



WORKAHOLISM AND ITS IMPACT ON SOFTWARE ENGINEERS IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated in a sample of 130 software engineers. They were selected through the convenient sampling method and workaholism battery was administered. The present results of the study reveals that, more than 35 years old were high on work involvement, 26 years to 30 years old software engineers were high in work enjoyment and 21 to 25 years old software engineers were high in feeling driven to work. In sum, our analyses provided converging evidence that there is significant impact of workaholism.

Keywords: Workaholism, IT Sector, and Software engineers

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1. INTRODUCTION

The term workaholism was originally coined to describe an individual's deleterious compulsion to work (Oates, 1971) and equated workaholism with alcoholism, and described workaholism as an excessive compulsion to work which resulted in negative outcomes brought about by an addiction to work. In contrast to Oates (1971) original definition, some writers view workaholism positively from an organizational perspective (Korn et al., 1987; Machlowitz, 1980; Sprankle and Ebel, 1987). Few (Killinger, 1991 and Schaeff & Fassel, 1988) were supported the Oates (1971). These writers equate workaholism with other addictions, and depict workaholics as unhappy, obsessive, tragic figures who were not performing their jobs well and were creating difficulties for their co-workers (Naughton, 1987; Oates, 1971; Porter, 1996).

Cherrington (1980) views workaholism as "an irrational commitment to excessive work. Workaholics are unable to take time off or to comfortably divert their interests." Machlowitz (1980) defines workaholics as people "who always devote more time and thoughts to their work than the situation demands ... what sets workaholics apart from other workers is their attitude toward work, not the number of

hours they work." In certain situations, individuals may over-commit their energies and their time to their working lives. This over-commitment to work has been used in the literature to describe the notion of "workaholism" (Seybold and Salomone, 1994).

Spence and Robbins (1992) were the first academics/researchers to define workaholism. They define the workaholic as a person who "is highly work involved, feels compelled or driven to work because of inner pressures, and is low in enjoyment at work." Spence and Robbins (1992) identified three workaholism components based on an extensive review of the literature: work involvement, feeling driven to work and work enjoyment. Workaholics score high on work involvement and feeling driven to work and low on work enjoyment. Snir and Zohar (2000) define workaholism as the individual's steady and considerable allocation of time to work-related activities and thoughts, which does not derive from external necessities.

Killinger (1991), Porter (1996), Scott et al., (1997), Spence and Robbins (1992) were suggested that workaholics are more perfectionist, have greater difficulty in delegating job responsibilities and relying on others and experience more job stress.

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Machlowitz (1980) conducted a qualitative interview and study of more than 100 workaholics and found them to be satisfied with their lives. She prefers to view workaholism as an approach or an attitude towards working, rather than as the amount of time spent at work, since workaholics continue to think about work even when they are not working.

Empirical research has also shown that workaholism is related to numerous life effecting variables such as an individual's level of happiness (Schaufeli, Bakker, Van der Heijden, & Prins, 2009), need for perfection (Burke & Fiksenbaum, 2009), supervisor support and co-worker cohesion (Johnstone & Johnston, 2005), mental and physical health (McMillan & O'Driscoll, 2004), and work-family conflict (Bakker, Demerouti, & Burke, 2009).

It is difficult to ascertain the current state of workaholism and determine whether it has consistent relationships with other variables. Hence, the primary purpose of the present study was to attempt to clarify the current state of the construct of workaholism, specifically clarifying its relationship with emotional intelligence. Clarification of the correlates of workaholism with emotional intelligence will be a step forward in the process of developing a commonly agreed-upon definition for this form of addiction.

The prominent core element of workaholism is substantial behavioral and cognitive investment in work and that to be steady. Aside from the few commonalities, there is lack of clarity remains regarding the consistent and specific relations of workaholism among software engineers.

The goal of this study was to enhance our knowledge regarding workaholism, defining the work involvement, work drive and work enjoyment and demographic (age, length of service, marital status, and occupational level) antecedents.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are framed to study the relationship between workaholism among the software engineers

1. There is a significant difference in workaholism of software engineers on the basis of their age.
2. Software engineers differ significantly in their emotional intelligence and workaholism on the basis of their length of service.
3. There is a significant difference in workaholism of software engineers in accordance to their marital status.
4. There is a significant difference in workaholism of software engineers on the basis of their occupational level.

2.METHOD

The sample comprises of 130 software engineers who working full time and resides in the Bangalore area completed self-report surveys containing items assessing the variables described follows. The surveys contained the twenty five items of the Spence and Robbins (1992) workaholism inventory. The survey items designed to assess work involvement, feeling driven to work and work enjoyment of the individuals. These items featured a seven-point response format ranging from not strong disagree (one

point) to strongly agree (seven points) for the positive items and for negative items strongly agree (one point) to strongly disagree (seven point). The cronbach alpha value of the tool is 0.67 to 0.71 for work involvement, 0.80 for feeling driven to work and 0.88 for work enjoyment.

3.ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

From the Table 1, it is found that 'F' values are significant for the entire workaholism dimensions viz. Work involvement, Work enjoyment and Feeling driven to work, hence the hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that the software engineers differ significantly in entire workaholism dimensions.

More than 35 years old were high on work involvement, 26 years to 30 years old software engineers were high in work enjoyment and 21 to 25 years old software engineers were high in feeling driven to work. More than 35 years old were high on work involvement it was due to their intrinsic motivation (finding joy in your work) and identified motivation (feeling driven to achieve goals) which are closely associated with productivity, engagement, and innovation that makes them to higher in the work involvement.

High in work enjoyment was due to the association of their skill set with the challenge of the job required. The good feelings of the 26 years to 30 years old software engineers makes them to break through the limits of homeostasis— when they do something that stretches them beyond what they were.

The software engineers belong to 21 to 25 years of age was high in the feeling driven to work. This group of engineers were fresh from college or university and new to the corporate step up. This group are young age and new to the corporate life or the work life that leads to the time of confusion and uncertainty, marked by rising peer expectations and a desire for independence. They spent most of their time living under the rule of their parents, which clashes with their needs to develop a personal identity and traits different from their family members. That makes them to feel the pressure of driven.

It is concluded that the software engineers differ significantly in entire workaholism dimensions with respect to their age.

From the Table 2, it is found that 'F' values are significant for the entire workaholism dimensions viz. Work involvement, Work enjoyment and Feeling driven to work, hence the hypothesis is accepted for workaholism.

All the workaholism dimensions were high by the group of who possess 3 to 5 years length of service. This group of individuals expresses the high degree of engagement of work nature. This may be due to their work values reflection of individual motivation, preferred work setting, the way the individual interacted with others, and work style. The work values would determine the expected achievement from the work experience and thus, would also determine the choice and reaction of the individuals to their job situation.

High in work enjoyment are due to the meet out of the expectations what were set for them and consciously breaking the stretches and then try to touch what is thought of as attainable. The software engineers who experienced 3 to 5 years are high in feeling driven to work, that was due to the negative outcomes of their inner pressures in predicting their experiences. The ability to come up with original creative solutions to problems by looking into the situation and cope with new and

unexpected challenges faced by the 3 to 5 years of length of experience in the information technology sector.

It is concluded that the software engineers differ significantly in entire workaholism dimensions with respect to their experience in the information technology sector.

From the Table 3, it is found that ‘t’ values are significant for the two workaholism dimensions viz. Work enjoyment and Feeling driven to work, hence the hypothesis is accepted for workaholsim.

The software engineers who were married are high in work enjoyment and feeling driven to work dimensions of workaholism. The high in work enjoyment and feeling driven to work is one of the finest and understandable outcomes of this study. Work enjoyment is the level of excitement or pleasure that individuals experience with respect to their work. The excitement or pleasure makes them to feel happiness about the work, which is purely influenced by individual characteristics of the software engineers who has the ability to balance the family-work role. This outcome supports the one of the type of workaholism i.e achievement-oriented workaholism those people character will positively related to job and life satisfaction which was identified by Scott., Moore., and Miceli (1997).

Feeling driven to work was the outcome of the non-balance of issues in the work-family role such as financial values, gender roles, career paths, time management and many other factors. This can be avoided by understanding the process of deciding the choices from the availability most often they don’t anticipate it. It is concluded that the software engineers differ significantly in work enjoyment and feeling driven to work dimensions of workaholism based on their marital status.

From the Table 4, it is found that ‘F’ values are significant for the entire workaholism dimensions viz. Work involvement, Work enjoyment and Feeling driven to work, hence the hypothesis is accepted for workaholsim.

Senior software engineers were high in the work enjoyment and feeling driven to work dimensions of workaholism. The software architect was high in the work involvement dimensions of workaholism. Usually workaholics score high on work involvement and on feelings of being driven to work and low on work enjoyment. In this study the senior software engineers were high in work enjoyment and feeling driven to work. The most crucial element of enjoyment is the ability to be completely absorbed by the activity performed by them, which is imperative that those people are satisfied with the job. Whereas high in feeling driven to work dimension of workaholism was due to the factors such as pressure created by the task or people, time boundary to complete task, nature of problem raised, and changes in the working hours and time. These concerns were purely based on the project or task which happens as the routine in the work life.

Work involvement reflects the degree to which a person wants to be engaged in work. Ones’ own internal motivation towards the work and how often they think about work makes them involve into the task. The internal motivation may be stimulated to gain prestige, peer admiration, and supervisors’ approval (Spence & Robbins, 1992). This is evidenced by workaholics’ tendency to pursue work that might result in a pay raise, promotion, or other external signs of worth (Porter, 1996). It is quite nature that next promotion level for the software architect was team leader and they all waiting for the day to come. It is concluded that the software engineers differ significantly in entire workaholism dimensions with respect to their occupational level in the information technology sector.

Table: 1. WORKAHOLISM OF SOFTWARE ENGINEERS BASED ON THEIR AGE

Workaholism Dimensions	AGE				F – value	Posthoc
	1 Mean (S.D)	2 Mean (S.D)	3 Mean (S.D)	4 Mean (S.D)		
Work Involvement	40.50 (4.32)	44.83 (4.40)	45.55 (3.48)	46.00 (4.10)	11.68*	4 vs 3 vs 2 vs 1
Work Enjoyment	49.17 (5.45)	57.51 (3.67)	56.85 (3.58)	56.83 (3.40)	29.03*	2 vs 3 vs 4 vs 1
Work Driven	34.33 (5.18)	39.37 (3.31)	40.00 (3.79)	39.50 (2.75)	14.50*	3 vs 4 vs 2 vs 1

- 1. Less than 25 years
 - 2. 26 to 30 years
 - 3. 31 to 35 years
 - 4. Above 35 years
- *Significant at 0.05 level
^{NS} Not Significant

Table: 2. WORKAHOLISM WITH RESPECT TO THEIR LENGTH OF SERVICE

Workaholism Dimensions	LENGTH OF SERVICE			F – value	Posthoc
	1 Mean (S.D)	2 Mean (S.D)	3 Mean (S.D)		
Work Involvement	42.59 (4.93)	45.78 (3.31)	45.61 (3.94)	8.818*	2 vs 3 vs 1
Work Enjoyment	53.23 (6.18)	57.17 (3.54)	56.78 (3.23)	9.735*	2 vs 3 vs 1
Work Driven	37.03 (5.03)	39.74 (3.98)	39.65 (2.62)	6.190*	2 vs 3 vs 1

- 1. Less than 3 years
 - 2. 3 to 5 years
 - 3. 3 to 5 years
 - 4. Above 5 years
- *Significant at 0.05 level
^{NS} Not significant

Table 3. WORKAHOLISM BASED ON THEIR MARITAL STATUS

Workaholism Dimensions	MARITAL STATUS		t value
	MARRIED Mean (S.D)	UNMARRIED Mean (S.D)	
Work Involvement	45.34 (3.85)	42.57 (4.93)	3.236
Work Enjoyment	56.95 (3.62)	52.63 (6.26)	23.293*
Work Driven	39.81 (3.38)	36.35 (5.20)	15.342*

* Significant at 0.05 level

NS Not significant

Table 4 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORKAHOLISM BASED ON THEIR OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL

Workaholism Dimensions	OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL			F – value	Posthoc
	1	2	3		
Work Involvement	42.77 (4.83)	45.90 (3.38)	46.00 (4.10)	8.092*	3 vs 2 vs 1
Work Enjoyment	53.64 (6.14)	56.96 (3.54)	56.83 (3.40)	6.943*	2 vs 3 vs 1
Work Driven	37.11 (4.93)	39.98 (3.83)	39.80 (2.75)	6.611*	2 vs 3 vs 1

1. Software engineer

2. Senior Software engineer

Software Architect

* Significant at 0.05 level

NS Not significant

4. CONCLUSION

The Workaholism Battery (WorkBat) and emotional intelligence are the two most prominent measures in the behavioural research. The relationships between the components of the WorkBAT (drive, work involvement and work enjoyment) and the emotional intelligence criteria variables were hypothesised; this study also includes the personal demographic and work situation characteristics.

In conclusion, despite one somewhat unexpected finding, it seems that workaholism show a unique pattern of relationships with variables representing age, length of service, marital status, and occupational level in the information technology sector.

Therefore, future research should examine employees of a particular project or a company this would increase our understanding. The study of workaholism is still in its beginning stage and will require significant collaboration amongst researchers and modifications of current definitions in order to achieve a coherent description of the construct.

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