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**THE DILEMMA OF HIRING BALANCE LIFE WORKERS**  
**VERSUS WORKAHOLICS**

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*Abstract*

Power industry is an essential ingredient in the development of a country like Malaysia which aims at achieving a high-income status by 2020. Among the most important aspects driving the operation of the power industry is the human capital. The objective of this article is to determine the relationship between employment and working behavior, comparing between workaholics and work-life balance workers.

The study was conducted in the power plant of EDRA Malaysia which included Kuala Langat Power Plant (KLPP), Jimah Berhad, Telok Gong Power Station (TGPS) and Tanjung Kling Power Station (TKPS). The sampling frame constituted employees from the executive level or higher. A quantitative approach was used to collect primary data through the administration of questionnaires among respondents. The dependent variable was employment while the independent variable was working behavior, categorized into 'workaholic' or 'work-life balance'.

This paper concurrently sought to find out which type of employee delivered more efficient outcome – workaholics or work life balance workers – and which group was preferred by EDRA (M). It is hoped that this paper will provide an insight into future job application dynamics in the power industry.

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**Keywords:** Employment, workaholic, work-life balance, job performance.



## 1. Introduction

On 29 September 1992, a total power blackout struck the nation for several days. This landmark incident catapulted the privatization of the power generation sector that opened a market for IPPs in Malaysia. On 3 August 1996, another major blackout occurred in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Putrajaya, Johor, Malacca and Negeri Sembilan for several hours. Following these incidents, in order to provide uninterrupted electricity supply, TNB's monopoly was broken for the first time in late 1993, when five Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were set up with 30.99% contribution to the National Grid. They were - YTL Power Generation Sdn. Bhd, Segari Energy Ventures Sdn. Bhd, Port Dickson Power Bhd, Powertek Bhd and Kuala Langat Power Plant Sdn. Bhd. (KLPP) – EDRA Power Holdings Sdn. Bhd. (Formerly known as Genting Sanyen Power Sdn. Bhd.

With the advent of these IPP's, the power industry became more prominent and influential for many reasons, one being its huge workforce. As human capital is core to this industry, issues pertaining to its dynamics of employment, working behavior of its employees and the industry's recruitment strategies and policies are vital to its survival and progress.

## 2. Problem Statement

Studies have suggested that there are different types of workaholic behavior patterns, each of which has potential different premises and work performance, association of work and life outcomes (Scott, Moore & Miceli, 1997; Spence & Robbins, 1992). The presence of different types of workaholics might resolve conflicting views as to whether workaholics are productive and satisfied, or disastrous and unhappy. Workaholics have been said to not necessarily always produce good outcomes. Instead, such tendency may be detrimental to the productivity of an individual and efficiency of the company.

Traditionally, men are regarded as 'protectors' and 'breadwinners' for the family and they feel achieve satisfaction and self-esteem through participation in the workforce and public life. On the other hand, women are often applauded for being 'home-makers'. However, due to changing trends in the era of "double-income family", husbands and wives are today both employed in order to cover rising living costs and provide a better quality of life for the family. Although females are said to be more inclined to prioritize work life balance, how men make such adjustment is little understood. Men are gradually becoming more willing to compromise and support their wives to continue education or join the labor force.

Applying these phenomena to the current power industry and its employment policy, various questions remain to be answered: Does a power industry like EDRA prefer hiring workaholics or work-life balance workers? Does EDRA award workaholics or work life balance workers more? Are the performance and contribution of workaholics better as compared to work-life balance workers, or vice versa? Do male employees also yearn for work life balance or do only women prioritize having a work life balance?

### 3. Research Questions

Several research questions have been constructed, as follows:

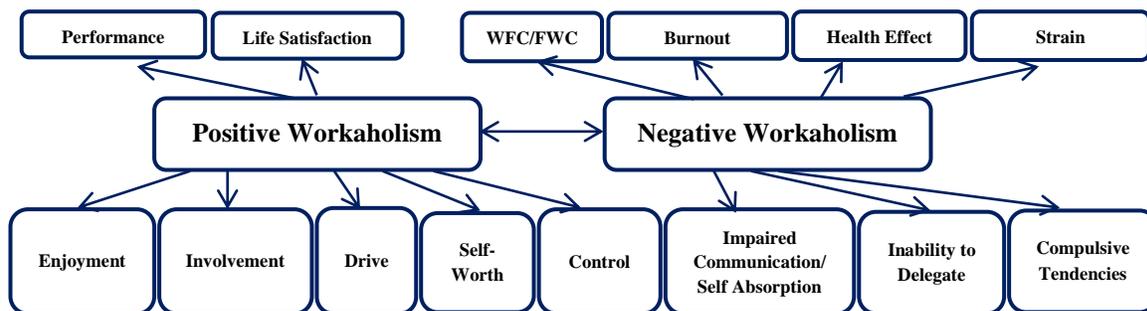
- a. Which workaholic category constitutes the highest percentage of employees in EDRA (M)?
- b. How is the gender distribution of workers across different departments of EDRA (M)?
- c. Which types of employees are more productive and efficient?
- d. Does EDRA favour workaholic or work life balance workers in their employment policy?

### 4. Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this research is to determine the working behavior of IPP’s employees at the management level, analyze IPP’s recruitment policy and evaluate IPP’s performance based on recruitment choices: workaholics vs. work-life balance employees. Secondary objectives include: 1) uncover the performance of Edrans’ workaholic vs work-life balance workers; 2) explore the different working behavior across different generations (age groups) to provide an insight into future deployment strategy and to promote knowledge transfer; 3) study the industry’s preference in recruitment with regards to gender; 4) explore EDRA’s management level perceptions of workaholic and work-life balance employees, which can be used to improve the working environment and promote better communication at workplace; 5) compare the work-life balance practices between men or women.

#### 4.1 The Model of Workaholism

Figure 1 below illustrates the different dimensions of workaholism: positive and negative workaholism. Both types have seven main attributes which differentiate one from the other.



**Figure 01.** Positive and Negative Workaholism Model.

Ng et al. (2007) maintains that there are three types of mental processes or dimensions, which are behaviour, cognition, and affect. Workaholism in a form of addiction can be derived from those three mental states. The three mental states are:

- Behavioural dimension: obsessed with work and spent less time for other activities;

- Cognitive dimension: too preoccupied with work that is beyond control including persistent thought regarding work even outside working hours;
- Affective dimension: positive emotions towards employment that only appear when the person is working and negative emotions appearing not working.

The conclusion from the studies are able to confirm that workaholism is a type of syndrome rather than just a habit or single factor concept with three main state of mind: behavioral, cognitive, and affective.

#### 4.2 The Model of Work-Life Balance

Lu et al., (2006) researched on the connection between work, family, work-to-family conflict (WFC) with a resulting cross cultural comparison among Taiwanese and British employees and the relationship is shown in Figure 02. Data show that work demands and family demands are positive towards WFC but WFC related negatively towards family satisfaction.

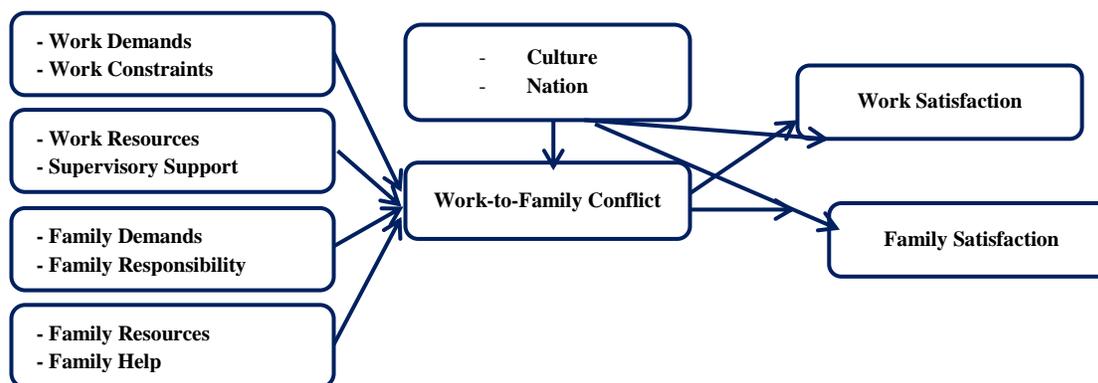


Figure 02. Connection between work, family and work-to-family conflict (Source: Luo Lu et al., (2006))

## 5. Research Methods

Two types of data were collected in this study. Primary data consists of surveys whilst secondary data consists of journals, annual reports, internet and online databases, books and proceedings.

Questionnaires were administered to 137 respondents among executives in all departments of all EDRA power plants including Kuala Langat Power Plant, Jimah Berhad, TGPS and TKPS with a predetermined sampling criterion. 102 number of respondent are targeted as suggested by (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The questionnaire was based on established model, Workaholism Battery (WorkBat) by Spence and Robbins (1992) and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) by Linda Koopmans (2012).

### 5.1. Variables

In this study, the dependent variable is *employment*. Independent variables are type of workers: *workaholic* and *work-life balance*. Gender is another variable (considered as potential moderator). Figure 03 below depicts the relationship between the three variables.

## 5.2. Tool of Assessment (questionnaire)

Questionnaire was used as the instrument in this study. There were five sections in the survey questionnaire – Section 1 is demographic profile questionnaire (9 questions), Section 2 is WorkBat questionnaires (25 questions), Section 3 covering work-life balance practices (2 parts, 10 questions each), Section 4 cover the preferences of employment (11 questions) and last but not least, Section 5 is IW PQ (4 parts, 5 questions each, 2 categories). There are 85 questions in total to be completed in the questionnaire.

## 6. Findings

In the following Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of workaholic types in EDRA (M) power plant. There are 18 respondents that are uncategorized due to there is no category for high *Work Involvement*, low *Work Driven* and low *Work enjoyment* in Spence and Robbins's model. The demographic distribution of 102 categorized respondents is presented.

**Table 01.** Respondents Demographic of Workaholic Types

Workaholic Types / Age Range		< 31	31-40	40-50	> 50	Total
<i>Work Enthusiasts</i>	WE	6 (5%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	12 (10%)
<i>Workaholics</i>	W	12 (10%)	26 (22%)	11 (9%)	2 (2%)	51 (43%)
<i>Enthusiastic Workaholics</i>	EW	13 (11%)	4 (3%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	22 (18%)
<i>Unengaged Workers</i>	UW	-	3 (3%)	5 (4%)	-	8 (7%)
<i>Relaxed Workers</i>	RW	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	-	-	2 (2%)
<i>Disenchanted Workers</i>	DW	-	4 (3%)	3 (3%)	-	7 (6%)
Total		32 (27%)	41 (34%)	22 (18%)	7 (6%)	102/120

From the table it can be seen that the highest percentage which is 43% (51 respondents) of Edrans are *Workaholics*. Second highest which is 18% (22 respondents) are *Enthusiastic Workaholics*. Follow up with 10% of Edrans are *Work Enthusiasts*. Out of the 43% (51 respondents) who are *Workaholics*, 22% (26 respondents) of them are between ages 31-40, 10% (12 respondents) are below 31 years old and 9% (11 respondents) are at the age range of 40-50. Other than that, out of 18% (22 respondents) of *Enthusiastic Workaholics*, 11% (13 respondents) are below age of 31 and 5% (6 respondents) out of the 10% (12 respondents) *Work Enthusiasts* are below 31 years old.

**Table 02.** Demographic Analysis of Employment Preference According to Department

Department	Employment Preference		Total (%)
	Male (%)	Female (%)	
<i>Operation &amp; Maintenance</i>	77 (64.17)	9 (7.50)	86 (71.67)
<i>Admin, HR, Purchasing</i>	14 (11.6)	18 (15.0)	32 (26.67)
Total	91 (75.83)	27 (22.5)	118 (98.33)

From Table 2, there are 71.67% (86 respondents) from either *Operation Department* or *Maintenance Department*. The other 26.67% (32 respondents), are from *Administration Department*, *Human Resource Department* or *Purchasing Department*.

### 6.1. Descriptive Statistics

**Table 03.** Descriptive Analysis Result of Performance

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Task Performance</i>	<i>Workaholic</i>	120	3.91	0.27
	<i>W-L Balance</i>	120	4.08	0.54
<i>Contextual Performance</i>	<i>Workaholic</i>	120	4.77	0.28
	<i>W-L Balance</i>	120	3.23	0.32
<i>Adaptive Performance</i>	<i>Workaholic</i>	120	3.84	0.27
	<i>W-L Balance</i>	120	4.18	0.40
<i>Counterproductive Performance</i>	<i>Workaholic</i>	120	4.58	0.28
	<i>W-L Balance</i>	120	3.22	0.56
<b><i>Overall Performance</i></b>	<b><i>Workaholic</i></b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>0.15</b>
	<b><i>W-L Balance</i></b>	<b>120</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>0.23</b>

As shown in Table 3, there are four dimensions used to measure performance of Edrans includes *Task Performance*, *Contextual Performance*, *Adaptive Performance* and *Counterproductive Performance*. In the dimension of *Task Performance*, work-life balance worker performance is better than workaholic which is mean of 4.08 vs. 3.91 respectively. In the dimension of *Contextual Performance*, workaholic performs better than work-life balance worker which is mean of 4.77 vs. 3.23 respectively. Work-life balance worker performance is better than workaholic in *Adaptive Performance* which is mean of 4.18 vs. 3.84 respectively. Lastly in *Counterproductive Performance* dimension, workaholic performs better than work-life balance worker which is mean of 4.58 vs. 3.22 respectively. In the overall performance as the average among the four dimensions of performance, workaholic performs better than work-life balance worker which shown by the mean of 4.27 vs. 3.68 respectively.

### 6.2. Workaholic and Work-Life Balance Performance (Multiple Regression)

This section of analysis will use Multiple Regression to study the predictive capacity of the identified dependent variables constructs and to check whether the established hypothesis can be confirmed. Table 4, Table 5, Table 6 and Table 7 shows the relationship between Workaholic/Work-Life balance Performance and better performance using Multiple Regression in SPSS.

**Table 04.** Descriptive Statistics of Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Better Performance	4.4233	.19905	120
Workaholic Performance	4.3483	.15877	120
WLB Performance	3.7658	.23461	120

In table 4, it shows that the mean for better performance is 4.42, mean for workaholic performance is 4.35 while mean for work-life balance (WLB Performance) is 3.77.

**Table 05.** Model Summary of Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.816 <sup>a</sup>	.666	.660	.11599	.666	116.714	2	117	.000

Predictors: (Constant), WLB Performance, Workaholic Performance

From table 5, the "R" column represents the value of *R*, the multiple correlation coefficient. The *R* value is 0.816. A value of 0.816, in this example, indicates that the prediction level is good. *R*<sup>2</sup> of the value of 0.666 explains that the independent variables explain 66.6% of the variability of our dependent variable, Better performance.

**Table 06.** ANOVA<sup>b</sup> of Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.141	2	1.570	116.714	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	1.574	117	.013		
	Total	4.715	119			

a. Predictors: (Constant), WLB Performance, Workaholic Performance

b. Dependent Variable: Better Performance

The F-ratio in the Table 6 ANOVA tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable,  $F(2, 117) = 116.71, p < .0005$ . This means that the regression model is a good fit of the data.

**Table 07.** Table Coefficients<sup>a</sup> of Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-.120	.328		-.368	.714	-.769	.528
	Workaholic Performance	.572	.067	.456	8.515	.000	.439	.705
	WLB Performance	.546	.045	.644	12.020	.000	.456	.636

a. Dependent Variable: Better Performance

From table 7, T value for workaholic performance is 8.515 while T value for work-life balance worker performance is 12.020.

In short, multiple regression was run to predict better performance from workaholic performance and work-life balance performance. These variables statistically significantly predicted better Performance,  $F(2, 117) = 116.714$ ,  $p < .0005$ ,  $R^2 = .666$ . The two variables added statistically significantly to the prediction,  $p < .05$ .

### 6.3. Contribution of the Performance towards Employment (Multiple Regression)

Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10 shows the relationship between Workaholic/Work-Life balance Performance and Employment of worker type using Multiple Regression in SPSS.

**Table 08.** Model Summary of Employment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.035 <sup>a</sup>	.001	-.016	.86410

a. Predictors: (Constant), W.L.B. Performance, Workaholic Performance

In this case, from the Table 8, R value is 0.035 and the value of  $R^2$  is 0.001.

**Table 09.** ANOVA<sup>a</sup> for Employment

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.107	2	.054	.072	.931 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	87.360	117	.747		
	Total	87.467	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Preference of Worker Type

b. Predictors: (Constant), W.L.B. Performance, Workaholic Performance

The table 9 shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable,  $F(2, 117) = 0.072$ ,  $p = 0.931 > .05$ .

**Table 10.** Coefficients <sup>a</sup> for Employment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	(Constant)	4.479	2.493		1.796	.075	-459	9.416
	Workaholic Performance	-.135	.509	-.025	-.266	<b>.791</b>	-1.144	.873
	W.L.B. Performance	-.086	.337	-.024	-.254	<b>.800</b>	-.753	.582

a. Dependent Variable: Preference of Worker Type

From Table 10, both p-value for Workaholic Performance ( $p = 0.791$ ) and Work-Life Balance Worker Performance ( $p = 0.8$ ) are more than 0.05.

## 7. Conclusion

Previous studies showed that in work facets, poor performance and absenteeism can be amongst the consequences of the absence of work-life balance (Kanfer, 2005; Kurz, 2002). However, there exists significant association between increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment with balanced work and family life (Cyrus, 2012; Griffin et al., 2007). Likewise, experiences gained by employees who exhibited work-life balance, enhanced their engagement and commitment towards organizational performance improvement (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). In this study, it shows that Administration Department, Human Resource Department and Purchasing Department are willing to hire work-life balance workers however operation and maintenance department prefer to hire workaholics.

Fostering a work-life balance in the work environment have become a major concern for employers as it was proven to reveal positive results such as improved job satisfaction better organizational citizenship behavior, increased firm productivity, reduced turnover rate, enhanced work engagement, enriched in-role performance, and organizational commitment (Yuile et al., 2012; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Burke et al., 2006). From the strategic perspectives, managing it has become one of the most important duty to ensure individuals and organizational performance (Hall, 1988; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). However in this study showed that workaholics in EDRA have better job performance than work-life balance workers.

It was initially thought that recruitment of new workers depends is influenced by previous performance. However, out study found no significant relationship between workaholic or work-life balance work performance and the pattern of employment.

### 7.1. Study Limitations and Future Direction

This study was restricted to only two categories of workers; workaholic and work-life balance. There are altogether six categories of workaholics as suggested by Spence and Robbins (1992). Inclusion of more categories of workers would provide a better understanding of this issue. Second, the sampling frame was limited to executives. However, 70% of EDRA power plant workforce comprised non-executives, therefore

our results may not be generalizable to the whole workforce of the power plant industry. Future studies should aim at filling these gaps in order to update and add to the current available literature and findings.

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