Chapter VII: Conclusion, Implications and Future Directions of Research

Work plays a crucial role in the life of the individuals and brings positive value for them. However, when it becomes over important for the individuals, it may have negative consequences for them at various fronts of life. This syndrome of over-involvement in work both behaviorally and mentally named as workaholism is a serious age-killer whose long term effect may be far more severe. As in the preliminary stages of workaholism, the negative effects may not be visible and it may be seen as the positive symptom but slowly and steadily it may have cascading effect on the well being of an individual deteriorating his/her health, social and family relationships. To contemplate on this, the present composition has been designed to study some of the issues associated with the phenomenon of workaholism. The present part of the research has been devoted to the conclusion and the main findings followed by theoretical and policy implications resulting from the study. The chapter has been divided into three sections. Section I deals with the summary and conclusion emerging out of the present study. While the implications have been discussed in section II followed by the direction for future research stemming from the study.

Section I

7.1 Summary and Conclusions
The previous studies in this area of research has indicated, that the workaholism as a phenomenon has hardly been understood in its entirety and comprehensively in case of Indian context, though this term has received considerable acknowledgement from various researchers. The present work has been planned to reduce this gap and made an
endeavor to explore the unknown or less explored areas of workaholism and its various aspects in relation to service sector organizations.

7.1.1 Objectives of the Study and Research Methodology

The study entails to get the answers of certain issues associated with the dynamism of workaholism.

i. Is the typology of Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS) that constitutes workaholism is applicable in Indian context especially in the service sector?

ii. What are the consequences which people with high workaholic tendencies bear at personal and professional level?

iii. Whether people with high workaholic tendencies spend more time working?

iv. Do the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of workaholism have similar antecedents and consequences?

v. Whether it is the role of individual or non-individual variables which place a person in the more or less workaholics’ category?

vi. Whether the individuals with both cognitive and behavioral tendencies of workaholism bear more consequences than the individuals with either cognitive or behavioral tendencies of workaholism only?

In view of the above research questions, the study is framed with the perspective of:

i. An examination of the construct validity of workaholism scale;

ii. An identification of the causes attributed to different types of workaholic behavior in employees;
iii. Understanding of the impact of different types of workaholic behavior on personal and professional well being of the employees; and

iv. Suggesting suitable measures to deal with the issues associated with workaholism.

In order to commensurate with the objectives, primary data have been collected from employees engaged in front line work in service sector organizations. With the purpose to prepare an empirical case for the phenomenon of workaholism, the study has concentrated on the specific part of the country i.e. Jammu region of J&K state. This has enabled to analyze the antecedents and the outcomes of workaholic behavior among the employees.

The primary data have been collected from the employees of the sample units with the help of well structured, pre-tested comprehensive questionnaire. With the objective to develop a comprehensive questionnaire for the employees previous literature on workaholism has been reviewed deeply. The structured questionnaire was distributed among 650 employees, who were contacted personally at their workplace in order to take their anonymous responses. Out of 650 respondents, 600 responses were received which resulted in 530 usable responses for the final analysis.

The previous research entails, various variables underlying the phenomenon of workaholism i.e. socio-economic variables (age, gender, sector, monthly salary, education, number of children), personality characteristic (Type-A behavior), job characteristics, and work characteristics (tenure working with this organization, number of years spent working on the same position, number of people handled in the organization, average working hours). These indicators have been used as the probable antecedents of workaholism for the present work. Adding to it, outcomes of workaholism
like work family conflicts, career satisfaction, family satisfaction, job satisfaction, physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well being have also been assessed in the present work.

The final instrument developed, assessing all the above variables, has been used for the sample survey. The study uses various statistical tools, such as, factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, regression analysis, discriminant analysis, percentages, mean, chi-square and independent sample t-test to arrive at the results. The responses of the respondents were analyzed by using two softwares, namely, Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 16) and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20).

7.1.2 Major Findings of the Study

The present study validates the factorial validity of DUWAS for employees working in service sector of Jammu region, India. The preliminary model has checked the first order three construct model, namely, WkE, WkC and OW and, further, the incorporation of these three dimensions into a second order factor termed as workaholism. The results got reasonable endorsement from various model fit indices. However, a comparison of tri-dimensional model comprising of WkE, WkC and OW with two-dimensional model consisting of WkE and WkC specifies that two-dimensional model has proven to be superior to tri-dimensional model. The results of two-dimensional model of DUWAS were marginally better which specifies about the relative weak contribution of overwork dimension. This is akin to the viewpoint of Schaufeli et al. (2006 and 2008); Miralles (2011); Libano et al. (2010); Taris et al. (2005) who epitomize the confirmation of workaholism as the inter-correlation between excessive working and compulsive working and thus, envisioning workaholism as a two-dimensional construct.
Furthermore, the study checked the validity of employee well being instruments, namely, work to family interference, family to work interference, career satisfaction, family satisfaction, job satisfaction, physical well being and mental, spiritual and emotional well being. The results from the maximum likelihood estimation method showed that some statistics did not reach the threshold limits and suggested that an improvement in the model was possible by modifying the model. Accordingly, a modified model has been built after the deletion of some items with which, model showed much better fit statistics and reached the threshold limit of various model fit indices.

On the basis of regression model, at aggregate level, the study revealed that there are four underlying antecedents i.e. gender, sector, salary and Type-A behavior which contribute significantly to the high workaholic tendencies of the employees. ‘Type-A behavior’ has emerged out to be one of the significant (p<0.01) determinants which lead to the high workaholic tendencies among the employees. As the workaholic individual is characterized with the traits, such as, competitive, driven and perfectionist which are similar to some of the features of an individual, who possess Type-A behavior. Since the characteristics of Type-A behavior are more or less similar to the workaholic characteristics which may add to the high workaholic tendencies of the employees. Another important determinant contributing to workaholic behavior among the employees is ‘Salary’ which is statistically significant at 1 per cent level of significance. It implies that employees, who earn high salaries, may come across various work pressures and demands, due to which they experience high workaholic tendencies. Further, the relationship between ‘Gender’ and workaholic behavior has also come out to
be significant (p<0.01) at aggregate level. It expounds that as the females have been identified as responsible, diligent and hardworking, which may be contributing significantly in the possibility of developing high workaholic tendencies in them. Adding to it, is the ‘Sector’ which also plays significant (p<0.01) role in determining workaholic tendencies of the employees. This implies that due to high work demands and cut throat competition prevailing in the private sector organizations the employees may have become more susceptible to high workaholic tendencies.

Furthermore, at disaggregate level, for working excessively workaholics, ‘job characteristics’ (p<0.05) comes out to be significant predictor for WkE. The probable reason is that job characteristics influence those individuals who find work interesting and derive satisfaction from it. Since the employees, who report low on job characteristics, does not experience the flavours of job enrichment which may be contributing in the development of their excessive workaholic behavior.

Further, regression analysis has also acknowledged ‘Education’ (p<0.05) as another determinant for excessive workaholic behavior of the employees. Since higher education is also normally related with higher job designation encompassing greater responsibilities due to which they may have to devote long number of hours working which may increase the chances of developing high workaholic behavior among them. Further, ‘Number of Children’ emerges out to be significant (p<0.01) predictor of excessive workaholic behavior. It reveals that the individuals having lesser parenting responsibilities are devoid of many home related responsibilities due to which they may spend most of the time in work related activities.
‘Average working hours’ (p<0.01) also emerge out to be the significant predictor for WkE. The devotion of extended number of hours in work related matters enhances the possibility of developing excessive workaholic behavior pattern among the employees. Lastly, ‘Years spent working on the same position’ crop up to be another predictor of excessive workaholic behavior in the employees. The probable reason behind this may be that individuals, who spend lesser number of years working on the same position, have the more possibility of developing excessive workaholic behavior since they have to gather knowledge and familiarize themselves with the work related skills.

For working compulsively workaholics, ‘Age’ proves to be significant (p<0.10) predictors which implies that individuals develop obsessions for work with the advancement in their age. As the individual with increase in age start worrying excessively that may act as a source for developing compulsive workaholic behavior. ‘Number of children’ (p<0.05) and ‘Years spent working on the same position’ (p<0.01) are also emerged out to be the significant determinants of compulsive workaholic behavior among the employees. This implies that fear of insecurity in job due to spending of lesser number of years working on the same position may be the plausible clarification for the development of obsessive workaholic behavior.

The results also exhibits that WkE and WkC have similar socio economic and personality antecedents except age (which is positively and significantly associated with WkC only) and education (which is negative and significantly associated with WkE only). Further, the job characteristics is significantly (negatively) predicting the WkE dimension but has not come out as the significant determinant in case of WkC.
The results, further, reveal significant association between WkE and average working hours. While in case of working compulsive behavior, insignificant relationship appears with average working hours. The probable rationale behind this may be that individuals with compulsive workaholic behavior are not restricted to their workplaces and simultaneously may be able to devote time to their personal as well as professional lives, thus, indicating insignificant impact of average working hours.

Moreover, the results, further, indicate that socio-economic variables and personality traits have proved to be the variables significantly discriminating between high and low workaholic category of employees. It emphasizes that it is more the role of the individual factors which cause the development of high workaholic tendencies in them rather than work or job characteristics.

At disaggregate level, the personal consequences resultant from workaholic behavior of employees reveals significant (p<0.01) and negative relationship between ‘Family satisfaction’ and WkE. It entails that the behavior in which the employees spend a great deal of time in work activities may result into the weak relationship with the family. Whereas ‘Family satisfaction’ (p<0.05) reveals positive relationship with WkC. It signifies that families of the employees may be remaining satisfied with physical presence of their spouses at home though they may be mentally busy with their work related activities. Another positive relationship pops out is between work to family interference and WkE which is statistically significant at 1 per cent level of significance. It specifies that employees’ devotion for long number of hours in work related matters is hampering their personal life. Furthermore, positive relationship comes out between ‘Work to family interference’ (p<0.05) and WkC. It puts in view that inspite of deriving
satisfaction at family front by the employees, who are with more working compulsive
derive, still work interferes with the normal working of their personal life. ‘Physical well
being’ (p<0.01) exhibits negative relationship with WkE. It points out that as the
employees characterised by working excessively hard, devote much of their time in work
related activities which hold them back to get sufficient time for recovery from their work
that result into their poor physical well being. The regression analysis reveals that
‘Mental, spiritual and emotional well being’ (p<0.01) depict negative relationship with
WkE. The employees’ excessive involvement in work has made hard for the individuals
to devote time for themselves resulting into poor mental, spiritual and emotional well
being.

At the professional front, negative relationship exhibits between ‘Career
satisfaction’ (p<0.05) and WkE. It reveals that individuals working excessively
experience less satisfaction towards their career. Though working excessively hard is a
positive feature but when it goes beyond a reasonable degree, it may create disparity in
the life of an individual, hinder his/her career, and further reduces satisfaction from
career life. ‘Job satisfaction’ also exhibits negative relationship with WkE and WkC. This
implies that employees who have psychological and excessive involvement at work
derive less satisfaction from their job.

‘Family to Work Interference’ (p<0.01) depicts positive relationship with WkE.
This may be due to the reason that when individual starts working excessively his/her
family life, gradually gets disturbed, thus, causing interference in the professional life of
an individual. Whereas, ‘Family to work interference’ (p<0.01) exhibits negative
relationship with WkC. Because of the presence of features of collectivism and unity in
case of Indian families system, a provision for discussion, communication and sharing among the family members about work-related issues in many cases may be available which, in turn, may provide a support system to the employees at family front. This supportive behavior and resultant family satisfaction may be the probable elucidation for less interference of families in work related matters in case of WkC.

At aggregate level, the results reveal that employees, who are high on workaholic tendencies, experience high work-family conflict, and derive less family satisfaction. Further, the results have also put in view that employees high in workaholic tendencies are less satisfied with their job and career and exhibit low physical and mental, spiritual and emotional well being.

The findings of the study also contradict the earlier studies which have explained that people with cognitive workaholic behavior are having severe health problems in comparison to the individuals, who have excessive workaholic behavior. The probable reason may be the role played by the family which is acting as a buffer for employees with the compulsive workaholic tendencies and may make them relaxed on health front.

The results of the study uphold the earlier opinion about the consequences being faced by the individual with both mental and behavioral workaholic tendencies. It puts into view that individuals with both mental and behavioral tendencies bear more severe sufferings at personal and professional front and their well being is adversely effected as compared to the individuals with either behavioral or cognitive tendencies. The results provide evidence regarding the proposition that well being is affected differently by different components of workaholism, which is in alignment with the previous research.
Section II

7.2. Implications and Directions of Future Research

In the present section the implications and future scope of the study have been discussed.

7.2.1. Implications of Study

The significance of the study is to suggest policy implications to the organizations and individuals so that the efforts for the management of workaholic behavior prevailing among the employees may be taken. The policy and theoretical implications of the study are worth mentioning and narrated below:

7.2.1.1 Theoretical Implications

a. One of the objectives of the present research was to address the limitation existing in the literature regarding the application of DUWAS and well being instruments in Indian culture. The findings of the study relating to the well being instruments do reflect some country related differences which contributes to the understanding of well being measures from Indian perspective. However, results of the study have authenticated the proposition made by the earlier researchers that DUWAS instrument can be used to study the workaholic dimensions irrespective of the country or work-settings involved and has advanced both the knowledge and understanding of the literature in this direction. The findings based on the parsimony results manifest that measure of workaholism is better when overwork dimension is removed and confirmed that workaholism can be measured with a bi-dimensional approach of DUWAS.
b. Employee well being, so far, has been studied from different theoretical frameworks but an overarching framework was lacking especially in Indian context. This attempt has put the efforts to integrate different taxonomies of well being. This integration may helpful in a parsimonious understanding of employee well being from various perspectives that constitutes the cornerstone to continue with the study of well being from applied perspective.

c. The present work offers a breath of air in the area of study of workaholism in Indian context and contributes to the ongoing discussion about the explanation of workaholism with the better description of antecedents and consequences both at the aggregate and disaggregates level. It improves the understanding of the factors affecting workaholism. The probable predictors sprung from the previous literature have added to the pool of the knowledge with some validation from the existing results. Therefore, it offers a general and inductive interpretation of workaholism by including all these variables together in a more precise and indepth manner.

d. The findings of the study have taken the position with that set of the researchers, who portrayed the workaholism as a negative concept because of its resultant detrimental consequences at both personal and professional front. In this direction the study has extended the horizon of knowledge about the concept of workaholism by providing confirmation that workaholism may be measured with a negative approach which is the basis of DUWAS. This verdict of negative concept of workaholism strengthens the belief of these researchers, who have equated it with any kind of addiction on account of which individual suffers at
various fronts of his/her life. This confirmation of negative nature of workaholism is a relevant point that needs to be considered not only by the employees but also by the organisations as only those organisations which are concerned about their employees’ well being can be in position to meet their goals and offer excellent performance.

e. The current work has added to the pool of deliberation in the area of workaholism where it has been debated as an individual or non-individual oriented phenomenon. Based on the substantiation produced by the study, it can be inferred that workaholism is more dependent on aspects relating to the individual differences rather than the requirements of job or work. The requirements of job or work can act like accelerating factors which may give authorization to those factors which account for individual differences and drag them towards high workaholic tendencies.

7.2.1.2 Policy Implications

Some of the policy implications stemming from the findings of the present study are discussed below.

a. The study establishes the relevance of designing of various workaholic management strategies focusing on the personality which has been identified as the ‘on button’ in the workaholism process at the aggregate and disaggregate level. Therefore, profiling employees accordingly will lead human resource specialists to take care of those contributing factors. Besides, the profile obtained in the study may also serve as a guiding principle to apply the various measures
correctly as they can play the role of indicators of the possibilities of developing tendencies of workaholics in the future.

b. Moreover, the study clearly establishes that components of workaholism have different antecedents and consequences. It necessitates the application of customized heterogeneous approach in the adoption of measures taking into account the underlying behavioural pattern observed in the employee. It will help to capture the diversity existing in predictors on account of different patterns of workaholism with which the side effects of excessive involvement in work activities can be neutralized with a more pointed approach.

c. Additionally, as the people with high workaholic tendencies bear the brunt of their workaholism tendencies at personal and professional front, so strategies specifically taking care of the predictors determining the existence of high workaholic tendencies should be designed. In this regard, factors accounting for individual difference which cause the development of workaholic tendencies in employees rather than work or job characteristics should be the prime base for selection of any intervention program for an employee with workaholic tendencies. Moreover, family members should also be included in the prevention programs as Indian family system may behave as one of the key shields of protection and remedy against repulsive effects of workaholism as noted in the present study.

d. As the excessive working has shown significant relationship with the average working hours spent at the work place, in this regard, organizations should ensure that judging solely by who arrives for work at the earliest and leaves at the last
should not be important criterion for performance evaluation. So, the organizations should change their policies and procedures and include strict working hours which foster an environment that encourages employees not to continue working after office hours and thus, not providing additional fuel to the workaholic characteristics of employees. Besides, reinforcement intervention to prevent or reduce that workaholism should target rewarding appropriate rather than excessive workaholic behavior which will help in creating a positive work culture in such a way that their efficiency and productivity will also get improved in the long run.

e. Furthermore, the contribution urge for the creation of provisions of job security, the lack of which can also make employees feel compelled to work longer both behaviourally and psychologically. This has been evident from the finding where in case of public sector the employees are experiencing less workaholic tendencies both at the aggregate and disaggregate level due to the less presence of factors related to job security. The impact of these factors needs to be mitigated in the atmosphere within the organization culture.

f. The role of sector in determining the workaholic characteristics in employees cannot be undermined which can also be a contributory factor in driving the employees towards work and perpetuating a different kind of working climate at the workplace. The study also implies that the difference in the organization culture of private sector from public sector which may be on account of work pressure, job insecurity, etc. are acting as the important instigating factors for generating workaholic tendencies in the employees. For this training programs
should be exclusively designed for private sector employees, which cater to their needs taking into account their work requirements. These training programs should focus more on time management and problem solving skills as the characteristics of workaholics explains that they take more work than they can handle and accept new tasks before completing previous ones. Besides, in this context, formal personal selection procedure should contain examination of person-employment sector fit in addition to conventional person-job fit or person-organization fit in order to discourage the development of workaholic tendencies in employees.

g. During the study it was also found that most of the individuals, who have been rated as high workaholics, are not able to recognize their workaholic behavior either they denied that they are with high workaholic tendencies or they referred it to their responsibilities at work to justify their dedication towards work. Although recognition does not ensure any change in their behavior, yet failure to recognize the problem seems a guarantee that such behavior will continue. In this context, self-awareness program can be designed by the organization which may enlighten them about the contributory factors and repercussions emerged from such type of behavior. The employee assistance programs, such as counselling sessions, seminars/workshops, on this front, may also be organized so that they can be made aware of the potential consequences and thus may be educated about the eventual effects of workaholic behavior vis-a-vis leisure activities. A key aspect of these workshops should involve providing accurate feedback on the
workaholics’ behavior and outcomes as an aid in altering their workaholic behavior.

h. The study emphasize the relevance of upholding the efforts to optimize the work environment, such that employees are exposed to challenging (but not too high) job demands, and sufficient job resources (e.g. job control, autonomy, feedback, task significance) which can help the employees to feel job more enriched which is likely to cause a dent on their WkE tendencies. Work engagement, development opportunities for better engagement or flexible roles are some of the ways to make the employees feel their job enriched which may provide means to reduce their workaholic tendencies. Moreover, periodic assessments of work enjoyment at the workplace may assist in rationalization of job resources.

i. The findings of the study also indicate promising directions for the practitioners who can understand the workaholism by understanding the construct from Indian perspective. It offers them some cues to guide the professional work in the field of diagnosis and interventions of workaholism, such as, measuring workaholism and its resultant at the workplace. Additionally and more importantly, they could get an idea about the antecedents which maintain workaholism behavior and are able to propose more specific intervention strategies to prevent workaholism as well as more accurate means of promoting positive work behavior and attitudes. From a practical point of view, the results obtained suggest that two-dimensional mode of DUWAS can be used by the practitioners as a screening instrument for identifying the workaholics and their well being status on account of it. Consequently, they
might be able to exercise more control over the conditions of workaholics with ease.

j. The study highlight the role of required family support and assistance in case of individuals with working compulsive tendencies due to which they are experiencing less work to family conflict and more satisfaction on family front. Drawing upon these results, it is, therefore, suggested that organization may fortify the presence of this layer of protection by organising various activities like family day or picnics where a familial kind of environment can be provided. In this way, the family support system which may be acting as a cushion against many evil effects in case of working compulsive, can be more strengthened. Moreover, these kinds of steps may also help in the reduction of the side effects of excessive involvement in work on family front in case of working excessively and help in buttressing the bondage between individuals and his/her family.

k. The results of this study can also provide insight to the organization which may help them to support their employees better in handling work demands and make them realize that they themselves can play an active role in the self-management in order to balance work and family lives. This is important for the employees as they need to be made aware of the demands that they place upon themselves which has been pointed as one of the attributes of workaholics in the study. This understanding can help them in generating reasonable expectations about themselves. The resulting increased awareness may open the doors for the individual to seek the support that may help to reduce work–family conflict.
7.2.2 Future Directions of Research

Workaholism is an important phenomenon in organizational and individual life and as such is deserving of further study. Exploring the workaholic behavior phenomenon for professionals other than from service sector can also give understanding of the specific nature of workaholic behavior. In future, studies can also be planned to examine whether the personal and professional outcomes of workaholic behavior can affect the organization’s performance. Moreover, research can also be designed to test the effectiveness of workaholism interventions. The results of the study are obtained by self-reported measures, and consequently, may be contaminated by the common method variance and by wish to answer consistently. The potential impact of common method variance on responses was checked with the application of Harman’s test which may have reduced the likelihood of its occurrence in data. But, still the possibility of its occurrence cannot be denied completely. Therefore, future research should also include reports from family, friends and co workers in order to address the problem of common method variance completely. Future longitudinal study can also be conducted in order to examine whether an employee’s considerable allocation of time to work related activities and thoughts is steadfast along years. This may facilitate a more accurate measurement of workaholism. Besides, replication of results in different kinds of samples to develop a more compelling construct validity argument and for robustness of the model is required.

Workaholism has emerged as the common phenomenon in the present work system. In this direction, the only organizations’ endeavours cannot bring any desired results until and unless it is being supplemented by individual’s own efforts as it has been
identified as more of individual oriented phenomenon which is being accelerated by the external factors.