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# THE BEAUTY VERSUS THE BEAST

## On the Motives of Engaged and Workaholic Employees

*Toon Taris, Ilona van Beek, and Wilmar Schaufeli*

### Introduction

The present chapter focuses on two types of heavy work investment: work engagement and workaholism. A body of research has addressed the conceptualization and consequences of these concepts (e.g., Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008; Taris, Schaufeli, & Verhoeven, 2005; van Beek, Taris, & Schaufeli, 2011). From this research, we know that both work engaged and workaholic employees work hard and harder than others. We also know that work engagement and workaholism are two relatively independent concepts, and tend to show different patterns of correlations with work outcomes (Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2006; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008; Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kubota, & Kawakami, 2012). Whereas work engaged employees mainly report positive consequences, workaholic employees mainly experience adverse consequences. Therefore, it has been suggested that work engagement and workaholism are “good” and “bad” forms of heavy work investment, respectively (van Beek et al., 2011). However, to date, the motives of work engaged and workaholic employees to work hard have received little attention. So, two questions remain to be answered: what are the motivational drivers underlying work engagement and workaholism, and do these motivational drivers differ for these two forms of heavy work investment? The present chapter addresses this issue from two different perspectives, namely (1) a *personality-based perspective*, based on Higgins’s (1998) regulatory focus theory, and (2) a *situational-based perspective*, using Deci and Ryan’s (2000) self-determination theory.

## Heavy Work Investment: Workaholism Versus Work Engagement

The term “workaholic” was coined in 1971 by the American minister and psychologist Wayne E. Oates. Oates (the author of 57 books, mostly expressing Christian views on societal issues) worked with alcoholics and realized that his own attitude toward work was much like his clients’ attitude toward alcohol. In his book *Confessions of a workaholic*, Oates (1971) defined workaholism as “the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly” (p. 11). This compulsion or uncontrollable need is so strong that it could be harmful for one’s health, could diminish one’s happiness, and could negatively affect the quality of one’s interpersonal relations and social functioning (Schaufeli et al., 2006). In line with this reasoning, scholars have tended to consider workaholism as a phenomenon that is inherently bad (e.g., Cherrington, 1980; Robinson, 2007). However, this view is not universally shared. For instance, based on a qualitative interview study, Machlowitz (1980) reported that workaholic employees were productive and satisfied. Similarly, Korn, Pratt, and Lambrou (1987) considered workaholism as a positive phenomenon, calling workaholics “hyper-performers.” Furthermore, Peiperl and Jones (2001) stated that workaholic employees are hard workers who find their work enjoyable and get a lot out of it. More recently, Baruch (2011) argued that not only is workaholism linked to high productivity, but also that workaholic employees may function as role models to other employees in competitive environments.

Yet, other scholars acknowledge that workaholism may have *both* positive and negative aspects. They distinguish among different types of workaholism, some of which are “good,” whereas others are “bad.” The most influential scholars sharing this view have been Janet Spence and Ann Robbins (1992), who proposed the so-called *workaholic triad*. Basically, they argue that workaholism should be conceived as a three-dimensional concept, involving work involvement (referring to the degree to which employees are highly committed to their work and spend much time on it), drive (referring to the degree to which employees feel forced to work due to inner pressures), and work enjoyment (referring to the degree to which employees experience their work as pleasant and fulfilling). The combination of these three dimensions yields eight different types of employees, three of which are termed “workaholic”: (a) non-enthusiastic workaholics, who are high in involvement and drive, but low in enjoyment; (b) enthusiastic workaholics, who are high in involvement, drive, and enjoyment; and (c) work enthusiasts who are high in involvement and enjoyment, but low in drive. Buelens and Poelmans (2004) refer to the latter group as the “happy hard workers,” because they are “enthusiastic, meet interesting people, love their jobs, and avoid conflict

at home and in the workplace, possibly owing to their resulting positive attitude and a high level of social intelligence” (p. 454).

Interestingly, the description of the typical work enthusiast (apparently the “good” type of workaholism) strongly resembles that of the work engaged employee (cf. Snir & Harpaz, 2012). In comparison with workaholism, work engagement is a relatively new concept that emerged in the wake of the positive turn that occupational health psychology took at the end of the last century (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). Work engagement refers to “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence also in the face of difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one’s work, and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Finally, absorption is characterized in terms of being fully concentrated on and happily engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. Work engaged employees work hard (vigor), are involved in their work (dedication), and are happily engrossed (absorption) in their work, and in this sense they are similar to workaholic employees (i.e., Spence & Robbins’, 1992, work enthusiasts). However, work engaged employees lack the strong compulsion to work hard (drive) that is typical for workaholism (i.e., Spence & Robbins’, 1992, enthusiastic and non-enthusiastic workaholics). Work engaged employees work hard because they enjoy their work (cf. Schaufeli, Taris, Le Blanc, Peeters, Bakker, & De Jonge, 2001). Instead of distinguishing between “good” and “bad” forms of workaholism, it seems better to distinguish between workaholism as an overall bad type of heavy work investment and work engagement as an overall good type of heavy work investment (cf. Schaufeli et al., 2006; van Beek et al., 2011). Such a distinction will certainly contribute to conceptual clarity, because it excludes perspectives that consider at least some forms of workaholism as a potentially “good” phenomenon (e.g., Korn et al., 1987; Peiperl & Jones, 2001). In addition, it agrees with Porter’s (1996) recommendation to “return to the origin of the term [i.e., workaholism as an addiction to work] as a starting point for future research” (p. 71).

In defining workaholism, we follow the lead of Scott, Moore, and Miceli (1997). Based on an extensive literature review, they identified three core features of workaholism. First, workaholic employees spend an excessive amount of time on their work activities when given the discretion to do so. That is, they work *excessively hard*. Second, workaholic employees are unwilling to disengage from their work activities and persistently think about their work. They even think about their work when they are not at work. In other words, they work *obsessively* and

*compulsively*. Third, workaholic employees work beyond what is reasonably expected from them in order to meet organizational or economic requirements. In a sense, the third feature is a specification of the first two features and deals with the *motivation* for spending excessive time on work: workaholic employees work harder than is required out of an inner compulsion and not because of external factors such as financial rewards or an overtime-promoting organizational culture. Hence, the two main aspects of workaholism are working excessively and working compulsively (Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008).

Previous research on the correlates of workaholism and work engagement has shown that these two forms of heavy work investment retain different patterns of correlations with employee health and well-being (such as distress and depression), work characteristics (e.g., job demands and job control), and work outcomes (such as job satisfaction; e.g., Salanova, del Libano, Llorens, & Schaufeli, 2014; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Generally speaking, comparisons have shown that high levels of work engagement tend to be associated with positive outcomes (such as good health, and high levels of satisfaction and autonomy) and that high levels of workaholism tend to be associated with negative outcomes (such as bad health, and low levels of satisfaction and autonomy), lending credit to the notion that work engagement and workaholism are “good” and “bad” forms of heavy work investment, respectively. However, this research did not touch upon the issue of the motivational origins of these two forms of heavy work investment: *why* do work engaged and workaholic employees work so hard? In the past decade, these issues have been addressed from two different major points of view: a personality-based perspective and a situational-based perspective.

### A Personality-Based Perspective on Heavy Work Investment

One obvious way to answer the question of why work engaged and workaholic employees work so hard—to psychologists, at least—is to look at the role of personal dispositions or traits. It is conceivable that workaholic and work engaged employees can be distinguished from other employees and from each other on the basis of their personality. A straightforward starting point for research in this tradition is to relate workaholism and work engagement to the Big Five personality dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (e.g., Digman, 1990; Ng, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2007). Studies from this perspective provided converging evidence that conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism are positively related to workaholism (Andreassen, Hetland, & Pallesen, 2010; Aziz & Tronzo,

2011; Burke, Matthiesen, & Pallesen, 2006; Clark, Lelchook, & Taylor, 2010), whereas agreeableness is negatively related to workaholism (Andreassen et al., 2010; Aziz & Tronzo, 2011). In other words, employees who tend to have high aspirations and to focus on the goals they have set (McCrae & Costa, 2003), to be gregarious, to experience distress and negative affect, and to be less caring, collaborative, and sympathetic toward others (Costa & McCrae, 1992), are more likely to be workaholic. Other research in this area has focused on more specific personality traits, finding that especially high levels of narcissism (Andreassen, Ursin, Eriksen, & Pallesen, 2012; Clark et al., 2010) and perfectionism (Clark et al., 2010) are related to high levels of workaholism. Taris, van Beek, and Schaufeli (2010) showed that workaholism is especially positively related to socially prescribed perfectionism, that is, people's belief that significant others hold high standards for them and that they will be accepted only if they meet these standards (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). However, recently, Stroeber, Davis, and Townley (2013) found that workaholism is positively associated with *self*-prescribed perfectionism (i.e. setting exceedingly high standards for oneself and striving for perfection), rather than with *socially* prescribed perfectionism.

Similar research on the personality correlates of work engagement showed that of the Big Five personality factors, conscientiousness and emotional stability (i.e., low levels of neuroticism) independently account for most of the variance in work engagement (Kim, Shin, & Swanger, 2009). In addition, research showed that the more "active" sub-factors within extraversion and conscientiousness are important (Inceoglu & Warr, 2011). In other words, employees who tend in dispositional terms to be emotionally stable, socially proactive, and achievement oriented are likely to be work engaged. Furthermore, there is also some evidence that high levels of narcissism (Andreassen et al., 2012), agreeableness (Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori, & Dauwalder, 2012), proactivity (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012), and Type-A behavior (i.e., low levels of irritability and high levels of achievement striving, Hallberg, Johansson, & Schaufeli, 2007) are associated with high levels of work engagement.

Comparing the findings for work engagement to those obtained for workaholism shows that high levels of narcissism, conscientiousness, and extraversion are related to higher levels of work engagement as well as workaholism. Furthermore, whereas work engagement relates positively to agreeableness and negatively to neuroticism, workaholism relates negatively to the former and positively to the latter personality dimension. Apparently, there are some differences in the way work engagement and workaholism relate to various personality dimensions. Nevertheless, overall the similarities seem at least as strong as these differences. At least as far as narcissism, neuroticism, and agreeableness are concerned, these findings support the conceptualization of workaholism as a "bad" form

of heavy work investment and work engagement as a “good” form of heavy work investment.

However, note that this comparison of the associations between personality aspects on the one hand and the two forms of heavy work investment on the other suffers from two critical limitations. First, much research on the relation between personality and workaholism has employed Spence and Robbins’ (1992) three-dimensional conceptualization of workaholism as a combination of drive, work involvement, and work enjoyment. Since these dimensions were usually studied *separately* (among others, Aziz & Tronzo, 2011; Burke et al., 2006), this research did not distinguish among specific types of workaholism. This is a major issue, since Spence and Robbins (1992) distinguished among three types of workaholism, with two of these being “bad” and one very closely resembling our notion of work engagement (i.e., the “good” type of workaholism). Indeed, according to Spence and Robbins, high *as well as* low scores on drive and enjoyment can be typical for workaholism, depending on the specific type of workaholism that is considered. In effect, it is extremely difficult to interpret the associations between “workaholism” (drive and enjoyment) and personality, because both positive and negative associations between these concepts would provide support for the idea that personality and workaholism are related. In the presence of this conceptual ambiguity, it comes as no surprise that the findings for “workaholism” and work engagement can be similar.

Second, research directly comparing the effects of personality on workaholism versus work engagement is largely absent (with the exception of Andreassen et al., 2012). In conjunction, both limitations mean that the available evidence does not allow for drawing strong conclusions (or even *any* conclusion) on the patterns of correlations between personality traits, workaholism, and work engagement.

### *Regulatory Focus Theory and Heavy Work Investment*

In an attempt to address this issue, van Beek, Schaufeli, Taris, and Breninkmeijer (2014) examined the associations between personality (prevention vs. promotion focus: Higgins, 1997, 1998) on the one hand, and workaholism and work engagement on the other. Higgins’ regulatory focus theory (RFT) assumes that individuals approach pleasure and avoid pain, and that individuals use different strategies to achieve this. More specifically, RFT distinguishes between two motivational systems that mirror these individual differences: the *promotion system* and the *prevention system*. These systems differ in terms of the needs that are attempted to be satisfied, the goals that are pursued, and the psychological situations that are deemed salient by an individual (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). Basically, RFT assumes that promotion-focused individuals

seek to satisfy the need for growth and development, and are sensitive to the pleasurable presence or painful absence of positive outcomes, that is, advancement and gains (hopes, wishes, and aspirations). They are likely to *approach* matches to desired goals, that is, to strive actively to achieve these goals and to take advantage of any opportunity to bring achievement of these goals closer. When desired goals are obtained, promotion-focused individuals experience cheerfulness-related emotions (e.g., enthusiasm and joy), whereas failing to obtain these goals leads to dejection-related emotions (such as disappointment and dissatisfaction). Conversely, prevention-focused individuals seek to satisfy the need for security. They are sensitive to the pleasurable absence or painful presence of negative outcomes and are likely to *avoid* mismatches to desired goals, that is, safety and non-losses (duties, obligations, and responsibilities). Prevention-focused individuals associate obtaining desired goals with quiescence-related emotions (e.g., contentment and calmness), and failing to obtain these goals with agitation-related emotions (such as feeling uneasy and upset). Thus, RFT proposes that promotion-focused individuals are inclined to *approach matches* to desired goals, whereas prevention-focused individuals tend to *avoid mismatches* to desired goals (van Beek et al., 2013).

Since the promotion and prevention systems are differentially linked to the way individuals pursue different goals, RFT offers a handle in examining the personality-related and motivational correlates of workaholism and work engagement. Based on the views of Mudrack (2006), van Beek et al. (2014) argued that workaholism develops in response to feelings of low self-worth and insecurity. As individuals with a negative self-view tend to pursue avoidance/prevention goals, that is, to avoid negative outcomes (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005), they expected that workaholic employees would be primarily driven by avoidance motivation. Conversely, work engagement is positively related to personal resources such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and optimism (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007), meaning that work engaged employees will usually be confident about their capabilities and optimistic about the future. Since individuals with a positive self-view tend to pursue self-concordant goals (Elliot & Sheldon, 1998), they are likely to pursue approach goals, that is, positive outcomes such as learning and development, or accomplishment through the achievement of aspirations. Therefore, van Beek and colleagues (2014) expected that work engaged employees would be driven by approach motivation that is characteristic of a promotion focus. Drawing on cross-sectional data from 680 bank employees, van Beek and colleagues (2014) confirmed these expectations, showing that workaholism is moderately positively related to having a prevention focus, and that work engagement is moderately positively related to having a promotion focus. Hence, this study provides strong

evidence that the motivational drivers of the “good” (work engagement) and the “bad” (workaholism) forms of heavy work investment differ. Since personality reflects a set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are relatively enduring (Higgins, 1998; Larsen & Buss, 2002), this study is consistent with the idea that workaholism and work engagement are differentially related to personality factors.

### **A Situational-Based Perspective on Heavy Work Investment**

The second perspective on the motivational antecedents of work engagement and workaholism draws on the idea that specific characteristics of the work environment can satisfy particular psychological needs, that the extent to which these needs are satisfied determines the type of employee motivation, and that employee motivation results in different types of heavy work investment. Central to this idea is Deci and Ryan’s (2000) self-determination theory (SDT).

SDT proposes that human beings are active, growth-oriented organisms that are predisposed to engage in interesting and enjoyable activities, to use their capacities fully, to search for connectedness with others, and to integrate their experiences (both intrapersonal and interpersonal; Deci & Ryan, 2000). This growth-oriented tendency requires fulfillment of three innate psychological needs: the needs for autonomy (i.e., the need for experiencing freedom of choice and initiating behavior), competence (i.e., the need for accomplishing challenging tasks successfully), and relatedness (i.e., the need for experiencing positive relationships with others). SDT posits that motivation, optimal functioning, and psychological well-being are affected by the extent to which the social environment allows satisfaction of and individuals can find or create the conditions necessary to satisfy these needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

#### *Types of Motivation*

SDT makes a primary distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated for an activity perform that activity because they consider it as interesting, enjoyable, and satisfying. They engage in that activity for its own sake and act with a full sense of volition (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Therefore, intrinsically motivated behavior is considered *self-determined*. To foster intrinsic motivation, need satisfaction is required. Conversely, individuals can be externally motivated for an activity. In this case, an activity is performed because of its instrumental value (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000b), meaning that externally motivated individuals engage in an activity because of the outcome (e.g., monetary reward, social prestige,



and promotion prospects). For most employees, their activities at work will be at least partly externally motivated because work is usually not exclusively interesting, enjoyable, and satisfying.

Furthermore, SDT distinguishes between four different types of extrinsic motivation: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. Dependent on the degree to which the three innate psychological needs are fulfilled, both the type of extrinsic motivation and the extent to which behavior is self-determined vary (Deci & Ryan, 2000). *Externally regulated behavior* is motivated by external contingencies involving threats of punishments, and material or social rewards. This type of behavior is regulated by the social environment and is, thus, fully non-self-determined. *Introjected regulation* is a product of an internalization process, in which individuals adopt external standards of self-worth and social approval without fully identifying with them. Thus, individuals must comply with partially internalized external standards that may conflict with their personal preferences (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Therefore, introjected regulation is experienced as relatively non-self-determined. Identified regulation and integrated regulation are the product not only of an internalization process in which individuals adopt external standards, but also of an integration process in which individuals transform these standards to become an integral part of the self. When individuals accept and identify with the underlying value of a particular activity, their motivational regulation is *identified*. Since some ownership of behavior is experienced, identified regulation is considered as relatively self-determined. When the underlying value of a particular behavior is experienced as consistent with other important values and constitutes an integral part of the self, its regulation is *integrated* (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Individuals experience their behavior totally as their own and, thus, as self-determined. Basically, these four types of external motivation and intrinsic motivation can be located on a continuum that ranges from (fully) externally regulated behavior, via introjected regulation, identified and integrated regulation, to (fully) intrinsically motivated behavior.

### *Work Characteristics and Need Satisfaction*

As outlined above, one central assumption in the SDT approach is that characteristics of the social environment (in this case, the work environment) affect the degree to which the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied, and, hence, what type of motivation will occur. Drawing on Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001), and Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, and Lens (2008) proposed that job resources (defined as the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that can reduce job demands and their health-impairing impact, are functional

in achieving work goals, or stimulate personal growth) would allow for satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Conversely, they argued that high job demands (i.e., those aspects of the job that tax employees' personal capacities and are, therefore, associated with certain psychological and/or physiological costs) would thwart satisfaction of these needs. Drawing on cross-sectional data from 740 Flemish employees, Van den Broeck and colleagues (2008) confirmed these expectations, showing that job demands are negatively associated with need satisfaction, whereas job resources are positively related to need satisfaction. Similarly, Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, and Dussault (2013) found that high levels of job resources were related to high levels of perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness, whereas negative associations were found for high levels of job demands. In conjunction, this research shows that work characteristics are indeed associated with the satisfaction of the basic needs specified in SDT.

### *Motivation and Heavy Work Investment*

As indicated earlier on, workaholism has little to do with true love of one's work or with a genuine desire to contribute to organizational goals. Rather, workaholic employees work hard because they *must* do so: they are compelled to work, and not working evokes intolerable distress and negative emotions, such as irritability, anxiety, shame, and guilt. It has been suggested that workaholism develops in response to feelings of low self-worth and insecurity (Mudrack, 2006), and Ryan (1982) has argued that performing an activity in order to enhance or maintain self-esteem and self-worth, is prototypical for introjected regulation (one of the four types of extrinsic motivation). Furthermore, we have seen that workaholism is positively linked to socially prescribed perfectionism (Taris et al., 2010), which is another way of saying that workaholic employees' work investment is externally regulated (i.e., by their social environment). In addition, recent findings confirmed the idea that satisfaction of the three innate psychological needs is negatively linked to working compulsively (Andreassen et al., 2010), suggesting that for workaholic employees the possibility to be intrinsically motivated is curtailed. Based on this reasoning, it appears likely that workaholism is positively associated with the more non-self-determined types of motivation (i.e., external regulation and introjected regulation).

Conversely, work engaged employees work hard because they genuinely *want* to (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Since work engaged employees experience high self-esteem, self-efficacy, and optimism, they are confident about their capabilities and optimistic about their future (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Individuals who evaluate themselves positively are less strongly affected by the social environment and by feedback (Brockner, 1988),

and are more likely to pursue goals that fit their own ideals, interests, and values (Judge et al., 2005). Therefore, it is likely that engaged employees are driven by self-concordant goals and engage in their work activities for intrinsic rather than extrinsic reasons. Thus, work engagement will be positively associated with the more self-determined types of motivation (i.e., identified regulation and intrinsic motivation).

van Beek and colleagues (van Beek, Hu, Schaufeli, Taris, & Scheurs, 2012; Nijhuis, van Beek, Taris, & Schaufeli, 2012) tested the idea that workaholism should be associated with the more non-self-determined types of motivation (external regulation and introjected regulation) and work engagement with the more self-determined types of motivation (identified regulation and intrinsic motivation). Drawing on data from 760 Chinese employees (544 nurses and 216 physicians), van Beek and colleagues (2012) found that workaholism is positively associated with introjected regulation and identified regulation, but negatively with intrinsic motivation. Indeed, workaholic employees personally value their work activities, which may explain why they continue working hard despite the adverse consequences for themselves and the organization. Conversely, they found that work engagement is strongly and positively associated with intrinsic motivation and—to a considerably lesser degree—introjected regulation and identified regulation. Since many jobs also consist of mundane, repetitive, and unpleasant tasks, it makes sense that engaged employees are to some degree extrinsically motivated as well. Using data from 680 Dutch bank employees, Nijhuis and colleagues (2012) largely replicated van Beek and colleagues' findings. Thus, these two studies provide converging evidence that the two types of heavy work investment studied here (workaholism and work engagement) are differentially related to various forms of motivation. Work engagement is primarily associated with high scores on intrinsic motivation, whereas workaholism is primarily linked to high scores on introjected regulation and identified regulation. Again, this underlines the conceptualization of workaholism as being a “bad” form of heavy work investment, whereas engagement is a “good” form of heavy work investment.

### Personality–Situation Interaction

As outlined previously, both differences in personality (e.g., the Big Five personality traits and having a promotion vs. a prevention focus) and the work environment (job characteristics) seem to determine which type of heavy work investment will occur. Clearly, the issue of the motivational antecedents of workaholism and work engagement goes beyond the simplistic nature versus nurture division. It is likely that the *combination* of both matters in determining the type of heavy work investment that will occur. Although personality is thought to have a biological basis and,

therefore, to be stable over time, how it manifests itself in actual behavior may depend on the situation and vary considerably (Larsen & Buss, 2002). Personality will affect behavior the strongest when situations are weak or ambiguous, and the least when situations are strong. In the latter case, nearly all individuals will react in the same way. Furthermore, personality affects the situations individuals opt to place themselves in. When given the choice, individuals usually choose situations that match their personality. Personality may also evoke responses from the environment (i.e., from others), indicating that individuals may create their own environment. In other words, reality seems to be far more complicated than a simplistic nature versus nurture division: it is likely that the Big Five personality traits and having a promotion or prevention focus, and the extent to which the work environment satisfies the three psychological needs and determines motivation, interact in producing workaholism and/or work engagement.

More specifically, it is conceivable that the Big Five personality dimensions relate differently to need satisfaction and motivation. Individuals high in openness to experience, that is, who show a strong intellectual curiosity, might be more likely to engage in their (work) activities for self-determined reasons than others (Komarraju, Karau, & Schmeck, 2009). Individuals high in conscientiousness are disciplined and achievement-oriented, and, therefore, their need for competence might be easily satisfied (Ingledeu, Markland, & Sheppard, 2004) and they might engage in their (work) activities for self-determined reasons (Komarraju et al., 2009). Extraverted individuals have the tendency to be warm and sociable. On the one hand, it can be speculated that it is relatively easy for them to satisfy their need for relatedness and that they are led by a self-determined type of motivation (Ingledeu et al., 2004). On the other hand, extraverted individuals might be strongly focused on their social context and externally regulated (a non-self-determined form of motivation; Komarraju et al., 2009). Because agreeable individuals are cooperative and likely to follow (work) requirements, it can be argued that they will engage in their work activities for non-self-determined reasons. Finally, individuals high in neuroticism tend to experience distress and negative affect, and, therefore, they might be motivated by introjected regulation (a non-self-determined form of motivation). Clearly, more research on this issue is badly needed.

The prevention vs. promotion, or the avoidance vs. approach distinction, cannot encompass the non-self-determined vs. self-determined distinction (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For instance, pursuing tangible rewards (i.e., an approach orientation) reduces autonomy and self-determined motivation because rewards shift individuals from a more internal to external perceived locus of causality (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Also, it is possible to identify self-determined avoidance behaviors: an individual

can completely endorse and follow a physician's advice to stop smoking in order to avoid health risks (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Hence, there are instances of non-self-determined approach and avoidance goals, and of self-determined approach and avoidance goals. It is conceivable that having a prevention focus or having a promotion focus influences the type of goals that are pursued within every regulatory style, varying from non-self-determined (external regulation) to self-determined (intrinsic motivation). However, the relation between personality and situations is probably far more complicated, meaning that more comprehensive research is needed to address this issue.

### Concluding Remarks

The present chapter sought to explore the motivational antecedents of heavy work investment: workaholism and work engagement, respectively. Although both types of work investment have amply been examined, as yet little is known about the motivational bases underlying workaholism and work engagement. In this chapter we have discussed theory and research on this issue from two perspectives: a personality-based perspective, in which the motivational bases for heavy work investment were sought in stable individual differences in personality, and a situational-based perspective, in which the motivation for heavy work investment was examined as a function of differences in the work context. The second aim of this chapter was to examine the degree to which the motivational bases for work engagement and workaholism differed.

### *Workaholism Versus Work Engagement*

One important issue in research on heavy work investment concerns the definition of this concept. It is intuitively clear to what type of behaviors heavy work investment refers: namely, heavy investment in work in terms of both time and effort (Snir & Harpaz, 2012). However, the fact that there is agreement as to what type of behavior the term refers to does not preclude the possibility that different types of heavy work investment exist. For example, previous research on workaholism—a type of heavy work investment—has typically started from the three-dimensional conceptualization proposed in the seminal work of Spence and Robbins (1992). However, these authors distinguished among no less than three types of workaholism, with some having clear positive connotations and others having primarily negative characteristics. Clearly it is undesirable to refer to very different phenomena using the same label. In the present chapter we therefore distinguished between workaholism (conceptualized as a phenomenon consisting of working excessively and compulsively) and work engagement (referring to high levels of vigor, dedication, and

absorption). The fact that both workaholism and work engagement can be considered subtypes of heavy work investment raises the question of whether these concepts are really different. Previous comparative research (Salanova et al., 2014; Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker, 2008; Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008) has shown that the work-related outcomes of these concepts are indeed different, with workaholism being related to high scores on “negative” work outcomes (e.g., high levels of distress and low job satisfaction) and work engagement being related to high scores on “positive” work outcomes. The focal question in this chapter is, do these conceptual and empirical differences generalize to the motivational bases underlying these two types of heavy work investment? To address this question, we focused on two motivational frameworks that could be relevant in explaining heavy work investment; that is, differences in employees’ personalities, and differences in their work environment.

### *A Personality-Based Perspective on Heavy Work Investment*

This chapter revealed that a small body of research has related workaholism and work engagement to the Big Five personality dimensions. Assuming that personality affects employees’ motivation and attitudes, such research could be relevant in examining the motivational differences between workaholic and work engaged employees. Although the available research showed some minor differences in the personality-related antecedents of these two forms of heavy work investment, it was concluded that little could be said on these differences, because the conceptualization of workaholism was weak; most of the research in this area examined the associations between various personality dimensions and the three separate dimensions of Spence and Robbins’ (1992) conceptualization of workaholism. Conversely, research on the relations between personality and work engagement is scarce. In a study that was based on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998), van Beek and colleagues (2014) showed that workaholics are driven by the motivation to satisfy the need for security and to avoid negative outcomes, whereas work engaged employees are driven by the motivation to pursue approach goals (i.e., positive outcomes, such as learning, development, and the achievement of aspirations). This research thus provided evidence that the motives of workaholic and work engaged employees differ strongly.

### *A Situation-Based Perspective on Heavy Work Investment*

The second perspective here started from the assumptions that specific characteristics of the work environment can satisfy particular innate psychological needs, and that these needs trigger different types of

motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Van den Broeck et al., 2008). Drawing on Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, Van den Broeck and colleagues (2008) showed that job resources such as high autonomy satisfy the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and that job demands such as high workload thwart satisfaction of these needs. A higher degree of satisfaction of these needs triggers self-determined (as opposed to non-self-determined) motivation for a particular work activity. Since work engaged employees work hard because they genuinely want to and are likely to pursue goals that fit their own values, ideals, and needs, van Beek and colleagues (2012) expected that work engaged employees would report high levels of self-determined motivation. Conversely, since workaholics work hard because of a compulsion, workaholics were expected to report relatively high levels of non-self-determined motivation. This reasoning was for the greater part confirmed in three independent samples (Nijhuis et al., 2012; van Beek et al., 2012), again underlining the differences in the motivational make-up of workaholic and work engaged employees.

### *Motivation and Heavy Work Investment*

Based on the material in this chapter, four conclusions on the differences in the motivational drivers of two types of heavy work investment can be drawn. First and foremost, few studies have addressed the motivational correlates of heavy work investment, and even fewer of these have explicitly compared these correlates for different types of heavy work investment. Moreover, the quality of much of this research is questionable, mainly because it is unclear what type of workaholism was involved. Thus, there is a need for more (high-quality) research on the motivational correlates of heavy work investment.

Second, although at present little research addresses the motivational drivers of different types of heavy work investment, the material presented in this chapter suggests that conducting such research could be interesting and worthwhile. Research on the motivational correlates of different types of workaholism and work engagement shows interesting and theoretically interpretable differences. Clearly, the currently available evidence suggests that further research on the motivational bases of heavy work investment is promising and warrants further attention.

Third, this chapter showed that there are different types of heavy work investment. We have focused here on work engagement (the "good" type of heavy work investment) versus workaholism (the "bad" type of heavy work investment). In this chapter we have shown that the motivational correlates of these two concepts differ quite strongly, and in a theoretically interpretable manner: workaholism is primarily associated with an extrinsic motivation and a prevention focus, whereas work engagement

is mainly linked to intrinsic motivation and a promotion focus. It is likely that these motivational differences translate into different behaviors at work: although both workaholic and work engaged employees invest much effort in their jobs, their specific behaviors and the goals they pursue seem to differ strongly. Finally, the present chapter suggested that differences in both personality (Big Five personality dimensions; promotion versus prevention focus) and environment (job characteristics) may determine which type of heavy work investment will occur. Despite these advances, a comprehensive framework containing both factors is lacking and needs to be addressed in future research.

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