Workplace Telepressure and Workaholism:

ICT Boundary Creation as a Potential Moderator

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to investigate the relationships between workplace telepressure, workaholism, and information and communication technology (ICT) boundary creation. Workaholism is the compulsive need to work incessantly (Oates, 1971). It has been linked with adverse effects such as work stress, sleep problems, burnout, physical complaints, and lower mental health (Andreassen et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2016). A work-related construct associated with similar negative outcomes (e.g., physical exhaustion, burnout, sleep problems, and poor work-life balance; Barber et al., 2019; Kao et al., 2020; Santuzzi & Barber, 2018) is workplace telepressure. Workplace telepressure is the urge and preoccupation to respond to work-related messages (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015). In our proposed study, we will examine the relationship between workaholism and workplace telepressure and test ICT boundary creation as a potential moderator. ICT boundary creation, the restrictions one sets for using ICTs for work, will be tested as a moderator because it could be part of a solution to minimize the negative effects affiliated with workaholism and workplace telepressure (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015). If significant results are found, organizations could alter their policies to promote separating work and personal life, thus lowering harmful consequences associated with both workplace telepressure and workaholism. Due to their similar associations with other organizational constructs, we expect workaholism will be positively related to workplace telepressure (H1). Furthermore, since ICT boundary creation allows workers to separate their work and home life, we hypothesize ICT boundary creation will be negatively related to workplace telepressure (H2a) and workaholism (H2b). Lastly, we expect ICT boundary creation will moderate the relationship between workaholism and workplace telepressure, such that the greater the level of ICT boundary creation, the weaker the relationship between them (H3). The participants will consist of full-

time staff and faculty recruited through an online email distribution at a Southeastern university. The proposed hypotheses will be analyzed using correlations and multiple regression analysis. Moreover, the potential moderating influence of ICT boundary creation will be investigated through a PROCESS Hayes (2014) analysis.

Summary

Information and communication technology (ICT) continue to grow and become a normal part of the work environment. In 2019, approximately 81% of U.S. citizens owned a smart phone, and 75% owned a laptop and/or a desktop computer ("Mobile Fact Sheet," 2019). Their growth in popularity combined with the impact COVID-19, has made them more prevalent than ever before. While ICTs may help employees have more control over their response times, they can also contribute to blurring an employee's boundaries between work and home life.

As a result, ICTs may worsen the adverse influences linked to workaholism and workplace telepressure. ICTs make it possible for workaholics to continue working outside of their workplace and provides workers with more opportunities to give into their workplace telepressure urges. Both constructs have a compulsive nature and are associated with negative interpersonal relationships, sleep problems, physical exhaustion and complaints, burnout, and poor work-life balance (Barber et al., 2019; Santuzzi & Barber, 2018; Andreassen et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2016). As ICTs become even more engrained as a normal part of the work environment, it is important to understand the role ICT boundary creation has as a potential solution to workaholism and workplace telepressure.

In the current study, we will investigate the relationship between workplace telepressure, workaholism, and ICT boundary creation. Little research has been done directly looking at the relationship between workplace telepressure and workaholism. Due to the comparable associations with other constructs, it is predicted that workaholism and workplace telepressure will be positively correlated. In addition, the potential moderating effect of ICT boundary creation on the workplace telepressure and workaholism relationship will be investigated.

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