

# The Impact of Psychological Empowerment on Workaholism

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of psychological empowerment on workaholism among University faculty. Two hypotheses were tested: 1) There is an impact of Psychological Empowerment on Workaholism. 2) There is a gender difference in Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism. The current study followed the quantitative research approach by using the convenience sampling technique. Data was collected from the 40 faculty members of one public and one private university located in Karachi. For the data collection, two scales were used i.e. Psychological Empowerment by Spreitzer (1995) Instrument, and "Workaholism analysis questionnaire". The study findings suggested that the impact of Psychological empowerment on Workaholism is not significant and there was no gender difference in these two variables. The findings of this study can contribute to the educational sector by enhancing the understanding association between Psychological Empowerment and workaholism among Faculty staff.

**Keywords:** *Workaholism, Psychological Empowerment, University Faculty, Educational sector*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the world of modern management, Psychological empowerment is one of the well-known concepts in execution, and organisational psychology studies (Fourie, 2009; Whetten & Cameron, 1995). Deci and Ryan (2009) stated that employees who are empowered do trust upon themselves and their tasks, which they carry out, thus, organised their goals, that increase their interest in working for their organization. As per the study of Conger and Kanungo (1988) & (Fourie, 2009), psychological empowerment can lead to raise the emotions of self-efficacy, which means they considered empowerment as motivational factor, which can improve one's self-efficacy.

Psychological empowerment defined as "work motivation divided into four cognitions showing an employee's direction to his or her task contribution: competence, impact, meaning, and self-determination" (Fourie, 2009; Gillet, Morin, Sandrin, & Houle, 2018). According to the study Wessels (2012), psychological empowerment could be said as an "enabling process", which leads to increase the establishment of task and its determination. When an individual is self-assured regarding his capabilities for doing work or he is an expert in his abilities need for that work (competence), then he might be capable to his work with complete dedication. Furthermore, individuals who can make decision to perform any task (self-determination) and aware of the fact that they can bring change on their organisation (impact) will considered to be full motivated and passionate for their work. Earlier researches suggested that employees who are more empowered to their work are more novel and indulge into creativity, show more efficiency in fulfilling their work (Gillet et al., 2018)(Fourie, 2006), and these employees show additional behaviour to their work (Lawong, McAllister, Ferris, & Hochwarter, 2018).

Motivated employees are good in performing their working in comparison to their colleagues and workers (Spagnoli, Balducci, Scafuri Kovalchuk, Maiorano, & Buono, 2018). Therefore, employees who are motivated to their work, perform their work more effectively as compared to their colleagues and other workers (Kolodinsky, Ritchie, & Kuna, 2018).

In the present economic atmosphere, the psychological connection of the individuals with their task is a powerful tool to rival others effectively (Chaudhry & Shah, 2011). Nowadays, firms and institutions demand that individual who shows their extra passion during work (Bakker, van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010). Those individuals who always contribute continued progress of existence to their task are known as workaholics (Burke, 2000; Spagnoli et al., 2018).

According to Zeijen, Peeters, and Hakanen (2018), Wrokholism compel employees towards work and create

motive and interest within them. They further illustrated that proactive employees redesign their jobs which make them fit with the new tasks as per their competency level and expectations. Snir and Harpaz (2009) stated that the people who are workaholics every time shows their concerns to work even when they are not doing work. In short, the thoughts of the workaholic person always engage with the activities involved to their work (Snir & Harpaz, 2009).

Thus, the objective of this study is to investigate the impact of psychological empowerment on workaholism among university faculty and find out the gender difference on the variable of psychological empowerment and Workaholism.

There are different professions in our society such as nursing, teaching, and medical while the individuals belong to these professions may require psychological empowerment or maybe they become workaholic due to the motivational factors from surroundings or by their organization (Khaef Elahi, Nargesian, & Babashahi, 2012).

The occupation of teachers is stressful by nature that affect the status of life and physical conditions of teacher. The physical conditions of teachers can be physically or mentally well-being is a matter, which got an enough amount of awareness in the organisation.

The study of Duffy and Lent (2009) illustrated that teaching is a professions among all other professions that have received the challenging attention. In the field of education, psychological empowerment has developed into appealing subject matter for different authors in previous years (Carless, 2004). According to the research study of Dee, Henkin, and Duemer (2003), motivated teachers are enough to perform their tasks because it improves their feeling to understand the meaning of their job and they well- built their performances in their respective organisations, which are the basics for area of education. People empowering to do their jobs with hard work in the both negative and positive situational factors have become a source of attention for authors (Martinko, Douglas, & Harvey, 2006).

Many authors accept that Oates first defined the Workaholism in a research study in 1971. His actual article compared Workaholism as same as alcoholism, which shows a similar meaning to Workaholism i.e., an obligation to do something (work) excessively. In 1980 Machlowitz, outlined workaholic as employees' habit who continued their task for long time even when they are not compelled to do so.

Workaholic is the term which has been used for the individuals who do their work for long time, with the changes in outcomes and appropriately, whether it is an issue or not (Friedman & Lobel, 2003; Scott, Moore, & Miceli, 1993). To do continue working for prolong, it fits to the emerging concept of a workaholic while according to many studies, it has been discovered that work duration hours do not depend upon Workaholism.

Work duration involves internal desire or emotions motivated to work and internal mechanism of motivation is termed as Psychological Empowerment (Burke, 1999; Taris, Schaufeli, & Verhoeven, 2005).

Those employees who can bring revolution and creativity in the emerging evolvment and competition of international business became the reason of preceding interest of Psychological empowerment (Drucker, 1988). Before now, employee empowerment was recognised as a management tool specially designed to bring out the best job behaviours from employees. Psychological empowerment was stated as a different ways of management traditions that recognise the position of employees by handing over to them some decision making authority, spanning from the top level of hierarchy to the down level by improving the ways of guidance and by providing different services for each individual worker (Bowen & Lawler, 1992; Neilsen, 1986).

Even though employee empowerment has been extensively used in management and by organisational researchers, there has been lack of concurrence in its definition. For example, according to the study of Conger and Kanungo (1988), Self-efficacy is a motivational idea of psychological empowerment. Randolph (2000) notified the ability of oneself for understanding and identifying for an individual that he or she has already has a treasure of helpful and practical information that is Psychological empowerment. It is a perception of an individual about their work that is useful with any target to achieve (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) discussed psychological empowerment is based upon different features and its intrinsic nature cannot be understand by any single idea. He further explained empowerment as enhancing internal motivation for work that is divided into different dimensions based on four cognitions shows an employee's direction towards duty for fulfilling tasks.

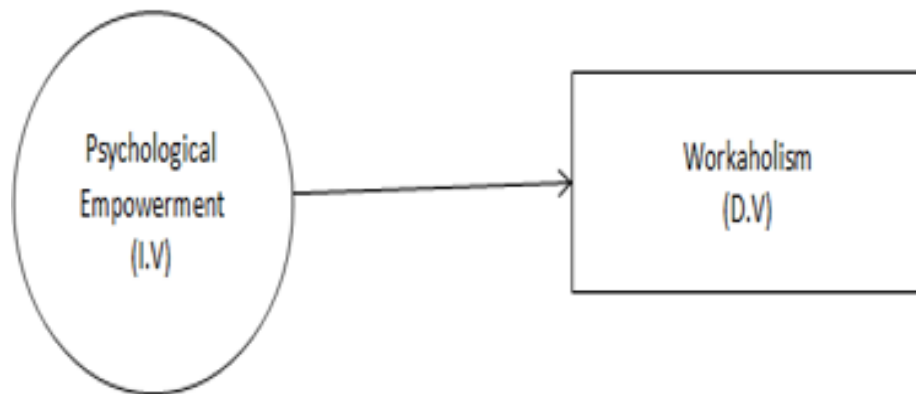
These cognitions are meaning, competence, self-determination and impact.

According to the study of Staples (1990), Psychological empowerment tends to improve the employees' efforts and their command over their job. The study of Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989) states empowerment as the ability to establish and manage the individual's behaviour.

If an individual can determine his own abilities, then he can also manage what he does, how much struggle he does and when he begins and ends (Spector, 1986). Impact is one of the cognition of psychological

empowerment that stated as the effect of the performance of one individual to his surroundings of organisation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). It is also termed as to learn how to do work independently in the workplace (Gillet et al., 2018). Cognitions used by Spreitzer (1995) to describe psychological empowerment. It is asserted that these four types of cognitions unite additionally to make a general form of psychological empowerment. This illustrates that the absence of one of these cognitions will collapse, even if not entirely abolish to large extent of felt empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996).

According to overall literature review, the conceptual framework of this study is described in [Figure 1](#):



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework.

*H1: There is an impact of Psychological Empowerment on Workaholism.*

*H2: There is a gender difference with variable of Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism.*

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study followed the quantitative research approach by using the convenience sampling technique that is a type of non-probability technique in which people are taken in due to the reason of becoming convenient source of data for researchers (Lavrakas, 2008). The total number of participants were 40 (20 males and 20 females), 20 participants were from public university and other 20 participants were from private university. Data was collected from the University faculties of one public and one private university located in Karachi, who were conveniently available at the time of data collection. The age of participants ranged from 26-60 years. Educational status of participants of this study was from bachelors to doctor of philosophy (see [Table 1](#)). Data of 40 participants found appropriate for the preliminary research and for the comparison of a private university with a government university. We used linear regression model and used sample size justified as per the standard rule of thumb by Myers and Myers (1990).

Consent and demographic form was used to obtain participants' consent to participate in the study by providing them with a brief detail regarding the purpose of the research, their role in it, and their rights of voluntary participation and confidentiality and to obtain basic demographic details that will be deemed necessary for research purposes.

Demographic form included age, gender, marital status, education and total numbers of years working.

Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES) developed by Spreitzer (1995) was used to evaluate psychological empowerment among faculty members. It is a 12-items scale that measures the four dimensions of empowerment that are meaning, competence, self-determination and impact.

The psychological empowerment scale is a self-assessment scale, with a 5-point Likert-type response format. The instrument has four sub-scales of three items and each of the scale measure one dimensions. The original psychological empowerment scale has sixteen items, but the twelve items often used by researchers, were those that had the strongest loadings in an exploratory factor analysis in Spreitzer (1995) initial study.

The Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ) is a 29-item self-report measure of workaholism scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of workaholism. Sample items include, "I enjoy spending evenings and weekends working" and "I often obsess about goals or achievements at work." Cronbach's alpha was .934 in the study in which that questionnaire was created by Aziz, Uhrich, Wuensch, and Swords (2013), emphasizing Work-Life Imbalance and addiction in the measurement of Workaholism. In current study, Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire Scale found to be internally consistent at the level of = 0.928.

After pretesting, final data was collected through convenience sampling. As a researcher, we got the consent form filled by the head of the department and also by the participants as well mentioning that their names will not be disclosed nor their names would be quoted at any part of the research.

Other ethical issues related to the study were also explained. We ensured participants to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants, building professional researcher-participant relationships. We also explained the risks as well as the benefits of joining this research study to all the 40 participants.

A demographic form was also used to gather the basic demographic details about the participants. We ensured that all participants are currently employed as permanent faculty in their respective universities.

To investigate the impact of Psychological empowerment on Workaholism, Linear regression analysis test was used and to find the gender differences, an independent samples t-test was employed. All statistical analysis will be done through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

### 3. RESULTS

Overall the regression model applied did not indicate any significant impact of Psychological Empowerment on Workaholism (See Table 2). Table 4 provides the R and R<sup>2</sup> value. The R value is 0.270, which represents the simple correlation and, therefore, indicates weak correlation. The R<sup>2</sup> value indicates how much of the dependent variable, Workaholism can be explained by the independent variable, psychological empowerment. In this case, 2% can be explained which is small. According to the results, there was no gender difference on the variable of Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism (See Table 2).

### 4. DISCUSSION

The basic purpose of this study was to explore the impact of psychological empowerment on workaholism among university faculties of one private and one public University. Furthermore, this study also examined the gender difference on the variable of Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism among University Faculty. The findings of the first hypothesis assess the linear regression between Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism among University Faculties and reveal its insignificance enough in predicting the outcome variable. The correlation between Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism among University Faculties is resulted as insignificant ( $r=0.270$ ;  $n=40$ ). These results are consistent with the previous researches on Workaholism. For Example, It supports the Machlowitz (1980) who stated that for being workaholic economic and instrumental motivation is not important, instead intrinsic motivation work effectively. These finding also supports the research of Burke, Martinko et al. (2006) who stated that Wokaholism is more related to the characteristics of personality rather than Psychological Empowerment.

The study of Ugwu (2011) also supported the findings of this research by stating that Psychological empowerment cannot differ significantly on Workaholism because Workaholism is a personality trait and it will not be affected by the motivational factors of surrounding. The results of this study also support few other studies of Burke (1999); Burke, Matthiesen, and Pallesen (2006) which explored the positive relationship between behavior and Workaholism, focusing more on Workaholism as a trait than the situational factors. Thus, it cannot be affected by the empowerment factors exist in the organizations.

The findings of second hypothesis stated that there were no gender differences on the variable of Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism among University faculty. According to the results, gender difference on the variable of Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism shows that Workaholism ( $t=1.63$   $df=38$ ,  $p >.05$ ) and psychological empowerment ( $t=-.179$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $p >.05$ ) is not statistically significant.

These findings also support earlier studies of Burke (2000) and McMillan, O Driscoll, and Burke (2003), which stated that the individual demographics are independent to Workaholism and other motivational actors of surroundings. Many authors like Spence and Robbins (1992); Robinson (1998) and Ugwu (2011) discussed workaholism as a constant individual personality variable. Therefore, in this context, gender differences is not related to the Psychological empowerment and workaholism.

**Table 1.** Participant Demographics (N=40).

Measure	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	20	50%
Male	20	50%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	10	25%
Single	27	67.5%
Widow	3	7.5%
<b>Age</b>		
26 to 29 years	7	17.5%
30 to 34 years	6	15%
35 to 39 years	8	20%
40 to 44 years	10	25%
45 to 49 years	3	7.5%
50 to 60 years or above	6	15%
<b>Education</b>		
Bachelor's Degree	3	7.5%
Graduate/Masters	19	47.5%
Post Graduate/ Master	12	30.0%
Doctor of Philosophy	6	15.0%
<b>Ranks</b>		
Professor	6	15%
Associate Professor	11	27.5%
Assistant Professor	3	7.5%
Lecturer	20	50%
<b>Total Number of years working</b>		
Less than 3 year	7	17.5%
4 to 8 years	11	27.5%
9 to 13 years	7	17.5%
14 years and above	15	37.5%
<b>The organization you work is public or private</b>		
Public	20	50%
Private	20	50%

**Table 2.** Frequency summary of linear regression with psychological empowerment on workaholism.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.270a	.073	.048

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological Empowerment.

**Table 3.** Analysis of Variance for Linear Regression with Psychological Empowerment on Workaholism.

Model		SS	Df	MS	f	Sig.
1	Regression	1145.562	1	1145.562	2.977	.093 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	14623.413	38	384.827		
	Total	15768.975	39			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological Empowerment

b. Dependent Variable: Workaholism.

**Table 4.** Coefficients for Linear Regression with Psychological Empowerment on Workaholism.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error (Constant)	Beta		
1	Psychological Empowerment	141.746	33.627		4.215	.000
		-1.244	.721	-.270	-1.725	.093

a. Dependent Variable: Workaholism.

**Table 5.** The mean difference between male and female on the variable of workaholism and psychological empowerment (N=40).

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig.
Workaholism	Female	20	87.35	17.23			
	Male	20	80.60	22.55	1.063	38	.294
Psychological Empowerment	Female	20	46.30	2.867			
	Male	20	46.55	5.539	-.179	38	.859

**Table 6.** Reliability analysis of scales (Cronbach Alpha).

Scales	Cases (N)	Item(N)	Cronbach Alpha $\alpha$
Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES)	40	12	.716
Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ)	40	29	.928

**Note:**  $\alpha$  of Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES) showing acceptable internal consistency and  $\alpha$  of Workaholism Analysis Questionnaire (WAQ) is showing excellent internal consistency.

Limitations that require to be addressed are as: We did our research only on the faculty in a context of two universities so the data of this study cannot be generalized on overall educational sector of Karachi. Purpose of picking faculties of two universities only is to explore the previous researches on the primary level. This study is limited to very few aspects of Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism as there are very few latest research studies on Psychological Empowerment and Workaholism. Data of 40 participants found appropriate for the preliminary research and for the comparison of a private university with a government university. We used linear regression model and used sample size justified as per the standard rule of thumb by Myers and Myers (1990).

The implication for current study is that this study should be employed on large sample size in future. The current study may increase the information that how psychological empowerment can influence the behaviour of individuals to perform their work. The findings of this study can be utilized for making decision to analyse situation of faculty's turnover. These finding can be implicated to make better environment of work and to enhance the motivational level of faculty by adding more variables to it such as Job commitment, Job Engagement and Satisfaction. This is the research on primary level with comparison of a private university with a government university, however, in extension this research can spread not only to the other universities of Pakistan but it can expand for the betterment of the individual and community

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is no impact of Psychological Empowerment on Workaholism between the Faculty of a Private and a Public University. These results suggest that to exhibit workaholism in faculty members, there is no need of psychological empowerment; instead it depends on their personality characteristics or nature to get more addiction to their work. Furthermore, there is no gender difference between faculty on the variable of psychological empowerment and Workaholism.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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