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Workaholism as Positive Reinforcement for Educators Working Engagement in Higher Education

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Abstrak

Work engagement merupakan indikator penting bagi pendidik untuk dapat menyatu dengan tugas pekerjaan mereka dan untuk memastikan kesejahteraan di tempat kerja. Beragamnya tugas dan terbatasnya waktu yang diberikan kepada pendidik, khususnya pada pendidikan tinggi, dapat menurunkan *work engagement*. Di sisi lain, organisasi industri jasa mengalami fenomena perilaku baru yang dikenal dengan istilah *workaholism*. Hal ini ditandai dengan kebiasaan karyawan yang bekerja secara berlebihan dan kompulsif. Tahap penelusuran literatur menunjukkan bahwa belum ada penelitian yang menganalisis bagaimana kecanduan kerja di pendidikan tinggi berkorelasi dengan keterlibatan kerja para pendidik. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh dan korelasi antara tingkat *workaholism* dan *work engagement* pada perguruan tinggi. Sebeanyak empat puluh satu dosen Fakultas Teknologi Industri, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta diminta mengisi kuesioner pengukuran tingkat *workaholism* (*DUWAS*) dan *work engagement* (UWES-9). Hasil dari *Pearson's analysis* terhadap kedua variabel ini menunjukkan korelasi positif sedang (r = 0.565, p < .001). Selain itu, analisis ANOVA menunjukkan dosen dengan perilaku *workaholic* memiliki tingkat keterlibatan yang secara signifikan lebih besar (p < .05) dibandingkan dengan dosen yang tidak berperilaku *workaholic*. Hal ini menyiratkan bahwa lingkungan kerja harus diciptakan untuk mendorong sikap *workaholic* yang sehat, di kalangan pendidik pendidikan tinggi untuk memaksimalkan tingkat keterlibatan mereka dalam pekerjaan mereka. Hasil penelitian memberikan implikasi untuk dapat menjadi salah satu acuan dalam perancangan sistem dan lingkungan kerja dosen yang mendukung *work engagement* mereka dalam mengabdi sebagai pendidik.

Kata kunci: adiksi bekerja, kesejahteraan manusia; pendidik; workaholism; work engagement

Abstract

Work engagement is an essential indicator for educators to be immersed in their work tasks and to ensure well-being at work. The various tasks and limited time given to educators, especially in higher education, can reduce work engagement. On the other hand, service industry organizations are experiencing a new behavioral phenomenon known as workaholism. This is characterized by employees' habit of working excessively and compulsively. The literature review stage shows that there is no research that analyzes how workaholism in higher education correlates with educators' work engagement. Therefore, this study aims to understand the effect and correlation between workaholism level and working engagement in higher education. The 41 lecturers from the Faculty of Industrial Technology at Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta were asked to complete a questionnaire measuring workaholism level (DUWAS) and working engagement (UWES-9). The Pearson analysis of these two variables shows a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.565, p < .001). Moreover, the ANOVA analysis shows lecturers with workaholic behavior have significantly greater engagement levels (p < .05) than those without. This implies that a working environment should be created to promote healthy workaholism among higher education educators and maximize their engagement levels in their work. The research results provide implications for being a reference in designing systems and work environments for lecturers that support their work engagement in serving as educators.

Keywords: educator; human wellbeing; workaholism; work addiction; work engagement

INTRODUCTION

Tri Dharma, which literally means three main tasks, requires lecturers or faculty members in Indonesia to conduct not only teaching but also research and community service. Moreover, those who also serve as organizational leader have it harder to manage their workload. The rules related to curriculum change every five years, and the need for university or program re-accreditation works also contributes to the administrative burden of the faculty members. This workload causes most faculty members to voluntarily spend more time completing their work, which may lead to workaholism.

Workaholism has been perceived as an addiction that performs unhealthy forms of work investment and is indicated by an obsessive working involvement. Although workaholism pushes faculty members to devote themselves to their work, it can lead them to constant depletion of personal resources, work-life conflict, and poor social relationships outside work (Di Stefano & Gaudiino, 2019). Moreover, workaholism also influences physical and psychological problems, due to its characteristic that produces a high activity with low enjoyment of the workers (Mazzetti et al., 2018; van Wijhe et al., 2011).

Three dimensions related to workaholism were proposed: work involvement, drive, and work enjoyment. Furthermore, workaholism combines behavioral and cognitive components, translated as working excessively and compulsively (Mazzetti et al., 2018; W. Schaufeli, n.d.). Although one of the dimensions of workaholism is similar to the absorption dimension in working engagement, it has different implications since work engagement represents a healthy working attitude and involvement.

On the other hand, work engagement has a negative association with work-life conflict, which results from workaholism behavior. Engaged faculty members will have a high level of activation or vigor, resulting in high work resilience and enjoyment. Vigor (high level of energy), dedication (the involvement and sense of enthusiasm, pride, and inspiration), and absorption (the willingness to engross in work) are the dimensions of work engagement.

Research shows that although workaholism and work engagement make faculty members put in extra hours to finish their work, they are driven by different motivations. Workaholism is driven by internal standards of self-worth and social validation, while engaged workers are intrinsically motivated to feel content about their work. When workaholism was attributed to the job demand-resources model, it hindered the workers from using job resources effectively and efficiently, resulting in stress and exhaustion. Therefore, engaged workers will have better health than workaholics (Mazzetti et al., 2018). However, achievement-oriented workaholics may have high job satisfaction, mental health, and low stress levels.

Several researchers have already analyzed the relationship between workaholism and work engagement in certain sectors outside of education. Differences in beahior and tasks in education sectors, could have different correlation between workaholism and working engagement of educators. Therefore, this study aims to determine the relationship between workaholism and the work engagement of faculty members at the Faculty of Industrial Technology Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta (UAJY). The results can provide input for university leaders and faculty to realize human well-being, ultimately improving faculty members' performance and developing the university's organization.

METHODS

Research Variables

The dependent variable used in this research was working engagement, which consists of three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The independent variable used in this research was workaholism, which consists of two dimensions: work compulsively and work excessively. This part explains the definition of both variables in detail.

Working Engagement

Engagement at work is defined as a positive, fulfilling, and work-related mental state (Agarwal et al., 2019) and related to how the worker achieves their goal (Langseth-Eide, 2019). The first dimension in work engagement is vigor, shown by the worker's energetic, effortful, resilient, and happy behavior in the given responsibilities (Loscalzo & Giannini, 2019; Titien, 2016). The second is dedication, which represents the worker’s enthusiasm for being involved in the tasks and, at the same time, stimulates the worker’s self-respect and inspiration(Kotera et al., 2022; Loscalzo & Giannini, 2019). The third is absorption, which represents how the given tasks consume the worker (Kotera et al., 2022), and therefore, the worker becomes more engrossed and focused on his/her responsibilities (Agarwal et al., 2019).

Workaholism

As a general definition, workaholism is an addiction to working (Makhdoom et al., 2022). Sometimes, this behavior also involves the need to work uncontrollably (Langseth-Eide, 2019). The first dimension of workaholism is work compulsively (WC), which represents the cognitive construct of workaholism. In this condition, the workers are constantly thinking about and obsessed with work (Mazzetti et al., 2018). The other dimension is work excessively (WE), which represents the behavioral construct of workaholism. Workers work more than they should, in terms of time and effort, to fulfill organizational or economic needs (Mazzetti et al., 2018; Torp et al., 2018).

Sampling Method
The data collection was done using purposive random sampling by setting the criteria of the sample to be comprised of job, degree, and place of work. This sampling method allowed us to identify and select respondents who will utilize limited resources efficiently and yield helpful information (Campbell et al., 2020; Evadewi & Suarya, 2013).

Subject
The participants recruited in this study were forty-one (male = 21, female = 20) faculty members from the Faculty of Industrial Technology, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta. They voluntarily joined the research after receiving an oral invitation during the faculty annual meeting. The age range of the participants was between 27 and 64 years old. All faculty members were from three study programs: Industrial Engineering, Informatics, and Information Systems. They were also distinguished by their academic grade comprising no academic grade, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. There were certain of them who were being assigned as university officials. The characteristics of the participants involved in this research are presented in Table 1 in detail.

Instruments
Workaholism was measured using the Dutch Workaholism Scale (DUWAS) (Clark et al., 2016; Makhdoom et al., 2022; Omar et al., 2021), which measures two workaholism dimensions, comprising WC and WE behavior. Each dimension was measured using five questions with the order of the questions followed by the DUWAS manual (Clark et al., 2016; Makhdoom et al., 2022; W. Schaufeli et al., 2011). The tool uses a rating scale with a minimal score of one, representing rare frequency to four, representing (almost) always frequency. The workaholism level cut-off also followed the rule in the DUWAS manual with a very low level for <5th percentile, low level for 6th – 25th percentile, average level for 26th – 75th percentile, high level for 76th – 94th percentile, and very high level for > 94th percentile of collected data (W. Schaufeli et al., 2011). Based on our collected data, the workaholism level cut-off is shown in Table 2.

The working engagement of faculty members was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9) (Klassen et al., 2012, 2013; Mills et al., 2012), which contains nine questions. The questions represent three dimensions measured in this tool, comprising participants' vigor (3 questions), dedication (3 questions), and absorption (3 questions). The questions in UWES-9 need to be answered with ratings representing the frequency of each condition's occurrence. Zero scores for never, 1 for almost never (few times in a year), 2 for rare (maximum once a month), 3 for often (a few times a month), 4 for often (once a week), 5 for very often (a few times a week), and 6 for always (every day). This study's UWES-9 questions order and score cut-off followed the UWES manual (Rao et al., 2020; W. B. Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Vîrgă et al., 2022). Based on the collected data, the score cut-off of engagement level is shown in Table 3.

DUWAS and UWES-9 measurement tools were shared with all participants in Bahasa Indonesia through a digital survey platform. The Bahasa Indonesia version of these scales was adopted from Schaufeli's official website (W. Schaufeli, n.d.). This version has been tested in particular research, especially for Indonesian respondents (Kristiana & Purwono, 2019; Rachmawati, 2022).

Research Design
The study aims to reveal the relationship between independent and dependent variables, which is quantitative research. Quantitative research helps develop and refine knowledge to solve problems using formal, objective, rigorous, and systematic approaches (Mohajan, 2020). Therefore, using this research design helps reach the study's goals.

Data Collection Procedure
The data collection was initiated by setting the criteria for selecting the subjects. The instruments were then designed as an online questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the subjects by first asking for permission from the leaders of the institution units. All subjects were asked for their consent before filling out the questionnaires.

Data Analysis Technique
The analysis in this study was done using certain methods comprising Cronbach's alpha (Barbera et al., 2020; Taber, 2018) for reliability tests, both for the Bahasa Indonesia version of DUWAS and UWES-9. The descriptive statistics calculations were applied to show participants' prevalence of workaholism and working engagement. The correlation analysis used Pearson's correlation analysis method (Selvanathan et al., 2020) to understand the relationship between workaholism and working engagement variables. The results from those tests became the references for conclusions. The statistical analyses were executed using Minitab 20.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	Description	
Age	**Year**	
Mean	41.27	
Standard Deviation	11.21	
Range	27-64	
Sex	**Amount**	**Percentage (%)**
Male	21	48.80
Female	20	51.20
Program		
Industrial Engineering	17	41.50
Informatics	16	39.00
Information System	8	19.50
Academic Grade		
Assistant Professor	26	63.40
Associate Professor	9	22.00
Professor	1	2.40
No-academic grade yet	5	12.20
University official		
Yes	19	46.30
No	22	53.70

Table 2. Cut-off for WE and WC Dimensions Levels

Level	WE score	WC Score
Very low	<1.80	<1.80
Low	1.80-2.20	1.80-2.20
Average	2.21-3.00	2.21-2.80
High	3.01-3.20	2.81-3.12
Very high	>3.20	>3.12

Table 3. Cut-off for Engagement Levels

Level	Engagement Score	Vigor Score	Dedication Score	Absorption Score
Very low	<3.11	<2.10	<2.73	<2.40
Low	3.12-4.00	2.10 – 3.83	2.73 – 4.33	2.40 – 3.83
Average	4.01-5.00	3.84 – 5.00	4.34 – 5.50	3.83 – 5.50
High	5.01-5.57	5.01 – 5.67	5.50 – 6.00	5.50 – 5.97
Very high	>5.57	>5.67	>6.00	>5.97

RESULTS

Reliability Test Results

The reliability tests were done to check the consistency of questions used in each measurement tool. The Bahasa Indonesia version of the DUWAS result reaches 0.79 of Cronbach's alpha (good reliability) (Taber, 2018), same reliability quality as in earlier Indonesian translated version (Krumov et al., 2022). The UWES-9 scale performs 0.89 of Cronbach's alpha or high reliability (Taber, 2018). Those results imply that the questions used in the DUWAS and UWES-9 scales are consistent for all involved participants in this study.

Workaholism and Working Engagement Conditions of Faculty Members

The prevalence of WE and WC levels reflects the level of workaholism of all faculty members. The prevalence of WE levels for very low, low, average, high, and very high states are 4.90%, 28.30%, 53.70%, 7.30%, and 4.9%, respectively. The prevalence of WC for very low, low, average, high, and very high states are 4.90%, 29.3%, 48.80%, 9.80%, and 7.30%, respectively. These findings show that the faculty members work excessively and compulsively at an average level. The mean of WE and WC from all participants are 2.57 ± 0.50 and 2.50 ± 0.48, respectively. This indicates that the faculty member phases an early workaholic state, as none of the WE and WC levels are at low levels (Allam et al., 2021).

The prevalence of working engagement of all faculty members is reflected by the total engagement level and the values of each dimension, which are vigor, dedication, and absorption levels. The prevalence of total engagement levels is 4.90%, 22.00%, 48.80%, 17.10%, and 7.30% for very low, low, average, high, and very high levels, respectively. Therefore, the majority of the participants are at an average level of total engagement. The prevalence of vigor dimension levels is 7.30%, 31.70%, 39.0%, 19.50%, and 2.40% for very low, low, average, high, and very high, respectively, or the majority of them are in average level. The prevalence of dedication dimension levels is 2.40%, 2.40%, 70.70%, 12.20%, and 12.20% for very low, low, average, high, and very high levels, respectively, or the majority of them are at an average level too. Furthermore, the prevalence of absorption dimension levels is 4.90%, 19.50%, 65.90%, 4.90%, and 4.90% for very low, low, average, high, and very high levels, respectively, or the majority of them are at an average level of absorption. All information related to prevalence analysis results is shown in Figure 1.

Correlation of Workaholism and Working Engagement Component Levels

The correlation between workaholism total engagement level and its dimensions was analyzed using Pearson's Correlation. The results show that workaholism level has a moderate positive correlation with total engagement ($r = 0.565$; $p < .001$), vigor ($r = 0.503$; $p < .01$), dedication ($r = 0.371$; $p < .001$), and absorption level ($r = 0.594$; $p < 0.001$). In detail, the workaholism components comprising WE and WC also have a significant positive correlation with each engagement component. The Pearson's Correlation value r of WE and total engagement, vigor, dedication, and absorption are 0.494 ($p < .01$), 0.428 ($p < .01$), 0.358 ($p < .05$), and 0.500 ($p < 0.01$). The r values that represent the correlation of WC and total engagement, vigor, and absorption are 0.513 ($p < .01$), 0.470 ($p < .01$), and 0.560 ($p < .001$), respectively. The dedication dimension does not significantly correlate with the WC level ($r = 0.302$; $p > 0.05$). These correlations are well described with scatterplots shown in Figure 2.

DISCUSSION

Workaholism Stimulates Working Engagement for Educators

These results mentioned above imply that the workaholic behavior of faculty members helps them engage with the given tasks and responsibilities, as found in certain research (Choi et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2022), that also show the correlation in all level of workaholism. The behavior of working excessively and compulsively successfully increases the value in all dimensions. This may happen because they overlap behavior, especially the WE with absorption, vigor, and dedication, and WC with absorption (Di Stefano & Gaudiino, 2019; Gorgievski et al., 2010). Workaholic behavior has also become a criterion for leaders to be considered for promotion planning (Di Stefano & Gaudiino, 2019; Ng et al., 2007). Therefore, for certain faculty members, workaholic behavior is formed and triggers working engagement, leading to promotion at both managerial career level and academic ranks (i.e., associate professor to full professor). However, workaholic behavior still needs to be controlled by the faculty member himself/herself and by their leader helps, because there are certain negative adverse effects of this behavior, including low mental health level (Andreassen, 2014), exhaustion in cognitive aspects (Taris et al., 2005), and sleeping disorders (Di Stefano & Gaudiino, 2019; Taris et al., 2005), if it is not well managed. The challenge for the lecturer is how to manage the time and workload well. The leaders also need measure the proper workloads before they are shared to the lecturers.

Workaholism and Working Engagement as a "Yin and Yang" Working Behavior

As mentioned in the previous section, workaholism behavior is like a two-edged sword that positively and negatively affects workers, including lecturers or faculty members in higher education institutions. A follow-up action to manage the level and form of workaholism behavior of the faculty members needs to be planned. Basic knowledge about workaholism and engagement implies a small clue to planning this action.

Workaholism and engagement have certain similarities (Allam et al., 2021) that make them called types of heavy work investment (Shimazu et al., 2020). However, they are motivated by different powers. If workaholism is encouraged by the unresisted obsessive inner drive, the engagement is more motivated by their willingness to do the best(Shimazu et al., 2020; Van Beek et al., 2012). Therefore, they will achieve optimum results if these two variables work in balanced synergy. The engagement itself can be the automatic alarm if the workaholic behavior starts to become destructive to the well-being of workers. Suppose the condition of working engagement does not follow the trends found in this study anymore. In that case, the faculty members or the leaders need to re-engineer the working lifestyle to become more balanced. Most previous studies on the relationship between workaholism and engagement confirm our finding (has a positive correlation) (Di Stefano & Gaudiino, 2019). However, workaholism has a long-term harmful effect that leads to deleterious problems rather than positive effects, such as productive outcomes for organizations

that happen in the short term (Di Stefano & Gaudiino, 2019). Therefore, reaching the balance between workaholism and working engagement is an essential follow-up.

CONCLUSION

The study on faculty members of the Faculty of Industrial Technology finds that workaholism dimensions positively correlate to each dimension of work engagement. However, it does not necessarily mean the rise of workaholism will promote better work engagement. Workaholism may contribute to short-term success, but in the long term, it will deteriorate personal resources. The balance of workaholism and working engagement is important to maintain sustainable productivity for the university or organization.

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Authors Contributions
The first authors had responsibility to generate and conceptualize the main idea. The first and second authors did the research instruments' design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript production.

Conflict of Interest
This article was written by authors with no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication.

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Appendix

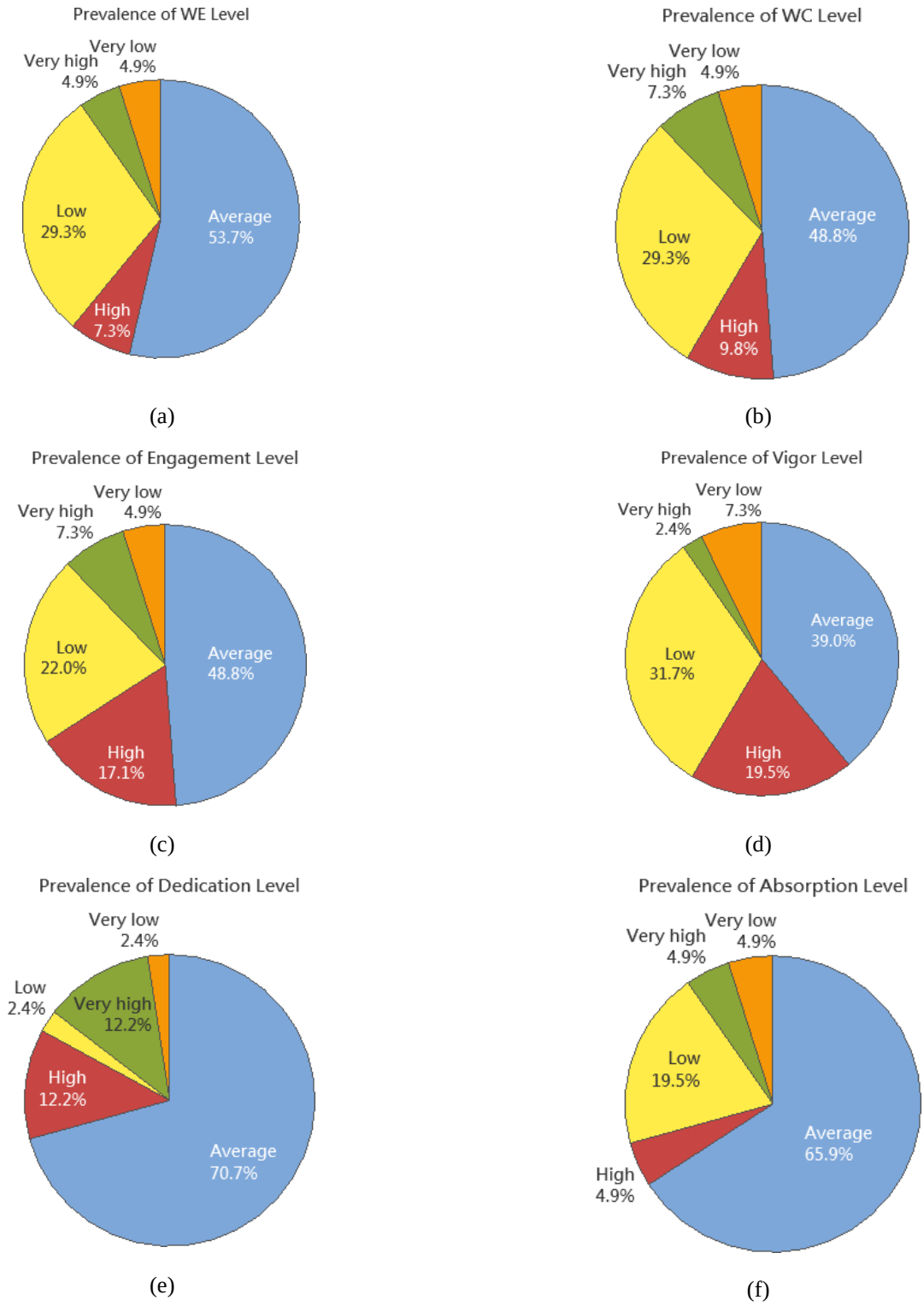

Figure 1. Prevalence of workaholism and working engagement levels; (a) WE level; (b) WC level; (c) total engagement level; (d) vigor level; (e) dedication level; and (f) absorption level

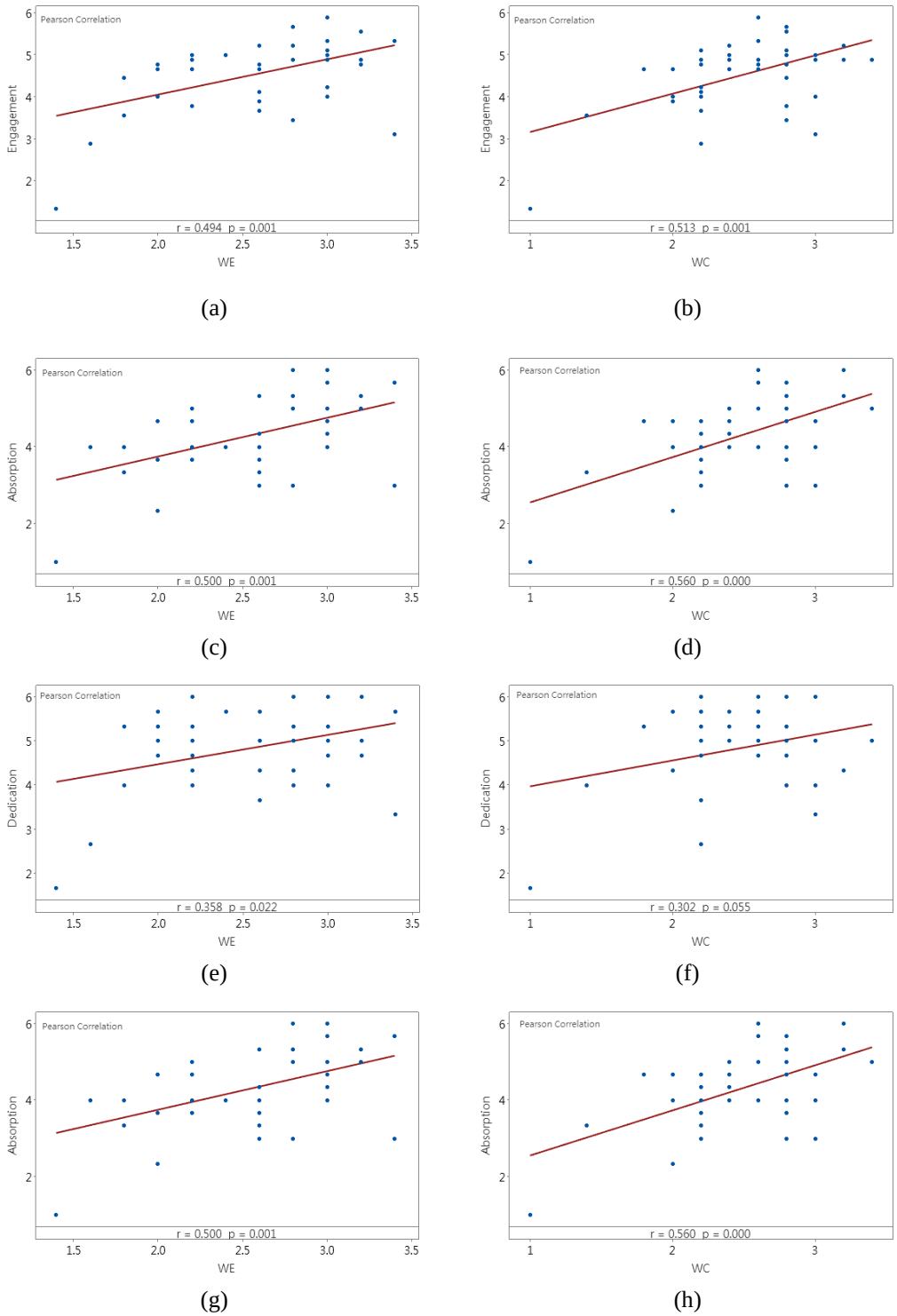

Figure 2. Scatterplot for describing the correlation of workaholism components and working engagement dimensions: (a) WE vs. total engagement; (b) WC vs. total engagement; (c) WE vs. vigor; (d) WC vs. vigor, (e) WE vs. dedication; (f) WC vs. dedication (insignificant correlation); (g) WE vs. absorption, (h) WC vs. absorption.