

BURNOUT, ENGAGEMENT AND INTENTION TO LEAVE: CROSS-SECTIONAL
STUDY IN A TRANSPORT COMPANY.

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Resumo

O trabalho desempenha um papel fundamental na vida em sociedade, sendo um factor preponderante na obtenção de estatuto social e bem-estar. Contudo, a relação “individuo – trabalho” pode torna-se pouco saudável, gerando stress profissional. Neste contexto surge o conceito “*burnout*”, termo que define um síndrome psicológico negativo desenvolvido em resposta a um prolongado stress profissional.

Prevenir o “*burnout*” é um processo que pode ser acompanhado pela incrementação do “*engagement*”, termo que define pessoas com intencional e focada energia para alcançar os objectivos organizacionais (Macey *et al.*, 2009).

O sector dos transportes tem a particularidade de expor a maioria dos colaboradores a riscos diários, que pode consequentemente aumentar o stress profissional.

Neste contexto, o presente estudo pretende analisar a prevalência do “*burnout*”, bem como perceber o seu relacionamento com as variáveis sociodemográficas, “*engagement*” e intenção de abandonar a empresa.

Para alcançar este objectivo, foi elaborado o enquadramento teórico, seguindo-se o estudo empírico, onde foi aplicado um questionário adaptado á população alvo.

Foram recolhidos e analisados 164 questionários, onde se concluiu que os colaboradores apresentam níveis médios de “*burnout*” e elevados níveis de vigor e dedicação. Pode-se também constatar que a idade e educação são as únicas variáveis sociodemográficas que se correlacionam significativamente com o nível de “*burnout*” experienciado. Quanto à variável “*burnout*” e às suas subescalas, existe uma correlação negativa com as variáveis vigor e dedicação e positiva com a variável intenção de abandonar a organização.

Palavras – chave: stress, stress profissional, burnout, engagement.

JEL Classification: J24, I10.

Abstract

Working plays an important role in society, being a preponderant factor in the social status and wellbeing achievement. However, the relation “human being-job” may become unhealthy, resulting in professional stress. In this context the burnout concept emerges, defining a psychological negative syndrome developed in response to a long period of professional stress.

To prevent the burnout is a process that may be accompanied by the increment of the engagement, term that defines people with intentional and focused energy to achieve the organizational aims (Macey *et al.*, 2009).

The transports sector has the particularity of putting most of its workers in daily risks, which can consequently increase the professional stress. In this context, this research pretends to analyze the prevalence of burnout, as well as understand its relation with the social demographic, engagement and intention to leave the organization variables.

To reach this objective, the theoretical framework was drawn up, followed by the empirical research where a questionnaire adapted to the target population was applied.

164 questionnaires were collected and analyzed, which pointed out that the collaborators present average burnout levels and high vigor and dedication levels. We can also determine that age and education are the only social demographic variables that correlate themselves significantly with the experienced burnout level. As to the burnout variable and its subscales, there is a negative correlation with the vigor and dedication variables and positive with the intention to leave the organization variable. Indeed, vigor mediates the association between emotional exhaustion and intention to leave the organization.

Key-word: stress, professional stress, burnout, engagement.

JEL Classification: J24, I10.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation of the topic

Today, the national and international economic and financial crisis takes the organizations into a great instability. Seen in these terms, the companies must be proactive in adapting to the current context, in a way to contradict the instability and achieve success, or in more extreme cases, guarantee the company survival (Viseu *et al.*, 2012).

The employees assume themselves as an essential and precious need to the organization, sometimes even more preponderant than financial capital. So, it is crucial to understand their position, because it is the only way to assure the company productivity, sustainability and success.

In this context and during the attendance of Master of Science in Business Administration, it was sought to make a research applied to the business world, in which could be applied the acquired knowledge over the same period and mostly to observe that investigation impact in an organization.

This way, after developing a careful research, the opportunity to make the study in a transport company showed up. It is a family business that, due to the economic and financial conjecture, may face some problems that can affect their workers and consequently its sustainability. In that respect, the developing of the research about the burnout syndrome in employees can be useful to the company in a way to protect itself from future problems or acting in order to keep the collaborators active and productive.

Burnout should be understood as a particularly serious syndrome of chronic stress that may influence negatively the efficacy of a worker and may be considered as the final stage of an extended professional stress (Collings and Murray, 1996 cit. in Lloyd *et al.*, 2002) and engagement as the intentional attitudes and the focused energy that collaborators develop to the organization (Macey *et al.*, 2009).

The transport sector plays a major role in global economy, as much of the economic sectors depend on its efficiency, directly or indirectly. According to Hummels (2007), roundly 23 percent of world trade occurs between countries that share a land border.

This way, it was decided to evaluate the burnout syndrome in a transport company as well as employees' engagement. For this purpose, different tools were used as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).

The MBI contains three subscales that evaluate the three dimensions of burnout, namely the exhaustion, the depersonalization or cynicism and the professional achievement (usually negatively worded as lack of professional efficacy or inefficacy feelings). This tool is constituted by 16 closed answer questions and formulated according to the Likert scale of 7 points (from 0 (never) to 6 (every day)).

On the other hand, the UWES is composed by 17 closed answer questions and also formulated from the Likert scale of 7 points. This tool is intended to evaluate the three dimensions of the engagement, being them vigor, dedication and absorption.

From a professional point of view and taking into account that after the elaboration of a careful revision of the literature, no studies with the evaluation of the burnout syndrome on Portuguese transport of goods companies were discovered, we believe that this investigation, for being pioneer in the transport of goods sector and by the results that can be obtained for the benefit of the company, may be highly relevant to the company human resources managers. These facts inspired interest and encouraged the investigator to carry out the study, in order to enumerate the difficulties found in the burnout analysis in this sector companies. In turn, from the academic point of view, this investigation allows to develop knowledge about this theme specificity.

1.2 Methodology adopted

The primary method used in this investigation is the inquisitive method, based on a paper-and-pencil questionnaire, being the scientific basis instrument used in this study.

This study's main purpose is to evaluate the prevalence of the burnout syndrome and the engagement levels in a Portuguese transport company. However, this study also approaches possible groups more prone to this syndrome. For this, some sociodemographic variables were analyzed, such as: age, gender, marital status, existence of children, education, work experience, professional category, and region. At last, the impact of such psychological constructs - burnout and engagement - on employees' attitudes was analyzed, as the intention to leave the organization.

1.3 Structure of the investigation

In order to achieve the aims proposed, this investigation was structured in five main groups.

The first chapter includes this introduction, which presents the project objectives, the methodology, and the project structure.

Chapter 2 includes the literature revision, focuses on the theoretic framework and a wider spectrum of notions and key concepts analyzed in this investigation, such as burnout, engagement, stress and occupational stress, in order to deepen that concepts as well as understand their evolution over time.

In chapter 3 it is approached the methodology applied in this investigation, as well as the object, the aims, the hypothesis and the instruments used and the sources for data collection.

Chapter 4 present the empirical study, including all the analysis and results of a sample.

Finally, the chapter 5 focuses on the analysis and discussion of the results and the conclusion of this study, the limitations of the research and suggestions for future research are presented.

In a final stage I have the bibliography consulted and, attached, the questionnaire used for the execution of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter is presented some concepts, as well as the literature review that supports and frames the main study variables. Thus, this chapter covers concepts such as stress, job related stress, burnout, engagement, and intention to leave (turnover intention).

2.2 Stress

The word stress has its origins in the Latin “*stringo, stringere, strinxi, strinctum*”, meaning to hold together, to compress, to restrict (Serra, 2005).

Stress is relatively recent as a scientific concept, being initially used in the XIX century by Claude Bernard, physiologist that referred that the physical threats to integrity of an organism produce responses that contradicts these threats (Serra, 2005).

Later and according to different researchers (Ribeiro, 2005; Serra, 2005) Hans Selye introduced the notion of “stress” into the scientific world.

Selye in 1975 (cf. Onciul, 1996) described the general adaptation syndrome that consists in three phases:

1. The initial phase – Alarm Reaction – correspond the immediate response to a challenge or threat;
2. The second phase – Resistance stage – occurs when “*people develop a “survival” strategy and a way to fighting against the response the stressor has initiated*” (Onciul, 1996: 745); and
3. The last phase – Exhaustion phase – when the stress can lead to chronic problems (e.g., exhaustion of all reserves and energies can lead to depression).

Even so, Selye introduced two new concepts in 1980 that allow to distinguishing between positive and negative stress, being them the “distress” and the “eustress”. The first concept concerns to the stressful and non-productive situations, the “eustress” is related to situations that contribute to the individual personal achievement (Serra, 2005).

Later Lazarus and Folkman (1984), affirm that stress has been defined as a stimulus or a response. This approach recognizes the existence of stressful situations¹ to which the individual has to respond. Still on this study, the authors mentioned that the situational inductors of stress are divided into threat (e.g. anticipation of something unpleasant, but that has not happened yet), damage (e.g. something painful that has already occurred) and challenge (e.g. situation in which the individuals hope to overcome obstacles) (Serra, 2005). Lazarus (1999, cf. Serra, 2005) pointed out that to most of individuals, damage and threat have more probability of being harmful than challenge.

After and in accordance with Maslach *et al.* (1996, cf. Lloyd *et al.*, 2002: 256) “*stress can be defined as the emotional and physiological reactions to stressors*”. In that sense, Serra (2005) has provided evidence that no one is stress free. So, stress became an important phenomenon, since it conditions the personal development and behavior (Pocinho and Capelo, 2009).

She also referred that many studies done in this area demonstrate that the way the individual deal with the situation is partly dependent on his/her social and personal resources. In this way, individuals with a “strong social network” feel stress situations less intensely.

Besides of that, according to Serra (2005) humans cross over three different environments in their daily routine: family, social and professional. It is true that negative events happened in one of these environments may aggravate or not by the occurrence of negative or positive factors in other environments, since they are all related.

Thus, situations inductive of stress change from person to person, that is, each one reacts in a different way to the same events (Serra, 2005).

However, according to Ramos (1994, cf. Serra, 2005) work related stress is the main source of stress in individuals, being justified by the fact that people dedicate most of their time to work.

2.3 Professional stress

From the social-economic point of view, work is a source of income that provides a particular social status. Providing a certain life style, social contacts and, frequently, establishes the individual’s identity, fortifying his or her self-esteem and self-efficiency

¹ According to Lazarus (cf. Serra, 2005), an event is only considered stressful if it is perceived by the individual in that way, otherwise the individual will not feel stressed.

(Serra, 2005). However, is not only a source of satisfaction (Lacovides *et al.*, 2003), work can also be a source of stress, for many reasons², gradually wearing down the professional (Serra, 2005).

Occupational stress “*occurs when job demands do not match the person’s adaptive resources*” (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003: 389). This way, if job stress is not handled appropriately, in accordance with Chen and Silverthorne (2008, cf. Hsieh and Wang, 2012), low job satisfaction, poor work performance, and negative health effects may occur.

The work-related stress can affect an organization’s productivity and competitiveness, with further impact on social and economic costs (Marinaccio *et al.*, 2013), because stress can result in increased absenteeism or a decline in productivity (Williams, 2003).

According to Serra (2005) professional stress usually comes from various sources and may occur in some situations from the kind of job, the organization or for example from a problem unrelated to the job, having a negative effect on the same at the end.

However, Rodrigues (1998) gives particular emphasis to the shift work³, as the writer says it has been associated with stress emergence. Among the different consequences listed by the author it should be noted: personal and industrial accidents; poor performance and productivity; obesity (e.g. inappropriate diet); health and mental risks; family, social, leisure and sleeping problems (e.g. sometimes night shift workers cannot conciliate personal life with professional life in an easy way). In that sense, studying professional stress in the transport sector seems to be particularly of interest because the increasing shift works in this sector.

² Sutherland and Cooper, (1990 cf. Serra, 2005) refers to some facts that may ignite work related stress, such as: inherent work conditions (e.g. overload, deadlines); work relationships within the organization (e.g. conflict with a co-worker or boss); role in the organization (e.g. ambiguous or confliction responsibilities); career (e.g. promotion perspective, insecurity); structure and environment in the organization (e.g. ineffective supervision, company policy) and exterior relationships (e.g. family/work conflict).

³ According to Rodrigues (1998), shift working is all the continuous work out of the “normal” work schedule (which starts between 6 and 8 am and finishes between 4 and 6 pm).

2.4 Professional stress in the transport sector

The transport sector plays a major role in global economy, as much of the economic sectors depend on its efficiency, directly or indirectly, and roundly 23 percent of world trade occurs between countries that share a land border (Hummels, 2007).

However, according to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work there are many dangers and risks that are common to all transport sector workers, such as:

- Exposure to environmental noise and vibration;
- Long periods of static postures (e.g. sit)
- Handling of dangerous substances (e.g. exhaust gas, transportation of dangerous substances, fuel);
- Exposure and different weather conditions (e.g. heat, coldness, rain, etc.);
- Problems in adopting ergonomic work conditions and healthy lifestyles.

These risks that most of workers in sector of transports are exposed to, cause fatigue and symptoms that are harmful to their health, which in turns can lead to professional stress.

Nowadays, the workload increases, as well as traffic, remote control and clients demands. Workers in this sector are increasingly working with irregular schedules and during various non-stop periods of time (Saturdays, Fridays, and holidays). Therefore, sometimes workers are far from home during long periods of time, which complicates them to conciliate their personal life with their professional life (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work).

This way, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work made a table (Table 1) that specifies exactly the problems each worker is exposed to, according to the subsector of activity.

Table 1 - The problems each worker is exposes

Subsector	Problems
Road long haul	<p>Just-in-time management (causes many pressure at work); Pressure from clients; Increased use of complex technologies; Accessibility of installations and services (hygiene, food, medical assistance); Infectious diseases; Violence and aggression; Solitary work; Long time sit position and exposure to vibrations; Accident risks, specifically during loading and unloading operations; Needs of labor that is getting old</p>
Transports of dangerous goods	<p>Accident risks, including fire and explosion; Exposition to dangerous substances, particularly during loading and unloading operations; Risk of falling to outside of the vehicle or to another means of transport;</p>
Delivery Services	<p>Unpredictable conditions in clients installations; Clients expectations and contact; Accident risks and weather conditions; Elevation e manipulation of unpredictable dimensions and shapes package/stocks; Pressure in work caused by last minute changes (receiving indications when driving);</p>

Font: Adapted from European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

2.5 From professional stress to burnout

According with Schaufeli and Buunk (2003), stress is a generic term that refers to the temporary adaptation process that is accompanied by mental and physical symptoms. In contrast, burnout can be considered as a final stage from prolonged job stress. This way, burnout was considered as “*a particularly serious feature of chronic stress and one that can impair the human service worker’s effectiveness*” (Collings and Murray, 1996; cf. Lloyd *et al.*, 2002:256).

Burnout includes the development of negative attitudes and behaviors towards recipients, the job, and the organization. In contrast, the stress is not necessarily accompanied by these behaviors (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003).

This way, anybody can experience stress. However, only people that entered in their jobs enthusiastically, with high expectations can experience burnout. Moreover, “*burnout is a specific type of job stress that is characterized by its chronic and multifaceted nature*”. (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003: 389).

2.6 Burnout

“*Burnout refers to smothering of a fire or the extinguishing of a candle*” (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009: 205). The metaphor describes the exhaustion of people capacity to continue an intense involvement with work.

2.6.1 History of Burnout Research

Actually the relation between people and their work, and the difficulties that appear when the relationship goes wrong, have been recognized as an important phenomenon. To define this phenomenon was used the term burnout (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

In 1961 Greene’s published a novel, “*Burn-Out*”, where it describes a tormented and disappointed architect left his job and went to the African jungle (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Subsequently, in 1969, Bradley did a study called staff burnout on professionals that monitored a community program for teen delinquents (Pinto and Chambel, 2008).

Later, burnout started to be studied as a psychological phenomenon (Pinto and Chambel, 2008). Thus, it becomes crucial to make a historical perspective of the evolution of this concept.

2.6.2 Seventies – The Pioneering phase

The term burnout appears in the mid-1970s in the United States, especially among people that worked in human services and health care, and in the beginning their contribution was to describe the basic phenomenon (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

The first articles were written by in 1975 by Freudenberger, a psychiatrist, and by Maslach in 1976, a social psychologist (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

Freudenberger used the term “*Burnout*” to describe the emotional depletion, loss of motivation and commitment among volunteers of the St Mark’s Free Clinic in New York’s East Village – clinic for drug addicts and homeless people. He was victim to burnout twice, which increased the article credibility (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009).

Maslach interviewed a diversity of human services workers about the emotional stress of their jobs. She concluded that often the people developed negative perceptions

and feelings about their clients or patients and this way often felt emotionally exhausted (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009).

Nevertheless, Maslach published a definition about this syndrome: “*Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity*” (Schaufeli, *et al.*, 2009: 206).

In a way, the almost simultaneous “*discovery*” of burnout by the clinician Freudenberger and by the researcher Maslach marks the beginning of two different approach of the term: from a practical and from a scientific point of view, respectively (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003).

2.6.3 Eighties – The empirical phase

After the introduction of the concept by the two authors referred previously, burnout soon becomes a very popular topic (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003).

This way, in the 1980s the burnout study focuses more on empirical research. The work in these years is quantitative, applying questionnaires and surveys methodology (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

In accordance with Maslach *et al.* (2012), the development of a standardized measure of burnout was necessary and considered the significant next step to advance in the research field. This way, in 1981 Maslach and Jackson developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), an inventory that is based on the three proposed dimensions of burnout: exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009) – concepts explained in the next topics.

The MBI continues the “*gold standard*” to evaluate burnout (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009; Makikangas, *et al.*, 2012). In fact, this instrument is used in over 90% of the empirical publications on burnout (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003).

The first MBI was designed for use in human service works. However, a second MBI was soon developed for use by people working in educational settings (Maslach *et al.*, 2001; Maslach and Leiter, 2008).

2.6.4 Nineties – Theory approach

With the evolution of empirical research, other proposals began to be generated about this topic. Therefore, in 1990s this empirical phase continued to be studied, however in new areas, (e.g. military, managers, computer technology, and clerical) and with better and sophisticated methodology and new statistical tools (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

Thus, the burnout definition was extended to include other areas, and defined as: “... a state of exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one’s occupation and doubtful of one’s capacity to perform” (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009: 206), and a new MBI was developed – MBI General Survey (MBI-GS) – which evaluate job burnout in all professions independent of the vocational aspects (Maslach *et al.*, 1996, cf. Makikangas *et al.*, 2012).

The MBI-General Survey was translated into many languages in order to measure burnout in research around the world (Maslach *et al.*, 2012).

2.6.5 Twenty-first century

Actually, in accordance with Schaufeli *et al.* (2009), young professionals have fewer chances for naivety, because they have few illusions about the working world. However, they are vulnerable to burnout.

The same authors enumerated some points that actually can lead to burnout:

1. Persistence imbalance between demand and resources;

When demands increase and do not exist sufficient resources to support them, people feel insufficient opportunities to regenerate depleted energy and consequently aggravate the exhaustion (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009).

2. Motives rather than energy;

Hemingway and Maclagan (2004, cf. Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009), affirmed that in the twenty-first century employees view organizational values, mission and vision with skepticism, because the personnel values differ from the organizations’ values.

“Employees are less willing to put aside their personal inclinations for the good of the company” (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009: 209).

3. Conflict between organizations’ stated values and its values in action.

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If people work in complex, contradictory, and sometimes hostile organizational environments, they are vulnerable to exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009).

2.7 Burnout Definition and the Three Dimensions

Initially the term “*Burnout*” was an unstable concept, because there was no standard definition, only existed a huge variety of opinions and judgments about what it meant and what could be done about it. A wide diversity of people used the same term to define different things (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

However, there was a consensus about three core dimensions of burnout – exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

“*Exhaustion is the central quality of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome*” (Maslach *et al.*, 2001: 402). When people describe others or themselves as experiencing this syndrome, normally they mention exhaustion as a symptom. Thus, we can see this dimension as the most reported and analyzed. However, it does not mean that this dimension is sufficient criterion to support burnout. Exhaustion reflects the stress dimension, but fails to capture the critical aspects between people and their work (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

People use “*distancing*” by developing an indifference or cynical attitude when they are exhausted. So, cynicism, the second dimensions is found consequently in burnout research (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

However, the third dimension – Inefficacy – has a relationship more complex with the others two dimensions. It is difficult to feel personnel realization when exhaustion and cynicism occurs. Nevertheless, in some job contexts, inefficacy appears to develop in parallel with exhaustion and cynicism, rather than sequentially (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

The inefficacy seems to appear from a lack of relevant resources, in other hand the exhaustion and cynicism seems to arise from work overload and social conflict (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Schaufeli *et al.* (2008: 175) defined the lack of efficacy as “*the tendency to evaluate one’s work performance negatively, resulting in feelings of insufficiency and poor job-related self-esteem*”.

This way, today the most commonly accepted definition of burnout is the three-component conceptualization used by Maslach (Hsieh and Wang, 2012).

2.8 Engagement

Preventing burnout can be accomplished by building engagement and utilizing organizational valuations that include tools for early detection. Thus, the goal is moving employees from burnout to engagement (Maslach, 2011): “...in recent years the concept of burnout is being supplemented and enlarged by the positive antithesis of job Engagement so that currently the full spectrum of workers’ well-being is studied, running from negative (burnout) to positive (engagement) states...” (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003: 385).

Kahn (1990: 694) defined engaged employees as “fully physically, cognitively, and emotionally connected with their work roles”. Later, Harter (2002, cf. Kahn, 1990 and Pakistan, 2010) and other authors viewed engagement as employee involvement, with satisfaction, and enthusiasm with their work.

Some years later, Macey *et al.* (2009), made his contribution and defined engagement as people with intentional and focused energy to organizational goals.

Nevertheless, Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) have provided the most knowledge and cited definition of this term. They defined work engagement as a positive, fulfilling, and rather consistent state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.

- Vigor refers to high levels of mental energy and resiliency while working and personal investment at work.
- Dedication is characterized as feelings of pride, meaningfulness, challenge, and enthusiasm about one’s work.
- Absorption occurs when the person is fully immersed in one’s work and losing all sense of time while working.

In order to assess engagement and measure the three dimensions referred previously, Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).

Burnout and work engagement are seen as opposite indicators of occupational well-being (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002), in such an extent that the opposite of exhaustion is vigor, of cynicism is dedication and loss of effectiveness is absorption. In this way, some studies refer that burnout and engagement scales are placed in between this two distinctive dimensions, moderate negatively correlated (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004, cf. Pinto and Chambel, 2008).

2.9 The influence of social and demographic variables

Several demographic variables have been studied about burnout, but the studies are few and the findings are not consistent (Maslach and Leiter, 2008).

Of all the demographic variables that have been studied, age is the one that has been most consistently related to burnout. Diverse studies concluded that the level of burnout is higher in younger employees than older employees (Haley *et al.*, 2013; Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Normally, age is synonymous of work experience, so it is consensual that there is more vulnerability to burnout in the first years of a career, when occurs transition between the idealist expectations to the real world daily practice, so that the young professional begins to understand that personal, professional or financial rewards do not correspond to the expected (Haley *et al.*, 2013).

With regard to gender, this variable has not been a strong predictor of burnout. During the years some studies show higher levels of burnout for women, some for men, and others find no differences (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Nevertheless, some studies have found that women show higher levels of exhaustion (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). This occurs because women tend to do more house related work than men, feeling more emotionally exhausted and experiencing guilt and anxiety for not being able to complete all the duties as they wished.

Relating to marital status, Maslach *et al.* (2001) concluded that unmarried people (especially men) seem to be more prone to burnout compared with married people. However, singles seem to experience higher levels of burnout than divorced people.

Finally, in accordance with Maslach *et al.* (2001) the variable education is positively related with burnout, in other words, some studies found that people with higher levels of education report higher levels of burnout than less educated employees (higher education normally is related with jobs with grater responsibilities and higher stress). This can occur because highly educated employees have higher expectations for their careers, and are thus more distressed if these expectations are not realized.

2.10 Consequences of burnout and engagement: intention to leave

Among the negative consequences of burnout for the organizational productivity and employee well-being, the intention to leave has important implications for managers and other related professionals in human resources. For example, Rouleau *et al.* (2012) refers that higher levels of turnover intentions have a negative impact in organizations, by increasing workloads, disrupting team cohesion and decrease morale. In that sense, intention to leave is related to turnover and other withdrawal behaviors.

Indeed, turnover can be defined as one's propensity to leave (Lyons, 1971), or as a voluntary separation between an individual and an organization (Price and Mueller, 1981 cf. Jiménez *et al.*, 2012).

Similarly, when people experience burnout, and feel unable to continue their work, and in their jobs, they are more probably to consider quitting (Jackson *et al.*, 1986 cf. Jiménez *et al.*, 2012). This positive relationship between burnout and intention to leave are supported by empirical studies (for a review, see Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

Thus, considering that burnout is positively related to intention to leave the organization or turnover intentions, whereas engagement has a buffering role in such relationship (i.e., engagement mediates the relationship between burnout and turnover intention), reducing burnout and enhancing engagement seems a plausible intervention strategy for reducing intention to leave (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008).

3. Methodology

In this chapter there is a description of the methodological aspects, as well as the procedures and instruments used. It is organised in this way: 3.1) introduction of the main purpose and the goals 3.2) definition and justification of the methodology adopted in this investigation and description of the investigation instruments, and 3.3) procedures used in the data collection and sample characterization.

3.1 Main purpose and goals

This study aims at establishing the prevalence of burnout and the level of engagement in a Portuguese transport company. In addition, this study addresses possible groups more prone to experience burnout or engagement at work depending on socio-demographical variables as well as the impact of such psychological constructs (burnout and engagement) on employees' attitudes (i.e., intention to quit/leave the organization).

In summary, this study tries to:

- a) Establishing the prevalence of burnout and engagement;
- b) Exploring the socio-demographical determinants of burnout and engagement;
- c) Addressing the relationship between burnout and engagement with intention to leave.

3.2 Design and measures

According to Sarmiento (2013:4), the methodology may be defined as “*a process or method to reach a purpose*”⁴. Thus, in an investigation we can use different methods in order to find the desired responses. According to Sarmentos’s (2013) classification this study follows a quantitative methodology based on a paper-and-pencil survey design.⁵

In that sense, participants were asked to respond to the following questionnaires:

3.2.1 The Maslach Burnout Inventory - MBI

The MBI (Maslach and Jackson, 1981 cf. Maslach *et. al.*, 2001) is an instrument of evaluation first designed to health professionals, being later built for professionals in general. Currently there is a global version of the MBI developed to all kind of jobs, not only to the ones that deal directly with individuals (Maslach, 2003).

This questionnaire, as I said before, has three subscales that evaluate the three burnout dimensions, which are the Exhaustion (e.g., “I feel exhausted at the end of a work day”), the Depersonalization (e.g., “I have become more reluctant about the utility of my job”) and the Professional achievement (e.g., “I feel I can give a valid contribution to the company through my work.”). It consists in 16 closed answer questions which were made according to the Likert scale of 7 points (from 0 = ‘never’ to 6 = ‘every day’). To analyse the results of the questionnaire you must add up the punctuation corresponding to each item. In other words, the exhaustion represents 6 items, which may present a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 36. The depersonalization has 4 items, so it may present a score between 0 (minimum) and 24 (maximum) points. Last, the professional achievement is composed by 6 items and it can reach the score from 0 (minimum) to 36 (maximum).

⁴ Method in Greek means “*way to reach an end*” (Sarmiento, 2013: 4).

⁵ Sarmiento (2013) enumerates some of the most known methods such as: method of direct observation, critical method, experimental method, analytical method, demonstrative method, systematic method, inquisitorial method, descriptive method, historical method, rational method and relational method.

3.2.2 The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – UWES

The UWES (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002) has been developed with the aim of analyze three constituting aspects of work engagement: vigor (e.g., “I am strong enough to face my obligations.”), dedication (e.g., “I am proud of doing my work”), and absorption (e.g., “I feel happy when I'm doing tasks related to my work”). This one is constituted by 17 questions and evaluated by the same scale that MBI (Likert scale of 7 points from 0 ‘never’ to 6 ‘everyday’).

The vigor and the absorption represent 6 items each. This way, it may present a total score ranging between 0 (minimum) and 36 (maximum), whereas the dimension dedication has 5 items (total score ranging from 0 to 30). Then, high results in the subscales of vigor, absorption and dedication reflect high levels of engagement.

3.2.3. Sociodemographic questions

In the last page of the questionnaire I asked about the sociodemographic characteristics as age, gender, marital status, years of service, existence of children, educational qualification, professional category, and working area.

3.2.4. Intentions to leave

Finally, I applied a questionnaire that consists in four items (Veldhoven and Meijman, 1994), two items asking about the intention to leave, their current job and two questions asking to leave the company (e.g. “I sometimes think about seeking work outside this organization” and “Next year I am planning to look for a job outside this organization”). Items were assessed on a five point Likert type scale ranging: 1: totally disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neither disagree nor agree; 4: agree; and 5: totally agree.

3.3. Procedure and participants

The present research has been done in a transports company in Portugal. The data collection began with a first contact with the company owner, to whom has been asked authorization to apply the questionnaires and to use the relevant information to this study. Through this connection, the aims were referenced in a way to adjust the data collection.

In the first stage information was collected about the company activity, essentially about the level of the workers' literacy, which allowed researchers for a further analysis and a direct contact with the reality under study.

In a second phase voluntary questionnaires were presented to all workers from the same company.

On the cover page were given details in an easy way to fill in the questionnaire, taking into account that they are mostly closed questions. As the application of the questionnaires coincided with summer vacations when the majority of workers were out of the company headquarters, the questionnaire was available during the whole two months of July and August. Then, 176 responses were collected (response rate = 65 per cent of the population).

However, some questionnaires were incomplete and therefore only 164 were considered in the final sample.

Regarding the characterization of the final sample, it is largely formed by men (male gender = 98.8 per cent), with ages see between 24 and 63 years old (see Table 2), being the average of 41.30 years old.

Table 2 - Descriptive Frequencies - Age

Variables	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1. 20 – 30	12	7.9
2. 31 – 40	68	41.5
3. 41 – 50	55	33.5
4. 51 – 60	21	12.8
5. > 60	2	1.2
6. Omissions	5	3.0
Total	164	100
Minimum	Maximum	Mean
24	63	41.30

In relation to the marital status, we can see through Table 3 that the majority of the respondents are married (72 per cent), being the percentage of singles, divorced and widows people very low (13.4 per cent, 14 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively).

Table 3 - Descriptive Frequencies: Marital Status

Variables	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1. Married	118	72
2. Divorced	23	14
3. Unmarried	22	13.4
4. Widower	1	0.6
Total	164	100

As for the existence of children, most of the sample has at least one child (85.4 per cent vs. 14.6 per cent without children).

Regarding educational qualifications, we conclude that most of the respondents have the 9th grade only (62.8 per cent), 34.8 per cent finished high school and only 2.4 per cent has a university degree.

In relation to working experience, we can observe through Table 4 that 36 per cent of the respondents have between 1 and 5 years of experience in this company, and 20.1 per cent between 6 and 10 years. 18 respondents did not answer this question (11 per cent).

Table 4 - Descriptive Frequencies: Work Experience

Variables	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1. < 1	11	6.7
2. 1 – 5	59	36
3. 6 – 10	33	20.1
4. 11 - 20	27	16.5
5. 21 - 30	11	6.7
5. > 31	5	3
6. Omissions	18	11
Total	164	100

Concerning to the professional category, we can verify through Table 5 that most of the sample is formed by drivers (97 per cent), being this our analysis aim. However we had the feedback of two directors (1.2 per cent) and 3 people that occupy organization positions (1.8 per cent).

Table 5 - Descriptive Frequencies: Professional Category

Variables	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1. Administrative	2	1.2
2. Driver	159	97
3. Other	3	1.8

4. Empirical Investigation

In this chapter I present the results. It is structured in this way: 4.1) data reliability, 4.2) descriptive analysis, 4.3) comparative and correlational analysis, 4.4) Linear Regression, and 4.5) Mediation Analysis.

4.1 Data reliability

Initially the coefficient Cronbach's alpha was calculated in order to assess the reliability of the instruments. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011) the Cronbach's alpha was developed in order to provide a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale.

The alpha of Cronbach coefficient must be over 0.70 and below 0.90 (values over 0.90 may indicate redundancy), because an alpha low value could be due to a low number of questions, poor interrelatedness between items or heterogeneous constructs. However, if alpha is too high it may indicate redundancy (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011; Streiner and Norman, 2008).

The Burnout scale (MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory) presents values that meet the criteria described before, being an alpha of 0.749. The engagement scale (UWES - Utrecht work Engagement Scale) also presents values that meet the criteria. This way, it is within the parameters considered by Streiner and Norman (2008), presenting a Cronbach's alpha of 0.742.

In a second stage it was made the analysis by burnout subscales (Table 6) and engagement subscales (Table 7). We checked that the exhaustion subscale presents an alpha of 0.811, meeting the criteria. The cynicism and inefficacy scales present alphas lower than 0.70 (0.532 and 0.689 respectively), however was chosen not to eliminate any item, taking into account that the increasing of Cronbach's alpha would not be significant.

Table 6 - Cronbach's Alpha: Burnout dimensions

Variables	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N</i>
1. Exhaustion	0.811	6
2. Cynicism	0.689	4
3. Inefficacy	0.532	6

The engagement subscales also present values lower than the criteria (0.70), being of 0.628 to vigor, 0.695 to dedication and 0.31 to absorption. This way, it will be necessary to eliminate some items in a way to assure the scale internal consistence to a value equal or higher than 0.70.

To the vigor subscale, it was chosen to eliminate an item, having now a Cronbach alpha of 0.72, thereby meeting the criteria (higher than 0.70). The eliminated question was number 20: "I don't stop during my duties, even when I'm not feeling well." This question may have had a wrong interpretation by the collaborators for being made in the negative form, causing opposite answers.

To the dedication subscale it was chosen not to eliminate any item, taking into account that the increasing of Cronbach's alpha would not be significant.

However, the impossibility of eliminating any item to the absorption subscale was checked, taking into account that Cronbach's alpha would not increase. So, it was chosen not to analyze this subscale, considering that the alpha is lower than it was expected, excluding that way the absorption subscale from analysis.

Table 7 - Cronbach's Alpha: Engagement dimensions

Variables	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N</i>
1. Vigor	0.628	6
2. Dedication	0.695	5
3. Absorption	0.311	6

4.2.Descriptive Analysis

At this stage, we pretend through the descriptive analysis to describe the main variables of our research, dividing them up into burnout and engagement subscales. As can be seen in Table 8, exhaustion presents an average of 18.92, which represents a medium level of this subscale, being the maximum 36 and the minimum 0. Relatively to the cynicism, we can check that the average represents a low value of 7.27 (maximum of 24 and minimum of 0). At last, the inefficacy subscale presents an average (31.92) close to the maximum value (36). This way, medium/low levels of exhaustion and cynicism and high levels of personal fulfillment correspond to a low/medium degree of burnout.

Regarding the engagement subscales (vigor and dedication), we can see through Table 8 that both subscales present high averages (28.26 to vigor and 25.10 to dedication). Yet I cannot make a conclusion about the engagement level, because in the analysis I do not considerate the three subscales that constitute this variable, since the absorption subscale was not reliable.

Table 8 - Average and Standard Deviation: Burnout and Engagement dimensions

Variables	A	SD
1. Exhaustion	18.92	8.991
2. Cynicism	7.27	6.193
3. Inefficacy	31.92	4.388
4. Vigor	28.26	6.295
5. Dedication	25.10	5.559

Then, the number of burnout cases was explored. According to Schaufeli *et al.* (2009) burnout is not a dichotomous variable (it is either present or absent), but that can be experienced in terms of degrees (low, moderated or high). Thus, high results in the exhaustion and depersonalization subscales and low results in the personal accomplishment/fulfillment subscale reflect high levels of burnout. In particular, it is considered that a person is burned-out when scores higher than 24 in exhaustion and 9 in cynicism as well as score lower than 24 in personal accomplishment (Maslach and

Jackson, 1981). According to such criteria, 55 workers are experiencing emotional exhaustion at work (33 per cent) and there are 3 cases of burnout in our sample (1.8 per cent).

4.3. Correlational Analysis

In this section I will approach the correlation present among the burnout and engagement subscales with the different social demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, marital status, years of service, children, educational qualifications and professional category). To conduct this correlational analysis, I firstly did a test to normality to the subscales of the burnout and engagement variables, in order to check the assumption of normality. This way, it will be used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test with the Lilliefors correlation, being tested the following hypotheses:

H0: The distribution is normal.

H1: The distribution is not normal.

As can be seen in Table 9, the three burnout subscales (exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy) are non-normally distributed (the normality of the variable is rejected).

Table 9 - Test of Normality: Burnout

<i>Kolmogorov - Smirnov^a</i>		
Variables	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1. Exhaustion ^a	0.105	0.000
2. Cynicism ^a	0.136	0.000
7. Inefficacy ^a	0.176	0.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Relatively to the engagement subscale, we also reject the subscales normality to vigor and dedication. This way, there is no normality assumption (Table 10).

Table 10 - Test of Normality: Engagement

<i>Kolmogorov - Smirnov^a</i>		
Variables	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1. Vigor ^a	0.140	0.000
2. Dedication ^a	0.189	0.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Next, and taking into account that the normality was rejected to all the subscales, it was analyzed the Spearman Correlation. This is used to measure the correlation between two nonlinear variables. The coefficient of the correlation refers this association degree and varies between -1 and 1, being that the 0 value means that there is not a linear relation, the 1 value indicates a perfect linear relation and the -1 value also indicates a perfect linear but reverse relation, that is, when one of the variables increases the other decreases. The closer it is to 1 or -1, the stronger is the linear association between the two variables.

To the correlational analysis some social demographic variables were selected, such as: age, gender, marital status, “children”, educational qualifications and work experience. According to previous empirical studies, as it was mentioned in chapter 2 – literature review, these are the variables with more probability of being correlated with the burnout and engagement subscales, as well as with the intention to leave. It was decided to include the gender variable although it is not a relevant variable in this research, considering that 98.8 per cent of the collaborators are men, making this variable negligible to draw conclusive data.

Next, I will present the results of the correlational analysis, which are summarized in Table 11.

Starting with the age variable, it is possible to see that it correlates itself negatively with the burnout subscales and positively with the engagement subscales. Relatively the education variable, we can observe that it correlates positively with the exhaustion variable (0.155) and with the “intention to leave” variable (0.157) and negatively with the dedication variable (-0.258) and engagement (-0.219).

The marital status and number of children variables did no present statistically significant correlations with the main variables of this study.

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The exhaustion variable correlates negatively with the engagement subscales (vigor, dedication) and positively with the intention to leave variable and with the burnout variables (cynicism, inefficacy, and burnout).

On other hand, the inefficacy correlates positively with the burnout and intention to leave variables and negatively with the vigor and dedication variables.

Finally, burnout correlates negatively with the vigor and dedication variables and positively with the intention to leave variable.

Table 11 - Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of the Scales (n=164)

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	41.30	8.82	-											
2. Gender	0.01	0.11	-.181*	-										
3. Marital Stat.	0.72	0.45	.309**	-.178*	-									
4. Children	0.85	0.35	.291***	.268***	.394**	-								
5. Education	0.37	0.48	-.176*	.144	.003	-	-							
6. Work Exp.	8.86	9.21	.486***	-.111	.162	.160	-.129	-						
7. Exhaustion	3.17	1.49	-.219**	-.128	.046	-	.155*	.037	-					
8. Cynicism	1.84	1.57	-.170*	-.059	-.045	-	.038	-	.600***	-				
9. Inefficacy	0.63	0.70	-.240**	.124	.049	-	.115	-	.213**	.275***	-			
10. Burnout	1.88	1.00	-.253**	-.064	.017	-	.118	-	.871***	.868***	.446***	-		
11. Vigor	4.96	1.07	.182**	.043	-.050	.020	-.129	-	.503***	.302***	.461***	.502***	-	
12. Dedication	5.04	1.10	.160*	-.124	-.057	.145	-	-	.352***	.303***	.602***	.450***	.585***	-
14. Int. to leave	2.16	1.23	-.217**	.075	.005	-	.157*	.006	.542***	.358***	.318***	.518***	-	-
						.081							.424***	.475***

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

4.4. Linear Regression Analysis

Following an initial examination of the correlations between the variables, I assessed the extent to which intention to leave (dependent variable) was predicted by burnout and engagement dimension after controlling for age, education, gender, work experience, children and marital status (independent variables). In doing so, I performed a hierarchical linear regression using the statistical package SPSS v.20. Socio-demographical variables were included in the first step, whereas subscales of burnout and engagement dimensions were included in the second step. I entered these variables in two steps in order to determine the extent to which the burnout and engagement dimensions contributed to the prediction of intention to leave beyond education.

Results revealed that socio-demographical variables did not contribute to the prediction of intention to leave ($R^2 = .065$; $p .149 > .001$; see Table 12, Step 1). With regard to burnout and engagement dimensions, results revealed that exhaustion and dedication were significantly positive associated with intention to leave, whereas cynicism, lack of efficacy, and vigor were not significantly associated with intention to leave. In other words, higher levels of exhaustion and lower levels of dedication were associated with higher intentions to leave. Adding these burnout and engagement dimensions increased the explained variance to 42% ($\Delta R^2 = .373$; $p .000 < .001$).

This way, 42% of the variation on “intention to leave” is explained by the variation on exhaustion and dedication. Because of the higher coefficient of correlation, it can be confirmed a strong linear association between “Intention to leave” and “exhaustion and dedication”.

Table 12 - Regression Analysis with exposure to intention to leave as criterion variable

Predictors ^a	Intention to leave			
	Step 1 ^b		Step 2 ^b	
	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.
Age	-.277	.011	-.073	.419
Education	-.001	.992	.092	.205
Gender	.027	.769	-.040	.590
Married	-.039	.677	.022	.772
Children	.074	.392	-.020	.777
Work Exp.	.153	.134	.053	.518
Exhaustion	-	-	.420	.000***
Cynicism	-	-	.023	.794
Inefficacy	-	-	-.044	.622
Vigor	-	-	-.119	.204
Dedication	-	-	-.257	.013*
R^2	.065		.420	
ΔR^2	.025		.373	

Note: 'Gender' was dummy coded (0 = male, 1 = female); 'Marital Status' was dummy coded (0 = single, divorced, and widow; 1 = married); 'Children' was dummy coded (0 = no, 1 = yes); 'Education' was dummy coded (0 = basic education; 1 = secondary / higher education).^b Standardized Betas and probabilities: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

4.5. Mediation Analysis

Considering the results mentioned above, I examined a simple mediation or indirect effect model in which: the degree to which employees perceive dedication (M) mediates the effect of exhaustion (X) on intention to leave (Y). I tested this mediation hypothesis using a SPSS v.20 macro provided by Hayes (2013) that facilitates estimation of the indirect effect with a bootstrap approach to obtain confidence intervals. The application of bootstrapped confidence intervals (CIs) outperforms the normal theory Sobel tests since it avoids power problems introduced by asymmetric and other non-normal sampling distributions of an indirect effect (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2004) and makes Type I error less likely (Preacher and Hayes, 2008).

Regarding the simple mediation model, results revealed that dedication partially mediates the association between exhaustion and intention to leave (Table 13). Furthermore, the ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect of exhaustion on intention to leave was 0.21 (bootstrapped 95 per cent CIs of 0.1120 to 0.3618), which means that 21 per cent of the variance of intention to leave was due to the variable dedication (MacKinnon, 2008; Preacher and Kelley, 2011). Similarly, Preacher and Kelley's kappa-squared (2011) revealed a modest indirect effect (bootstrapped 95 per cent CIs of .0667 to .1941).

Table 13 - Regression Results for Simple Mediation

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Total, Direct, and Indirect effects						
Total Effect of X on Y	.4353	.0552	7.8912	.000	.3264	.5442
Direct Effect of X on Y	.3438	.0543	6.3295	.000	.2365	.4510
Indirect Effect of X on Y	.0915	.0267	-	-	.0487	.1508
Partially standardized indirect effect of X on Y	.0743	.0206	-	-	.0400	.1183
Completely standardized indirect effect of X on Y	.1108	.0309	-	-	.0599	.1807
Ratio of indirect to total effect of X on Y	.2102	.0617	-	-	.1120	.3618
Ratio of indirect to direct effect of X on Y	.2662	.1070	-	-	.1261	.5669
Preacher and Kelley (2011) Kappa-squared	.1233	.0335	-	-	.0667	.1941
R-Squared mediation effect size	.1232	.0384	-	-	.0610	.2099
	<i>Value</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>		
Normal theory tests for Indirect effect						
Effect	.9515	.0276	3.3153	.0009		

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. X = Exhaustion; Y = Intention to leave; M = Dedication; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; CI = confidence interval. Bootstrap sample size = 1000.

5. Discussion

Work has a fundamental role in ours' everyday life, being important for creating an identity and facilitating inclusion in the society. This way, working is an important component, both for wellness and for life quality increment. From the social economic point of view, working assumes itself as a source of income that confers a particular social status. Yet, it can also be a powerful source of stress, which weakens the individual over time.

In that sense, as referred throughout this study, stress can be positive or negative, that is, it can be a source of learning, of personal achievement termed "eustress" or a source of wear defined as "distress". The long-term and continuous exposure of an individual and a source of stress may cause burnout (Schaufeli and Buunk, 2003), on which this research was focused.

It is in this context that is established the aim of this research: determine the burnout prevalence and the engagement level of a Portuguese transport company. This study pretends to compare these variables with the social demographic ones, as well as understand the impact of such psychological constructs (burnout and engagement) on collaborators attitudes (that is, intention to leave the organization).

Regarding the prevalence of burnout and engagement, at first sight, it has been established that in this organization the surveyed employees present average levels of exhaustion and cynicism and high levels of personal fulfilment, corresponding to a low or average burnout level. Relatively to the engagement subscales, we checked that the vigor and dedication variables present high averages. It could mean that the collaborators of the organization in study feel mostly involved in their work, dedicated to their duties, which leads them to overcome the situations of fatigue and exhaustion easily. This way, they feel professionally fulfilled. However, three cases of burnout were identified, which will deserve further consideration and urgent measures for preventing long-term negative consequences.

Moving forward, regarding the personal determinants of burnout and engagement in our current sample, the correlations between the social demographic variables and the burnout and engagement subscales suggest that younger workers report higher levels of burnout. According to Haley *et al.* (2013), the age is synonymous with work experience (in our study both variables were correlated), and therefore it is normal that the collaborators feel vulnerable in the early years of their careers to burnout, when their

expectations are high and do not correspond to the professional reality. Also, as expected, the age variable correlates positively with the engagement subscales (vigor and dedication), which means that the higher the age, the higher the engagement levels. It can be explained by the strong involvement and dedication over the years by the collaborators.

On the other hand, a higher educational level is related to increased exhaustion levels and decreased dedication levels. This finding meets the Maslach *et al.* (2001)'s affirmation, which refers that collaborators with high educational levels usually have higher expectations to their careers, which can take them into a higher distress, if the expectations are not realized.

In addition, contrary to Maslach *et al.* (2001) research, which concludes that single people are more exposed to this burnout syndrome than married people, neither the marital status nor the number of children variables were correlated with burnout and engagement.

Finally, through the regression analysis I conclude that exhaustion and dedication were significantly positive associated with intention to leave. Indeed, results revealed that dedication partially mediates the association between exhaustion and intention to leave. This way, the results found are in accordance with the researches made before, suggesting that burnout and work engagement are seen as opposite indicators of occupational well-being (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

5.1 Limitations and suggestions for Further Research

Along this written assignment, limitations have arisen in collecting the questionnaires, as considering that the analyzed company belongs to the transport sector, most of the collaborators are in service, in itineraries established by the company and not always travelling to the installations in order to monetize the means and the time. Even though, the questionnaire was applied, yet in summer coinciding with some collaborators' vacations. To remedy this situation, the questionnaires had to be available to fill in during a longer period than expected, in a way to enable the answer from a greatest number of employees.

After collecting the questionnaires and during the validation of the reliability of instruments, it was found a low Cronbach's alphas for the MBI dimensions (see Wheeler *et al.*, 2001) and an unacceptable Cronbach's alpha for the absorption subscale (see

Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Therefore, it was not possible to take conclusive results about engagement levels, due to the absence of one of the subscales. This problem such be solved in future studies.

Similarly, future studies should establish longitudinal designs and introduce different measures beyond self-report indicators in order to infer causality and avoid potential common method biases (see Podsakoff *et al.* 2003).

For last, although using the MBI-GS as a tool for diagnosing work-related mental problems was beyond the scope of this study, clinically validated cut-off scores for the MBI should be established in the future in Portugal, which will allow differentiating better between “burnout cases” from “noncases” with more updated data (Schaufeli and Taris, 2005).

5.2. Practical and theoretical implications

Although inherent limitations to the study design, results suggest that there are three cases of burnout in the participating company, which implies taking urgent measures for preventing long-term negative consequences (e.g. poor quality of work, absenteeism, turnover, health problems or depression) such as: assess levels of burnout in order to adopt measures to reduce organizational stressors and the individual problem, and improve the person-work relationship.

In addition, according to the results, promoting engagement can buffer the negative consequences of burnout on the organization’s productivity (intention to leave). Therefore, organizations may introduce measures aimed at building engagement, in other words, including the employees in the organizational goals, improving the social support at work from colleagues and supervisors (e.g. sharing experiences and knowledge), and improving the organizational environment.

In sum, in the case of burnout existence and according with Pines (1993, cf. Serra, 2005), in order to avoid the burnout syndrome, a multi-level intervention shall be provided: organization, group and individual. The organization shall provide physical, social and managerial conditions to the worker so that they do not turn up damaging. Relatively to the group where the individual is in, we need to learn to evaluate if the demands established are legal or not. At last, as the individual level, the intervention must be in a way to show that experienced crisis can be positive, becoming a source of personal

growth (firstly the problem should be evaluated, then the resources to deal with it and at last analyze the personal abilities or create a source of social support in order to overcome the problem).

5.2. Conclusion

The employees assume themselves as an essential and precious need to the organization, so, it is crucial to understand their position, because it is the only way to assure the company productivity, sustainability and success. This way, the present study may be highly relevant to the company human resources managers. Nevertheless, taking into account that no studies with the evaluation of the burnout syndrome on Portuguese transport of goods companies were discovered, we believe that this investigation gave a contribution to the burnout study in a new area.

I end this study emphasizing that, analyzing burnout is more than study a problem, is essentially talk about our expectations and how we can prepared in some mode for the inevitable difficulties. Learning about this syndrome is learn about how prevent professional stress and consequently how to have a healthy person-job relationship.

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7. Annexes

Bem-vindo!

Este questionário insere-se num estudo realizado no âmbito de um projecto de Tese do “Master of Science in Business Administration” do ISCTE-IUL, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. O principal objectivo deste estudo é compreender os factores que influenciam o desempenho laboral.

É neste sentido que solicitamos a sua colaboração. **O questionário é inteiramente anónimo e confidencial.** Para garantir esse anonimato não deve colocar a sua identificação em qualquer folha do questionário. No final, encontra algumas questões relativas a si próprio(a). No entanto, essas questões não visam identificá-lo(a) mas apenas recolher elementos que facilitem a análise estatística por grupos. Os resultados obtidos serão usados apenas para fins académicos e científicos (tese).

Não existem respostas corretas ou erradas, desta forma responda **com sinceridade** a cada questão. Na maioria das questões apenas terá de assinalar **com uma cruz (X)** a sua opção de resposta (Escolha **UMA SÓ RESPOSTA** para cada pergunta). Responda tendo em consideração os últimos meses de trabalho. **Este questionário tem a duração aproximada de 5-10 minutos.**

Caso tenha alguma questão relacionada com este questionário, pode entrar em contacto com: Marina Cruz, através do e-mail: marina.af.cruz@gmail.com.

Obrigada pela sua colaboração!

SECÇÃO 1/1

De seguida são apresentadas 40 frases sobre os seus sentimentos relacionados com a sua atividade profissional. ASSINALE PARA CADA QUESTÃO COM QUE FREQUÊNCIA SE SENTE DESSA FORMA.

	Nenhuma vez	Algumas vezes por ano	Uma vez ou menos por mês	Algumas vezes por mês	Uma vez por semana	Algumas vezes por semana	Todos os dias
1. Sinto-me feliz quando estou a fazer tarefas relacionadas com o meu trabalho.							
2. Sinto-me emocionalmente esgotado com o meu							
3. Esqueço tudo o que se passa à minha volta quando estou concentrado no meu trabalho.							
4. Sinto-me esgotado no final de um dia de trabalho.							
5. Estou imerso no meu trabalho.							
6. Sinto-me cansado quando acordo de manhã e tenho de enfrentar outro dia de trabalho.							
7. O meu trabalho satisfaz-me.							
8. Na minha opinião, sou bom no que faço.							
9. O meu trabalho é desafiante para mim.							
10. Tornei-me menos interessado no meu trabalho desde que assumi este cargo.							
11. Quando me levanto, ao acordar, apetece-me ir trabalhar.							
12. Trabalhar o dia todo é realmente motivo de tensão para mim.							

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(continuação)	Nenhuma vez	Algumas vezes por ano	Uma vez ou menos por mês	Algumas vezes por mês	Uma vez por semana	Algumas vezes por semana	Todos os dias
13. O meu trabalho inspira-me coisas novas.							
14. Posso efetivamente solucionar os problemas que surgem no meu trabalho.							
15. O meu trabalho não me exige muito esforço.							
16. Sinto-me acabado por causa do meu trabalho.							
17. Estou entusiasmado com o meu trabalho.							
18. Sinto que dou um contributo válido para a empresa através do meu trabalho.							
19. No final do dia ainda tenho energia para realizar outras							
20. Nas minhas tarefas não paro, mesmo que não me sintam bem.							
21. Sinto-me entusiasmado quando realizo algo no meu trabalho.							
22. Dedico muito tempo às minhas funções.							
23. Tornei-me mais reticente em relação à utilidade do meu trabalho.							
24. As minhas tarefas não me cansam.							
25. É difícil desligar-me do meu trabalho.							
26. Duvido da importância do meu trabalho.							

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(continuação)	Nenhuma vez	Algumas vezes por ano	Uma vez ou menos por mês	Algumas vezes por mês	Uma vez por semana	Algumas vezes por semana	Todos os dias
27. O tempo passa a voar quando estou a realizar as minhas tarefas							
28. Só desejo fazer o meu trabalho e não ser incomodado.							
29. "Deixo-me ir" quando realizo as minhas tarefas.							
30. Realizei muitas coisas valiosas no meu trabalho.							
31. Sou uma pessoa com força para enfrentar as minhas tarefas.							
32. No meu trabalho sinto que sou capaz de finalizar as minhas tarefas eficazmente.							
33. Sinto-me envolvido no meu trabalho.							
34. Creio que o meu trabalho tem significado.							
35. No meu trabalho sinto que sou capaz de realizar as minhas tarefas eficazmente.							
36. Sinto-me com força e energia quando estou a exercer as minhas funções.							
37. Sinto-me motivado para fazer bem o meu trabalho.							
38. As minhas tarefas fazem-me sentir cheio de energia.							
39. Estou orgulhoso de fazer este trabalho.							
40. Tornei-me menos entusiasmado com o meu trabalho.							

DADOS COMPLEMENTARES

1. Idade: _____
2. Gênero: Feminino Masculino
3. Estado Civil:
- Solteiro/a
- Casado/a ou União de facto
- Divorciado/a ou Separado/a
- Viúvo/a
4. Filhos: Sim Não
5. Habilitações Literárias: Até 9º ano Ensino Secundário Ensino Superior
6. Anos de Serviço: _____
7. Área / Categoria profissional: Administrativo Motorista Outra
8. Região onde trabalha: Norte Centro Sul
9. Indique se concorda ou discorda com as seguintes afirmações:

	Não concordo totalmente	Não concordo parcialmente	Indiferente	Concordo parcialmente	Concordo totalmente
1. Por vezes penso em mudar de profissão.					
2. Por vezes penso em procurar trabalho fora da organização.					
3. No próximo ano, gostaria de mudar de profissão.					
4. No próximo ano, gostaria de procurar trabalho fora da organização.					