Burnout symptoms can be predicted by personality traits and psychopathology in a sample of Catalan police officers

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological assessment involves the administration of one or more valid psychological tests in order to assess a person's suitability to a task or situation. Research has shown the convenience and utility to use these instruments in recruitment processes. For instance, when determining the suitability of the applicant for police duties. In Catalunya, this task is carried out during basic training for police career agent in the evaluation of psychological conditions for the use of the weapon.

Police work can be one of the most stressful jobs, and it frequently leads to the development of burnout syndrome (Burke, 1993). The most widely accepted definition of the burnout syndrome is one that describes it as a response to chronic work stress made up of three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Some studies showed that personality characteristics, and positive and negative affectivity explained significant variance in each of the burnout dimensions (Alarcon, Eschleman and Bowling, 2009).

AIM

The goal of this research consists in predicting the burnout syndrome in T2 by using personality and psychopathology measures (T1), and their interaction with adverse life events (T2).

MATERIAL & METHODS

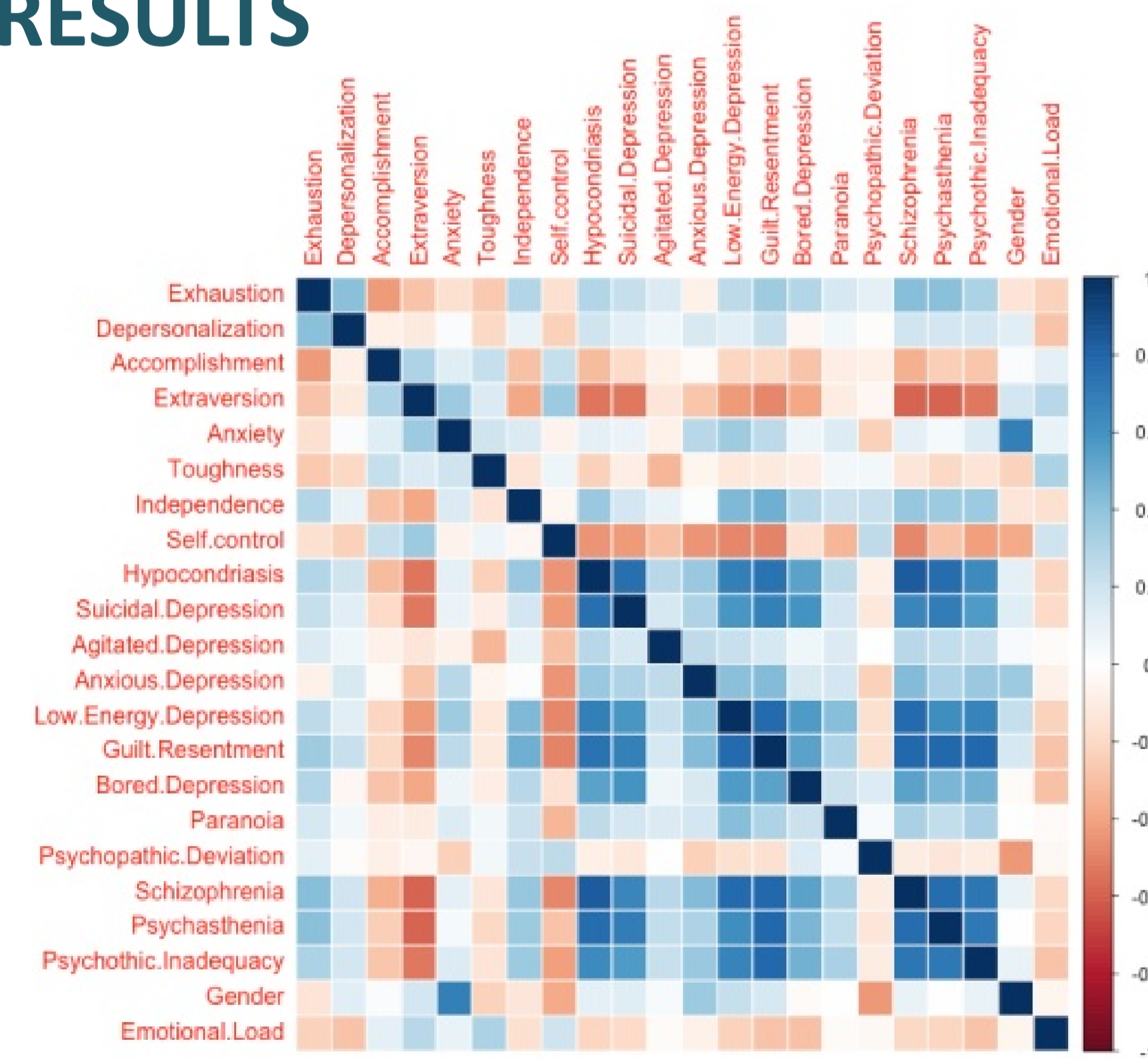See QR code at the end.

RESULTS
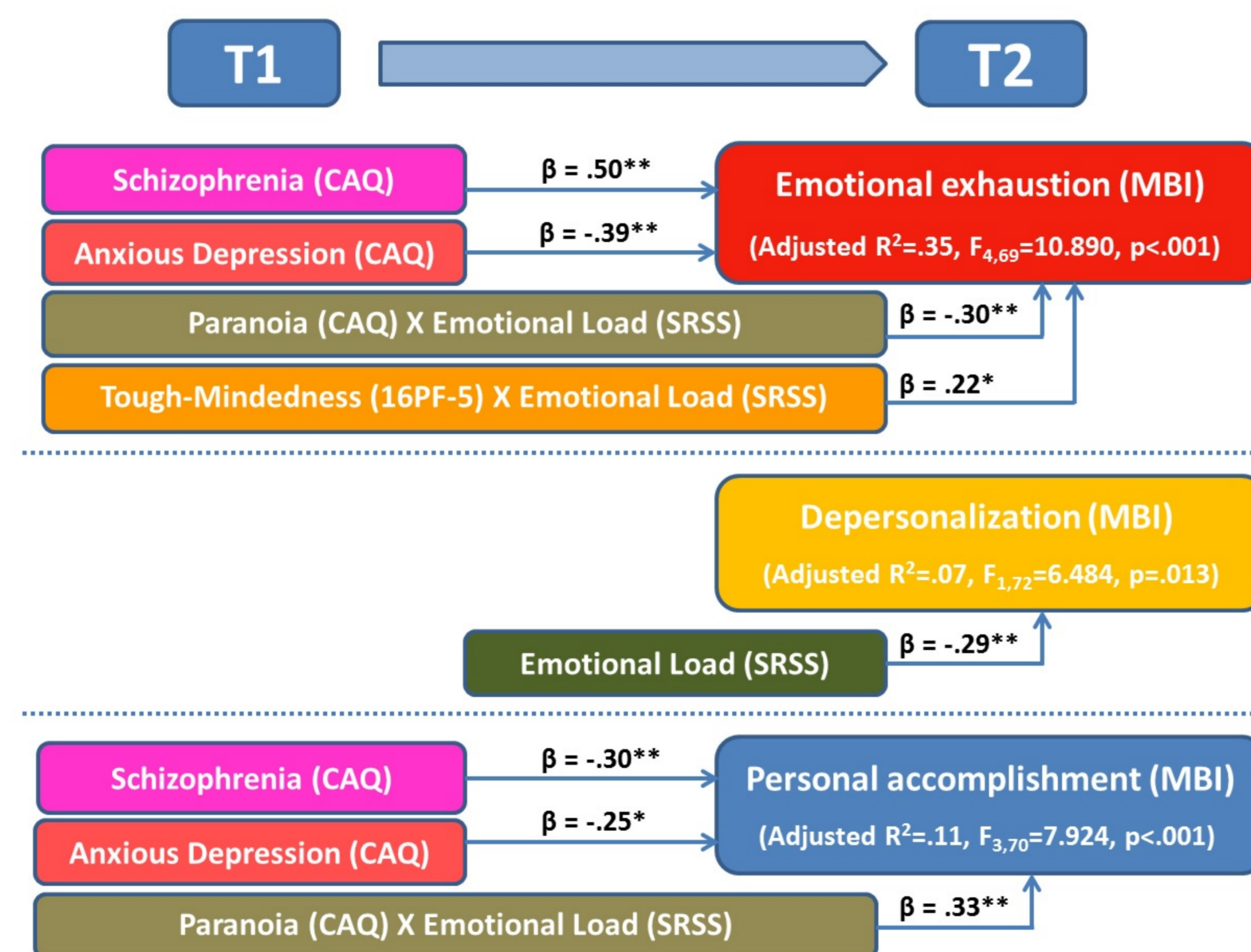

Figure 1. Correlation plot
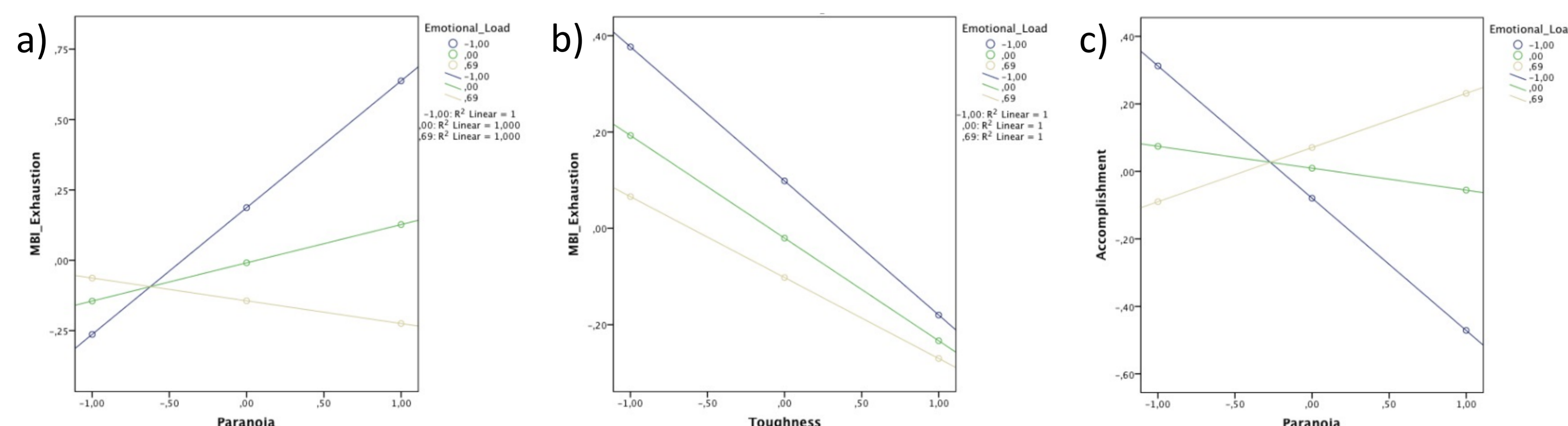

Figure 2. Standardized regression coefficients

Figure 3. Interactions between Emotional load and Paranoia (a, c) and Toughness (b)

CONCLUSIONS

- Schizophrenia and Anxious Depression predict the scores in Emotional exhaustion (a feeling of being emotionally overwhelmed by one's work). In addition, emotional load interacts with Paranoia partially with Tough-Mindedness.

- Emotional load predicts the scores in Depersonalization (an impersonal response toward the others).

- Schizophrenia is also related to Personal accomplishment (a feeling of professional self-competence). Moreover, when the amount of adverse life events is high, it interacts with Paranoia, lowering the scores in this MBI subscale.

- Tough-Mindedness could be considered as a protective factor against burn-out. Indeed, being resolute, practical, or unempathic, could preserve from Emotional Exhaustion whereas being intuitive, abstracted, sentimental and receptive could lead to distress.

- Paranoia could be considered as a vulnerability factor conjoined to experiences of negatively-valenced life events.

- It should be appropriate to include strategies of coping during the training to deal with the aforementioned characteristics before experiencing burnout syndrome.

- It seems reasonable to think that previous assessment of individual characteristics such as personality could help to individualize the training taking into account the vulnerabilities of the candidates.

- These results partially support previous findings of our team on this topic. The current results enrich the knowledge in the field of preventing burnout in police officers.

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