of contact center workers.

Perceived overqualification and burnout: The mediating role of motivations

The most often theory used to explain the effects of perceived overqualification is relative deprivation theory (RDT; Crosby, 1976). Relative deprivation theory explains the difference between people's subjective feelings and their objective situations (Crosby, 1976). It suggests that individuals with higher education, experience, knowledge, and/or skill levels

expect to perform more challenging and interesting work, to receive more responsibilities, and get better promotion prospects (Congregado *et al*., 2016). In other words, when people perceive as being overqualified, they might desire more than they have because individuals feel they have less than they should be entitled to. When the present job fails to meet the individuals' expectations, workers have a feeling of deprivation which results in frustration, anger, and resentment that leads to negative job attitudes, behaviors, and lower well-being at work (Harari *et al*., 2017). Supporting this theoretical background, using a sample of 517 executives, who lost their jobs as a result of downsizing, Feldman et al. (2002) observed that relative deprivation was an important mechanism in explaining how underemployment led to significant decreasing in psychological well-being. However, as the empirical data of Oki (2013) showed, this feeling of deprivation only partially explained the relationship between perceived overqualification and cynicism (i.e., one burnout dimension). As such, there may are other mechanisms that contribute to explain the relationship between perceived overqualification and work well-being.

In the present study, we argue that motivations can be a mechanism to explain why perceived overqualification could be related to burnout. Next, we will elaborate on why perceived overqualification would be related to workers' motivation, and, in turn, why workers' motivations would be related to burnout. We will explain these relationships by using the theoretical background of the self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

The self-determination theory (SDT, Deci and Ryan, 2000) is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of motivation for well-being and may explain why the person-job misfit (i.e., overqualification) is related to workers' well-being. According to this theory, there are different reasons why individuals initiate and persist in a specific course of action, e.g., different reasons for accepting and maintaining a job (Gagné *et al*., 2017). In light of this assumption, the SDT describes a motivational continuum that ranges from

amotivation to intrinsic motivation. Amotivation is the state of lacking the intention to act (Ryan and Deci, 2000), and therefore in an organizational context, there is no interest in studying it (Gagné *et al*., 2010). Intrinsic motivation is the prototype of autonomous/self-determined behavior and represents individuals who practice an activity for its inherent enjoyment or satisfaction, which is not dependent on external contingencies (Gagné *et al*., 2017). When workers are intrinsically motivated, they enjoy and prefer this employment. In between amotivation and intrinsic motivation, the self-determination theory has identified different types of extrinsic motivations (Deci and Ryan, 2000), which are experienced in situations in which the individual acts more under external regulation than by an intrinsic interest (Deci and Ryan, 2008). The more autonomous or self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is the regulation through identification. With this motivation, the worker shows a conscious appreciation of a behavioral goal or regulation, in such a fashion, that the action is accepted or owned as personally important (Ryan and Deci, 2000). When the worker's motivation is regulated through identification, he/she recognizes the value of that activity to his/her objectives, since it is regarded as a means to develop skills that will be helpful or as a means to develop a career. External regulation is less autonomous and closer to amotivation. It concerns in doing an activity to obtain the desired consequence (e.g. tangible rewards – a salary) or to avoid punishments (e.g., unemployment) (Gagné *et al*., 2017). When the motivation of the worker is externally regulated, he/she works because that activity becomes the only possible way of earning a salary and, hence, avoiding unemployment. In introjected regulation, between external and identified regulation, individuals administer the contingent consequences to themselves. This is prototypically associated with contingent self-worth (pride) or threats of guilt and shame. When a worker's regulation is introjected, there is no full acceptance of the regulation by the self, and individuals act as moved by his/her ego, wishing to maintain self-worth. With this introjected regulation, workers feel that work is

central to their lives and believe that one must overcome all challenges and be active in the labor market.

According to the self-determination theory, the aforementioned types of motivations may be grouped into two broad key forms of human motivations: autonomous and controlled motivations (see, Deci and Ryan, 2008; Fernet and Austin, 2014; Ronen and Mikulincer, 2014). Autonomous motivation refers to a person who behaves with a full sense of volition, freedom, and choice, while controlled motivation refers to a person who engages in an activity with an experience of pressure and control (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

Perceived overqualification can contribute to workers have lower autonomous motivation and higher controlled motivation for having a contact center job. This link can be explained by bearing in mind the notion of the three basic psychological needs of individuals, namely competence, autonomy, and relatedness need (Van den Broeck *et al*., 2015). Workers who perceive overqualification may have the lower autonomous motivation and the highest controlled motivation since they are more likely to feel unable to successfully use their skills, which contributes to undermining the satisfaction of their competence need. Additionally, the autonomy need may also be compromised, since workers who perceive overqualification may feel as having lower power to decide the way the job is performed considering the level of autonomy at work they feel they believe they should have (Erdogan *et al*., 2011; Van den Broeck *et al*., 2015). Furthermore, when workers perceive themselves as being overqualified their need for relatedness may also be compromised because the worker is surrounded by co-workers with lower education and experience which may contribute to a feeling of "I do not belong here" (Liu and Wang, 2012). Overall, the frustration of worker's needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness due to having a job where the individual perceives overqualification should foster the controlled motivation to have a job (e.g., see the present job only as a way to avoid a worse situation than being overqualified, i.e., be unemployed)

and undermine the autonomous motivation for having a contact center job (e.g., have the present job to develop new skills and competencies) (Harari *et al*., 2017).

Concerning the variables that can contribute to explaining workers' well-being, on the other hand, a worker who acts with a full sense of volition, freedom, and choice (i.e., who is autonomously motivated) experience more positive states than a worker who acts with an experience of pressure and control (i.e., who exhibit controlled motivation) (Deci and Ryan, 2008). As a result, higher levels of motivation yield more optimal outcomes if the motivation is autonomous while, inversely, there are more undesirable results if the motivation is controlled (for a review see Gagné *et al*., 2017). Moreover, some theoretical and empirical studies suggest and support a negative relationship between autonomous motivation and negative indicators of well-being (Fernet *et al*., 2015; Gagné *et al*., 2015; Parker *et al*., 2010). On the other hand, controlled motivation has been shown a positive relationship with negative indicators of well-being at work (Fernet *et al*., 2015; Gagné and Deci, 2005).

Thus, we can consider that autonomous and controlled motivations can be mechanisms that explain the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout.

H2. Autonomous motivation mediates the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout.

H3. Controlled motivation mediates the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout.

Method

Participants and procedure

The sample included 3256 contact center operators that work in a company operating in Portugal. All the participants were employed in commercial services of telecommunications, energy, banking or insurance companies that serve Portuguese costumers. The data were collected online with the use of a commercial survey service – survey monkey. All

company's workers were invited to participate in the study and received an email from Human Resource Management to containing the link to the survey. The participants represent 78% of all company's contact center workers. The anonymity of the participants was assured. Participants were informed of the opportunity to receive feedback on the overall results, and that the company would have access to a global final report and not to specific data itself.

The mean age of the sample was 33.62 years, with secondary education (67.4%), university attendance or a degree (32.6%), and participants were mainly females (65.5%). Regarding the work-related variables, 48.4% of the participants had a job tenure between one and five years and 24.8% had a job tenure of more than five years.

Measures

Perceived overqualification was measured with the four items scale of Johnson and Johnson (2000) (e.g., "*My professional experience is more than necessary to perform this job*", "*I have more skills and knowledge than the necessary to perform this job*", Cronbach Alpha = 0.72). Items were responded on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). This scale was not previously used in Portugal and was translated into Portuguese, and then a translator was asked to translate the Portuguese version back into English (Brislin, 1980). The company's Human Resource Manager read the questionnaire and confirmed the clarity and familiarity of items.

Motivations were assessed with a Portuguese version of the Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS; Gagné *et al*., 2010) that was previously used (Sobral *et al*., 2016; Lopes *et al*., 2019). This scale includes 16 items reflecting four types of motivation identified by Deci and Ryan (2000). Ranging from most to least autonomous, these constructs are Intrinsic Motivation (4 items, e.g., "*Because I enjoy being in a contact center job*"), Identified Regulation (4 items, e.g., "*Because being in a contact center job fulfills my career plans*"),

Introjected Regulation (4 items, e.g., "*Because I cannot fail to have a job*"), and External Regulation (4 items, e.g., "*I do this contact center job for the paycheck*"). Participants were asked to consider all statements and indicate to what degree they corresponded to one of the reasons for why they were doing their job in this contact center on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 ("*does not correspond at all"*) to 7 ("*corresponds very strongly"*). In line with Gillet *et al*. (2013) and Lopes *et al*. (2019), the different types of motivation were combined into Autonomous (Intrinsic Motivation and Identified Regulation, Cronbach Alpha = 0.90) and Controlled (Introjected Regulation and External Regulation, Cronbach Alpha = 0.84) Motivation scores. The factorial structure of the MAWS was evaluated using exploratory factor analysis. Two factors were extracted, explaining 54% of the variance and factor loadings of the matrix structure ranged from .60 to .84, corresponding to autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. The factors were well-defined with a cross-loading.

Burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion and cynicism) was measured using a Portuguese adaptation of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, General Survey (Maslach *et al*., 1986) that was used previously in Portugal (Castanheira and Chambel, 2010; Chambel *et al.*, 2015). The emotional exhaustion scale comprises five items (e.g., "I feel used up at the end of the workday"); the Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .92. Additionally, the cynicism scale comprises five items (e.g., "I doubt the value and usefulness of my work"); the Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .85. Items were responded on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (every day).

Statistical Analyses

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA; Brown, 2015) with structural equation modeling methods were implemented with Mplus 7.2 (Muthén and Muthén, 2015). The maximum likelihood estimation provides the well-known global fit statistics for structural equation modeling methods: Comparative fit index (CFI; satisfactory values of 0.90 and above), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; satisfactory values

of 0.90 and above), and Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA; satisfactory values below 0.08) (Van de Schoot *et al*., 2012). Next, a structural model was specified by adding regressions to the CFA (measurement) model to determine the standardized beta coefficients (β) and standard errors (S.E.) for the direction of relationships between the latent variables. Statistical significance for all parameters in the study was set at the normal 95 percent level ($p < 0.05$). We calculated the magnitude of indirect effects and tested their significance. For this process, we utilized the "MODEL INDIRECT" command of Mplus software, which estimates and tests specific indirect effects (MacKinnon, 2008).

Results

Measurement model

The goodness-of-fit index of the theoretical model (perceived overqualification, autonomous motivation, controlled Motivation, and burnout – where the second-order latent variable was explained by exhaustion and cynicism) presented a good fit to the data: χ^2 (392) = 5 165.03, $p < .01$, CFI =.91; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .06).

Descriptive statistics and correlations

The means, standard deviations, and correlations of the investigated variables are described in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Hypothesis testing

Structural regression paths based on the hypotheses were added to the measurement model to establish the structural model. The addition of a direct connection between perceived overqualification and burnout was also added. As Figure 1 shows, the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout was positive and significant ($\beta = .06$, $p < .01$), as such, hypothesis 1 was supported.

The perceived overqualification was significantly and negatively correlated with autonomous motivation (β = -.28, p < .01), and autonomous motivation was significantly and negatively related to burnout (β = -.64, p < .01). The indirect effect from perceived overqualification to burnout through autonomous motivation was positive and significant (β = .18, p < .01), thereby providing support for hypothesis 2.

We also found a significant positive relationship between perceived overqualification and controlled motivation (β = .05 p < .05), the relationship between controlled motivation and burnout was positive and significant (β =.13, p < .01). The indirect effect from perceived overqualification to burnout through controlled motivation was positive and significant (β = .01, p < .01), thereby providing support for hypothesis 3.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Discussion

The main purpose of the present research was to test a model positing that perceived overqualification relates to workers' burnout and autonomous and controlled motivation to work in a contact center. Additionally, we aimed to study an unexplored mediating role of autonomous and controlled motivations to explain the relationship between perceived overqualification and burnout. Results from a contact center operators sample, employed in commercial services of telecommunications, energy, banking or insurance companies, supported the hypothesized model. These findings lead to several implications.

Previous studies have indicated that workers report lower levels of well-being when they perceive a surplus education, experience, and/or knowledge, skills, abilities, and capabilities, relative to the requirements of their job (Maynard *et al*., 2006, 2009; McKee-Ryan and Harvey, 2011). We found that perceived overqualification was positively related to workers' burnout. Early findings have already advanced the positive relationship between perceived overqualification and exhaustion (a burnout dimension) (Navarro *et al*., 2010) and

cynicism (another burnout dimension) (Oki, 2013). In this study, we confirmed that perceived overqualification is a threat to workers' well-being since this perception is positively related to burnout – an indicator of very low well-being at work (Fisher, 2014).

More interestingly, our study found support for the role of motivation in explaining the relationship between perceived overqualification and workers' burnout. This result underlined that as a consequence of the presence of perceived overqualification, workers feel a depletion of their autonomous motivation to have a contact center job which in turn threatens their work well-being: they will feel exhaustion and cynicism. Moreover, our findings also revealed that perceived overqualification is positively related to workers' controlled motivation, which means workers have a contact center job to obtain the desired consequence (e.g., salary) or to avoid a punishment (e.g., unemployment). Additionally, the current study showed that as higher the levels of controlled motivation the higher the levels of individuals' burnout. These results are consistent with the assumptions of the self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000), that considers not only that autonomous motivation represents a basic mechanism contributing to the effects of social context characteristics (i.e. overqualification) on workers' well-being, but also that the more controlled the motivation, the less adaptive the outcomes (e.g., Gagné and Deci, 2005). Thus, our study contributes to the literature by adding to the small number of studies on the analysis of the mechanisms that explain the relationship between this poor fit between job requirements and perceived education, skills and experience, and workers' well-being.

The present findings also have some practical implications for promoting contact center workers' well-being. First, the findings suggest that perceived overqualification relates to the workers' motivation for a contact center job, and thus contributes to explaining their burnout. In light of these results, companies should implement actions to assess the perception of person-work fit during the selection process by selecting persons that perceive

their education, skills, and experience that are suited to the job that the company offered (Zheng and Wang, 2017). Secondly, the perceived *overqualification* contributes to more controlled motivation for having a contact center job, which results from the worker's perception that this job does not permit that he or she uses his/her competencies and skills (Fine, 2007). Thus, organizations should re-design the contact center work and promote task variety, autonomy, and workers' participation (Castanheira and Chambel, 2010) and relational job characteristics (Gonçalves *et al*., 2019). Finally, the organizations should promote the workers' proactivity because the workers that perceive higher overqualification should be predisposed to modify their work (job crafting) to make it more stimulating (Wrzesniewski *et al*., 2013).

The present study has some limitations. First, all variables were measured from the same source in a single survey. Although we believe that this design did not overly threaten our findings, as concerns associated with self-reported data may be inflated (Spector, 2006), it would have been preferable to further reduce the common method variance by introducing a time lag among the measurement of perceived overqualification, motivations, and burnout. Second, our design was correlational and cross-sectional and, therefore, causality cannot be inferred from the present results. Future research using a longitudinal design should be conducted to better understand the effects of perceived overqualification and motivation on workers' burnout. Moreover, the sample comprised call center employees from only one company and one country (Portugal), and the workers were all employed in commercial services of telecommunications, energy, banking or insurance companies, which may constrain the generalization of these results.

Conclusion

It is becoming increasingly widespread for individuals to work in a contact center where they feel overqualified. This is partly due to the rapid increase in jobs in this sector and

the rising number of university graduates entering the job market (OECD, 2019). Our findings indicate that there are disadvantages to hiring employees who perceived that are overqualified. Consistent with past research, we found that these workers may have lower work well-being, namely higher burnout. Moreover, we identified motivation as the mechanism that explains this relationship: overqualification is negatively related to autonomous motivation and positively related to controlled motivation to this job, which in turn are related to burnout. It may be, therefore, assumed that contact center workers, who perceived higher overqualification, are the ones who considered having this job due to less autonomous reasons and presented more controlled reasons, and consequently they showed higher burnout.

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Table 1. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD) and Correlations (r) of the study variables.

			r						
	M	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7
1. Gender	.34	.48							
2. P. Overqualification	3.59	.78	.11**						
3. Intrinsic Mot.	3.61	1.37	-.01	-.19**					
4. Identified Mot.	3.08	1.33	.03	-.10**	.66**				
5. Introjected Mot.	5.08	1.31	-.06**	.03	.11**	.17**			
6. External Mot.	4.84	1.18	-.03	.03	.16**	.19**	.69**		
7. Exhaustion	4.19	1.69	-.02	.13**	-.50**	-.31**	.08**	.06**	
8. Cynicism	3.15	1.57	.03	.14**	-.50**	-.30**	.01	.01	.68**

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Gender was codified as dummy variables (0=women, 1=men).

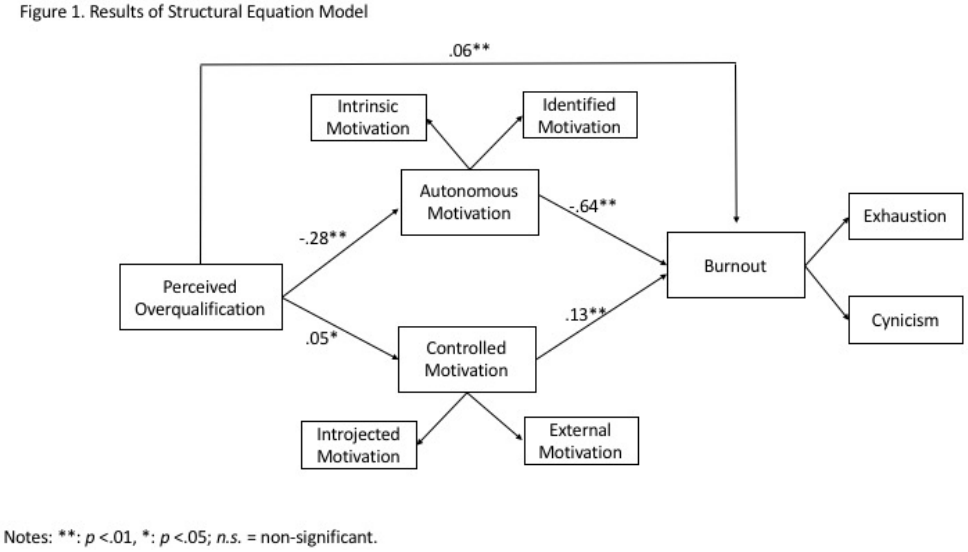

Figure 1. Results of the Structural Equation Model.

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