

## An Empirical Investigation on Workaholic's Imbalance Factors Using Workaholism Questionnaire Analysis

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**Abstract:** Workaholism is the key component or symptom towards work-life imbalance. The work-life imbalance causes stress towards individual. The main objective for the present research aims to measure this imbalance that associated with the workaholism factors using Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ). Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ) is about measurement that emphasizes the imbalance between personal life and work related issue. Findings reveal that educational, job status and mode of appointment associate to workaholism factors related such as work life conflict and work perfectionism. The importance of this research is able to give workaholism insight to academic and practitioner in order for them to sustain employee wellbeing.

**Key words:** Workaholism • Work-life imbalance • Workaholism analysis questionnaire (WAQ) • Employee wellbeing

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### INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Workaholic is conceptualized as highly work involvement, highly work drive and less of work enjoyment [1]. It tells that workaholic is a bout an imbalance between work and life among the employees. Fisher *et al.* [2] note that an imbalance work related is referred as a job stress that occurs when the resources of time, energy and feelings towards work and personal life are decreased. The imbalance between work and personal life lead to disruption in employee's life [3]. In other word, workaholism is the key component or symptom towards work-life imbalance as with other addictions, which causes stress along with other negative consequences [4]. Aziz *et al.*, [5] highlight that Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ) can be used to measure the imbalance between work and personal life. It is more accurate than existing measurement due to its measurement that focusing on high work drive and work-life imbalance. Therefore, the present research aims to measure this imbalance that associated with the workaholism factors using Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ).

### History of Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ):

The Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ) was created and validated as an instrument that can be effective in identifying workaholism [5]. This WAQ initiated due to some problems detected in the previous measurement. For example, in terms of validity problem [6], due to use a homogenous population of social workers [1], misfit of the workaholism model and instability of using the existing measurement in measuring workaholism [3],[7],[8],[9].

**Methodology:** Questionnaires were distributed to 180 employees in Langkawi. A total of 88 completed surveys were returned a 49 per cent response rate. Respondents were from different job background in terms of designation, level in management, mode of appointment and contractual basis.

This questionnaire has twenty nine question. These 29 questions are divided into five sub section which is 1) work life conflict, 2) work perfectionism, 3) work addiction, 4) work unpleasant and 5) withdrawal symptom. In demographic section, the respondents were asked in terms of their work background, tenure, mode of appointment, level in management and category of

organization. Present research aims to have respondents who are currently working in private and public sector in northern Malaysia.

## RESULTS

In line with findings in literature review, the present research conducted a background analysis. This is because to see the variance of respondents background. The variety of background is important because it would able to be one of the reason in validating the Workaholism Questionnaire Analysis (WAQ). As discussed in literature review, no variety or lesser variety of respondents' background may able to reduce the variance findings. Hence, below shown the table of background.

Table 1 shows the summary of background. The ranges from designation, job status, level in management, organization in sector and mode of appointment are shown above. However, in terms of response rate, only 49% returned the questionnaire. Based on note received from the respondents, the tight daily schedule caused them to not return the questionnaire within the time given. It shows that because of busy timeline, they only can focused on their job only, even they had performed but not in the right time.

Table 1: Summary of background

	Item	Frequency
Designation	Managerial	34
	Administrative	24
	Technical	20
Total		88
Education	School leavers	16
	Certificate	16
	Diploma	33
	Bachelor	23
Total		88
Job status	Permanent	62
	Contractual	23
Total		88
Level in Management	Junior	26
	Middle	53
	Senior	6
Total		85
Organization in Sector	Public	51
	Private	37
Total		88
Mode of appointment	Direct	60
	Promotion	25
Total		85

Table 2: Summary of reliability

Item	Cronbach alpha
Work life conflict	0.832
Perfectionism	0.758
Addiction	0.693
Unpleasant	0.751
Withdrawal symptom	0.853

Table 3: summary of different background of employees toward workaholism factors related

Background of employees	Workaholism related factors	Result
Educational	Work life conflict	0.036
		Pearson = 0.222
Educational	Work perfectionism	0.048
		Pearson = 0.210
Job status	Work perfectionism	0.018
		Pearson = 0.251
Mode of appointment	Work life conflict	0.015
		Pearson = -0.256

**Reliability:** All of the above results indicate that Cronbach alpha ranged between 0.693 to 0.853. The ranges are approximately above 0.7. This is important because the value above shows the internal consistency of variable. The absence of internal consistency may not permit the research to be carried on. Correlation and analysis of variance will be carried further to answer the set-up of research objective.

**Examination on Variance of Employee Background Towards Workaholism Factors:** Table 3 shows summary of different background of employees toward workaholism factors related: 1) work life conflict (WLC), 2) work perfectionism, 3) work addiction, 4) unpleasantness and 5) withdrawal symptom.

From five different background of employees tested, only educational, job status and mode of appointment associated with workaholism factors related. Moreover, out of five workaholism factor related, only work life conflict and work perfectionism have been considered as the factor to be a workaholic

## DISCUSSION

Heterogeneous is the main factor to validate the measurement used in this current research. Similar with Aziz *et al.* [5], to validate the WAQ they conducted a test using heterogeneous variable. For this purpose variety background of employees were selected ranges from different background of educational to mode of appointment. However, only education, job status and

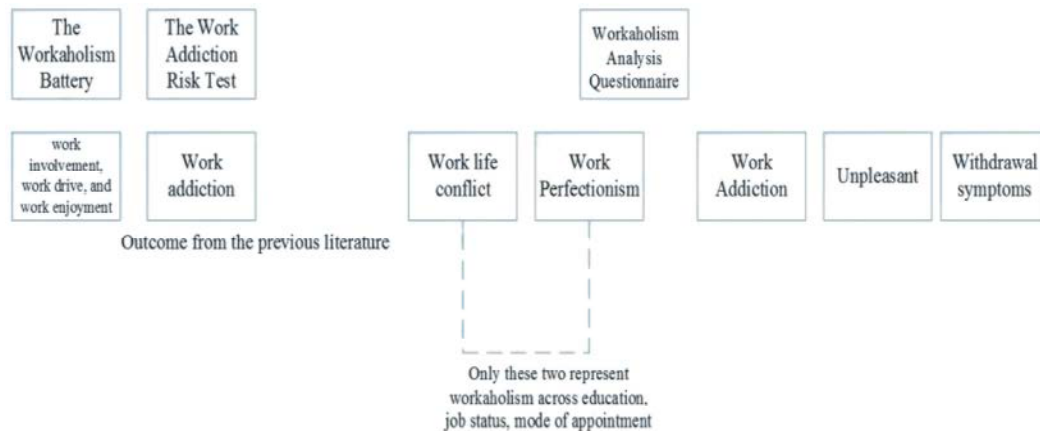


Fig. 1: Summary of present findings vs previous finding

mode of appointment have association with workaholism factors related. This shows that the higher the education they have, the higher their job status is, more complex is the job and the wider their responsibility and autonomy. This finding is supported by Schou Andreassen *et al.* [10]. This lead them to give more commitment, the worsen they imbalance between personal life and job demand. The present research anticipates that the workaholics they are, the more they could manage their time wisely.

Apart of the above, employees only considering themselves workaholics when they experienced work life conflict and they want perfectionism in producing their work. They always put 'on hold' their personal or family needs due to fulfil their work commitment even in the holiday. Ultimately lead to the conflict in family. From perspective work perfectionism, employees who are workaholics always checking their work before make a final submission. It tells that the self confidence is lessen and no trust in team or self perhaps.

In addition, the WAQ is created and developed due to define workaholism in more broad, hence able to provide a more comprehensive assessment by including items that directly tap into work-life imbalance, a common symptom of workaholism and other addictive disorders [5]. This explanation is in line with the above findings; Workaholism can be illustrated as an individual that emphasizes on perfectionism when dealing with work and give privilege to this work first and put on hold of his personal commitment. The imbalance between personal life and work is not a good indicator in employee wellbeing perspective. Many previous research conducted research consequences of having imbalance in work life; for example it causes job burnout [11], the transformation from having job satisfaction to dissatisfaction [12]. Ultimately, it is hard to hit the sustainable button in employment relations.

Throughout this present research, it seems that WAQ is able to be used in measuring the imbalance between personal life and work because of workaholism. It does broadened the existing definition of workaholism, which in previous workaholism always been associated with working long hours or work obsessive or work compulsive [13] but current findings had narrowed it down to perfectionism and work life conflict. In addition, the present research anticipates that another three; work addiction, unpleasant and withdrawal symptoms also need to be considered in future research. From the answer gained from survey, many respondents did not agree with those three mentioned above as indicate them are workaholics. Hence, no further discussion can be discussed since it is beyond present research territory. Below is the illustration (see figure 1) on the present findings and as compared to previous findings.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, workaholism may not contribute to the employee wellbeing due to it able ruin employees' quality of life. Workaholism also may not highly contributing to the job performance. However, this is only the assumptions that can be made based on the findings, due it beyond present research scope.

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