

**Understanding Workaholism: The Effects of Work Centrality and Psychological
Overwork Climate on Workaholism**

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Declaration of Authorship

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Abstract

This study examines the association of workaholism and its dimensions (i.e., behavioral dimension, motivational dimension, cognitive dimension, emotional dimension) with work centrality and psychological overwork climate (i.e., overwork endorsement, lacking overwork rewards). Understanding the relationships among these constructs will serve in creating targeted interventions to contain workaholism and its potential negative effects on employees. Relationships were tested with a quantitative research strategy, through the use of an online questionnaire, in a sample of 144 employees working in Cyprus. The results indicate that work centrality and overwork endorsement are positively related to workaholism and all its dimensions. Further, results show that lacking overwork rewards is negatively related to workaholism and its cognitive and emotional dimensions. Nonetheless, according to the findings, lacking overwork rewards is unrelated to the behavioral and motivational dimensions of workaholism. All in all, the evidence from this study suggests that both personal and contextual factors influence workaholism. Specifically, employees who have high work centrality or work in an organization that endorses and rewards overwork are more likely to be or become workaholics. These findings represent the first step towards closing the gap that exists in the literature regarding the association of workaholism and its dimensions with work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards, which, in turn, paves the way for effective organizational interventions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, researchers have shown an increased interest in workaholism (Clark et al., 2016). Although the phrase “I am a workaholic” is frequently used with honor in our everyday lives to illustrate our diligence and status, research suggests that workaholics’ overinvolvement with work may prove problematic (Lavine, 2014; Stillman, 2014). Of particular concern is the influence of overwork on the health and well-being of employees (Mazzetti et al., 2014). For instance, dramatic harmful effects of overwork such as deaths and suicides, expressed through the terms *karoshi* and *karo-jisatsu* (respectively), have been reported in Japan (Ito, 2018; Mazzetti et al., 2014), a country known for the high value that is attributed to work by its people (Misumi & Yamori, 1991). Further, with Big 4 companies being known for their long hours cultures, the suicide of an employee of EY in Australia has recently brought to the fore a discussion about the possibly detrimental effects of organizational culture (Wang, 2022). While excessive work is a constituting element of workaholism (see for example, Clark et al., 2016, 2020; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Ng et al., 2007; Oates, 1971; Porter, 1996; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Harpaz, 2012; Spence & Robbins, 1992), being a workaholic is more complex than merely working long hours (see for example, Clark et al., 2020; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Spence & Robbins, 1992; ten Brummelhuis & Rothbard, 2018) and involves significantly greater health and well-being risks (ten Brummelhuis & Rothbard, 2018). Consequently, identifying the factors that can lead to workaholism is crucial in order to be able to prevent such negative consequences through targeted interventions.

Looking at these factors, existing research identifies work centrality as one of the personal antecedents, and psychological overwork climate as one of the contextual antecedents of workaholism (Clark et al., 2016; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2016, 2020; Schaufeli, 2016; Snir & Harpaz, 2006, 2012). Nonetheless, a systematic understanding of how

work centrality and psychological overwork climate contribute to workaholism is still lacking. Existing research on those possible antecedents of workaholism is limited. The few studies that exist erroneously conceptualize and measure workaholism as an addiction. Additionally, very little is currently known about how work centrality and psychological overwork climate influence each aspect of workaholism (i.e., the behavioral dimension of workaholism, the motivational dimension of workaholism, the cognitive dimension of workaholism, and the emotional dimension of workaholism). Thus, considering the health and well-being implications of overwork and workaholism, the present study aims to evaluate the effects of work centrality and psychological overwork climate's dimensions (i.e., overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards) on employees' workaholism and explore the relationships among these constructs and the dimensions of workaholism.

In order to provide answers to the research questions of the study, a literature review was conducted on workaholism, work centrality and psychological overwork climate, as well as on the relationships among them. Data for this study were collected using an online questionnaire on a sample of employees working in Cyprus.

This is the first study to examine the association of workaholism, as a term that is separated from work addiction, with work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards. Moreover, this is the first study to examine the association of all the dimensions of workaholism with work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards.

The present thesis is organized in the following way. Chapter 2 lays out a literature review on workaholism, its antecedents and outcomes, as well as on the relationships among the studied variables. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the study and chapter 4 presents the results of the questionnaire. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study in relation to the literature and, finally, chapter 6 discusses conclusions and implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to define the concept of workaholism, explore its antecedents and outcomes, and examine its relationship with work centrality and psychological overwork climate, as presented in the literature. The chapter begins with the definition of workaholism based on the main themes of its conceptualization in the literature. It then proceeds with a distinction of workaholism from related constructs, the main characteristics of workaholism, and a description of its personal and contextual antecedents. During the description of the personal and contextual antecedents of workaholism, the chapter examines the definitions of work centrality, as a personal antecedent of workaholism, and of psychological overwork climate, as a contextual antecedent of workaholism. It also explores the relationship between workaholism and work centrality as well as the relationship between workaholism and psychological overwork climate. Moving on, the outcomes of workaholism are discussed, in terms of individual outcomes, family/social outcomes, and work-related outcomes.

Workaholism

The term workaholism was firstly used by Oates (1971, p. 1), who coined this term after “alcoholism”, to describe an “addiction to work, the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly”. Although workaholism, as a term, has been around since 1971, there is “a lack of consensus” regarding its conceptualization, definition and measurement in the literature (Andreassen, 2014, p. 3; Clark et al., 2016, p. 1836, 2020), with workaholism being mainly conceptualized, defined and measured as an addiction (see for example, Andreassen, 2014; Andreassen et al., 2012, 2018; Aziz et al., 2013; Kim, 2019; Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007; Oates, 1971; Porter, 1996; Robinson, 1999, 2014; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Spence & Robbins, 1992). For instance, Porter (1996), in her work, presented an analogy between the work behaviors of workaholics and alcoholics.

Following more recent studies (Clark et al., 2020; Griffiths et al., 2018, p. 848; Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021, p. 353), this study does not conceptualize workaholism as an addiction, but instead as “a more generic term”. Specifically, for the purpose of this thesis, workaholism is defined as “a multidimensional construct” that includes: excessive working, over what is required and anticipated; an inner compulsion or pressure to work; thoughts about work that are persistent and uncontrollable; and negative emotions when one is not working or is impeded from working. This definition is more relevant and recent and considers both the main concepts and definitions proposed in the literature, areas of consensus, disagreements, and distinctions of workaholism from related constructs (Clark et al., 2020, p. 1286).

According to Clark et al. (2020), the main constructs that conceptually overlap with workaholism are work addiction and work engagement. It is therefore useful to discuss these constructs and to clarify how they differ from workaholism.

Workaholism was equated with work addiction in the majority of studies (Andreassen, 2014; Andreassen et al., 2012) and some scholars suggest that work addiction and workaholism are synonymous (Andreassen et al., 2018), as they both include an inner pressure to work and present similarities in terms of the behavior, cognition, and affect in regards to work (Clark et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2007). However, work addiction can be distinguished from workaholism (Griffiths et al., 2018), due to the clinical criteria, clinically-centered language and measurement of work addiction (Clark et al., 2020; Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021). While work addiction is a psychological construct, workaholism is “a more generic term” (Clark et al., 2020; Griffiths et al., 2018, p. 848; Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021, p. 353).

As for work engagement, relationships have been found between the absorption dimension of work engagement with workaholism (Mazzetti et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2016; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010), and some scholars argue that both engagement and workaholism represent a category of heavy work investment

(Mazzetti et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2016; van Beek et al., 2014). Nonetheless, workaholism is a different construct from work engagement (Clark et al., 2020; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009; van Beek et al., 2011).

To begin with, the motivation behind workaholism and work engagement is different (Clark et al., 2020; Mazzetti et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010; van Beek et al., 2011, 2012). Whereas workaholism is mainly related to controlled motivation (van Beek et al., 2011, 2012) and workaholics' inner drive and compulsion to work (Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010), work engagement is related to autonomous motivation, mainly intrinsic motivation (i.e., working because one finds his/her work pleasurable and interesting) (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010; van Beek et al., 2011, 2012).

Additionally, there is a differentiation in the emotions experienced when not working (Clark et al., 2020). Workaholics tend to have unpleasant emotions when they are not working (Clark et al., 2014, 2020; Graves et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; van Beek et al., 2014), while work-engaged employees have positive emotions when they are not working (Clark et al., 2014; Culbertson et al., 2012). Similarly, there is a distinction in the presence of thoughts about work, while one is not working, between workaholics and engaged employees (Clark et al., 2020). Though workaholism is associated with thinking about work when not working (Clark et al., 2016, 2020; de Bloom et al., 2014; McMillan & O' Driscoll, 2006; Mudrack & Naughton, 2001; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Zohar, 2008), similar patterns are not observed in work-engaged employees (Sonnentag et al., 2008).

Finally, the outcomes of workaholism and engagement tend to be reverse (Clark et al., 2020). While workaholism is usually linked to negative consequences for individuals and organizations, work engagement is linked to positive outcomes for both individuals and organizations (Clark et al., 2016, 2020; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010; van Beek et al., 2011, 2012).

Main Characteristics of Workaholics

The main characteristics of workaholics outlined in the literature that are in line with the definition of workaholism outlined in this thesis are their excessive work, inner compulsion, thoughts about work, and emotions when not working. These characteristics, according to Clark et al. (2020), form the four dimensions of workaholism, namely the behavioral dimension, the motivational dimension, the cognitive dimension, and the emotional dimension, respectively. The characteristics of workaholics are discussed below.

Working excessively. Working long hours or allocating a significant amount of time to work is frequently included in the definitions of workaholism (Clark et al., 2016, 2020; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Ng et al., 2007; Oates, 1971; Porter, 1996; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Harpaz, 2004, 2006, 2012; Snir & Zohar, 2008; Spence & Robbins, 1992). For example, Mosier (1983, cited in Spence & Robbins, 1992) defined workaholism as working more than 50 hours a week.

However, McMillan et al. (2002) highlighted that merely denoting workaholism through work hours may be misrepresentative. Machlowitz (1980) argued that workaholics' intensity of involvement with work is a much more identifying feature of workaholism than the total time they spent working, with Spence and Robbins (1992) explicitly agreeing with that view in their work. Thus, many authors add that workaholics also allocate a significant amount of effort and energy to their work, arguing that they work excessively with regard to both time and effort or intensity put into work (Andreassen et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2020;

Machlowitz, 1980; McMillan & O' Driscoll, 2006; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Snir & Harpaz, 2012; Snir & Zohar, 2008), exhibiting high work involvement (Clark et al., 2016; Porter, 1996; Spence & Robbins, 1992).

In agreement with the view that long work hours are insufficient for the definition and measurement of workaholism, Mudrack and Naughton (2001) proposed that to evaluate workaholics' patterns of behavior, it is necessary to consider their tendencies to carry out work that is not required. In line with this, scholars suggest that workaholics work over what is logically anticipated from the requirements of their jobs (Clark et al., 2016, 2020; Machlowitz, 1980; Porter, 1996; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Scott et al., 1997), with some authors presenting similarities between workaholism and organizational citizenship behavior (Mudrack & Naughton, 2001; Scott et al., 1997).

Moreover, it is suggested that workaholics' excessive work is manifested by an exaggerated invasion of work into personal life. Workaholics allow work to entangle itself with life outside of work, as they either permit work to intrude into or replace their personal and family life (Ng et al., 2007). For instance, Porter (1996, p. 71) asserted that workaholism includes an "excessive involvement with work evidenced by neglect in other areas of life". Similarly, other scholars argue that spending an abundant amount of time on work activities at the expense of non-work-related activities, is a primary feature of workaholism (Aziz et al., 2013; Bonebright et al., 2000; McMillan & O' Driscoll, 2006; Scott et al., 1997). At the same time, it is suggested that workaholics prefer work over leisure (Machlowitz, 1978; Snir & Zohar, 2008), and may work while eating, or being on holiday (Machlowitz, 1980). In fact, workaholics may also choose hobbies associated with their work and leisure activities that supplement or progress their work, increasing the indistinctness between the work and personal life domains (Ng et al., 2007).

It should be noted that, although working long hours may signify workaholic behaviors, the motivation for that is not necessarily attributed to workaholism. Often, long working hours are associated with other factors, such as, financial reasons, desire for career advancement, marital problems or company requirements (Ng et al., 2007; Porter, 1996; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Snir & Zohar, 2008). In contrast, workaholics work more than what their economic needs, organization or jobs require (Porter, 1996; Scott et al., 1997), and irrespective of financial rewards, organizational culture or other external factors and necessities (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Snir & Harpaz, 2004, 2006). This happens because they have an internal drive that motivates them to work excessively (Bonebright et al., 2000; Clark et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Spence & Robbins, 1992), even when they know that excessive working is not required (Ng et al., 2007).

Inner compulsion. According to Schaufeli, Taris, and Bakker (2008, p. 221), “it takes two to dance the workaholism tango”, “the combination of working excessively hard and working compulsively”. The study by Schaufeli, Taris, and van Rhenen (2008) also comes to a similar conclusion, suggesting that the combination of both excessive work and a drive is essential. Consequently, a key common characteristic of workaholism is motivation by an internal drive, urge, pressure, compulsion, push to work, or feeling that the individual ought to be working (Aziz et al., 2013; Clark et al., 2016, 2020; McMillan & O’ Driscoll, 2006; Oates, 1971; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Spence & Robbins, 1992; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010; van Beek et al., 2012), that workaholics cannot resist, restrain or control (Andreassen et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2020; Oates, 1971; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008). This inner drive incorporates internal or self-imposed demands, instead of external demands (Clark et al., 2020; Oates, 1971;

Porter, 1996; Robinson, 2014; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Snir & Harpaz, 2012; Spence & Robbins, 1992).

The inner compulsion to work is a manifestation of introjected regulation (Clark et al., 2020; Graves et al., 2012). Introjected regulation is a specific type of controlled extrinsic motivation, that takes place when external contingencies have been partly internalized by the individual, however, the behavior is mainly controlled and not totally experienced as the individual's own (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to the self-determination theory of Ryan and Deci (2000), humans are motivated to participate in goal-oriented behavior in order to satisfy basic psychological needs (i.e., competence, autonomy, and relatedness). Self-determination theory suggests a differentiation between autonomous and controlled motivation, describing the degree that behaviors are autonomous or controlled. Autonomous motivation includes participating in a behavior with volition, choice and willingness (i.e., intrinsic motivation and well-internalized extrinsic motivation), while, in contrast, controlled motivation includes feeling a pressure to participate in the behavior (i.e., external regulation and introjected regulation) (Deci et al., 2017; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Generally, the more controlled the motivation of a person is, the less expected it is that his/her basic psychological needs are to be fulfilled (Clark et al., 2020; Gillet et al., 2017).

As workaholics are “pushed” to work via partly internalized reasons, their behavior is not completely motivated by their own free will. Rather, they are motivated by ego involvement as well as contingent self-esteem, which pressure them to work with the purpose of reinforcing their egos and feeling worthy, respectively (Clark et al., 2020; Deci et al., 2017; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Accordingly, research has indicated that workaholism is positively related to introjected regulation, but negatively related or not related to intrinsic motivation (van Beek et al., 2011, 2012, 2014).

Thoughts about work. Workaholics persistently and uncontrollably think about work, an aspect that several authors include in their definitions of workaholism (Clark et al., 2020, p. 1286). Workaholics' drive (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008) prompts them to have a cognitive preoccupation with work, perseveringly thinking about work, being extremely concerned about it, or being obsessed with it, even when they are not working (Clark et al., 2016, 2020; de Bloom et al., 2014; McMillan & O' Driscoll, 2006; Mudrack & Naughton, 2001; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Zohar, 2008).

Emotions when not working. Spence and Robbins (1992) categorized workers into six profiles: workaholics, enthusiastic workaholics, work enthusiasts, disenchanted workers, relaxed workers, and unengaged workers. They gave the most popular definition of workaholism by proposing the "workaholic triad", namely the "degree of work involvement, drivenness [*sic*], and enjoyment of work", to define real workaholics as "highly work involved", feeling "compelled or driven to work because of inner pressures", and being "low in enjoyment of work" (Spence & Robbins, 1992, p. 162). Individuals that have high work involvement, work enjoyment, and inner drive to work were categorized as enthusiastic workaholics (Spence & Robbins, 1992). As two types of workaholics were proposed, with one of the two types not enjoying their work, and one enjoying their work, Schaufeli, Shimazu et al. (2009) argue that work enjoyment may be present or not, and, thus, it is not a constituting feature of workaholism.

On the other hand, Snir and Zohar (2008) showed that workaholics experience greater positive affect during work than during leisure activities, and a meta-analytic study by Clark et al. (2016) found workaholism to be positively correlated with work enjoyment. Workaholics' passion for working gives them the momentum to devote an excessive amount of time and effort to their work and maintain it despite impediments (Ng et al., 2007). For instance, it is suggested that workaholics gain enjoyment and fulfillment from working (Bonebright et al.,

2000; McMillan & O' Driscoll, 2006) and pursue satisfaction and enthusiastic involvement from working (Cantarow, 1979, cited in Ng et al., 2007). Furthermore, workaholics attribute their hard work to the love they have for work, using words such as “fun” when characterizing their experiences of work (Kiechel & Kuhn, 1989; Machlowitz, 1980). Consequently, Ng et al. (2007, pp. 114–115, italics in original) proposed that workaholics frequently enjoy the act of working and included enjoyment of working in their definition of workaholism. Yet, they made a distinction between enjoyment of “*working*” and enjoyment of “the nature of the *work* itself” and suggested that “enjoyment of *working*” is a more suitable element for workaholism than the “enjoyment of *work*” proposed by Spence and Robbins (1992).

However, interestingly, Machlowitz (1978) stated that, possibly, it is not the satisfaction derived from working that drives workaholism, but the suffering of not working. Later on, Schaufeli, Taris, and Bakker (2008) argued that workaholics are being driven to work in order to avoid negative emotions associated with not working. Accordingly, van Beek et al. (2014) suggest that workaholics are primarily sensitive to the absence or existence of undesirable results, such as negative emotions felt when not working, and specifically, van Beek et al. (2011, 2012) argue that workaholics work hard because not working induces bad feelings, for example, unworthiness. Consequently, feeling negative emotions, such as anxiety, guilt, frustration, anger, and disappointment, when not working, is a common element of workaholism (Clark et al., 2014, 2020; Graves et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008). These negative emotions experienced by workaholics are often associated with their inner drive (Clark et al., 2020).

Antecedents of Workaholism

Having established the meaning of the term workaholism and the main characteristics of workaholics, it is now possible to explore the antecedents of workaholism. The antecedents of workaholism presented in the literature can be discussed as personal and contextual

antecedents (Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021). A description and examples of each category of antecedents are presented below.

Personal Antecedents

Personal factors have been suggested to be related to the development of workaholism (Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021). Therefore, individuals may become workaholics due to individual differences, such as demographic characteristics, beliefs, fears, values, attitudes, and personality/dispositional traits.

To begin with, demographic characteristics may influence the development of workaholism. Harpaz and Snir (2003) and Snir and Harpaz (2006) suggested that males are more prone to workaholism than females, with marital status also being significantly related to workaholism, though with opposite relationships for males and females. On the other hand, Andreassen et al. (2014, 2016), and Clark et al. (2016), found no relationships between workaholism and the demographic characteristics of gender and marital status. Clark et al. (2016) also found no relationships between workaholism and parental status, number of children, age, and educational level in their meta-analytic study, suggesting that what drives workaholics is their inner compulsion to work, rather than any family or economic needs. Regarding age and childcare responsibilities, mixed and contradictory results were found (Andreassen et al., 2014, 2016). Andreassen et al. (2014), although reported no relationships between workaholism and childcare responsibilities, found workaholism to be negatively related to age. In contrast, Andreassen et al. (2016), in a longitudinal study, found no relationship between workaholism and age, and reported a negative association between workaholism and the presence of children at home.

Workaholism has also been associated with beliefs and fears (Burke, 2000b; Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021), for instance, it is positively associated with a fear of failure (Mazzetti et al., 2020), and may be explained by a belief that hard work indicates success

(Andreassen, 2014). Additionally, workaholism has been linked to values; people who value achievement and self-direction (Ng et al., 2007) and adhere to intrinsic work values (Liang & Chu, 2009) may be more prone to workaholism. Moreover, workaholism has been related to attitudinal antecedents (Liang & Chu, 2009; Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021), such as low family centrality (Snir & Harpaz, 2004), high work centrality (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Snir & Harpaz, 2006), extrinsic career goals (Spurk et al., 2016), high economic orientation (Harpaz & Snir, 2003), high occupational satisfaction (Snir & Harpaz, 2004), and high career commitment (Spurk et al., 2016).

Furthermore, existing research recognizes the critical role played by personality or dispositional traits in the development of workaholism (Clark et al., 2010, 2016; Liang & Chu, 2009; Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2020; McMillan et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, 2016; Snir & Harpaz, 2012). For instance, it is shown that self-esteem is negatively associated with workaholism (Andreassen, 2014; Aziz et al., 2018; Ng et al., 2007) and internal drive (Graves et al., 2012), while, especially when the work environment is conducive to workaholism (Mazzetti et al., 2014), generalized or work self-efficacy is positively related to important elements of workaholism (Burke et al., 2006; del Líbano et al., 2012). However, a meta-analytic study by Clark et al., (2016) found no relationship between workaholism and self-efficacy or self-esteem and reported mixed results within other studies. At the same time, higher self-efficacy in work activities compared to non-work activities may be an antecedent of workaholism (Andreassen, 2014; Ng et al., 2007). Moreover, personality traits related to achievement (Ng et al., 2007), such as Type A personality (Clark et al., 2016; Ng et al., 2007; Scott et al., 1997), obsessive-compulsive personality (Mazzetti et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2007), and need for achievement (Ng et al., 2007), have been found to be positively associated with workaholism. Furthermore, it has been consistently shown that perfectionism is positively related to workaholism (Clark et al., 2010, 2016, 2020; Falco et al., 2017; Girardi et al., 2018;

Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2020; Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021; Scott et al., 1997; Spence & Robbins, 1992; Stoeber et al., 2013; Taris, van Beek, et al., 2010). Positive relationships were also found between workaholism and negative affect (Clark et al., 2010, 2016, 2020). Out of the Big Five personality factors, namely openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, what seems consistent throughout most of the studies is the positive relationship between workaholism and neuroticism (Andreassen, 2014; Andreassen et al., 2016; Clark et al., 2010; Schaufeli, 2016), with a few studies also reporting positive relationships between workaholism and extraversion (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli, 2016). Nevertheless, personality traits such as negative affect, positive affect, and perfectionism were found to be associated with workaholism over and above the Big Five personality dimensions (Clark et al., 2010). Although many personal antecedents of workaholism are proposed in the literature, this study focuses on work centrality as a personal antecedent of workaholism.

Work Centrality. All the studies that examined the relationship between workaholism and work centrality found that workaholism is associated with work centrality. Nonetheless, only a few studies examined this relationship, and those who did, mostly defined workaholism using its behavioral dimension.

Work is among individuals' most fundamental and significant activities in modern society (Harpaz & Snir, 2003). As a result of work's importance in people's lives, work centrality was introduced by Dubin (1956) and Dubin et al. (1975, p. 411) with the term central life interest in work, defined as individuals' "expressed preference for carrying out their activities" in the institution of work. In a later study, Paullay et al. (1994, p. 225), through an effort to reduce ambiguity in regard to the concept of work centrality, defined work centrality "as the beliefs that individuals have regarding the degree of importance that work plays in their lives". It is proposed that work centrality is influenced by the socialization of a person, through a learning process from family, friends, and culture, as well as by the person's own experiences.

However, due to the role of socialization in the development of work centrality, work centrality is believed to be relatively stable, without sizable variations “in response to conditions in the immediate work environment”. Although sometimes the term work centrality is used as an equivalent of the term job involvement, it has been suggested that they present two different constructs. Specifically, work centrality illustrates the level of significance of work in an individual’s life, generally, while job involvement shows the level of cognitive preoccupation, engagement, and concern with an individual’s current job (Paullay et al., 1994).

Relationship between Workaholism and Work Centrality. All the studies that examined the relationship between workaholism and work centrality found a positive relation between the two. For instance, Harpaz and Snir (2003) found workaholism, measured as the total number of hours worked in a week, to be positively associated with work centrality. Snir and Harpaz (2006) also came to the same results, regardless of the nationality of employees. Later on, Snir and Harpaz (2012, p. 236) proposed work centrality as an “internal, controllable, and stable” predictor of heavy work investment types, including workaholism. Finally, Clark et al. (2016) found work centrality, defined as the significance of work to an individual’s identity, to be positively related to workaholism, conceptualized as incorporating the behavioral, motivational, and cognitive dimensions of workaholism.

Although not necessarily exclusively attributed to workaholism, it is suggested that work centrality is one of the most important predictors of long work hours (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Individuals who consider their work highly significant have a stronger career identity (London, 1983; Noe et al., 1990), which prompts them to place more effort into their work (Lobel & St. Clair, 1992). Additionally, work centrality is found to be positively related to introjected regulation (Grabowski et al., 2021), which resembles the motivational dimension of workaholism (Clark et al., 2020). Moreover, earlier studies of work centrality measured work centrality with a scale that included the question “to what extent do matters connected

with your work occupy your thoughts outside working hours” (Ball & Stenlund, 1990; Poppleton & Riseborough, 1990, p. 108), showing a link between thoughts about work outside work hours – which resembles the cognitive dimension of workaholism (Clark et al., 2020) – and work centrality. Further, Johns (2008) suggested that employees with low work centrality regard absence from work as more legitimate. Drawing from this, we may expect implications on the emotions individuals experience. At the same time, Snir and Harpaz (2004) found that individuals lower in workaholism, defined as those who work fewer hours in a week, are high in family centrality. However, no difference was observed between workaholism of people who have high and low leisure centrality.

Harpaz and Snir (2003) and Snir and Harpaz (2006) noted that work centrality may cause excessive working and workaholism, but it is also possible for some employees, due to their excessive working and workaholism, to infer that they have high work centrality, following the self-perception theory of Bem (1972, p. 2). According to this theory, people learn about their attitudes, emotions, and internal states, partly, through drawing conclusions from observation of their own behavior and situations under which this behavior happens.

Overall, the literature examining the association between work centrality and workaholism consistently shows a positive relationship between the two. However, the relationships between work centrality and the dimensions of workaholism have not been studied in the literature and merit investigation. Based on the above, the following hypothesis is put forth regarding the relationship between work centrality and workaholism:

Hypothesis 1: Work centrality is positively associated with workaholism and with all its dimensions, i.e., behavioral dimension, motivational dimension, cognitive dimension, emotional dimension.

Contextual Antecedents

Apart from personal factors, contextual/situational factors have been also proposed as antecedents of workaholism (Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021), leading to the suggestion that the environment and specific situations may play an important role in workaholism's development (Andreassen, 2014; Balducci et al., 2018; Liang & Chu, 2009; McMillan et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2007). Contextual factors include factors related to the family and the workplace (Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021). Interestingly, a study by Liang and Chu (2009) argued that these contextual factors influence the association between personality traits and workaholism. Nonetheless, Schaufeli (2016) suggested that, instead of interacting, contextual and personality antecedents of workaholism have an independent influence.

As for family factors, it has been suggested that dysfunctional family or childhood family experiences may lead to workaholism (Ng et al., 2007). Additionally, it is proposed that vicarious learning by observation of workaholism at home (i.e., role models in the family that work excessively) encourages workaholism (Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007). Moreover, it is suggested that expression of over-responsibility for one's family, may lead to workaholism (Andreassen, 2014; McMillan et al., 2003; Robinson, 2014).

Several factors related to the workplace were examined in the literature. For example, it was found that managers (Clark et al., 2016; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Taris et al., 2012), professionals (Harpaz & Snir, 2003), private sector employees (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Snir & Harpaz, 2006), and self-employed workers (Snir & Harpaz, 2004) are more likely to be workaholics. Additionally, Clark et al. (2016) found no relationships between tenure and workaholism.

Furthermore, workaholism is found to be positively related to job demands (Balducci et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2016; Mazzetti et al., 2020; Molino et al., 2016; Morkevičiūtė et al., 2021; Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Torp et al., 2018),

such as work role overload, work role conflict (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009; Torp et al., 2018), workload (Girardi et al., 2018; Molino et al., 2016), overtime work (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Taris et al., 2005), overwork (Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008), customer-related stressors (Molino et al., 2016), cognitive, emotional (Molino et al., 2016; Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009), and organizational demands (Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009). On the other hand, Clark et al. (2016) found a significant negative association between work role ambiguity and workaholism. However, in general, the positive relationship between job demands and workaholism is a consistent result throughout studies (Morkevičiūtė & Endriulaitienė, 2021). Specifically, Balducci et al. (2018) showed that job demands influence the degree of workaholism, and argued that a worker's continual experience of high job demands can contribute to the development of workaholism.

Job resources or elements of job resources were found to be either negatively related to workaholism (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009; Spurk et al., 2016), to buffer the positive association of job demands with workaholism (Molino et al., 2016), to be marginally related to workaholism (Torp et al., 2018), or to be positively related with workaholism (Clark et al., 2016). Yet, motivated by their inner compulsion, workaholics may be less probable to rely on job resources than nonworkaholics (Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009).

Vicarious learning through the observation of the behaviors of others at work is also important for the development of workaholism in the workplace. Specifically, the observation of the workaholic behaviors of role models at work, such as mentors, supervisors, and managers, who might work excessively and allow work to interfere with their non-work activities, may encourage the development of workaholism (Holland, 2008; Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007). This holds also true for the workaholic behaviors of peers that result in

increased peer competition, which, in turn, positively relates to workaholism (Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007).

Studies over the past two decades have provided important information on the behavioral reinforcements of workaholism in the workplace (Liang & Chu, 2009; Mazzetti et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2007). It is, thus, suggested that “the initiation of workaholism is a result of positive reinforcement of workaholic behaviors or the lack of punishment of such behaviors”, such as “tangible or intangible rewards for excessive work”, ““winner-takes-all’ reward systems”, and “organizational emphasis on work input rather than work output” (Ng et al., 2007, pp. 125–126).

Moreover, according to Holland (2008), and Ng et al. (2007), some organizational cultures, encourage and preserve workaholism to some degree. For instance, the characteristics of a masculine organizational culture (Newman & Nollen, 1996) are in harmony with workaholism (Scott et al., 1997), and, consequently, in masculine organizational cultures, workaholism might be exceptionally predominant, whereas, in feminine organizational cultures, workaholism would be less encouraged or accepted (Ng et al., 2007). For example, “active encouragement of work prior to family” from the organization is associated with higher workaholism (Liang & Chu, 2009, p. 654). At the same time, it is possible that the organizational culture influences the associations of workaholism with its work-related outcomes (Ng et al., 2007). The organizational climate was also found to be related to workaholism, with a competitive organizational climate (Keller et al., 2016) and an overwork climate (Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2016, 2020; Schaufeli, 2016) being positively related to workaholism. Although multiple contextual factors may cause workaholism, this study focuses on psychological overwork climate as a contextual antecedent of workaholism.

Psychological Overwork Climate. Psychological overwork climate has been found to be associated with workaholism (Mazzetti et al., 2016, 2020; Schaufeli, 2016). However,

although important articles stress the importance of organizational culture to the development of workaholism (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Ng et al., 2007; Scott et al., 1997), limited studies examined the relationship between workaholism and psychological overwork climate, with no studies, to my knowledge, examining it using a measure of workaholism that treats workaholism as a distinct concept from work addiction.

When “working hours begin to entail escalating risks or harms beyond those associated with normal, standard, agreed-upon hours”, this refers to overwork. Overtime is an element of overwork (Golden & Altman, 2008, p. 65).

Psychological climate refers to human resources’ “psychologically meaningful representations of proximal organizational structures, processes, and events” (Rousseau, 1988, cited in Mazzetti et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2003, p. 390); the way workers perceive their work environment, the expectations put on them, and the repercussions of specific behaviors (James et al., 2008; Mazzetti et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2003). The psychological climate is “perceptive and descriptive” (Mazzetti et al., 2016, p. 881); climate perceptions are quite stable in the course of time and allow employees to interpret what happens in their organization (Rousseau, 1988, cited in Mazzetti et al., 2016), while the leaders of an organization play a significant role in the creation of climate perceptions (Ostroff et al., 2003).

Organizational climate is closely related to organizational culture, although, it is a more “‘immediate’ and subjective” construct than organizational culture, that presents distinct characteristics “in the psychological life of the organization” (Mazzetti et al., 2014, p. 234; Schneider, 2000; Schneider et al., 2013). At the same time, psychological climate (e.g., psychological overwork climate) is a distinct concept from organizational climate (e.g., organizational overwork climate). Psychological climate refers to the individual level of individuals’ perceptions and attributed meaning to their work environment, while organizational climate refers to shared beliefs among workers that represent an accumulation

of the psychological climate perceptions at the individual level (Dickson et al., 2006; James et al., 2008; James & Jones, 1974; Mazzetti et al., 2016). Scholars have suggested that the term climate needs to incorporate a particular reference term, such as a climate for safety, or customer service (Schneider, 2000; Schneider & Reichers, 1983).

Psychological overwork climate was introduced by Mazzetti et al. (2016) as the perceptions of employees, of a work environment that necessitates them to carry out overwork, while it does not distribute rewards for their overwork; an environment where supervisors and colleagues view overwork as normal. An earlier noteworthy attempt to establish a similar measure was done by Koys and DeCotiis (1991), who suggested eight components of psychological climate, with one of those components being pressure, defined as personnel's perceptions of an organizational environment that necessitates working outside of the official working hours.

Psychological overwork climate, as conceptualized by Mazetti et al. (2016), consists of two dimensions. These dimensions are named overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards. Overwork endorsement entails “the perception of a work environment that requires and expects employees to perform overwork” (Mazzetti et al., 2016, p. 884). These perceptions are associated with a management that encourages and expects overwork, therefore supporting the predominance of workers' overwork behaviors (Mazzetti et al., 2016; Ostroff et al., 2003). Lacking overwork rewards relate to “employees' perception of lacking compensation in response to their long work hours” (Mazzetti et al., 2016, p. 884). It represents the mixture of excessive work hours with insufficient compensation by the organization, which is an important element of overwork (Golden & Altman, 2008; Mazzetti et al., 2016).

Relationship between Workaholism and Psychological Overwork Climate.

Workaholism, mainly in terms of working excessively and working compulsively, is significantly positively related to overtime work (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al.,

2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Taris et al., 2005) and overwork (Schaufeli, Bakker, et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008). At the same time, overtime is sometimes included in the measurement of workaholism (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Snir & Harpaz, 2004).

Workers who believe that specific behaviors, such as overwork, are encouraged, expected and rewarded in an organization will feel compelled to adopt these behaviors (Afota et al., 2021). A study examined the association of four elements of organizational climate (i.e., supervisor support, coworker cohesion, involvement, and work pressure) with workaholism, defined in terms of drive and enjoyment of work. The results revealed that, although all climate's dimensions were linked to work enjoyment, only work pressure was linked to drive. Specifically, a work environment that places high work pressure on employees is linked to low enjoyment and a high inner drive (Johnstone & Johnston, 2005) – the drive that leads workaholics to work excessively (Bonebright et al., 2000; Clark et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Spence & Robbins, 1992). These results support arguments suggesting that workaholism is encouraged when workers' perception of their organizational context includes a promotion of longer work hours (Mazzetti et al., 2016). In a similar vein, Mazzetti et al. (2014, p. 234) suggested that workaholism may be encouraged by employees' perceptions that “working beyond set work hours, taking work home, and working during weekends or holidays” are essential prerequisites for success and career progression. Yet, other scholars suggest that workaholics' hard work is unrelated to career perspectives, as it is the result of their inner drive (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008). However, Porter (2004) argues that employees may work long hours, as organizational success leads to a sense of worth, which is central for introjected regulation (Clark et al., 2020; Deci et al., 2017; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000), manifested in workaholics as a compulsion to work (Clark et al., 2020).

Peiperl and Jones (2001, p. 374) distinguish workaholics and overworkers by their sense of reward equitability. They argue that workaholics view the rewards they receive for their efforts as “at least equitably distributed between themselves and the organizations that employ them (if not slightly more favorable to them)”, while overworkers consider the rewards they receive as “in favor of the organization”. Besides the relationship between workaholism and introjected regulation (van Beek et al., 2011, 2012), van Beek et al. (2011), found workaholism also related to external regulation, meaning that external contingencies, such as rewards or punishments, influence and propel workaholism as well (Deci et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In line with this, Bonebright et al. (2000) argued that an explanation of workaholism may be workaholics’ desire for recognition and rewards. Additionally, studies suggest that workaholism may be a product of positive reinforcements, such as tangible or intangible rewards, or absence of punishment, for excessive working (Liang & Chu, 2009; Mazzetti et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2007). Porter (1996), although having conceptualized workaholism as an addiction, argued that when workaholics are given external rewards for their excessive work, at the beginning, they temporarily feel good about themselves, but they then feel dysphoria for receiving rewards for undeserving performance because although they surpassed others’ expectations, they have not satisfied their own standards. Therefore, they feel that those that rewarded them were misled this time and that they have to work harder to make sure others will not change their minds about how good they are. In this sense, external rewards may increase workaholism. Nonetheless, somewhat contradictory results are presented in the literature, as in the study of van Beek et al. (2012) external regulation was not related to workaholism, and it is suggested that workaholics work hard due to their internal drive and irrespective of any external factors, including financial rewards (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008).

As the overwork climate is relatively a new term, only few studies have examined the relationship between workaholism and psychological overwork climate. Nonetheless, almost all the studies examining this relationship report that workaholism is significantly positively associated with organizational overwork climate (Mazzetti et al., 2014) and psychological overwork climate (Mazzetti et al., 2016, 2020; Schaufeli, 2016).

Mazzetti et al. (2014) found workaholism to be significantly positively related to organizational overwork climate, as a unidimensional model, especially for employees who have the personality traits that predispose them to workaholism. Similar results were obtained by Schaufeli (2016), who found workaholism positively related to an overwork climate. However, noteworthy interaction effects of personality traits and overwork climate on workaholism were not found in this study.

A study by Mazzetti et al. (2016) revealed that overwork endorsement is significantly positively correlated with both working excessively and working compulsively, while lacking overwork rewards is significantly positively correlated with working excessively but not significantly correlated with working compulsively. However, the authors concluded that the weak relationship between workaholism and lacking overwork rewards demonstrates that the existence or absence of rewards is relatively irrelevant for workaholics, who are motivated to work excessively through an introjected regulation. The positive relationships between workaholism and overwork endorsement as well as between workaholism and lacking overwork rewards were affected after taking into account the effect of psychological job demands (i.e., psychological stressors in the organizational context that may lead to a heightened request to carry out overwork). This held especially true for the relationship between workaholism and lacking overwork rewards, but both relationships continued to be significant. In sum, inadequate compensation for overwork may promote workaholism, though, workaholism, is more strongly related to overwork endorsement. A more recent study by

Mazzetti et al. (2020) also found a positive relationship between both overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards with workaholism, measured in terms of working excessively and working compulsively.

Afota et al. (2021), with a longitudinal study, revealed that high leader-member exchange (i.e., relationships of high quality between leaders and subordinates) increases subordinates' workaholism in the presence of a strong psychological overwork climate, for the purpose of reciprocating to the supervisor. Nonetheless, there is no relation between leader-member exchange and workaholism when a psychological overwork climate is absent. At the same time, the authors found no direct association between workaholism and psychological overwork climate, as measured in the same time period. However, this is the only study that reported a lack of direct relationship between these constructs.

Learning theory, and specifically operant learning (Skinner, 1974), could be used to explain the relationship between overwork climate and workaholism. When working excessively is considered the ideal behavior in an organization, it may likely be linked to recurring positive or negative reinforcements, and, through these, lead to workaholism (Mazzetti et al., 2014; McMillan et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2007; van Wijhe et al., 2016). After one voluntarily works some extra hours and this results in positive consequences or removes the presence of a negative consequence, the possibility of excessive working could be increased, and workaholism could be induced (McMillan et al., 2003). Consequently, as scholars suggest that some organizational cultures encourage and preserve workaholism (Holland, 2008; Ng et al., 2007), the same may apply for an overwork climate.

A somewhat contradictory point to the argument that a particular climate, such as an overwork climate, induces workaholism was presented by Schaufeli, Taris, and van Rhenen (2008), who argued that workaholics do not work hard because of the organizational culture (a closely related construct to climate), but because of their inner drive. Similarly, Snir and Harpaz

(2012) differentiate the type of workers that are heavy work investors but their investment stems from the organizational culture, from workaholics, naming them employer-directed heavy work investors, and classifying them in the category of the situational type of heavy work investment, which is distinct from the dispositional type of heavy work investment, where workaholism belongs, according to their categorization. However, it is important to note that, although workaholics work beyond organizational requirements, in “workaholic organizations, members who are not predisposed to workaholic behavior patterns have alternatives” (Scott et al., 1997, p. 294). Consequently, when one, rather than exploring alternative solutions, continues working in such organizations, and engages in excessive working behavior, is a workaholic, as other organizations could hire him/her without necessitating such behaviors (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Harpaz, 2004; Snir & Zohar, 2008).

Porter (1996, p. 81) argued that in “certain organizational cultures ... long work hours and sacrifice are widely believed to be required for success and advancement”. In these cultures, “self-selection, employer recruitment-selection, and socialization and reward systems” likely create a context, where workaholism is more likely to occur, in the course of time, in comparison to other organizations. As longitudinal studies examining the relationship between workaholism and psychological overwork climate have not been conducted, we cannot infer causality. Consequently, based on the Attraction-Selection-Attrition theory (Schneider, 1987, p. 440; Schneider et al., 1995), which posits that “different kinds of organizations attract, select, and retain different kinds of people”, it is suggested that workaholic employees might seek to work in organizational contexts that are compatible with their workaholism (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Liang & Chu, 2009; Mazzetti et al., 2014; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Zohar, 2008). As such, workaholics would be more likely attracted to, as well as selected and retained by organizations, for demanding jobs (Snir & Zohar, 2008), and, therefore, potentially for overwork environments.

Overall, the literature that examined the association between psychological overwork climate and workaholism shows a positive relationship between overwork endorsement and workaholism but does not give a clear indication regarding the relationship between lacking overwork rewards and workaholism. Though the few studies that examined the relationship between lacking overwork rewards and workaholism suggest a positive relationship, there are contradicting views and evidence that shed doubts on the strength or even existence of this relationship. As the literature does not lead to a specific conclusion, my hypothesis is made on the basis that workaholism is not influenced by external factors.

Additionally, the few studies that examined the relationships between overwork endorsement and the dimensions of workaholism suggest a positive relationship with working excessively (i.e., the behavioral dimension of workaholism) and working compulsively (i.e., the motivational dimension of workaholism). This relationship can be assumed to hold true for the remaining dimensions of workaholism, as in the studies that examined this relationship, working compulsively also included questions about the cognitive and emotional dimensions of workaholism. This is in line with the indicated relationship between overwork endorsement and overall workaholism. Based on these assumptions, hypotheses are made to explore these relationships. With regard to the relationship between lacking overwork rewards and workaholism, due to the limited and conflicting evidence offered by the literature, the dimensions of workaholism are assumed to behave the same way as overall workaholism and hypotheses are formed to explore these relationships. Based on the above, the following are hypothesized for the association of overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards with workaholism and its dimensions:

Hypothesis 2: Overwork endorsement is positively associated with workaholism and with all its dimensions, i.e., behavioral dimension, motivational dimension, cognitive dimension, emotional dimension.

Hypothesis 3: Lacking overwork rewards is not associated with workaholism or with any of its dimensions, i.e., behavioral dimension, motivational dimension, cognitive dimension, emotional dimension.

Outcomes of Workaholism

Having presented the main characteristics of workaholics and the antecedents of workaholism, it is now important to explore workaholism's outcomes. In spite of workaholics being seen as addicted individuals, unable to control their inner compulsion, they are notably hard-working and devoted employees (Liang & Chu, 2009; Ng et al., 2007; Scott et al., 1997).

Three different major views regarding workaholism and its outcomes are evident in the literature (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Snir & Harpaz, 2004, 2012; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010): the favorable view (Cantarow, 1979, cited in Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Machlowitz, 1980); the unfavorable view (Oates, 1971; Porter, 1996; Robinson, 2014; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009); and the recognition of the presence of different categories of workaholism, each with distinct causes and outcomes (Naughton, 1987; Scott et al., 1997; Spence & Robbins, 1992). This difference in the views about workaholism is related to the ambiguity about its meaning in the literature (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Kim, 2019; Snir & Harpaz, 2004, 2012).

Workaholism has been associated with both positive and negative consequences, with mixed results across studies (Clark et al., 2016), while some researchers choose to differentiate between short-term and long-term outcomes, suggesting that workaholism's long-term effects are more negative, while its short-term effects might be positive (Ng et al., 2007; Snir & Harpaz, 2012). At the same time, most researchers have come to interpret workaholism as mainly negative (Andreassen et al., 2012), possibly due to the equation of workaholism with work addiction (Griffiths et al., 2018). Interestingly, something that seems nearly consistent in studies is the association of workaholics' inner pressure to work with negative consequences (Andreassen, 2014; Andreassen et al., 2007, 2011; Aziz et al., 2013; Bonebright et al., 2000;

Clark et al., 2020; Schaufeli, Shimazu, et al., 2009; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009), while the dimension of work enjoyment, included in the measurement of workaholism in some studies, seems to bring positive outcomes (Andreassen et al., 2007, 2011, 2013; Bonebright et al., 2000).

The outcomes of workaholism can be grouped into three categories: individual outcomes, family or social outcomes and work-related outcomes (Clark et al., 2016; Snir & Harpaz, 2012). A description and examples for each category of outcomes are provided below.

Individual Outcomes

The individual outcomes of workaholism are usually negative, especially in the long-term horizon (Ng et al., 2007) and when high work enjoyment is not included in the definition and measurement of workaholism (Andreassen et al., 2007, 2011; Aziz & Zickar, 2006; Bonebright et al., 2000; Burke, 2000a; Spence & Robbins, 1992). For example, life satisfaction is negatively related to workaholism (Clark et al., 2016), while burnout and components of burnout are found to be positively associated with workaholism (Clark et al., 2016, 2020; Gillet et al., 2017; Molino et al., 2016; Moyer et al., 2017; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Taris et al., 2005; Taris, van Beek, et al., 2010). Finally, a negative relationship applies more generally to measures of emotional, mental, and physical health and well-being, either directly or indirectly (Andreassen, 2014; Balducci et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2016, 2020; de Bloom et al., 2014; del Líbano et al., 2010; Gillet et al., 2017; Ng et al., 2007; Robinson, 2000; Salanova et al., 2016; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu et al., 2010, 2011; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009).

Family/Social Outcomes

The family/social outcomes of workaholism tend to be negative. For instance, studies show that workaholism is negatively linked to family satisfaction or functioning (Clark et al.,

2016; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009), as well as positively related to marital disaffection, estrangement, low relationship satisfaction of partners, and marital problems (Bakker et al., 2009; Clark et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2001). Additionally, workaholism is associated with higher work-family/work-life conflict or imbalance (Andreassen, 2014; Bakker et al., 2009; Chang et al., 2022; Clark et al., 2014, 2020; del Líbano et al., 2012; Gillet et al., 2017; Hakanen & Peeters, 2015; Molino et al., 2016; Shimazu et al., 2011; Taris et al., 2005; Torp et al., 2018; Willianson & Clark, 2017), regardless of any inclusion of high work enjoyment in workaholism (Bonebright et al., 2000; Russo & Waters, 2006). At the same time, workaholism is related to social relationships of lower quality or social relationships problems (Andreassen, 2014; Andreassen et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008).

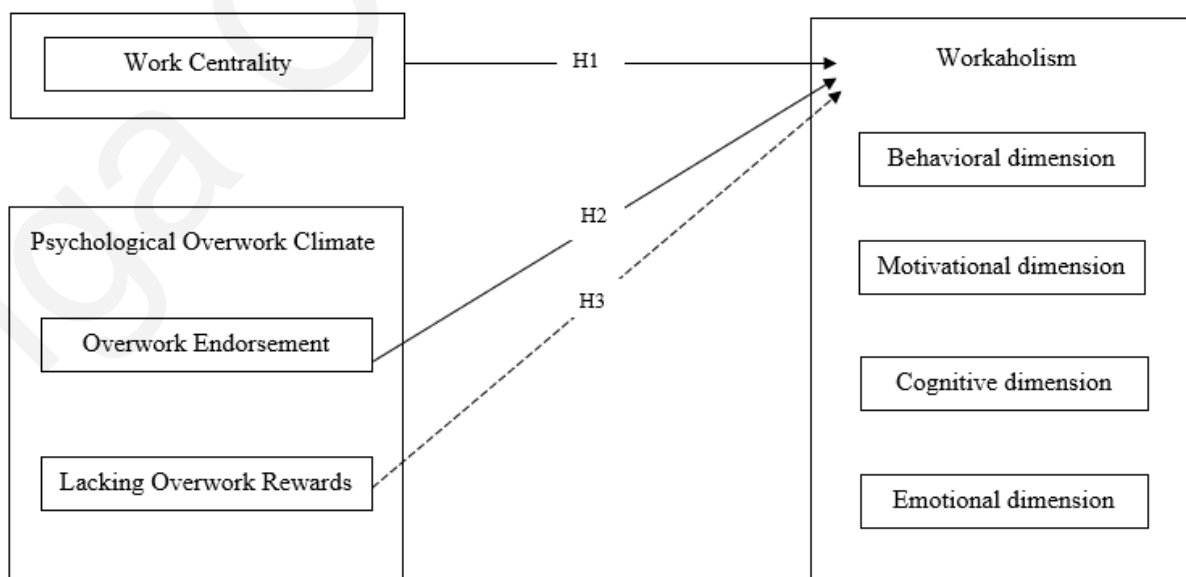
Work-related Outcomes

Workaholism has been associated with various work-related outcomes. However, the results of studies for some of these outcomes are more mixed. Associations found between workaholism and job stress are positive (Aziz et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2016), especially when high work enjoyment is not included in the measurement of workaholism (Andreassen et al., 2007; Burke, 2000a; Spence & Robbins, 1992). Similarly, relationships between workaholism and job satisfaction tend to be negative (Clark et al., 2016; del Líbano et al., 2012; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009), or null (Clark et al., 2020), especially when the conceptualization of workaholism does not incorporate high work enjoyment or the emotional dimension of workaholism (Andreassen et al., 2011; Machlowitz, 1980; Ng et al., 2007). Additionally, workaholism seems to be negatively related to healthy relationships or interactions at work (Balducci et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2016; Ng et al., 2007), while associations between workaholism and career prospects tend to be more positive, with organizations usually valuing the excessive work of workaholics (Clark et al., 2016; Ng et al., 2007). Nevertheless, both positive (Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Taris, Schaufeli, et al., 2010), negative

(Andreassen, 2014; Ng et al., 2007; Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009), and insignificant (Clark et al., 2016; Shimazu et al., 2010) associations were found between workaholism and job performance, with Ng et al. (2007) suggesting that what differentiates these outcomes is whether the outcomes are examined in the short-term or in the long-term.

This chapter discussed the literature around workaholism, its conceptualization, antecedents, and outcomes. In relation, it focused on a specific personal antecedent of workaholism, namely work centrality, and the relationship between workaholism and work centrality, as presented in the literature. Similarly, it explored the definition of psychological overwork climate, as a contextual antecedent of workaholism, and the relationship between workaholism and psychological overwork climate. Putting these aspects together, the present study aims to examine the effects of work centrality and psychological overwork climate (i.e., overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards) on workaholism and explore the relationships among these constructs and the dimensions of workaholism (i.e., behavioral, motivational, cognitive, and emotional dimensions). Figure 1, graphically summarizes the hypothesized relationships.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Relationships



Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of work centrality and psychological overwork climate on employees' workaholism in Cyprus. The methodology chapter describes the research method and design, the data collection process, the sample of the study, the measures used, and the data analysis process.

Design and Data Collection

The study was conducted through quantitative research with the use of a survey among employees in Cyprus. The research aimed to determine the effects of work centrality and psychological overwork climate on employees' workaholism. A quantitative research strategy highlights quantification in the data collection and analysis, uses a deductive approach that goes from theory to findings, and incorporates positivism and objectivism. The emphasis of quantitative research is on associations between variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since the purpose of the research was to determine the relationship between work centrality and workaholism and the relationship between psychological overwork climate and workaholism, the research employed the quantitative research method, which was the most appropriate one.

Data was collected through an online self-completion questionnaire, which included questions on demographics, work centrality, overwork climate, and workaholism. This data collection method has benefits over other quantitative data collection methods, that were important, especially considering the budget and time limitations related to this thesis; self-completion questionnaires are quicker and cheaper to administer, without any interviewer effects (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Specifically, the fact that the questionnaires were administered online, allowed faster and cheaper data collection and analysis, broadened the reach of the research, and provided more convenience to participants (van Selm & Jankowski, 2006).

The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was prepared in English and the survey was open between 20.10.2022 and 04.12.2022. Participants were recruited through word-of-mouth,

primarily through electronic invites but in some cases also verbally, by myself or other participants. The questionnaire was also posted on personal social media accounts and relevant Facebook groups to increase participation. The study was completely anonymous and the data collected was treated with strict confidentiality, following the standards set by the University Data Protection guidelines. On the questionnaire, it was made clear that participation was completely voluntary and participants could withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, the contact information of myself and my supervisor was given to participants in order to be able to communicate any questions regarding the research and questionnaire. The completion of the questionnaire indicated the consent of the individual to participate in the present study.

Participants constitute a convenient sample of employees in Cyprus. Self-employed individuals were excluded from the study due to the lack of organizational climate in their employment situation. No other prerequisite was needed regarding the profile of the participants in the study. The questionnaire was completed by 144 employees working in Cyprus with the following demographic characteristics, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Characteristic	N (%)	
<i>Sex</i>	- Males	43 participants (29.9%)
	- Females	101 participants (70.1%)
<i>Partner</i>	- No	79 participants (54.9%)
	- Yes	65 participants (45.1%)
<i>Children</i>	- No	105 participants (72.9%)
	- Yes	39 participants (27.1%)
<i>Job Level</i>	- Entry-level	43 participants (29.9%)
	- Intermediate or experienced (senior staff)	62 participants (43.1%)
	- First-level management	12 participants (8.3%)
	- Middle management	11 participants (7.6%)
	- Executive or senior management	16 participants (11.1%)

Measures

Dependent Variable: Workaholism

Workaholism was operationalized with the use of the original 16-item Multidimensional Workaholism Scale (MWS) by Clark et al. (2020), which included four sub-scales, namely the behavioral, motivational, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of workaholism (4 items each). Items on workaholism were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from never true to always true. Example items are “I work more than what is expected of me” (behavioral dimension), “I always have an inner pressure inside of me that drives me to work” (motivational dimension), “I feel like I cannot stop myself from thinking about working” (cognitive dimension), and “I feel upset if I cannot continue to work” (emotional dimension). Cronbach’s α is 0.88 for the behavioral dimension, 0.85 for the motivational dimension, 0.93 for the cognitive dimension, 0.91 for the emotional dimension, and 0.94 for the overall scale (Table 2), which are comparable to the study of Clark et al. (2020).

Independent Variables

Work Centrality. Operationalized with the use of the original 7-item unidimensional Work Centrality Scale by Paullay et al. (1994). Items on work centrality were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Example items are “In my view, an individual’s personal life goals should be work oriented” and “To me, my work is only a small part of who I am” (reversed). Cronbach’s α for work centrality in the present study is 0.71 (Table 2), which is comparable to other studies that have utilized it (e.g., Diefendorff et al., 2002; Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000; Paullay et al., 1994).

Psychological Overwork Climate. Operationalized with the use of the original 11-item Overwork Climate Scale (OWCS) by Mazzetti et al. (2016), which was comprised of two sub-scales, namely the overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards dimensions (7

and 4 items, respectively). Items on overwork climate were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Example items are “Almost everybody expects that employees perform overtime work” (overwork endorsement dimension) and “Working overtime is fairly compensated financially” (reversed) (lacking overwork rewards dimension). In the present study, Cronbach’s α is 0.84 for overwork endorsement, 0.63 for lacking overwork rewards, and 0.80 for the overall scale (Table 2), which are comparable to other studies utilizing the scale (e.g., Mazzetti et al., 2016, 2020).

Control Variables

Sex. Binary variable indicating Male (0) or Female (1) biological sex. Other options provided to respondents were not selected, therefore a binary form was retained.

Partner. Binary variable indicating whether participants lived with a partner (1) or not (0).

Children. Binary variable indicating whether participants had children (1) or not (0).

Job Level. Categorical variable indicating the job level of the participants: Entry-level (1), Intermediate or experienced (senior staff) (2), First-level management (3), Middle management (4), and Executive or senior management (5).

Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed with the use of R Studio Open Source Edition (AGPL v3). The data was initially downloaded from Google Forms in .csv format. The data was coded in Microsoft Office Excel (2021), taking into account the scales that needed to be reversed, and then imported into R Studio. Descriptive statistics were performed for all variables, including the mean (central tendency) and standard deviation (dispersion in relation to the mean). Additionally, Cronbach’s α was calculated for workaholism, work centrality, and psychological overwork climate, as well as for all their dimensions. All variables were standardized for comparison purposes. Moreover, correlations were performed among all the

variables. Using the correlations and the VIF test, the independent variables that were causing multicollinearity were identified. These variables were age, children, children under six years old, tenure, and job level, with strong and statistically significant correlations with independent variables and VIF values of above 2. Out of these variables, age, children under six years old, and tenure were removed from the model and multicollinearity was resolved. Then, a number of multiple regressions were performed, in order to arrive at the final models and test for the statistical significance of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. Variables that were statistically significant or important according to the literature were all kept in the models, without reducing the adjusted R square to an important degree. When performing each regression, influential points were identified using the measure DFFITS and were removed, one at a time, from each regression's dataset, respectively. The results of the survey are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Results

The aim of this research was to examine the effects of work centrality and psychological overwork climate (i.e., overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards) on workaholism and explore the relationships among these constructs and the dimensions of workaholism (i.e., behavioral, motivational, cognitive and emotional dimensions). These were tested with a quantitative research strategy in a sample of employees working in Cyprus. This chapter presents the results on the association of work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards, as the independent variables, with workaholism and its dimensions, as the dependent variable, while controlling for specific demographic characteristics. The first section of the chapter presents descriptive statistics, Cronbach's α , and correlations among variables. The second section presents the regressions performed to test the Hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's α , and Correlations

As shown in Table 2, work centrality had a positive relationship with workaholism ($r = 0.49^{***}$) and with all the dimensions of workaholism: cognitive dimension ($r = 0.53^{***}$), motivational dimension ($r = 0.39^{***}$), behavioral dimension ($r = 0.36^{***}$) and emotional dimension ($r = 0.36^{***}$). Additionally, overwork endorsement had a positive relationship with workaholism ($r = 0.40^{***}$) and all the dimensions of workaholism: cognitive dimension ($r = 0.41^{***}$), behavioral dimension ($r = 0.32^{***}$), emotional dimension ($r = 0.30^{***}$), and motivational dimension ($r = 0.28^{***}$). The only control variable that was related to workaholism/a dimension of workaholism is job level, which had a positive relationship with the behavioral dimension of workaholism ($r = 0.22^{**}$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's α , and Correlations

	M	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1. <i>Workaholism</i>	2.83	0.92	(.94)											
2. Behavioral dimension	3.01	1.16	.81***	(.88)										
3. Motivational dimension	3.22	0.95	.81***	.58***	(.85)									
4. Cognitive dimension	2.57	1.13	.87***	.61***	.61***	(.93)								
5. Emotional dimension	2.52	1.16	.84***	.51***	.56***	.69**	(.91)							
6. Work centrality	3.37	0.98	.49***	.36***	.39***	.53***	.36***	(.71)						
7. Overwork endorsement	3.08	0.95	.40***	.32***	.28***	.41***	.30***	.12	(.84)					
8. Lacking overwork rewards	3.17	0.96	.08	.06	.08	.13	-.01	.00	.27***	(.63)				
9. Sex	0.70	0.46	.00	-.05	.06	-.05	.05	-.07	.00	.10	-			
10. Partner	0.45	0.50	-.05	-.05	.02	-.03	-.09	.01	-.13	-.07	-.11	-		
11. Children	0.27	0.45	.01	.06	.02	-.10	.04	.06	-.11	-.09	-.05	.36***	-	
12. Job level	2.27	1.27	.16	.22**	.09	.10	.11	.14	.02	-.14	-.24**	.21*	.40***	-

Notes: n = 144. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Regressions

Multiple linear regressions were performed, with workaholism and each dimension of workaholism (i.e., behavioral dimension, motivational dimension, cognitive dimension, and emotional dimension) as a dependent variable in turn, and work centrality, overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards as independent variables, plus the control variables. The results of each regression's final model are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Regressions

	Workaholism				
	Overall workaholism	Behavioral dimension	Motivational dimension	Cognitive dimension	Emotional dimension
1. Work centrality	0.43***	0.43***	0.41***	0.49***	0.36***
2. Overwork endorsement	0.40***	0.35***	0.34***	0.59***	0.37***
3. Lacking overwork rewards	-0.17**	0.00	0.00	-0.40***	-0.25**
4. Sex	0.08	0.05	0.13	-0.13	0.15
5. Partner	0.08	-0.14	0.12	0.15	-0.09
6. Children	-0.13	0.16	0.05	-0.58***	0.02
7. Job level	0.03	0.18*	0.02	-0.02	0.01
Adjusted R-squared:	0.54	0.33	0.46	0.78	0.24

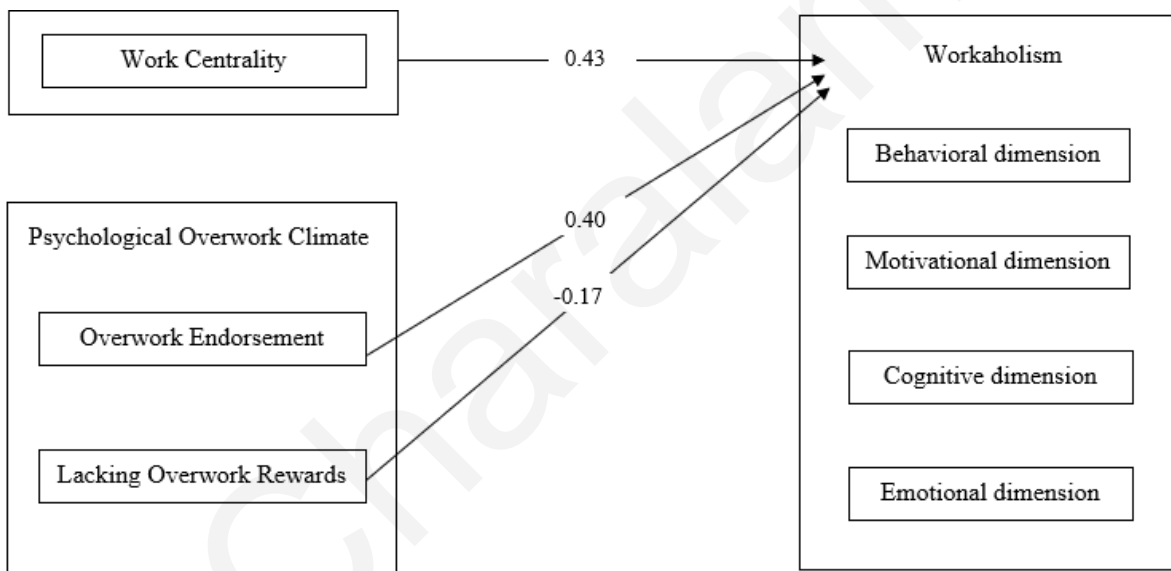
Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

In Hypothesis 1, it was proposed that **work centrality** would be positively associated with overall workaholism and with each of its dimensions, i.e., behavioral, motivational, cognitive and emotional. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, Table 3 reveals that work centrality was statistically significantly and positively related to overall workaholism and all its dimensions. Regression results also supported Hypothesis 2, where it was proposed that **overwork endorsement** would be positively related to overall workaholism and its dimensions. Although it was predicted in Hypothesis 3 that **lacking overwork rewards** would

not be related to overall workaholism and its dimensions, results only support this proposition for the behavioral and motivational dimensions of workaholism. Specifically, lacking overwork rewards was not statistically significantly related to the behavioral and motivational dimensions of workaholism, while it was statistically significantly and negatively related to overall workaholism, as well as to workaholism's cognitive and emotional dimensions. Therefore, results grant only partial support for Hypothesis 3.

Figure 2 graphically summarizes the statistically significant associations of workaholism with work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards.

Figure 2. Graphical Representation of the Relationships



Interaction effects were also tested. Specifically, interactions between overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards on overall workaholism, as well as between work centrality and each of the dimensions of psychological overwork climate (i.e., overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards) on overall workaholism were tested but none was found to be statistically significant. Therefore, the regressions were kept as presented.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of work centrality and psychological overwork climate (i.e., overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards) on workaholism and investigate the associations of these constructs with workaholism and all its distinctive dimensions (i.e., behavioral, motivational, cognitive and emotional). These research questions were examined with a quantitative research strategy in a sample of employees working in Cyprus. This chapter aims to interpret and explain the results of this study in relation to the relevant literature, discussing first relationships between workaholism and work centrality and then moving forward to relationships between workaholism and psychological overwork climate.

Workaholism and Work Centrality

Considering the significance that people high in work centrality place in work (Paullay et al., 1994), it was expected that work centrality would be positively associated with overall workaholism and with its behavioral, motivational, cognitive and emotional dimensions separately (Hypothesis 1). As expected, the results of this study showed a positive relationship between work centrality and workaholism. These results are in accord with those of previous studies that have demonstrated that work centrality presents a positive relationship with workaholism (Clark et al., 2016; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Snir & Harpaz, 2006, 2012). As Harpaz and Snir (2003) and Snir and Harpaz (2006) suggested, work centrality may cause workaholism, but it is also likely that some employees infer that they have high work centrality due to their workaholism, following the self-perception theory of Bem (1972). Yet, overall, the more vital role one believes work plays in his/her life, the more workaholic he/she is.

As hypothesized, work centrality presented a positive association with the behavioral dimension of workaholism. As most of the existing studies that tested the relationship between work centrality and workaholism measured workaholism through its behavioral dimension –

i.e., working excessively (Clark et al., 2020) – this study supports evidence from earlier literature indicating that work centrality is positively related to workaholism, as conceptualized through its behavioral dimension (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Snir & Harpaz, 2006, 2012). This is also in line with previous research that found that work centrality is positively associated with work hours (Ng & Feldman, 2008).

Additionally, as predicted, work centrality was positively linked to the motivational and cognitive dimensions of workaholism. These results, in addition to the positive relationship found between work centrality and the behavioral dimension of workaholism, are consistent with those of Clark et al. (2016), which concluded that work centrality is positively associated with workaholism, defined through its behavioral, motivational and cognitive dimensions. At the same time, this provides evidence that each of those dimensions of workaholism is positively related to work centrality, extending the existing literature. Specifically, the positive relationship between work centrality and the motivational dimension of workaholism is in line with a previous study that suggested that work centrality is positively related to introjected regulation (Grabowski et al., 2021), which is manifested in the motivational dimension of workaholism (Clark et al., 2020). Furthermore, the positive relationship between work centrality and the cognitive dimension of workaholism seems to be consistent with earlier studies of work centrality that included thoughts about work outside of work hours in the measurement of work centrality (Ball & Stenlund, 1990; Poppleton & Riseborough, 1990).

Further, as proposed, results indicated a positive relationship between work centrality and the emotional dimension of workaholism, which confirmed the expected relationship and extended the existing literature. This relationship illustrates that employees with high work centrality tend to have negative emotions when they are not working or are impeded from working, which is reasonable considering the importance that people with high work centrality place on their work. According to the literature, employees with low work centrality regard

absence from work as more legitimate (Johns, 2008), while workaholics experience negative emotions, such as guilt, when they are not working (Clark et al., 2014, 2020; Graves et al., 2012; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008). Therefore, employees with high work centrality may perceive absence from work as less legitimate due to the guilt or other negative emotions they experience when they are not working.

The relationships between work centrality and the dimensions of workaholism suggest that the more significant role one believes work plays in his/her life, the more excessively he/she is working, the higher his/her inner compulsion to work is, the more intense thoughts he/she has about work, and the more negative emotions he/she has when he/she is not working.

Workaholism and Psychological Overwork Climate

Considering the importance of organizational culture and climate for the encouragement of workaholism (Holland, 2008; Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2016, 2020; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, 2016), it was proposed that overwork endorsement would be positively associated with overall workaholism and with all its dimensions (i.e., behavioral, motivational, cognitive and emotional) (Hypothesis 2). Findings, as expected, showed a positive relationship between overwork endorsement and workaholism. These results seem to be consistent with recent research that found a positive relationship between overwork endorsement and workaholism (Mazzetti et al., 2016, 2020). As Mazzetti et al. (2014, p. 234) proposed, workaholism may be promoted by employees' perceptions that "working beyond set work hours, taking work home, and working during weekends or holidays" are essential requirements for success and career progression. This success leads to a sense of worth (Porter, 2004), which is pivotal for introjected regulation (Clark et al., 2020; Deci et al., 2017; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000), and therefore, workaholics' compulsion to work (Clark et al., 2020). Consequently, the more an employee perceives that his/her work environment endorses overwork, the greater his/her workaholism is.

Additionally, as hypothesized, overwork endorsement was positively associated with all the dimensions of workaholism: the behavioral dimension, the motivational dimension, the cognitive dimension, and the emotional dimension. These findings are in agreement with results obtained by Mazzetti et al. (2016), who found that overwork endorsement is significantly positively correlated with both excessive work and an inner compulsion, with the latter including questions related to the motivational, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of workaholism, as those dimensions were conceptualized and measured in this thesis. In addition, these findings extend the literature by providing evidence that overwork endorsement is positively related to each of the dimensions of workaholism. These results mean that the more an employee perceives that his/her work environment endorses overwork, the more excessively he/she is working, the higher his/her inner compulsion to work is, the more intense thoughts he/she has about work, and the more negative emotions he/she has when he/she is not working.

Taking into account the literature that suggests that workaholism is caused by an inner compulsion (a manifestation of introjected regulation) rather than external factors (Clark et al., 2020; Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Snir & Harpaz, 2004, 2006; Spence & Robbins, 1992), it was assumed that lacking overwork rewards would not be associated with overall workaholism or with any of its dimensions (i.e., behavioral, motivational, cognitive and emotional) (Hypothesis 3). This hypothesis was only supported for the behavioral and motivational dimensions of workaholism.

Contrary to what was hypothesized, findings revealed a negative relationship between lacking overwork rewards and workaholism. A possible explanation for this relationship might be that external contingencies, such as rewards (i.e., external regulation), influence and propel workaholism in addition to introjected regulation (van Beek et al., 2011). Besides, it is proposed that workaholism is a product of positive reinforcements, such as tangible or intangible rewards, or absence of punishment, for excessive working (Liang & Chu, 2009;

Mazzetti et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2007). Accordingly, as suggested by Peiperl and Jones (2001), workaholics perceive that the rewards they receive for their efforts are not inequitably distributed between the organization and themselves. Thus, when employees perceive that they are given adequate rewards for their excessive work hours, their workaholism is likely to increase, whereas when they perceive their rewards as inadequate, their workaholism is likely to decrease. It is interesting to note that the findings of the present study are also contrary to that of Mazzetti et al. (2016, 2020), who have suggested that there is a positive relationship between lacking overwork rewards and workaholism, expressed as working excessively and working compulsively. However, this difference could be attributed to the different measure used to capture workaholism due to its different conceptualization.

Despite the negative relationship between lacking overwork rewards and overall workaholism found in the present study, findings showed no relationship between lacking overwork rewards and the behavioral and motivational dimensions of workaholism. However, the lack of a relationship between lacking overwork rewards and the motivational dimension of workaholism corroborates the findings of Mazzetti et al. (2016), who showed that lacking overwork rewards is not significantly related to an inner compulsion. The association of lacking overwork rewards with both the behavioral and motivational dimensions of workaholism can be explained by the motivation of workaholics to work excessively via an introjected regulation, rather than the presence or absence of rewards, which seem to be relatively irrelevant for them, as argued by Mazzetti et al. (2016) when identified a weak relationship between workaholism and lacking overwork rewards. In line with this, earlier research suggests that workaholics work excessively due to their internal compulsion (i.e., the motivational dimension of workaholism) (Bonebright et al., 2000; Clark et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008; Spence & Robbins,

1992) and irrespective of monetary rewards (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008).

Finally, contrary to expectations, the data suggested that lacking overwork rewards is negatively related to the cognitive and to the emotional dimensions of workaholism. These findings extend the existing literature which offered no clear indication of the relationship between lacking overwork rewards and those dimensions of workaholism. To provide an explanation for these relationships, we can refer back to the work of Porter (1996). Although Porter (1996) conceptualized workaholism as an addiction, workaholism's similarities with work addiction in terms of the behavior, cognition, and affect in regard to work (Clark et al., 2020; Ng et al., 2007), make possible the application of her logic to workaholism. Specifically, Porter (1996) argued that when workaholics are given external rewards for their excessive work, they feel dysphoria for receiving rewards for undeserving performance because they have not satisfied their own perfect standards. Consequently, they feel that they have to work harder to ensure that others will not change their impression about how good they are. As a result, when given rewards for their excessive work hours, workaholics may have more intense thoughts about work and more negative emotions when they are not working, because these rewards make them want to prove themselves to others. Those workaholics that work in environments that endorse overwork already work excessively (as illustrated by the positive relationship between overwork endorsement and workaholism), therefore, if this interpretation holds true, this mechanism explained above may not actually increase their excessive working (as also supported by the lack of relationship between lacking overwork rewards and the behavioral dimension of workaholism), but merely their thoughts about work and their negative feelings when they are not working.

The relationship between lacking overwork rewards and the dimensions of workaholism suggests that one's perception of the adequacy of the rewards he/she is given for

his/her overwork relates just a little or does not relate to how much excessively he/she is working and to how strong his/her inner compulsion to work is. However, the more one perceives that the rewards he/she is given for his/her overwork are adequate, the more intense thoughts he/she has about work and the more negative emotions he/she has when he/she is not working.

In sum, the results relating to the association of workaholism with overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards are in accord with recent studies indicating that workers who believe that overwork is encouraged, expected and rewarded in their organization will feel compelled to adopt these behaviors (Afota et al., 2021). The relationship between psychological overwork climate and workaholism supports the belief that operant learning (Skinner, 1974) can explain workaholism. When working excessively is considered the ideal behavior in an organization, it may likely be linked to recurring reinforcements, and, through these, lead to workaholism (Mazzetti et al., 2014; McMillan et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2007; van Wijhe et al., 2016). However, the relationship might have the opposite direction. Consequently, based on the Attraction-Selection-Attrition theory (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1995), workaholic employees might seek to work in and be selected by organizations with an overwork climate (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Liang & Chu, 2009; Mazzetti et al., 2014; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Zohar, 2008). Overall, the relationship between psychological overwork climate and workaholism suggested in this study, further support the idea that in organizations with overwork climates, the “self-selection, employer recruitment-selection, and socialization and reward systems” likely create a context, where it is more probable for workaholism to be expressed (Porter, 1996, p. 81).

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

The aim of the present research was to examine the effects of work centrality and psychological overwork climate – composed of overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards – on workaholism and to further explore the relationships among these constructs and the distinct sub-dimensions of workaholism, i.e., behavioral, motivational, cognitive and emotional. These were tested with a quantitative research strategy in a sample of employees working in Cyprus. The study has shown that work centrality and overwork endorsement are positively related to workaholism while lacking overwork rewards is negatively related to workaholism. The research has also shown that work centrality and overwork endorsement are positively related to all the dimensions of workaholism whereas lacking overwork rewards is negatively related to only the cognitive and emotional dimensions of workaholism, but unrelated to its behavioral and motivational dimensions.

Taken together, the evidence from this study suggests that both personal and contextual factors influence workaholism. Considering that it is difficult to intervene in personal antecedents which are usually more stable, it is important to influence contextual antecedents so as not to induce workaholism and lead to potential negative consequences. As such, it may be possible that only having a personal characteristic that predisposes you to be a workaholic does not lead to harmful consequences if not combined with contextual antecedents.

This study is the first step toward closing the gap that exists in the literature regarding the association of workaholism and its dimensions with work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards. Specifically, this is the first study that examined the association of workaholism, as a more generic term that is separated from work addiction, with work centrality and psychological work climate (i.e., overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards). Further, this is the first study that examined the association of each of the

dimensions of workaholism (i.e., the behavioral, motivational, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of workaholism) with work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards.

Limitations

As with every study, this study has limitations that when addressed will further improve the understanding of the examined relationships. The study was limited by time and budget constraints related to the data collection process and the completion of the present thesis. Specifically, as this study is part of a master's thesis, all its parts had to be completed within certain limited timeframes and with no available budget. As a result, a convenience sample was used, which limits the generalizability of the study. It should also be noted that the questionnaire was completed by employees in Cyprus, a single country, while the tested relationships may be more complex than expected and influenced by broader factors, such as culture or the economic situation.

Reliance on self-reported data could be considered as an additional limitation of this study. Nonetheless, these were deemed appropriate for the measurement of workaholism, work centrality, and psychological overwork climate precisely due to the subjective nature of these constructs, according to the authors of the measures used (Clark et al., 2020; Mazzetti et al., 2020). Furthermore, the questionnaire in the English language possibly limited the research, because some individuals who were sent the questionnaires could not participate due to language barriers or perhaps encountered challenges in the interpretation of some questions.

The study was also limited by the lack of information from prior research studies on the topic, which complicated the development of hypotheses. This research is the first to test how workaholism, as a term that is separated from work addiction, relates to work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards. Therefore, hypotheses were based on existing available studies that measured workaholism as work addiction and, in many cases,

there were no clear indications about the association of the dimensions of workaholism with the independent variables.

Moreover, the study was correlational and not longitudinal, therefore, although it was assumed that work centrality and psychological overwork climate are antecedents of workaholism based on the literature, causality cannot be inferred, and it is possible that work centrality and psychological overwork climate are outcomes of workaholism. Further, this study studied only one personal antecedent and one contextual antecedent of workaholism. Even though work centrality, overwork endorsement, and lacking overwork rewards are important in the prediction of workaholism, it seems that workaholism is a complex phenomenon and that there are possibly other additional variables that influence workaholism as well.

Implications

Notwithstanding these limitations, the findings suggest several theoretical and practical implications. More studies using the same measures with probability sampling are needed to validate the relationships reported in this study, for instance in other parts of the world, potentially translating the questionnaire into the language of each country. Future studies could use the reported relationships as a basis to further explore the relationship between workaholism and work centrality, as well as the relationship between workaholism and psychological overwork climate. Peer ratings may also be integrated with participants' answers to further enhance the robustness of the collected data (Mazzetti et al., 2014; Schaufeli, 2016). Further research might also examine interaction effects between work centrality and psychological overwork climate on workaholism, or between overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards on workaholism, in order to verify their absence (or their existence). In addition, future longitudinal studies are needed to determine the direction of the relationship between workaholism and work centrality, as well as between workaholism and psychological

overwork climate. Moreover, since lacking overwork rewards had the opposite relationship with workaholism in comparison to other studies that measured workaholism as a work addiction, it may be possible that the influence of rewards on workaholism is a factor that differentiates workaholics from work-addicted employees. This could be a fruitful area for further work.

A natural progression of this work is to examine additional variables that might influence workaholism. Such variables could be personality characteristics, which are regarded as important antecedents of workaholism in the literature (Clark et al., 2010, 2016; Liang & Chu, 2009; Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2020; McMillan et al., 2003; Ng et al., 2007; Schaufeli, 2016; Snir & Harpaz, 2012). Interaction effects of work centrality or psychological overwork climate with personality characteristics on workaholism could also be examined, on the basis of studies that report interactions between personality traits and other antecedents of workaholism (Liang & Chu, 2009; Mazzetti et al., 2014). Another interesting variable that future research may add to the association of work centrality and psychological overwork climate with workaholism is the existence of alternative career opportunities. Extant literature suggests that one may be considered a workaholic when she/he continues working excessively in workaholic organizations despite having alternative career opportunities (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Scott et al., 1997; Snir & Harpaz, 2004; Snir & Zohar, 2008).

The findings of this study provide information that can be used for creating targeted interventions aimed at preventing or diminishing workaholism. As work centrality is quite stable (Paullay et al., 1994; Snir & Harpaz, 2012), little can be done for the positive relationship between work centrality and workaholism, from an organizational point of view, beyond encouraging and supporting employees with high levels of work centrality to find more meaning in their lives and activities outside of work. Yet, the association of workaholism with overwork endorsement and lacking overwork rewards points out important organizational

interventions. It is important for organizations to avoid endorsing and rewarding overwork and workaholic behaviors (Mazzetti et al., 2014) and instead to promote a climate that discourages overwork (Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2016; Schaufeli, 2016) and rewards non-workaholic behavior (van Wijhe et al., 2016). For a climate to change successfully, an adjustment of the expected and rewarded practices is necessary (Kopelman et al., 1990, cited in Mazzetti et al., 2014). Accordingly, as the leaders of an organization play a significant role in the creation of climate perceptions (Ostroff et al., 2003), it is important that leaders and managers do not encourage overwork but act as role models who display the desired healthy and non-workaholic behaviors, for example, by behaving in a way that promotes a balance between work and personal life and limits overwork (Mazzetti et al., 2014; van Wijhe et al., 2016). Further, organizations and managers should discourage the perspective that excessive work is a precondition for productivity and career progression and highlight the importance of a healthy productivity and commitment, combined with a healthy work-life balance (Lavine, 2014; Mazzetti et al., 2014, 2020).

Despite the limitations presented, the present study has enhanced the comprehension of the association of workaholism and its dimensions with work centrality and psychological overwork climate. I hope that the present study will encourage further investigation of this significant, but not sufficiently researched, topic.

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Research

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

My name is Olga Charalambous and I am a postgraduate student in the MSc in Human Resource Management at the University of Cyprus. I am conducting a research that examines whether and how work centrality and organizational overwork climate relate to workaholism.

If you are an employee who is working in Cyprus, but not self-employed, please take the time to complete this. It is completed online and will need around 13 minutes. The structure consists of Demographic Information, Part I, Part II and Part III.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is completely anonymous and collected data will be treated with strict confidentiality and following all the standards set by the University Data Protection guidelines. Information provided will only be used for the purposes of academic research and will be presented in an aggregated manner that will prevent your identification in any way.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you can contact me (ochara02@ucy.ac.cy) or my supervisor Dr. Christiana Ierodiakonou (c.ierodiakonou@ucy.ac.cy).

Thank you for your time.

Demographic Information

What is your age?

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- Over 59

What is your sex?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Do you live with a Partner?

- Yes
- No

How many children do you have, if any?

- No children
- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

Do you have children that are younger than six years old?

- Yes
- No

What is the maximum level of formal education that you have completed?

- High school degree
- College diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- PhD

How long have you been working for your current employer?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-9 years
- 10-14 years
- 15-19 years
- more than 19 years

What is your job level?

- Entry-level
- Intermediate or experienced (senior staff)
- First-level management
- Middle management
- Executive or senior management

In which industry do you work? (please choose the ONE option that fits best)

- Accountancy, banking and finance
- Business, consulting and management
- Charity and voluntary work
- Creative arts and design
- Energy and utilities
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Environment and agriculture
- Healthcare
- Hospitality and events management
- Information technology
- Law
- Law enforcement and security
- Marketing, advertising and PR
- Media and internet
- Property and construction
- Public services and administration
- Recruitment and HR
- Retail
- Sales
- Science and pharmaceuticals
- Social care
- Teacher training and education
- Transport and logistics
- Other

Multidimensional Workaholism Scale¹

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which each item describes you, using the following scale:

1 = Never true; 2 = Seldom true; 3 = Sometimes true; 4 = Often true; 5 = Always true.

Dimension	Item
Motivational	I always have an inner pressure inside of me that drives me to work.
Motivational	I work because there is a part inside of me that feels compelled to work.
Motivational	I have a strong inner desire to work all of the time.
Motivational	There is a pressure inside of me that drives me to work.
Cognitive	I feel like I cannot stop myself from thinking about working.
Cognitive	In general, I spend my free time thinking about work.
Cognitive	At any given time, the majority of my thoughts are work related.
Cognitive	It is difficult for me to stop thinking about work when I stop working.
Emotional	I feel upset if I have to miss a day of work for any reason.
Emotional	I am almost always frustrated when I am not able to work.
Emotional	I feel upset if I cannot continue to work.
Emotional	When something prevents me from working, I usually get agitated.
Behavioral	When most of my coworkers will take breaks, I keep working.
Behavioral	I work more than what is expected of me.
Behavioral	I tend to work longer hours than most of my coworkers.
Behavioral	I tend to work beyond my job's requirements.

¹ Adopted from "The multidimensional workaholism scale: Linking the conceptualization and measurement of workaholism" by M. A. Clark, R. W. Smith, & N. J. Haynes, 2020, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(11), p. 1294 (doi: 10.1037/apl0000484).

Work Centrality Scale²

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, using the following scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly disagree; 4 = Neutral; 5 Slightly agree; 6 = Agree; 7 = Strongly agree.

- Work should only be a small part of one's life. (R)
- In my view, an individual's personal life goals should be work oriented.
- The major satisfaction in my life comes from my work.
- The most important things that happen to me involve my work.
- I have other activities more important than my work. (R)
- Work should be considered central to life.
- To me, my work is only a small part of who I am. (R)

² Used with the permission of the authors: "Construct validation of two instruments designed to measure job involvement and work centrality" by I. M. Paullay, G. M. Alliger, & E. F. Stone-Romero, 1994, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(2), 224–228 (<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.79.2.224>).

Psychological Overwork Climate Scale³

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which each item describes your perception of your work environment, using the following scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree.

Dimension	Item
Overwork endorsement	Almost everybody expects that employees perform overtime work.
Overwork endorsement	Management encourages overtime work.
Overwork endorsement	It is considered normal for employees to take work home.
Overwork endorsement	Most employees work beyond their official work hours.
Overwork endorsement	Performing overwork is important for being promoted.
Overwork endorsement	It is considered normal to work on weekends.
Overwork endorsement	It is difficult to take a day off or paid holidays.
Lacking overwork rewards	Overtime work is fairly compensated by extra time off work or by other perks. (R)
Lacking overwork rewards	Working overtime is fairly compensated financially. (R)
Lacking overwork rewards	(Almost) nobody needs to do unpaid overtime work. (R)
Lacking overwork rewards	A policy exists to restrict overtime work. (R)

³ Adopted from “Overwork climate scale: Psychometric properties and relationships with working hard” by G. Mazzetti, W. B. Schaufeli, D. Guglielmi, & M. Depolo, 2016, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 31(4), p. 884 (<https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-03-2014-0100>).