The Individual ‘Costs’ of Workaholism: An Analysis Based on Multisource and Prospective Data

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Abstract
We conducted two studies on workaholism to address three identified gaps in the literature (Clark et al., 2014), namely, the job-related affective experiences of workaholics, the relationship between workaholism and job demands, and the long-term mental health effects of workaholism. We also examined gender as a moderator of the relationship between workaholism and its outcomes. In Study 1 (N = 311), focused on a heterogeneous sample of workers, we found that workaholism was positively related to the experience of observer-reported, as well as self-reported, job-related negative affect and that this relationship was stronger among female workers. Furthermore, in a subsample of participants (N = 189) for whom we had available blood pressure data, we found that workaholism was positively related to systolic blood pressure. In Study 2 (N = 235), based on a sample of health-sector employees in which we adopted a full, two-wave panel design including workaholism, job demands, and mental distress, we found that the baseline levels of job demands impacted the follow-up levels of workaholism, while the reverse was not the case. We also found that the baseline levels of workaholism positively affected the levels of mental distress reported after one year. These results add to the existing literature on the job-related affective correlates and psychophysical costs of workaholism and shedding further light on work environmental factors that may contribute to its genesis.

Keywords: Well-Being; Affect/Emotions; Occupational Health and Safety; Personality; Stress.