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WORKAHOLISM DIMENSIONS AND THEIR CONNECTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA  
USERS' PERFORMANCE, WELL-BEING, AND SELF-CARE

Bachelor Thesis

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I have written this Bachelor thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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## Introduction

Workaholism, the compulsive drive to work excessively, has become a pervasive phenomenon in modern society, where professional success often overshadows personal well-being, performance, and self-care. In a world where productivity and achievement are highly valued—both offline and on social media, individuals experience increasing pressure to dedicate more time and energy to their careers. This pressure is not limited to traditional work environments; rather, it has permeated digital spaces, especially social media platforms, where idealized portrayals of ambition and hustle culture position overwork as a norm. In such contexts, the balance between professional performance, personal well-being, and self-care is increasingly at risk.

The concept of workaholism, first introduced by Oates (1971) as “the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly,” highlights its disruptive effects on health, happiness, and personal relationships (as cited in Ruiz-Garcia et al., 2022, p.2). Over time, researchers have explored its multidimensional nature. The motivational dimension reflects the internal urges that compel individuals to work excessively, not due to external demands, but because of deep-rooted psychological needs. These include a desire for control, fear of failure, and a need for achievement—factors that often make work a central part of one’s identity (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). Robinson (1989), as cited in Snir and Harpaz (2012), identified the emotional dimension of workaholism as a disorder characterized by significant emotional strain and difficulties in maintaining a balance between work and personal life. The cognitive dimension, emphasized by Spence and Robbins (1992), as cited in Shkoler et al., (2017), involves internal pressures that compel individuals to work excessively, often driven by guilt or distress when idle. Meanwhile, the behavioral dimension refers to observable patterns such as excessive work hours and compulsive actions that undermine both well-being and interpersonal relationships.

As discussed above, scholars have identified various dimensions of workaholism—motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—that influence individuals differently (Spence & Robbins, 1992; Robinson, 1989). Recent studies have explored these dimensions further, focusing on their complex interchange and differing impacts on performance, well-being and self-care (Clark et al., 2016; Mazzetti et al., 2016; Franke et al., 2014).

The reasoning behind choosing performance, well-being, and self-care as focal points in this paper lies in their significance as critical indicators of both individual and organizational functioning. Performance reflects the ability of individuals to meet

professional expectations and achieve productivity goals, which are often prioritized in work-centric cultures. Well-being encompasses life satisfaction, emotional stability, and psychological health, all of which can be undermined by the chronic stress and emotional burden of workaholism. Self-care adds an essential layer to this framework, as it refers to intentional behaviors that support mental and physical health, such as taking breaks, maintaining boundaries, engaging in rest, and prioritizing one's emotional needs. According to Franke et al. (2014), neglecting self-care can lead to emotional exhaustion and diminished resilience, especially when individuals feel compelled to prioritize work above all else. For individuals with workaholic tendencies, self-care is often deprioritized, which further exacerbates burnout and reduces long-term capacity to perform effectively. According to Lemola et al. (2015), eveningness and prolonged screen exposure, often associated with excessive work or digital connectivity, are linked to sleep disturbances and increased depressive symptoms, ultimately reducing overall well-being and self-care patterns.

While workaholism has been extensively studied in organizational and personal environments, the intersection of workaholic tendencies with social media platforms remains unexplored. Existing studies often focus on traditional workplace settings, overlooking how social media influences work-related behaviors and exacerbates compulsive tendencies (Spence and Robbins, 1992; Robinson, 1989).

As Ng, Sorensen, and Feldman (2007) noted, societal expectations often promote work-centric identities, especially among high-achieving individuals. In this context, social norms frame overwork not as a dysfunction, but as a signal of ambition and reliability. These implicit standards are amplified in digital environments, where curated posts about productivity and professional milestones affirm internalized pressure to work excessively. Such influences may exacerbate the cognitive and motivational dimensions of workaholism, especially among social media users exposed to constant comparison.

Furthermore, research on workaholism across social media users is sparse, despite the increasing importance of digital platforms as spaces where professional and personal identities merge. The author did not manage to find articles on the specifics of social media influence in workaholism context, which shows there is lack of academic attention that leaves critical questions unanswered about how social media pictures workaholism, also making it an important area for further investigation. Occurs the need for more subtle investigations that adopt a multidimensional approach to workaholism while considering global trends, such as the influence of social media on perceptions of work and success (Shkoler et al., 2017).

Due to its crucial role in shaping modern work and lifestyle habits, social media has been chosen as one of the focuses for this paper. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok not only reflect societal values surrounding productivity and success but also amplify these pressures through constant exposure to curated representations of work and achievement. Social media users are often subjected to comparisons, which can intensify feelings of inadequacy or guilt, driving compulsive work behaviors. Additionally, the boundary between professional and personal lives becomes increasingly blurred on social media, making it an interesting context for examining the interplay between workaholism, performance, and well-being. The core idea of these factors within the social media landscape being examined can provide thoughts into how digital environments influence work-related behaviors and mental health of individuals.

The aim of this thesis is to find out how the dimensions of workaholism—motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—relate to performance, well-being and self-care among social media users. By doing so, it seeks to identify which dimensions pose the greatest risks and have the most influence on one's life. The research addresses the following tasks:

1. Present and analyze previous definitions of workaholism and its dimensions such as “motivational”, “cognitive”, “emotional” and “behavioral” as well as define performance, well-being and self-care.
2. Examine the psychological and social foundations of workaholism, identifying its primary drivers and their interactions.
3. Provide theoretical perspectives on the relationship between workaholism, performance, well-being and self-care, with a focus on the role of social media.
4. Provide an overview of previous empirical studies on workaholism, its dimensions, and their connection to performance, well-being and self-care.
5. Collect data on social media users' opinions on extensive work and its relationship with their performance, well-being and self-care through survey.
6. Analyze the collected data through descriptive analysis and correlation.
7. Conclude by comparing and discussing the empirical results with previous research.

Previously workaholism has been studied extensively in traditional workplaces, however there is a gap that the author has identified: in understanding of how it plays out on

social media. There is surprisingly little known about how workaholic tendencies—like obsessive motivation, overthinking, emotional attachment, or compulsive behavior correlate with users' job performance, personal well-being, or ability to care for themselves in these digital spaces. This is again a newly raised question: how does workaholism "look" online, and what does that mean for people's lives?

This thesis tackles that question in two parts. First, the groundwork by untangling what workaholism really means, especially with focus on its connections to performance, well-being and self-care will be laid. The author will break down its core dimensions—the why (motivation), how (thought patterns), feelings (emotional ties), and actions (behavioral habits)—and summarize what existing research says about their links to performance, well-being, and self-care, as most studies focus on office settings, not Instagram or LinkedIn.

In the second part, an empirical analysis will be presented. The author will share details about the survey conducted among social media users and explain how workaholic traits and its connections to users' performance, well-being and self-care were measured. Then, the thesis will dig into the data: does usage of social media correlate with well-being and healthy life-style habits? Does relentlessly chasing overworking patterns online actually help performance? Finally, the author will connect these findings to the bigger picture and discuss what they mean for both theory and real-life users.

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Keywords: workaholism, motivational dimension, cognitive dimension, emotional dimension, behavioral dimension, performance, well-being, self-care, social media.

## **1. The nature of workaholism, its dimensions: motivational, cognitive, emotional, behavioral; and its connections with overall performance, well-being and self-care**

### **1.1 Definition of the concept of workaholism, its dimensions, performance, well-being and self-care**

Workaholism, a term first introduced by Oates (1971), is described as “the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly.” Oates (1971) framed it as a persistent and excessive drive to work that adversely affects one's health, happiness, and personal relationships (as cited in Ruiz-Garcia et al., 2022, p.2). Since its introduction, the concept of

workaholism has evolved to incorporate various dimensions that reflect its multifaceted nature. Scholars generally categorize workaholism into four key dimensions: emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and motivational (Oates, 1971).

To a greater extent, it was developed by its dimensions, and the first one to observe is the emotional dimension of workaholism as a phenomenon. The emotional dimension of workaholism primarily addresses the psychological strain associated with compulsive work behaviors. Robinson (1989) described workaholism as a progressive and potentially harmful disorder that can lead to significant emotional distress. This strain often manifests in feelings of anxiety, irritability, and guilt when an individual is not engaged in work-related activities (as cited in Snir & Harpaz, 2012, p.233). Over time, these emotional pressures can affect personal well-being, causing disruptions in family life, relationships, and overall life satisfaction. Emotional workaholism is further characterized by a reliance on work as a coping mechanism to manage negative feelings, creating a vicious cycle of dependence on work for emotional stability (Clark, Michel, Zhdanova, Pui, & Baltes, 2016).

The cognitive dimension focuses on the mental patterns that drive workaholic tendencies. Spence and Robbins (1992) conceptualized workaholism as an addiction fueled by internal pressures rather than external demands or intrinsic enjoyment. Workaholics often perceive themselves as obligated to work incessantly, experiencing distress, guilt, or a sense of inadequacy when they are not working (as cited in Shkoler, Rabenu, & Tziner, 2017, p. 193). These cognitive patterns can include obsessive thoughts about work, perfectionistic tendencies, and a preoccupation with professional achievement. This dimension highlights the internal dialogue that sustains workaholism, often rooted in societal expectations or personal beliefs about success and productivity (Andreassen et al., 2014).

The behavioral dimension links to the observable actions and habits associated with workaholism. This includes excessive hours spent working, compulsive multitasking, and prioritization of work over other life domains, such as family, leisure, and personal health (Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008). Behavioral workaholism is often the most visible dimension, characterized by an inability to disengage from work activities even during non-working hours. Indeed, these behaviors may initially appear productive, however they often lead to negative outcomes, such as burnout, diminished performance, and strained relationships (Shimazu, Schaufeli, & Taris, 2009; Clark et al., 2016). Moreover, the compulsive nature of these behaviors makes it challenging for individuals to achieve a healthy work-life balance (Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008).

The motivational dimension of workaholism focuses on the internal drives that compel individuals to overwork, often to fulfill deep-seated psychological needs. Key motivators include the pursuit of perfection, fear of failure, and a need for validation or control. These motivations create a cycle where work becomes a primary source of self-worth and identity, making it difficult for individuals to disengage even when it negatively impacts their well-being (Schaufeli et al., 2008). For instance, perfectionism—a common trait among workaholics—leads to excessive commitment to work, initially boosting productivity but eventually resulting in inefficiency and burnout (Clark et al., 2016). This dimension highlights that while intrinsic motivation can be a positive force, when driven by compulsive needs, it can become detrimental, reducing both long-term performance and overall life satisfaction (Burke et al., 2006).

To better illustrate the definitions of workaholism and their key features the author compiled four definitions, as shown in Table 1. It is important to note that many of these are second source definitions, as the original sources were either inaccessible or lacked a precise definition. Despite this, the table offers a valuable overview of how different researchers have conceptualized the term in varying ways, which includes comparing definitions by their emphasis on compulsion, organizational expectations, and subjective interpretations.

Table 1

*Detailed comparison of workaholism's impact on personal life*

Source	Definition	Comment
Oates (1971) (as cited in Ruiz-Garcia, Castanheira, Borges, & Mosteiro-Diaz, 2022, p. 2)	"The compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly" and "a permanent, excessive, and uncontrollable need for work that disrupts one's health, happiness, and personal relationships."	This definition emphasizes compulsion as a key factor, along with the negative impacts on all aspects of personal life: health, happiness, and relationships.
Aguilera Luque (2017) (as cited in Ruiz-Garcia, Castanheira, Borges, &	"Working more than what is reasonable for an organization's expectations, oblivious to the potential negative	Focuses on exceeding organizational expectations, which leads to negative effects on health and well-being, but does not explicitly mention personal relationships.

Mosteiro-Diaz, 2022, p. 2)	impacts on physical and psychosocial well-being."	
Robinson (1989) (as cited in Snir & Harpaz, 2012, p. 233)	"A progressive, potentially fatal disorder of work addiction, leading to family disintegration and an increased inability to manage work habits and life domains."	Defines workaholism as a progressive disorder, indicating that it worsens over time and causes severe disruption of family life and personal health, aligning it closely with addiction.
Spence & Robbins (1992) as cited in Shkoler, Rabenu, & Tziner, 2017, p. 193	"The workaholic feels driven or compelled to work, not because of external demands or pleasure in work, but because of inner pressures that make the person distressed or guilty about not working."	Emphasizes internal psychological pressures, such as feelings of guilt when not working. Defines workaholism as an addiction, focusing on emotional distress rather than health or relationships.

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

As Oates (1971) views workaholism through the lens of a compulsive drive that affects all dimensions of personal well-being, making it the most comprehensive in terms of covering health, happiness, and relationships, Aguilera-Luque (2017) frames workaholism in the context of organizational expectations, emphasizing how it impacts physical and psychosocial health but does not put much consideration into the consequences for personal relationships.

Robinson (1989) takes a clinical perspective, likening workaholism to a progressively worsening addiction that can destroy family dynamics and personal health, underscoring its severity, while Spence & Robbins (1992) highlight the psychological aspect, where the addiction is driven not by external factors but by internal guilt and pressure, however there was no health affect mentioned.

These dimensions interact in complex ways. For example, emotional distress can support cognitive patterns of guilt and obligation, which in turn drive compulsive work behaviors. Similarly, motivational factors often influence both cognitive and behavioral aspects, creating a reinforcing cycle that perpetuates workaholic tendencies.

This interconnection becomes even more pronounced in environments where work and life boundaries are blurred. As noted by Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006), individuals who integrate work and nonwork roles are more prone to psychological strain and reduced

well-being, especially when boundary control is weak. Within the social media context, where professional visibility overlaps with personal identity, this permeability may intensify compulsive work behaviors and emotional distress.

To unpack the consequences of workaholism, this study focuses on three interconnected dimensions: performance (professional effectiveness), well-being (psychological health), and self-care (sustainable recovery practices). These variables act as a lens to examine how workaholism—a blend of compulsive motivation, cognitive fixation, emotional will and excessive work hours—shapes both professional outcomes and personal health.

Performance in organizational settings is broadly categorized into two domains: task performance and contextual performance (Koopmans et al., 2015). Task performance is often related to how effectively an individual executes core job responsibilities, such as completing assignments, meeting deadlines, and achieving measurable goals. In contrast, contextual performance captures behaviors that support the organizational environment but are not explicitly part of formal job duties—such as helping colleagues, demonstrating initiative, and contributing to a positive workplace culture (Koopmans et al., 2011).

Workaholics often demonstrate high initial task performance, driven by relentless effort. However, this “overdrive” comes at a cost. Prolonged overwork depletes cognitive resources, leading to diminished focus, poorer decision-making, and reduced creativity (Shimazu et al., 2010). Over time, even contextual performance suffers as exhaustion erodes empathy and collaboration—key ingredients for a healthy workplace (Clark et al., 2016). In essence, workaholism trades short-term gains for long-term sustainability.

Well-being is not merely the absence of stress but a holistic state of psychological, emotional, and social health. Drawing on Ryff’s (1989) model, it encompasses six dimensions: self-acceptance, purpose, autonomy, growth, environmental mastery, and positive relationships. This framework emphasizes thriving rather than just coping.

Workaholism directly undermines this equilibrium. Chronic overwork triggers emotional exhaustion, heightens stress, and weakens life satisfaction (Innanen et al., 2014). The problem intensifies in digital environments, where constant connectivity blurs boundaries between professional and personal identities (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006). For instance, the pressure to remain “always on” amplifies anxiety, making it harder to disconnect and recharge—a critical factor in maintaining mental health.

Self-care—defined as intentional practices to preserve physical, emotional, and mental health—is foundational to resilience. It includes restorative activities (e.g., sleep,

exercise), stress management (e.g., mindfulness), and boundary-setting (Ardila-Suárez et al. (2024). The World Health Organization (2021) frames self-care as proactive health management, empowering individuals to mitigate occupational strain.

Workaholics, however, often neglect self-care. They prioritize work over rest, skip meals to meet deadlines, and deprioritize social connections. This neglect creates a vicious cycle: without recovery, stress accumulates, impairing both performance and well-being (Franke et al., 2014). Ardila-Suárez et al. (2024) argue that self-care acts as a buffer, shielding individuals from the psychological toll of high-pressure work. When self-care falters, the system breaks down.

In digitally saturated environments—where productivity is glorified and downtime is stigmatized—workaholism thrives. Social media and workplace platforms normalize hyper-availability, equating busyness with success. Yet this study reveals a contradiction: while workaholics may appear productive, their performance becomes inconsistent, their well-being deteriorates, and their self-care habits unravel. This triad highlights the unsustainable nature of workaholism, particularly in cultures that conflate overwork with ambition.

In a way of integrating performance, well-being, and self-care, this research challenges the myth that “more work” equals “better outcomes.” Instead, it underscores the interdependence of professional effectiveness and personal health. Addressing workaholism requires systemic shifts, not just individual behavior change—to prioritize sustainable practices in workplaces, especially in our digitally amplified world.

Even though these dimensions provide a certain framework for understanding workaholism, the author finds their application in contemporary contexts still remains underrepresented, as there are no articles on investigation and analysis of workaholism impact on performance and well-being across social-media users. Notably, there are no articles specifically investigating and analyzing the impact of workaholism on performance and well-being among social media users. Considering that modern trends, such as the influence of social media may boost certain dimensions, particularly the cognitive and motivational aspects, social media platforms often promote idealized representations of success and productivity, shaping individuals’ perceptions of work and financial achievement. It indeed implies the need for continued research to examine how these dimensions evolve in response to societal changes.

## 1.2. Theoretical perspectives on causes of workaholism and its relationship with performance, well-being and self-care within social media context

This subchapter provides an overview of the theoretical background causes and consequences of workaholism's connection to performance, well-being, as well as comparison of causes and consequences of workaholism based on three primary aspects: Individual Factors, Workplace Environment, and Social Influences. Unfortunately, despite thorough research author could not find sufficient theoretical conceptual background particularly related to self-care to present it in the table, for all others aspects - see presented in Table 2.

In Table 2, specific causes align with distinct outcomes in terms of performance and well-being. For example, individual factors such as perfectionism and intrinsic drive often lead to short-term productivity gains but are inevitably followed by inefficiency and increased risks of burnout (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Workplace environmental factors—such as high job demands and insufficient support—compound the effects by fostering overcommitment and reducing work-life balance, as noted in studies by Waheed (2010). Social influences, especially societal norms and social media, exacerbate competitive overworking while fostering emotional exhaustion and negative self-perception, a phenomenon explored by Ng et al. (2006).

Table 2

### *Comparison of Causes and Consequences of Workaholism*

Aspect	Causes	Consequence on performance	Consequence on well-being
Individual factors	Perfectionism, need for control, and intrinsic drive	Initial productivity boost, followed by inefficiency	Increased stress, anxiety, and risk of burnout
Workplace environment	High job demands, lack of support, and long hours	Overcommitment leading to error-prone work	Poor work-life balance and dissatisfaction
Social influences	Societal norms, peer pressure, and social media	Competitive overworking and inconsistent performance	Emotional exhaustion and negative self-perception

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources (Burke et al., 2006), (Schaufeli et al., 2008), (Andreassen et al., 2014), Burke (2001), (Clark et al., 2016).

Starting with describing and comparing causes of workaholism, the origins of workaholism are often linked to individual personality traits, such as perfectionism, neuroticism, and Type A behavior patterns (Burke et al., 2006). These traits predispose individuals to overcommit to work in pursuit of self-worth, validation, or control.

Recent research also suggests a neurobiological foundation to workaholic behavior. According to Salanova et al. (2013), imbalances in dopamine-related reward systems may lead individuals to compulsively seek work-related success and feedback as a form of gratification. This biological reinforcement makes it difficult to disengage from work, thereby perpetuating compulsive work habits even in the face of negative outcomes.

Additionally, workplace factors, such as high job demands, lack of support, and excessive expectations, contribute to the development of workaholic tendencies. These environmental stressors, coupled with internal drivers, create a reinforcing cycle of overwork (Schaufeli et al., 2008).

Digitalization of the workplace has also introduced the concept of technostress—a form of stress resulting from excessive or ineffective use of technology. Tarafdar et al. (2019) argue that technostress interacts with individual psychological traits and workplace norms to promote workaholic tendencies. Employees who feel constantly "on" due to technological demands may experience a loss of control over their work schedules and increased burnout risks.

In contemporary contexts, societal and cultural influences, such as social media, further exacerbate workaholism by promoting idealized images of success and productivity. Platforms often glorify "hustle culture," leading individuals to equate their self-worth with their professional achievements. This societal pressure has expanded the scope of workaholism, making it more pervasive across different industries and demographics (Andreassen et al., 2014).

The relationship between workaholism and performance is paradoxical. Initially, workaholics may experience increased productivity due to their excessive commitment to work. However, over time, this overcommitment often leads to diminishing returns. Studies have shown that workaholics are prone to inefficiency, reduced quality of work, and errors, primarily due to fatigue and burnout (Shimazu et al., 2010).

The study by Inanen et al. (2014) demonstrated that individuals in the Exhausted-Workaholic profile experienced higher levels of stress and dissatisfaction compared to their engaged counterparts, emphasizing the detrimental effects on subjective well-being. This finding is further supported by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), who noted that workaholism can

lead to burnout and negatively impact both personal and professional life. Furthermore, Maslach and Leiter (2008) highlighted that prolonged work stress is associated with emotional exhaustion, which can impair overall functioning.

Workaholism has significant negative implications for well-being. Emotional and physical exhaustion are common outcomes, often accompanied by stress, anxiety, and sleep disturbances (Clark et al., 2016). Workaholics frequently report poor work-life balance, strained relationships, and lower life satisfaction.

Workaholism also poses serious risks to physical health. As Molino et al. (2020) emphasize, the chronic stress and lack of recovery time associated with compulsive work behaviors are linked to cardiovascular strain, immune suppression, and metabolic dysfunction. These physical costs compound the psychological effects, leading to decreased work performance over time and an overall reduction in quality of life.

Self-care is an essential yet often overlooked aspect of well-being, particularly for individuals exhibiting workaholic tendencies. It encompasses activities and behaviors that promote physical, emotional, and mental health, such as maintaining a healthy lifestyle, engaging in relaxation practices, and setting personal boundaries to prevent burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Studies suggest that workaholics frequently neglect self-care due to their compulsive focus on productivity and performance, leading to increased stress, exhaustion, and diminished overall well-being (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2008).

Incorporating self-care into assessment well-being allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the negative consequences of workaholism. Prior research highlights that individuals with workaholic tendencies often exhibit poor self-care routines, which can exacerbate burnout and emotional exhaustion (Innanen, Tolvanen, & Salmela-Aro, 2014). By examining how workaholic behaviors correlate with self-care habits, this study aims to determine whether individuals who score higher on workaholism dimensions also report lower self-care engagement. The findings could provide valuable understanding into the need for targeted interventions that promote self-care practices as a means of mitigating the adverse effects of excessive work engagement (Andreassen et al., 2014).

According to Innanen et al. (2014), individuals in the Exhausted-Workaholic profile often experience short-term gains in output but struggle with maintaining sustainable performance. High levels of emotional exhaustion and cynicism further erode their ability to perform effectively over time. This highlights the importance of distinguishing between healthy engagement and compulsive overwork, a view also expressed by Burke (2001) who

noted that workaholism can lead to significant health problems, which can ultimately reduce productivity in the workplace.

Conversely, engaged workers—characterized by intrinsic motivation and a balance between work and life—exhibit higher levels of satisfaction and resilience (Bakker et al., 2008). This contrast shows the need for strengthening engagement with addressing the drivers of workaholism to promote both performance and well-being.

Individual traits like perfectionism and intrinsic drive can lead to temporary productivity boosts but often result in burnout and inefficiency (Clark et al., 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Workplace factors, such as high job demands and lack of support, further worsen these effects (Schaufeli et al., 2008), while societal pressures, including "hustle culture," encourage overworking and emotional exhaustion (Andreassen et al., 2014). These findings highlight the need to address the drivers of workaholism—both personal and external—to support better work-life balance and sustainable performance.

Building upon this, social media emerges as a critical modern external factor that reinforces the very drivers discussed above. Traditionally seen as a tool for communication and self-promotion, social media platforms now function as amplifiers of work-centric values, encouraging users to display their productivity and professional success publicly. This shift indeed seems to influence implications for the motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of workaholism, as well as all the aforementioned workaholism outcomes.

The author has further broken-down social media influence on the workaholism dimensions. The motivational dimension is particularly vulnerable in the digital context, where users are constantly exposed to posts celebrating overachievement, side hustles, and “always-on” productivity. These curated portrayals create an illusion that success is synonymous with constant work, reinforcing internal drives such as fear of falling behind, need for recognition, or the desire to match others' visible accomplishments (Capitano et al., 2017). This environment promotes the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which has been found to increase pressure to perform and maintain constant engagement with work tasks (Przybylski et al., 2013). From a cognitive perspective, social media intensifies self-imposed expectations and perfectionistic thinking. Workaholic individuals may internalize societal standards promoted through digital content—believing they must be productive to be valued—thereby increasing feelings of guilt, inadequacy, or failure when they are not working (Spence & Robbins, 1992; Clark et al., 2016). The constant exposure to success narratives promotes obsessive thinking around performance metrics, deadlines, and

productivity hacks, often at the cost of mental clarity and rest. The emotional dimension is likewise affected, as social media can trigger stress, envy, or shame through social comparison. Seeing peers or influencers post achievements can heighten emotional distress in users already predisposed to workaholism, especially if they perceive themselves as less successful or insufficiently productive (Andreassen et al., 2014; Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Emotional strain is often exacerbated when individuals seek validation through online performance, leading to cycles of overworking to regulate negative affect. On the behavioral level, social media platforms encourage engagement with work-related content even during leisure hours. Notifications, direct messages, and professional posts act as constant reminders of work, making it difficult to disconnect. This “always-on” digital behavior translates into extended working hours, multitasking, and reduced participation in restorative activities such as sleep, exercise, or mindfulness practices (Tarafdar et al., 2019; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006).

This multidimensional augmentation of workaholism through social media ultimately erodes performance, well-being, and self-care. Although workaholics may initially appear highly productive, prolonged exposure to unrealistic digital expectations can lead to decreased task efficiency, increased error rates, and diminished contextual performance due to cognitive overload and fatigue (Shimazu et al., 2010; Koopmans et al., 2015). In parallel, psychological well-being deteriorates as users experience chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and impaired life satisfaction (Clark et al., 2016; Innanen et al., 2014). Perhaps most critically, self-care behaviors—such as adequate rest, emotional regulation, and health-preserving routines—are often deprioritized or viewed as unproductive by those under constant comparison and performance pressure. As Franke et al. (2014) claims, neglecting self-care compromises not only physical and emotional health but also long-term resilience and productivity.

In summary, social media does not simply reflect workaholic culture—it actively strengthens it. By stimulating internal motivations, intensifying cognitive distortions, escalating emotional turmoil, and encouraging compulsive behaviors, digital platforms deepen the psychological and behavioral patterns characteristic of workaholism.

### **1.3. Overview of previous empirical studies on workaholism**

The author compiled research of previously made empirical studies on workaholism which will be further presented in this subchapter.

Recent scholarship conceptualizes workaholism as a multidimensional phenomenon capturing motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components (Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development, 2021). Clark et al. (2020) developed the 16-item Multidimensional Workaholism Scale (MWS) to capture these four dimensions. In this view, a workaholic is driven by an inner compulsion to work (motivational), experiences persistent, uncontrollable thoughts about work even during off-hours (cognitive), feels negative emotions (e.g. guilt or anxiety) when not working (emotional), and habitually works excessively beyond job requirements (behavioral) (Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development, 2021). This refined definition isolates the core features of workaholism and prevents healthy high involvement at work. Researchers have since leveraged this framework to examine how each facet of workaholism relates to key outcomes.

Early empirical evidence suggested that dedicating excessive hours to work yields diminishing returns in performance. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Clark et al. (2016) found that workaholism was essentially unrelated to job performance. In other words, despite investing significantly more time and effort, workaholics did not outperform others in their core job duties. This may be because of inefficiencies or burnout counteracting any gains from sheer hours worked. However, more recent findings complicate this picture. Cheng and Gu (2022) conducted a meta-analysis focusing on workaholism and performance and observed a significant positive correlation overall. Notably, their analysis indicated that workaholics tend to contribute more to contextual performance (e.g. helping colleagues, taking on extra-role tasks) rather than just task productivity. This suggests that the motivational and behavioral dimensions of workaholism might drive individuals to go above and beyond formal job requirements, which can enhance certain performance metrics. Indeed, Clark et al. (2020) found that the inner drive (motivational aspect) of workaholism uniquely predicted higher work engagement levels. Elevated engagement and extra-role behaviors could explain instances where workaholism mildly benefits performance. Still, it remains clear that more work does not automatically equate to better work. The cognitive and emotional compulsions of workaholics (e.g. perfectionism, rumination) may sabotage efficiency or creativity, balancing out any performance gains from long hours. Thus, the relationship between workaholism and performance appears mixed – with some evidence of increased extra-role efforts, but no consistent improvement in core outcomes.

A far more consistent finding is that workaholism takes a substantial toll on individual well-being. Clark et al. (2016) reported that workaholism is strongly associated with high job stress, and moderately associated with burnout, poor physical health, poor emotional health,

and work–family conflict. In practical terms, workaholics frequently experience chronic fatigue, anxiety, irritability, and psychosomatic complaints as a result of their relentless work patterns. They often struggle to relax or recuperate, creating a cycle of stress that can spiral into exhaustion and mental health issues. Empirical studies link workaholism to higher levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms as well as to emotional exhaustion at work (Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development). For example, employees who identify as workaholics report significantly more frequent feelings of guilt or distress when idle, and a general negative affective state due to unmet work urges. Over time, this emotional strain can precipitate clinical outcomes; it is not uncommon for workaholics to develop stress-related disorders if the pattern continues unabated. In fact, one meta-analysis noted a moderate positive correlation between workaholism and work-related enjoyment, yet simultaneously high levels of burnout and low satisfaction – highlighting the paradoxical mix of short-term “work buzz” and longer-term harm (Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development, 2021). In sum, the emotional and cognitive compulsions inherent in workaholism (e.g. “I should be working” thoughts and guilt) are clearly detrimental to mental health and overall well-being.

Emerging research has begun to unpack short-term, day-to-day impacts of workaholism on health. In a recent intensive daily diary study, Menghini et al. (2024) monitored workers over two weeks to see how fluctuations in workaholic tendencies affected them in real time. The results were striking: on days when individuals felt a higher-than-usual compulsive drive to work, they exhibited elevated blood pressure (both systolic and diastolic) by afternoon, greater end-of-day emotional exhaustion, and more sleep disturbances that night. In other words, even a single day of heightened workaholic behavior triggered measurable stress responses – cardiovascular strain, fatigue, and impaired sleep. These physiological and psychological reactions illustrate how the cognitive dimension of workaholism (continuous work-related rumination) acts as an internal stressor. Notably, the same study found a silver lining: workers who managed to mentally detach from work in the evening were buffered from some of the negative effects. Specifically, strong evening detachment significantly weakened the link between daytime workaholic drive and nighttime sleep problems. This finding underscores the importance of recovery and self-care routines – even for those prone to workaholism, consciously disengaging after work can mitigate short-term health costs. Nonetheless, without such interventions, the daily strain of workaholic overdrive accumulates and can contribute to long-term health risks (e.g. hypertension,

insomnia). The evidence thus firmly indicates that workaholism erodes well-being through heightened stress arousal and insufficient recovery.

By definition, workaholics sacrifice other life domains in favor of work, often to the detriment of personal health and self-care. Research emphasizes that work-addicted individuals tend to neglect basic self-care practices – they sleep less, skip exercise, forego leisure, and even ignore medical appointments because work always takes priority (EBSCO, 2024). Over time, this neglect translates into tangible health issues. For instance, chronic over-workers report more stress-related ailments such as headaches, gastrointestinal problems, high blood pressure, and migraines. These conditions are consistent with the strain of long hours and insufficient rest. Workaholics also suffer from disrupted sleep patterns; rumination about unfinished tasks can lead to insomnia or poor sleep quality, compounding their fatigue. Moreover, the lack of work-life balance often strains personal relationships and erodes social support systems. Workaholics frequently experience conflict with family or partners due to their inability to “switch off” from work, as reflected in the moderate link between workaholism and work–family conflict found in the literature. From a self-care perspective, the emotional investment in work crowds out time for relaxation, hobbies, or socializing – activities that are vital for psychological replenishment. The net result is a lifestyle that is high on output but low on rejuvenation, putting the individual on a path toward burnout. Indeed, many clinicians view adequate self-care and boundary-setting as key challenges for those with workaholic tendencies, given how strongly the compulsion to work overrides other needs (EBSCO, 2024). Thus, an empirical review of workaholism would be incomplete without noting that failing to engage in self-care is both a symptom and a consequence of the condition, creating a feedback loop that reinforces further immersion in work at the expense of well-being.

Modern work environments – especially those mediated by technology –heightened both the opportunities and risks associated with workaholic behavior. In traditional office settings, a workaholic might stay late at the office; in today’s digital environment, they may never truly leave work at all. The COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of remote work provide a vivid example. Studies show that during pandemic lockdowns, as many companies shifted to work-from-home, employees experienced a blurring of boundaries and an “always-on” feeling (Haas School of Business, 2024). Objective data from millions of users revealed that the average workday lengthened by 48 minutes in 2020, and over one-third of the time saved on commuting was reallocated to doing more work. With laptops and smartphones at home, workaholics found it even easier to extend their hours. Digital tools like email, instant

messaging, and video conferencing created an environment where employees are constantly reachable and tethered to their work (Haas School of Business, 2024). This always-connected scenario can exacerbate workaholic tendencies, as there is little natural stopping point to the workday. Highly conscientious or intrinsically driven individuals are especially vulnerable: one study found that when such employees work in low-situational-strength settings (e.g. alone at home, without clear signals to stop), they are far more likely to slip into excessive work patterns (Haas School of Business, 2024). In essence, the motivational dimension (inner drive) of workaholism is amplified by a lack of external structure in remote environments, leading to greater risk of overwork.

Conversely, the digital era has also introduced new forms of stress that can intensify the emotional costs for workaholics. Researchers have examined the concept of “technostress” – the strain resulting from constant connectivity and information overload. Molino et al. (2020) reported that heavy use of ICT (email, smartphones, etc.) during enforced remote work led to significant technostress and lower well-being for many employees. Critically, those with workaholic proclivities were hit hardest: workaholics felt especially troubled by the disrupted routines and 24/7 connectivity, reacting with amplified feelings of guilt, anxiety, anger, and frustration when unable to work normally. This aligns with the emotional dimension of workaholism – the finding that being prevented from working (or not working “enough”) triggers disproportionate negative emotions in workaholic individuals (Molino et al., 2020). In the remote/digital context, a workaholic manager might also overstep boundaries, expecting employees to mirror their own always-on behavior. One study in an academic setting found that authoritarian leadership coupled with remote work can worsen outcomes: workaholic employees with overly controlling supervisors reported significantly higher technostress levels, especially when working entirely from home, as they felt no respite from constant performance monitoring. This makes it visible that digital era workaholism is a multi-faceted problem, that involves not just individual disposition but also technological use and managerial culture.

With the purpose of demonstrating a more accurate and precise vision of methodology and dimensionality nature of workaholism the table is concluded (See Table 3).

Critically, the table does not shy away from methodological limitations: self-report biases in cross-sectional studies, for example, or the underrepresentation of cultural contexts. Yet these works converge on a key insight—the paradox of workaholism. Short-term performance gains are often documented, they frequently mask long-term costs, such as burnout, strained relationships, and diminished creativity. This tension is particularly studied

in works addressing modern work environments, where remote work and ubiquitous digital tools blur boundaries between professional and personal life.

Table 3

*Comparison of Key Studies on Workaholism*

Study	Methodology	Insights	Dimensions Explored	Limitations and Gaps	Considered Factors
Clark et al. (2020)	Scale development and validation	Identified four core dimensions of workaholism; motivational drive linked to engagement.	Motivational, Cognitive, Emotional, Behavioral	Cross-sectional; scale validation needed in other cultures.	Work Dimensions (+), Engagement (+)
Clark et al. (2016)	Meta-analysis	Workaholism is linked to perfectionism, burnout, job stress.	Dispositional traits and outcomes (positive and negative)	General findings may not address specific contextual factors.	Burnout (+), Stress (+), Personality Traits (+)
Menghini et al. (2024)	Daily diary study	Daily workaholic behavior increases blood pressure, exhaustion, and sleep issues.	Cognitive, Emotional	Short-term study; physiological effects over time unclear	Physiological Stress (+), Detachment (-)
Cheng & Gu (2022)	Meta-analysis	Workaholism is associated with contextual performance; driven by motivational/behavioral factors.	Performance and extra-role behaviors	Does not control for leadership or digital boundaries.	Motivation (+), Engagement (+)
Molino et al. (2020)	Survey-based study	Workaholics experience more technostress and negative emotions in	Emotional, Behavioral	Self-report data: cultural generalizability limited.	ICT Use (+), Supervisor Style(+), Well-being(-)

		remote settings.			
Haas School of Business (2024)	Industry data analysis	Remote work during pandemic increased average workday; lack of structure fuels overwork.	Behavioral, Motivational	Lacks direct participant-level measures.	Remote Work Tech Exposure (+), (+)

*Notes: “-”- negatively related to well-being, performance and self-care “+”- positively related to wellbeing, performance and self-care*

Source: Compiled by author based on sources presented in the table

By means of mapping these patterns, Table 3 shows off gaps this thesis seeks to address. For example, a few studies explore how algorithmic management systems in gig economies amplify workaholic tendencies, nor do they account for generational shifts in work values. These omissions frame the urgency of the current empirical investigation and position it as a bridge between existing literature and emerging workplace realities.

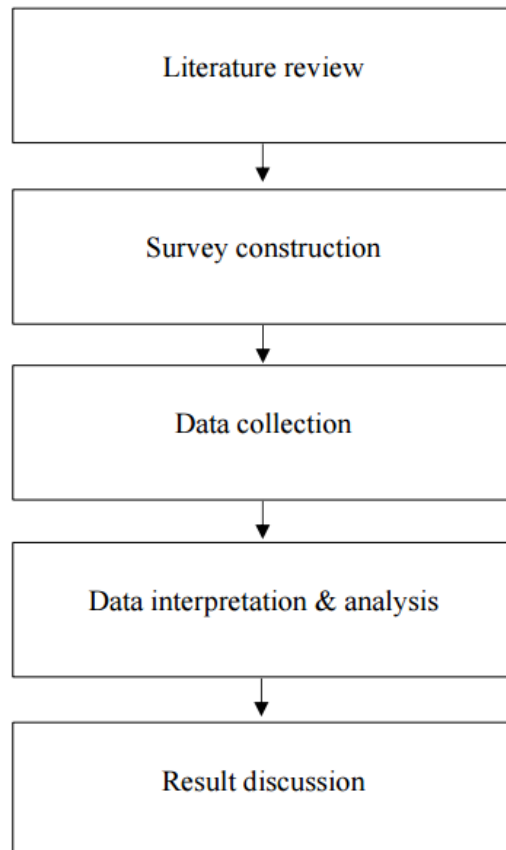
## **2. Empirical analysis on workaholism, its dimensions, and its connections with performance, well-being and self-care among social media users**

### **2.1. Empirical analysis methodology**

In this subchapter, the methodology employed for the empirical investigation of workaholism is presented. The author adopts a quantitative approach in this research to explore the interconnection between the four recognized dimensions of workaholism—motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—and their respective relations to individual performance outcomes and psychological well-being, as well as self-care subfactor. Social media was used as a platform for recruiting participants and sharing the survey.

This research followed seven interconnected stages, outlined in Figure 1. These stages involved reviewing existing literature, designing and distributing the survey, recruiting a diverse group of participants through social media, and conducting descriptive analyses and correlation analysis of the data using SPSS. A main focus was ensuring that the survey reflected both previous theoretical frameworks and the practical realities among social media.

A survey was conducted among professionals from various industries, recruited through social media platforms. The survey utilized validated measurement instruments specifically picked to assess the four core dimensions of workaholism and their connection to social media users' performance, well-being, and self-care.



*Figure 1: Methodology of the study*

Source: compiled by author

Selecting appropriate measurement tools for workaholism was challenging due to the variety of definitions and conceptual overlaps in literature. Researchers have used different terminologies for similar constructions, which can complicate the selection of standardized instruments. For example, as noted in prior studies, constructions such as work engagement, job involvement, and compulsive work behaviors often share overlapping measurement items.

For this thesis, a few methods of data collection have been used. Firstly, the measurement tool developed by Clark et al. (2020) has been used, as it comprehensively

addresses the cognitive, emotional, behavioral and motivational dimensions of workaholism. This tool has appeared appropriate for this study because it integrates the four critical dimensions of workaholism and has a validated Estonian translation, ensuring accessibility for respondents. The tool includes 4 items for the cognitive dimension, 4 items for the emotional dimension, 4 items for the behavioral dimension, and 4 items for the motivational dimension, ensuring a comprehensive assessment. Using a concise and validated measurement tool minimizes participant fatigue, requiring fewer questions compared to more extensive workaholism scales, such as the original Work Addiction Risk Test (WART) or the Workaholism Battery (WorkBAT). This brevity increases the likelihood of survey completion.

Measuring the connection of overworking to performance outcomes of individuals has been implemented with usage of Scales developed by Koopmans et al. (2014), which include two distinct factors: task performance and contextual performance.

Task performance was measured with five items, while contextual performance included eight items, using a 5-point rating scale (1 = Never to 5 = All of the time) over a three-week recall period. These scales were chosen due to their concise nature, appropriate psychometric properties, and clear distinction between core job activities and broader workplace behaviors. In contrast to alternative instruments—such as the lengthier 20-item Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ; Koopmans et al., 2011) or broader general performance measures like the 18-item Job Performance Scale by Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994)—the selected measurement tool reduces participant fatigue, making sure that contextually relevant answers flow into both direct and indirect aspects of performance connected to workaholism.

One of the objectives of this thesis is measuring the connections between workaholism and well-being of individuals. This aspect was assessed using the The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), (Tennant et al., 2007). Dissimilar to longer scales that assess negative mental health indicators (e.g., General Health Questionnaire–GHQ by Goldberg & Williams, 1988, or Depression Anxiety Stress Scales–DASS by Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), WEMWBS focuses on a positively oriented assessment of mental well-being. At just 14 items, it's also much shorter than tools like Ryff's (1989) 42-item Psychological Well-Being Scale, making it easier for participants, especially in online surveys where time matters. This positive, succinct approach is beneficial for detecting subtle impacts of workaholism, especially regarding decreases in well-being rather than just increases in negative states like anxiety or depression. Since workaholism isn't always tied

to obvious distress, WEMWBS's focus on positive mental health makes it a strong choice for assessing its connections.

The self-care measurement comprised three items assessing how often and how effectively individuals practiced self-care. Adapted from Franke et al. (2014), these items focused on practical behaviors like dedicating time to rest, maintaining physical health, and mentally disconnecting from work stress. This approach was chosen due to the existing scales—such as the 40-item Self-Care Inventory (Richards et al., 2010), which covers daily habits and stress management, or the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile (Walker et al., 1987)—are often too broad or lack validation for workplace contexts. Even tools like the Self-Care Assessment for Psychologists (Dorociak et al., 2017), while work-related, are niche and lengthy. By narrowing our focus to these three key behaviors, cut through the clutter of generic wellness surveys and honed in on what truly matters for self-care in demanding work environments is achieved. A list of all the items used is available in Appendix A.

The target sample consists of employed individuals across a range of industries and job roles. To ensure a balanced dataset, the survey aimed for a diverse sample and representation of varying levels of job responsibility. Participants have been recruited through social media platforms with the aim of targeting the required sample. Sample characteristics can be found in Table 4. The data collection was anonymous and all the data protection requirements were met.

The demographic table (Table 4) below presents an overview of the composition of the sample (N = 164) used in this research. The diversity of participants in terms of work experience, weekly workload, and occupational fields allows for a well-rounded understanding of workaholism in a digitally engaged environment.

Table 4  
*Sample characteristics*

Category	Variable	n	%
Work experience	Less than a year	11	6.7
	1-3 years	10	6.1
	4-6 years	68	41.5
	More than 6 years	75	45.7
Work hours per week	20 hours or less	6	3.7
	20-40 hours	64	39.0

	More than 41 hours	94	57.3
Department	Administrative	23	14.0
	Advocate	24	14.6
	Finance	19	11.6
	IT & Engineering	26	15.9
	Marketing & Sales	22	13.4
	Tutor	5	3.0
	Operations & Logistics	25	15.2
	Freelancer	3	1.9
	Human Resources	17	10.4

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*Notes: N=164*

Source: Compiled by author based on collected database

The sample predominantly consists of experienced professionals, with the majority having over four years of tenure. This suggests that the sample largely comprises experienced professionals who have had substantial time to establish work habits and potentially develop patterns of overwork.

When examining weekly workload, a striking 57.3% of participants reported working more than 41 hours per week, indicating a significant portion of the sample is exposed to extended work hours—a common precondition for workaholic behavior. Another 39% work between 20–40 hours, and a small minority (3.7%) work fewer than 20 hours per week. This further supports the relevance of studying workaholism in this sample, as most participants exceed standard workload expectations.

Regarding job roles, the sample shows considerable representation across industries. Administrative (14.0%), IT & Engineering (15.9%), Operations & Logistics (15.2%), and Marketing & Sales (13.4%) are among the most reported sectors. The “Law” field (aggregated here as “Advocate”) accounts for 14.6% of the sample, which is notably high and offers a solid foundation for analyzing patterns of work involvement in high-responsibility, high-pressure fields. Meanwhile, smaller groups such as freelancers (1.8%) and tutors (3.0%) also contribute to the diversity of professional contexts, adding nuance to the study’s findings.

The analysis combined descriptive statistics and correlational methods to determine how different dimensions of workaholism relate to core outcomes like performance, well-being and self-care. First, descriptive statistics provided a baseline understanding of

participants' tendencies by calculating average scores and variability across variables (e.g., how frequently individuals reported overworking). Next, correlational analysis assessed the strength and direction of relationships between specific workaholism traits (e.g., compulsive working, inability to disconnect) and outcomes such as productivity declines or emotional exhaustion. These approaches were chosen because they are well-established in organizational psychology research.

A specific focus was placed on the context of social media, as this paper explores how workaholism manifests among social media users. The dataset included participants involved in using social media. With incorporating these social media-related variables, the analysis assessed whether and how the dimensions of workaholism are influenced or exacerbated by behaviors and trends observed in online environments.

## **2.2 Results and connections discussion on workaholism dimensions, performance, well-being and self-care of social media users.**

In this part of the thesis the author will further provide the results of conducted empirical research, discuss, analyze and present the outcomes.

First, the reliability analysis of 8 factors grouped by author will be presented (see Table 5), as some of the original measurement statements have been left out.

Table 5

### *Reliability analysis of survey data factors*

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Motivational	,90	4
Cognitive	,91	4
Emotional	,91	4
Behavioral	,90	4
Task performance	,89	5
Contextual performance	,93	8
Well-being	,97	14
Self-care	,78	3

Source: compiled by author based on collected data, all variables were measured on a 5-point rating scale

To ensure the internal consistency of the survey instruments used to measure workaholism dimensions among social media users, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were

calculated for each scale (see Table 5). All four workaholism dimensions—motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—demonstrated excellent internal consistency, exceeding the recommended reliability threshold of 0.70 (Cho & Kim, 2014). This indicates a high level of internal consistency within each dimension, suggesting that the items reliably measure the underlying constructs among the sample of social media users.

Similarly, the outcome variables—task performance, contextual performance, well-being, and self-care—also showed acceptable to excellent reliability. The particularly high reliability for well-being and contextual performance suggests that social media users consistently perceive these aspects in a similar manner when responding to related items.

Now that the author confirmed the reliability of demonstrated factors, this section is secondly led by presentation of the descriptive analysis of the main variables of the study. Table 6 reflects the average scores of the four dimensions of workaholism (motivational, cognitive, emotional, behavioral), as well as their related outcomes — task performance, contextual performance, well-being, and self-care — specifically among social media users.

Table 6

*Descriptive statistics of indicated factors*

Factor	Mean	Median	Std.Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Motivational	3,60	3,75	,80	1,00	5,00
Cognitive	3,60	3,75	,81	1,25	5,00
Emotional	3,58	3,75	,82	1,00	5,00
Behavioral	3,61	3,75	,81	1,00	5,00
Task Performance	2,74	2,60	,85	1,20	4,60
Context. Performance	2,71	2,62	,83	1,13	4,88
Well-being	2,85	2,57	,75	1,36	5,00
Self-care	2,76	2,66	,81	1,00	4,67

*Notes:*  $N=164$ ; Context. Performance- contextual performance, all variables were measured on a 5-point rating scale

Source: compiled by author based on SPSS output

Table 6 was compiled to illustrate how social media users score on the dimensions of workaholism and related psychological and performance outcomes. The four core dimensions

— motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral — all show mean values above 3.58, suggesting a notable presence of workaholic tendencies within this group.

What’s interesting here is how these findings echo what researchers have warned about: being “always online” and overwhelmed by social media might make non-stop work habits feel normal—or even admirable (Molino et al., 2020). For example, the high scores in motivation and obsessive thoughts about work line up with Clark et al.’s (2020) argument that digital spaces train us to tie our self-worth to productivity, blurring the line between “work” and “life.”

The results in Table 6 reveal that social media users scored similarly across all four dimensions of workaholism—motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. This pattern suggests no single dimension (e.g., “I have to work” or “I can’t stop thinking about work”) stands out as dominant. Instead, the findings paint workaholism as a complex puzzle where each piece—motivational drive, cognitive preoccupation, emotional strain, and compulsive behavior—fits together to create the full picture. This aligns with Clark et al. (2020), who argue that workaholism thrives when these dimensions reinforce one another, like a feedback loop where stress fuels overwork, which then deepens stress. That said, the results diverge from studies like Molino et al. (2020), which singled out emotional exhaustion and obsessive rumination as key drivers in digital workspaces. The data in this study, however, shows no such hierarchy—for social media users, all four dimensions seem equally critical. This could reflect how platforms blur work-life boundaries differently than traditional workspace.

In contrast, task performance ( $M = 2.74$ ) and contextual performance ( $M = 2.71$ ) scored noticeably lower than the workaholism dimensions, suggesting a paradox: working harder doesn’t equate to working better. This reinforces Clark et al.’s (2016) finding that compulsive work habits often lead to diminishing returns—think pouring in extra hours but reaping little reward. Well-being ( $M = 2.85$ ) and self-care ( $M = 2.76$ ) followed suit, echoing the well-documented trend where overwork erodes both mental and physical health (Molino et al., 2020; Menghini et al., 2024). These patterns appear to be quite similar. Despite the unique pressures of social media environments—constant connectivity, performance visibility, the scores align closely with broader workaholism research (Molino et al., 2020; Clark et al., 2016). This implies social media users aren’t an outlier group; they’re experiencing the same burnout cycle seen in traditional workplaces. Workaholism’s costs—stagnant performance, drained well-being, low self-care—are universal.

This imbalance can be partly understood through what prior research calls the social-media productivity loop. Exposure to carefully curated success narratives on platforms such

as Instagram has been shown to intensify upward social comparison and trigger feelings of inadequacy, which, in turn, fuel compensatory overwork (Przybylski & et al., 2013). At the same time, the norm of being permanently reachable online—sometimes labelled digital telepressure—imply the psychological boundary between work and non-work time, leaving fewer opportunities for true recovery (Barber & et al., 2015; Tarafdar & et al., 2019). Longitudinal evidence further links night-time smartphone use to reduced sleep quality and poorer well-being (Lemola & et al., 2015), illustrating how 24/7 connectivity can crowd out restorative activities such as sleep, hobbies, or mindfulness practice. Together, these findings help explain why high work investment among social-media users may coincide with lower performance, well-being, and self-care.

The standard deviations for all variables cluster tightly around 0.80, indicating a comparable, moderate level of variability across the sample rather than any meaningful difference between task ( $SD = 0.85$ ) and contextual performance ( $SD = 0.83$ ). In practical terms, this means participants' self-reported scores are spread to a similar extent on every scale; no single outcome shows markedly greater dispersion.

For example, freelancers or remote workers heavily reliant on social platforms may internalize pressure of more than 9-to-5 employees with structured schedules.

The finding that social-media users score high on every workaholism dimension yet show no corresponding boost in performance, well-being, or self-care echoes earlier evidence that heavy work investment often fails to translate into superior outcomes and may even undermine them (Clark et al., 2016; Shimazu et al., 2010). Digital contexts appear to intensify this paradox: constant connectivity, telepressure, and upward social comparisons heighten compulsive work behaviour while simultaneously eroding recovery resources (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015; Tarafdar et al., 2019).

Following the descriptive statistics, the correlation analysis for the studied variables is presented in Table 7. An additional context, the use of social media, was emphasized due to previous studies highlighting its role in intensifying the blurring of home and work boundaries, thereby potentially increasing tendencies of workaholism among users.

Firstly, attention is drawn to the core variables studied—motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of workaholism, task and contextual performance, well-being, and self-care. The results are examined in relation to prior empirical studies discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Table 7

*Correlation between the studied variables*

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Motivational	1,00							
Cognitive	,76**	1,00						
Emotional	,75**	,78**	1,00					
Behavioral	,76**	,73**	,74**	1,00				
Task Perform	-,35**	-,37**	-,36**	-,30**	1,00			
Con. Perform	-,34**	-,39**	-,40**	-,33**	,92**	1,00		
Well-being	-,54**	-,55**	-,52**	-,51**	,68**	,69**	1,00	
Self-care	-,40**	-,41**	-,43**	-,33**	,65**	,64**	,74**	1,00

*Notes: N=164; \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Task Perform – task performance, Con.Peform – contextual performance, all variables were measured on a 5-point rating scale*

Source: Compiled by author based on based on collected data

Table 7 reveals significant positive correlations among motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of workaholism. All workaholism dimensions are correlated with each other with correlation coefficients in range  $\rho = 0,73-0,78$ . This indicates that motivational factors—such as intrinsic drive, perfectionism, and fear of failure—are strongly interconnected with obsessive thinking, emotional distress, and compulsive behaviors. These findings align closely with results presented by Clark et al. (2016) and Mazzetti et al. (2016), confirming the broad consistency of these dimensions across multiple contexts and studies. From another perspective, this strong interconnectedness may suggest a reinforcing loop, where motivational factors intensify cognitive and emotional distress, subsequently manifesting in compulsive behaviors. Future studies could explore whether this reinforcement differs significantly between frequent and infrequent social media users, potentially highlighting the influence of digital context frequency on the severity of workaholism.

Additionally, significant negative correlations were observed between the workaholism dimensions and both task performance and contextual performance. These

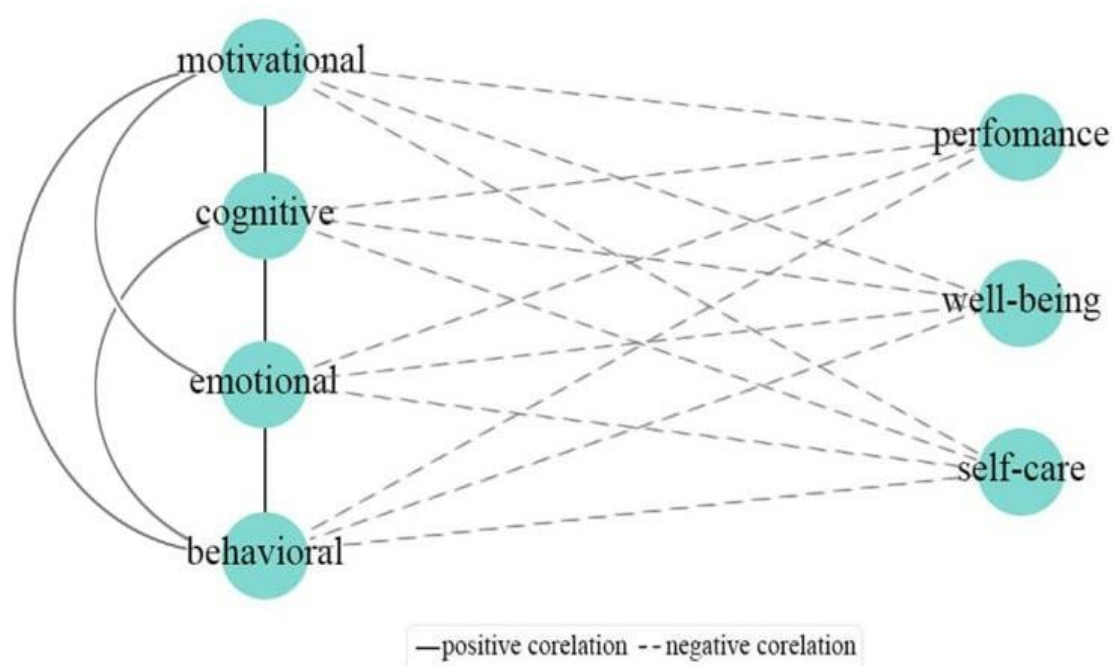
outcomes demonstrate the paradox identified in previous literature (Shimazu et al., 2010), where seemingly productive compulsive behaviors driven by digital contexts and social media visibility ultimately prove detrimental, resulting in decreased productivity, increased burnout, and potential performance errors. Interestingly, these findings parallel those from Capitano and Greenhaus (2017) and Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006), who found similar paradoxical outcomes related to boundary permeability in digital work contexts. Another perspective worth exploring is whether individuals perceive these negative performance outcomes as temporary setbacks or as long-term declines, which could significantly affect their continued engagement with compulsive work behaviors.

Furthermore, significant negative correlations were found between the dimensions of workaholism and well-being in range from  $\rho = -.51$  to  $\rho = -.54$ . This aligns well with findings from Innanen et al. (2014) and Clark et al. (2016), supporting the assertion that increased workaholic tendencies significantly impair psychological health, particularly in digital contexts characterized by continuous connectivity and blurred boundaries. It would be valuable for future research to further investigate whether certain digital platform characteristics—such as notification frequency, response expectations, and social comparison—disproportionately contribute to decreased well-being.

Moreover, a significant negative correlation between self-care and workaholism dimensions was observed (from  $\rho = -.33$  to  $\rho = -.43$ ). This correlation indicates that individuals with higher levels of workaholism tend to neglect self-care practices, a critical internal resource for managing stress and promoting well-being (Franke et al., 2014). Given the nature of social media engagement, which often pressures users towards constant availability and responsiveness, the neglect of self-care practices among highly engaged social media users could exacerbate stress, health issues, and work-life conflicts. This pattern is consistent with the concept of health-oriented leadership as described by Franke et al. (2014), suggesting that organizational support structures might be essential in promoting better self-care habits among employees regularly engaged with digital media. It would also be insightful to compare whether individuals in different digital media roles—such as content creators versus passive consumers—experience varying degrees of self-care neglect. The overall correlational structure—positive links among workaholism dimensions and negative links with performance, well-being, and self-care—is visualized in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the correlational structure identified in this study. The figure distinguishes between positive and negative correlations through the use of solid and dashed lines, respectively. On the left side of the diagram are the four core

dimensions of workaholism: motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. The solid lines connecting these dimensions illustrate statistically significant positive correlations, indicating that individuals who score high in one dimension (e.g., motivational) also tend to score high in the others (e.g., cognitive, emotional, behavioral). These relationships affirm the theoretical view that the workaholism construct is multidimensional and internally coherent, as was previously discussed.



*Figure 2: Correlation between variables*

Source: compiled by author based on collected data

On the contrary, the dashed lines connecting the workaholism dimensions with outcome variables on the right—namely performance, well-being, and self-care—represent significant negative correlations. This means that higher levels of workaholic tendencies are statistically associated with lower scores in performance, poorer well-being, and reduced self-care. Importantly, these associations do not imply causality but reflect the observed tendency for these variables to co-vary in the studied sample of social media users.

The use of visual differentiation (solid vs. dashed lines) in the figure can help in the interpretation of complex interrelationships, making it clear which variables co-occur positively and which show inverse relationships. It also helps emphasize the broader conclusion of the study: that while workaholism dimensions are tightly interrelated, they are

also consistently linked to less favorable outcomes, especially in the context of highly connected social media users. This visualization supports the findings of the correlation table and also offers a conceptual framework for understanding how internal psychological traits translate into observable patterns of well-being and behavior of engaged in social media individuals.

In conclusion, the results of this correlation analysis demonstrate the nuanced and often harmful influence of workaholism within the context of social media. The findings validate previous theoretical and empirical work (Clark et al., 2016; Shimazu et al., 2010; Franke et al., 2014) and emphasize the need for holistic interventions that target the full spectrum of workaholism dimensions. Future research could further explore how digital-specific mechanisms—such as algorithmic engagement loops or online role expectations—contribute to or disengage these effects in various user populations.

### **Conclusion**

This thesis examined the complex phenomenon of workaholism through its four core dimensions—motivational, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral—by exploring their conceptual foundations and connections with performance, well-being, and self-care in the context of social media users. The analysis began with an overview of existing definitions, showing how each dimension contributes to the broader understanding of workaholism. Previous literature has put emphasis that motivational elements such as perfectionism or fear of failure often intertwine with cognitive tendencies like obsessive work-related thoughts, emotional distress when not working, and behavioral patterns marked by compulsive work habits. These dimensions can be stated to form a multidimensional construct that is internally coherent and mutually included.

Building on this conceptual framework, the thesis further examined psychological and social foundations of workaholism. By organizing theoretical causes into individual, organizational, and societal levels, the research emphasized how personality traits (e.g., intrinsic drive), work conditions (e.g., high demands, low support), and cultural messages (e.g., hustle culture) interact to sustain compulsive working behaviors. The rise of digital technologies and social media platforms plays an important role in this dynamic, by continuously influencing productivity norms and shaping how individuals perceive their work identities. Similar foundations showed that workaholism emerges both from internal drives

and also from external pressures. They were forming a feedback loop that increases the risk of sustained overcommitment.

The thesis examined the theoretical connections between workaholism and key outcomes—namely performance, well-being, and self-care—with social media as a potential moderating factor. Existing research presented conflicting evidence on performance: some studies associated workaholism with increased extra-role behaviors, others pointed to diminished efficiency due to chronic exhaustion. Findings on well-being, however, were more consistent, with workaholic tendencies frequently linked to emotional fatigue, heightened anxiety, and lower life satisfaction. Self-care, though often overlooked, emerged as a critical concern, as individuals with excessive work engagement tended to neglect rest, recovery, and healthy habits. Notably, social media was hypothesized to intensify workaholic patterns by upbringing unrealistic productivity standards, normalizing constant availability, and diminishing the boundaries between work and personal life.

An overview of previous empirical studies confirmed these theoretical insights and further detailed how each dimension of workaholism connects to psychological and behavioral outcomes. Key findings from scale development, meta-analyses, and diary studies were compiled to illustrate short- and long-term consequences. Some motivational elements may relate to engagement; however, the cognitive and emotional burdens were consistently shown to neglect well-being and performance. The author also identified a gap: limited attention has been paid to the manifestation of workaholism in social media settings, especially in relation to emerging behaviors such as digital over-availability.

To address this gap, the thesis conducted a survey-based empirical study among 164 social media users from various professional backgrounds. The survey measured workaholism's four dimensions, task and contextual performance, well-being, and self-care using validated tools. The sample was diverse in terms of work hours, industries, and experience levels, providing a view of digitally connected professionals. Data collection was performed entirely online through a survey, which reflected the digital environment in which the studied behaviors often potentially occur.

The empirical analysis employed descriptive statistics and correlation methods to explore relationships between studied variables. Results showed that participants scored relatively high across all workaholism dimensions, which suggests widespread presence of compulsive work-related attitudes and behaviors among social media users. However, average scores for performance, well-being, and self-care were notably lower, pointing to a disconnect between work effort and desired outcomes. Correlation analysis confirmed

positive relationships between the four dimensions of workaholism, as well as significant negative relationships with performance, well-being, and self-care. These findings supported prior research and demonstrated that workaholism—when manifested across multiple dimensions—is consistently associated with poorer self-reported outcomes. The results also validated the idea that digital environments intensify the internal mechanisms of workaholism, especially through blurred boundaries and constant exposure to productivity-related content.

Finally, the findings were discussed in relation to earlier studies, confirming both theoretical predictions and empirical patterns. The study showed the view that workaholism is multidimensional, internally coherent, and frequently associated with compromised individual functioning. At the same time, it added a contemporary perspective by showing how social media usage can intensify these patterns. Compared to earlier studies in traditional organizational settings, this thesis contributes a timely exploration of how digital platforms shape workaholic behaviors.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The most important is the reliance on self-estimated responses. All variables, including performance, well-being, and self-care—were assessed through participants' own perceptions, which may not accurately reflect objective outcomes. Individuals may under- or overestimate their behaviors and experiences due to bias, mood, or social desirability. Consequently, indeed the observed patterns are meaningful, but they reflect subjective experiences rather than verified behaviors. In addition, the study used a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to determine causality or temporal dynamics. Future research could incorporate longitudinal or experimental methods and potentially combine survey data with objective indicators of performance or physiological stress. Finally, while the sample was diverse, it was limited to users who are active on social media, which may not reflect experiences in other populations or offline contexts.

In summary, the takeaway is clear: tackling workaholism today means looking beyond long hours to the inner mind-sets and digital pressures that keep us locked in “always-on” mode—and designing interventions that fit that modern context.

Put simply, the danger is no longer just “working too much”; it's the constant mental tug of notifications, comparison culture, and the fear of falling behind that keeps us stuck in an always-on cycle. Addressing workaholism in 2025 therefore demands more than time-management tips or calls to “work smarter.” It requires digging into the psychological drivers—perfectionism, fear of missing out, chronic self-comparison—and the digital

architectures that magnify them. Only by recognizing how these forces intertwine can employers, policymakers, and individuals craft interventions—like tech-free breaks, boundary-setting workshops, or healthier platform designs—that genuinely help people reclaim balance without sacrificing ambition.

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## APPENDIX A

## Measurement Tools Used in the Study

Measurement Tool	Source	Purpose	Format
Workaholism Measurement Tool	Clark et al. (2020)	Measure motivational, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of workaholism tool	5-point Likert scale. Each dimension consists of 4 items, resulting in a total of 16 items
Performance Outcomes	Koopmans et al. (2014)	Measure task and contextual performance	13 items on 5-point scale developed to measure the two main dimensions of job performance
Well-being (WEMWBS)	Tennant et al. (2007)	Assess subjective well-being including positive affect, psychological functioning	14 items, 5-point Likert scale
Self-care	Franke et al. (2014)	Assess subjective attitude towards one's health and self-care	3 items, 5-point Likert scale

*Source: Compiled by author based on sources in the table*

## Resümee

### TÖÖSÕLTUVUSE DIMENSIOONID NING NENDE SEOS SOTSIAALMEEDIA KASUTAJATE TÖÖ TULEMUSLIKKUSE, HEAOLU JA ENESEST HOOLIMISEGA

Daria Yefymenko

Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö eesmärk oli välja selgitada töösõltuvuse nelja dimensiooni – motivatsioonilise, kognitiivse, emotsionaalse ja käitumusliku – seosed sotsiaalmeedia kasutajate töö tulemuslikkuse, heaolu ja enesest hoolimisega. Teema aktuaalsus seisneb selles, et digitaalse ajastu töökeskkonnad ja sotsiaalmeedia platvormide kasutamine mõjutavad järjest enam individuaalseid töötamisharjumusi ning produktiivsuse norme, hägustades piire töö- ja eraelu vahel ning soodustades pidevat tööga seotud aktiivsust. Üha enam inimesi kogeb survet olla pidevalt kättesaadav, mis loob pinnase töösõltuvuse arenguks ja süvenemiseks. Lisaks on oluline mõista, kuidas virtuaalne keskkond mõjutab inimeste psühholoogilist tasakaalu ja nende võimet hoida töö ning isiklik elu lahus.

Uurimisülesanded hõlmasid järgnevaid aspekte: töösõltuvuse dimensioonide teoreetiline selgitamine ning nende seoste analüüsimine töö tulemuslikkuse, heaolu ja enesest hoolimise vahel; töösõltuvuse tasemete kvantitatiivne mõõtmine sotsiaalmeedia kasutajate seas; töösõltuvuse seose väljatoomine töö tulemuslikkuse, psühholoogilise heaolule ja enesest hoolimise vahel sotsiaalmeedia kasutamise kontekstis; praktiliste soovitude formuleerimine töösõltuvuse ennetamiseks ja leevendamiseks; ning täiendavate uuringuvõimaluste tuvastamine.

Teoreetilises osas käsitleti põhjalikult töösõltuvust kui nähtust, mida defineeritakse kui kontrollimatut sisemist vajadust pidevalt töötada, mis põhjustab sageli terviseprobleeme, emotsionaalset kurnatust ning suhtepingete suurenemist. Nelja töösõltuvuse dimensiooni selgitamisel rõhutati, et motivatsiooniline dimensioon väljendub eeskätt sisemises sunnis, nagu perfektsionism, hirm ebaõnnestumise ees ja vajadus tunnustuse järele. Kognitiivne dimensioon väljendub tööga seotud sundmõtetes, näiteks süütundes puhkehetkede ajal, mis vähendab võimalust efektiivseks taastumiseks. Emotsionaalne dimensioon väljendub negatiivsetes tunnetes nagu ärevus, rahunemine või süütunde tööga mitte tegelemisel ning käitumuslik dimensioon tähendab liigseid töötunde ja võimetust tööst puhata, mis pikemas perspektiivis kahjustab nii individuaalset tervist kui ka sotsiaalseid suhteid. Lisaks käsitleti teoreetilises osas töösõltuvuse ajaloolist tausta, erinevaid teoreetilisi mudeleid ja varasemaid

teadusuuringuid, mis võimaldasid luua terviklikuma ülevaate töösõltuvuse olemusest ja selle mõjudest indiviididele.

Empiirilises osas viidi läbi kvantitatiivne uuring, milles osales 164 erineva valdkonna töötajat, kes kasutavad aktiivselt sotsiaalmeediat. Uuringus kasutati valideeritud küsimustikke, mis hõlmasid kõiki nelja töösõltuvuse dimensiooni ning lisaks mõõdeti eraldi ülesande- ja kontekstuaalset töö tulemuslikkust, psühholoogilist heaolu ja enesest hoolimise praktiseerimise sagedust ja tõhusust. Uuringu tulemused näitasid, et vastajatel olid suhteliselt kõrged töösõltuvuse näitajad kõigis mõõdetud dimensioonides, eriti tugevalt avaldusid motivatsiooniline ja kognitiivne dimensioon. Lisaks leiti, et kõrgetel töösõltuvuse tasemetel on märkimisväärne negatiivne korrelatsioon töö tulemuslikkusega nii ülesande- kui kontekstuaalsel tasandil, samuti psühholoogilise heaolu ja enesest hoolimisega. Eraldi analüüsi ka töösõltuvuse dimensioonide omavahelist seost ning selle seost töötajate üldise tulemuslikkuse ja heaoluga.

Tulemused kinnitavad töö tulemuslikkuse paradoksi: kuigi esialgu võib palju töötamine tunduda produktiivne, vähendavad krooniline stress ja emotsionaalne kurnatus tegelikku töö efektiivsust ning kahjustavad märgatavalt üldist heaolu. Lisaks selgus uuringust, et töösõltuvusega kaasnevad emotsionaalsed ja kognitiivsed raskused piiravad indiviidide võimet taastuda ja lõõgastuda, mis omakorda võimendab stressi mõju ja kahjustab töö kvaliteeti. Kokkuvõttes rõhutatakse vajadust pöörata tähelepanu enesest hoolimisele, töö- ja eraelu tasakaalule ning teadlikule sotsiaalmeedia kasutusele, et vältida töösõltuvuse negatiivseid mõjusid indiviidide heaolule ja töö tulemuslikkusele. Praktiliselt on oluline luua toetavad organisatsioonilised ja sotsiaalsed struktuurid, mis aitavad töötajatel tõhusamalt hallata töö- ja puhkeaja piire.

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