

# Research suggests perfectionism and work motivation contribute to workaholism

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Research from psychologists at the University of Kent suggests that being a perfectionist and highly motivated at work contributes directly to being a workaholic.

Led by Dr Joachim Stoeber, Head of the University's School of Psychology, the research team set out to explore the previously under-researched reasons why some people feel the need to work both excessively and compulsively.

Dr Stoeber and his team researched the links between workaholism and two forms of [perfectionism](#): self-oriented perfectionism, whereby someone sets exceedingly high standards for themselves, and socially-prescribed perfectionism, whereby someone feels that others have high standards and that acceptance by others is conditional on fulfilling these standards.

Among their findings, they discovered that self-oriented perfectionists showed significantly higher levels of workaholism. This was partly due to this group being motivated by a number of internal and external drivers—such as self-control and rewards—that push them towards workaholism. In contrast, socially-prescribed perfectionists were not likely to become workaholics.

Dr Stoeber said: 'Our findings suggest that self-oriented perfectionism and [work](#) motivation contribute to workaholism, whereas socially prescribed perfectionism does not.'

'Our findings also suggest that workaholism in self-oriented perfectionists is driven by those types of [motivation](#) characterized by personal importance and ego involvement as well as being motivated by internal rewards and punishment.'

**More information:** The paper, titled 'Perfectionism and workaholism in employees: The role of work motivation' (Joachim Stoeber, Charlotte R. Davis and Jessica Townley) used data from questionnaires completed by 131 employees. It is published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*.

Provided by University of Kent

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