

WORKAHOLIC TEST

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A workaholic is a person who works [compulsively](#). While the term generally implies that the person enjoys their work, it can also imply that they simply feel compelled to do it. Workaholism could be described by feeling compelled to work because of internal pressures, having persistent thoughts about work when not working, working beyond what is reasonably expected of the worker (as established by the requirements of the job or basic economic needs) despite the potential for negative consequences (e.g., marital issues) (Clark, Michel, Zhdanova, Pui and Baltes, 2016).

The Workaholic Test is a 51-item psychometric test that adopts Likert-type forced choice 6-point scale. Scales are from 1-point “Very strongly disagree” to 6-points “Very strongly agree”. There are two factors (51 items) included into the Workaholic Test, namely: (1) Wellbeing (27 items); (2) Attitudes (17 items). Factors incorporate statements like “I think of how I can free up more time to work” or “I de-prioritize hobbies, leisure activities, or exercise because of my work” or “I am unsatisfied with my work/life balance” or “Work is a regular part of my evenings and weekends” or “I fear failure” or “I get stressed when I am not at work”.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The terms ‘workaholic’ and ‘workaholism’ are commonly used in everyday language, yet there is relatively little empirical research on the topic. For the lay public, workaholism is synonymous with working long hours. However, conceiving workaholism exclusively in terms of the number of working hours is misleading because it neglects its addictive nature. A typical work addict is motivated by a strong internal drive that cannot be resisted rather than by external or contextual factors, such as financial problems, a poor marriage, organizational culture, supervisory pressure, or a strong desire for career advancement.

The term workaholism was coined in 1971 by minister and psychologist Wayne Oates, who described workaholism as “the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly” (Oates, 1971). The term “workaholic” has become a popular buzzword in the popular press (e.g., Lavine, 2014; Singal, 2014; Stillman, 2014). Therefore, based on a conceptual analysis, Schaufeli and his colleagues (2005) defined workaholism as the tendency to work excessively hard (the behavioral dimension) and being obsessed with work (the cognitive dimension), which manifests itself in working compulsively.

Although reliable evidence on the prevalence of workaholism are hard to come by, Porter (1996) claims that one in four employed people are workaholics. It has also been claimed that amongst professional groups, the rate of workaholism is high (Doerfler & Kammer, 1986) especially in occupations such as medicine (Killinger, 1992). As a result they work long hours, rarely delegate, expend high effort, and may not necessarily be more productive (Griffiths, 2005). Inefficiency may also result as a consequence of perfectionist traits (Porter, 1996).

Taris et al. (2008) also note that there is a behavioral component and a psychological component to workaholism. The behavioral component comprises working excessively hard (i.e. a high number of hours per day and/or week), whereas the psychological (dispositional) component comprises being obsessed with work (i.e. working compulsively and being unable to detach from work) (McMillan and O’Driscoll, 2006; Ng et al., 2007; Taris et al., 2004).

Workaholism, long-associated in some parts of the world with an industrious work ethic, can develop into a full-blown psychological addiction. Workaholism can be a sign of serious emotional distress. Psychology researchers, led by Cecilie Schou Andreassen (2016) from the University of Bergen in Norway, found a strong link between workaholism and anxiety, and depression.

Workaholism has been associated with ill-health (i.e., psychological distress and physical complaints) and poor job performance (Taris et al., 2010; Shimazu et al., 2009). In our studies we found negative and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) correlations between perceived performance and both workaholism factors (i.e. Wellbeing $r = - 0.17$ and Attitudes $r = - 0.28$; $p < 0.05$).

VALIDATION

For validation of our Workaholic Test (WT) we used Work and Well-being Survey (DUWAS) © Schaufeli & Taris (2004). DUWAS-short version incorporates twenty statements about how a person feel at work. Likert-type frequency scale is adopted from “1” (one) = (Almost) never to “4” (four) = (Almost) always.

Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS) is popular and widely published:

- Schaufeli, W., Van Wijhe, C., Peeters, M. & Taris, T. (2011). Werkverslaving, een begrip gemeten [Workaholism; The measurement of a concept]. *Gedrag & Organisatie*, 24, 43-63. ; Taris, T.W. & Schaufeli, W.B. (2003). Werk, werk, en nog eens werk : De conceptualisering, oorzaken en gevolgen van werkverslaving. *De Psycholoog*, 38, 506-512.
- Taris, T.W., Schaufeli, W.B., van Hoogenhuyze, C.L.P & Zon, A.C.B. (2003). Werkverslaving en gezondheid : Ontwikkeling en validatie van een Nederlandse workaholisme-schaal. *Gedrag & Gezondheid*, 31, 2-18.
- Taris, T.W., Schaufeli, W.B. & Verhoeven, L.C. (2005). Internal and external validation of the Dutch Work Addiction Risk Test: Implications for jobs and non-work conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology: An international Review*, 54, 37-60.

Internal correlations are shown in Table below.

Table. Within Sample Correlations in the Workaholic Test (WT) and Work and Well-being Survey (DUWAS) (N = 731)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. WT. Wellbeing	1				
2. WT. Attitudes	0.87	1			
3. DUWAS. Working Excessively (WE)	0.64	0.68	1		
4. DUWAS. Working Compulsively (WC)	0.61	0.61	0.72	1	
5. DUWAS. Total	0.67	0.69	0.92	0.94	1

All presented correlations are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

RELIABILITY

Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach α or coefficient alpha) was 0.97; Generally ranges from 0.94 to 0.96 (see Table below).

Table. Reliability Statistics for Workaholic Test (N = 731)

Technophobia and Technophilia Factors	Number of items	Reliability Statistics* Cronbach α
1. WT. Wellbeing	27	0.96
2. WT. Attitudes	17	0.94

* Widely is accepted .70 coefficient alpha as a standard (Nunnally, 1978)

It has to be mentioned that in our studies the DUWAS Cronbach α (or coefficient alpha) was 0.88 (N=731).

ESTONIAN NORMS

Estonian Norms for Workaholic Test (see Table). Estonian norms are based on 488 people from 2 samples i.e. one general sample and one occupational sample.

Table. Descriptive statistics of Workaholic Test (WT) results in Estonia. Scales are from 1-point “Very strongly disagree” to 6-points “Very strongly agree”.

Workaholic Test (WT) Factors	NURSES (N=132)		EST (N=356)	
	M	SD	M	SD
1. WT. Wellbeing	2.30***	0.78	2.64	0.82
2. WT. Attitudes	2.44***	0.85	2.73	0.88

Occupational sample is significantly different from the EST sample: * $p < 0.05$;

** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

POLISH NORMS

Polish Norms for Workaholic Test (see Table). Polish norms are based on 277 people from one general sample.

Table. Descriptive statistics of Workaholic Test results in Poland. Scales are from 1-point “Very strongly disagree” to 6-points “Very strongly agree”.

Workaholism Factors	M	SD
1. WT. Wellbeing	2.70	1.06
2. WT. Attitudes	2.68	1.12

CORRELATION BETWEEN WORKAHOLISM AND PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE

Reliability between Workaholic Test and Perceived Performance Scale (PPS) was 0.93.

Table. Correlations between Workaholic Test (WT) and perceived performance (measured by Perceived Performance Scale) N = 731

Workaholism	Perceived performance
1. WT. Wellbeing	-0.17
2. WT. Attitudes	-0.28

Correlations are negative and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$)

PUBLICATIONS and/or CONFERENCES

(Bibliography of Studies Using the Workaholic Test)

Teichmann, M. (2016). *E-HRM* (Human Resource or Personnel or Human Factor or Human Capital). In: Conference “New approaches to HR management: do they work in Central and Eastern Europe?” University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, the 6th of October 2016.

Teichmann, M., Murdvee, M., Kożusznik, B., Smorzewska, B., Gaidajenko, A., Ilvest, J. Jr. (2017). *Relationship between the Employees’ Perceived Performance and Various Work Related Psychosocial Characteristics*. In: European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) Congress “Enabling Change through Work and Organizational Psychology”, May 17th - 20th 2017, Dublin, Ireland (in press).

Teichmann, M. (2017). *Changing world of work*. In: Congress “Psychology in the crossroad of traditions and innovations or Psychology between traditions and innovations”, 11th of May 2017, Vilnius. Lithuania (in press).