

# THE ROLE OF A PERCEIVED ETHICAL LEADERSHIP STYLE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKAHOLISM AND OCCUPATIONAL BURNOUT

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**Abstract. Background.** Academic literature has shown that working conditions created by ethical leaders might have positive as well as negative consequences for the employees. Research has revealed that it might contribute to employees' workaholism and occupational burnout, but this relationship is still controversial. **Purpose.** The aim of this study was to investigate the significance of a perceived ethical leadership style for the relationship between employees' workaholism and occupational burnout. **Method.** The study involved 302 (41 men and 261 women) employees working in different Lithuanian organizations. A perceived ethical leadership style was assessed with the help of Brown, Trevino, & Harrison's (2005) questionnaire. The 10-item Dutch Work Addiction Scale, developed by Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker (2009), was used for the measurement of workaholism. Occupational burnout was measured using Copenhagen Burnout Inventory by Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen (2005). **Results.** The results revealed that workaholism, personal and work-related burnout of employees who consider their leaders as more ethical is lower than of those who consider their leaders to be less ethical. Relationship between client-related burnout and excessive work of the employees who consider their leaders as more ethical is weaker than of those who consider their leaders to be less ethical. **Conclusions.** Overall, the findings support that employee's attitudes towards their leader are important for the occupational burnout and proneness to workaholism. Therefore, an ethical leadership style must be considered when addressing physical and psychological well-being of employees.

**Keywords:** a perceived ethical leadership style, workaholism, occupational burnout.

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## INTRODUCTION

New technologies enable employees to work outside their office, leading to a higher number of hours devoted to work (Ng, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2007). Numerous studies have demonstrated that the scope of workaholism is on the increase (Shonin, Van Gordon, & Griffiths, 2014; Schaufeli, Shimazu, & Taris, 2009). However, the amount of empirical research is still relatively low. It has been established that one of the negative consequences of the workaholism might be occupational burnout (Innanen, Tolvanen, & Salmela-Aro, 2014; Balducci, Cecchin, Fraccaroli, & Schaufeli, 2012; Andreassen, Ursin, & Eriksen, 2007). The latest research shows that it is necessary to study the relationship between the workaholism and occupational burnout due to their harmful effect on psychological and physical functioning of an individual. On the other hand, the study of the workaholism and occupational burnout alone is inexpedient on account of several reasons: 1) usually these phenomena are closely related to any employees, in any organization; 2) employees' workaholism, occupational burnout and their relationship is a biopsychosocial problem. However, the relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout is unstable. The social environment of an organization can either strengthen or weaken this relationship (Ying-Wen & Chen-Ming, 2009). Therefore, in order to understand the relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout comprehensively, it is important to investigate these phenomena not only from the psychological or biological, but also from social aspects (Ying-Wen & Chen-Ming, 2009).

According to Kunigauskaitė (2011), Genevičiūtė-Janonienė & Endriulaitienė (2010), no other organizational factors have such a significant impact on the employees' behaviour, their psychological well-being and physical health as the leader of the organization. Various leadership styles are important for the factors related to the employees (Jočienė, 2015; Genevičiūtė-Janonienė & Endriulaitienė, 2010). However, an ethical leadership style has an entire complex of certain features that contribute to employees' workaholism, occupational burnout, their relationship and change (Fernández, José, Boada-Grau, Gil-Ripoll, & Vigil-Colet, 2016). Therefore, a perceived ethical leadership style has a greater impact on workaholism and occupational burnout than any other styles of leadership.

Some authors state that an ethical leadership style can create favourable conditions for the development of employees' workaholism, occupational burnout and their relationships (De Coninck, 2015; Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & De Hoogh, 2013). Other authors state the opposite – ethical leadership bars the way to the development of the relationships between these phenomena (Bouchamma & Brie, 2014; Chughtai, 2015). Issues of ethical leadership in the context of workaholism and burnout need further and deeper investigations (Kanste, Kyngas, & Nikkila, 2007). Therefore, the aim of this study was to identify the significance of a perceived ethical leadership style for the relationship between employees' workaholism and occupational burnout.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Workaholism and occupational burnout**

Ever since the notion of "workaholism" was introduced, researchers have held different viewpoints on its definition (Aziz & Tronzo, 2011). However, this research is based on the definition proposed by Oates (1971), who labeled workaholism as "the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly" (p. 11). According to this author, workaholism is composed of two dimensions: working excessively (the behavioral component) and working compulsively (the cognitive component). It is important to highlight that due to a high work investment, workaholism can be understood as similar to work engagement. Although both workaholism and work engagement are characterized by heavy work investment, the underlying motivation for this investment differs: workaholics are driven by an inner compulsion to work they cannot resist, whereas engaged employees work because they find it stimulating, meaningful and engrossing (Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kamiyama, & Kawakami, 2015).

Theoretical and empirical models suggest that workaholism is caused and maintained by a range of antecedents. For instance, some authors have reported a link between workaholism and family systems, with the family being the origin of the phenomenon. According to this perspective, workaholism is regarded as the result of certain family dynamics (e.g., over-responsibility), affecting the individual within the system. Some other authors theoretically frame the structure, process,

growth and development of workaholism within addiction theory. Based on this model, workaholic behavior is somatically stimulated by physiological activation produced, for example, by working against the clock to meet a deadline. Learning theory may also add to our understanding of workaholism antecedents. Based on this theory, the development of workaholism and corresponding behavior can be explained by various principles of learning (e.g. the individual may be influenced by observing the behavior of significant others). To sum up, although the theories presented here have different explanations of workaholism, it is most probably formed by a variety of antecedents (Miller, 2013).

It is agreed that workaholism is one of the fundamental factors hindering employees' physical and psychological well-being. Therefore, interest in employees' occupational burnout was expressed at the same time as in workaholism. While not a new phenomenon, job burnout has resurfaced in scientific literature as the society becomes more complex, and more demands are placed on employees (McKinley, Bolanda, & Mahanb, 2017). This research is based on the occupational burnout model suggested by Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen (2005). According to Kristensen et al. (2005), occupational burnout indicates the level of burnout which is the result of working activity, being in the working environment or thoughts about the work (Kristensen et al., 2005). They identified three dimensions of burnout: personal burnout (an employee's psychological and physical fatigue and exhaustion experienced by a person regardless of their participation in the workforce), work-related burnout (physical and psychological fatigue related to work) and customer-related burnout (physical and psychological fatigue caused by frequent communication with customers) (Robinson, Magee, & Caputi, 2016; Kristensen et al., 2005).

Scientific literature has shown that occupational burnout can be caused by work activity, working environment and thoughts about work (Bubnienė, 2009; Kunigauskaitė, 2011). It is noted that workaholism is characterised by intense work activity, frequent and long-term being in the working environment and constant thinking about work. That is, the behavior and thoughts of a person who is prone to workaholism, creates conditions leading to physical and mental exhaustion. Thus, one of the most extreme outcomes of workaholism is occupational burnout (De Carlo, Falco, Pierro, Dugas, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2014).

## **The relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout**

One of the main determinants that explain the relationship between employees' workaholism and occupational burnout is high standards for oneself (Aziz & Tronzo, 2011; Taris, Van Veek, & Schaufeli, 2012; De Carlo et al., 2014; Bovornusvakool, Vodanovich, Ariyabuddhipongs, & Ngamake, 2012). According to Ng et al. (2007), workaholics are characterized by a high need for achievement and perfectionism. Numerous studies have found positive correlations between perfectionism and stress (Shifron & Reysen, 2011). This increases the risk for the development of occupational burnout (Aziz & Tronzo, 2011; Kristensen et al., 2005). Therefore, employees with higher perfectionism are more likely to experience burnout.

Another mechanism that seems to be involved in the relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout is lack of rest. According to De Carlo et al. (2014), employees who are prone to workaholism devote more energy to work than necessary. Therefore, workaholics typically work long hours (on average 50–60 hours per week). When the excessive amount of energy that workaholics spend at work is not counterbalanced with appropriate recovery (Taris, Geurts, Schaufeli, Blonk, & Lagerveld, 2008), employees might eventually exhaust their energy back-up (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Furthermore, workaholics are thinking about work even if not at work. It is clear that constant thinking about work limits the time for relaxing or hobbies (Falvo, Visintin, Capozza, Falco, & De Carlo, 2013). Consequently, this increases burnout.

As Smedema, Thompson, Sharp, & Friefeld (2016) explained, the physical and psychological difficulties should be considered in the context of individuals' life, including the environments in which they live and work. Some authors suggest that to understand the development of the relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout, it is necessary to pay attention to the way in which individuals perceive and interpret the behavior of others at work. It has been noted that the perception of manager behavior is one of the essential factors predicting the relationship between these phenomena (Rodríguez-Mantilla & Fernández-Díaz, 2017).

## **Importance of an ethical leadership style for the relationship of employees' workaholism and occupational burnout**

Ethical leadership is usually defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005, p. 120). The most prominent features of an ethical manager are the following: management skills, personal morality and orientation to subordinates (Chughtai, 2015).

Some authors have revealed the association between a perceived ethical leadership style and workaholism. One of the main antecedents of workaholism is strong working control, job demands and pressure to be productive (Choi, 2013). Ethical managers are characterized by the fact that a part of the responsibilities and powers is given to the employees. Such managers allow subordinates to independently control certain work processes (Engelbrecht, Heine, & Mahembe, 2014; Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009). In this way, they can choose appropriate ways and conditions of meeting the targets. As a result, the risk of workaholism decreases (Choi, 2013). Hence the results of the previous research provide some data for the first hypothesis:

1. Employees who perceive their manager as characterised by a more ethical leadership style have lower level of workaholism than those who perceive their manager as less characterised by an ethical leadership style.

Also, researchers claim that ethical leadership reduces employee's burnout (Madathil, Heck, & Schuldberg, 2014). Ethical manager promotes subordinates' ideas, creates a climate of mutual respect and favourable conditions to achieve professional and personal development of employees. In such organization environment employees feel safe (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). This leads to a positive assessment of a manager. In order to reduce the probability of burnout, a positive assessment of a leader and safety are very important (Kanste, Kyngas, & Nikkila, 2007; Bouchamma & Brie, 2014; Peterson, Walumbwa, Avolio, & Hannah, 2012). Based on these theoretical arguments and empirical evidence, this study generates the following hypothesis:

2. Employees who perceive their manager as characterised by a more ethical leadership style have lower level of occupational burnout than employees who perceive their manager as less characterised by an ethical leadership style.

According to the previous research, a perceived ethical leadership style is important for the relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout for such reasons: 1) it can increase (or reduce) the probability that an employee who is prone to workaholism may start suffering occupational burnout; 2) can accelerate (or distance) occupational burnout of the employee who is prone to workaholism; 3) can maintain or bar the relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout.

The research results of an ethical leadership style for the relationship between employees' workaholism and occupational burnout are controversial. For instance, ethical leaders focus on the employees' progress rather than results (Ma, Cheng, Ribbens & Zhou, 2013). Therefore, employees may consider that in order to become well-appreciated, they have to obviously show their initiative and efforts. This stimulates them to work excessively (Andreassen, 2014; Ng et al., 2007). Working excessively hard causes considerable stress, which is incompatible with feelings of health and well-being (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

On the other hand, some authors provide contradictory results. For instance, according to Youngkeun (2013), if an organization implements a winner-takes-all or star reward system, employees are more likely to exert greater effort because only the top performers are rewarded. Thus, they are forced to work unceasingly to compete, and peer competition can evoke workaholic behavior. Also, in the organizational atmosphere created by widespread workaholism, peer competition can accelerate occupational burnout. It is important to highlight that an ethical manager is orientated to each employee's progress and does not create a competitive working environment. Hence this creates unfavourable environment for the workaholism and occupational burnout (Choi, 2013).

Job demands-resources theory (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) may also help to explain the relationship among ethical leadership, workaholism and occupational burnout. Job demands-resources theory claims that emotional job demands, physical job demands and work pressure are all risk factors for occupational burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016). Moreover, as it was found in the previous

research, employees who are confronted with more work pressure usually report higher levels of workaholism (Choi, 2013). However, in a view of job demands-resources theory, the undesirable impact of job demands can be alleviated by job resources. The results showed that ethical leadership results in fewer job demands (cognitive, emotional and physical demands) and more job resources (e.g. job autonomy, taking care of the welfare of subordinates, encouragement, support), and indirectly contributes to the development of an appropriate work habits and well-being of employees (Chughtai, 2015; Russell, 2013; Bakker & Demerouti, 2016).

Based on a social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), workaholic behavior occurs, is nurtured and sustained because similar behavior in the past had led to positive outcomes, such as praise and approval from managers, promotion, good salary, or because the behavior had led to the avoidance of negative outcomes such as unwanted leisure (Miller, 2013; Loi, Lam, Ngo, & Cheong, 2015; Kalshoven, van Dijk, & Boon, 2016). It is known that one of the essential features of workaholics is inability to work in a concentrated way (Jočienė, 2015). Ethical leaders influence subordinates' behavior by approving or rewarding well-structured activity and punishing overtime and continuous work. As a result, employees are able to work purposefully, saving their time and energy (Chughtai, 2015). In this way, health-damaging work habits do not recur, and the risk of occupational burnout decreases (Russell, 2013).

The above literature provides more rationales for the positive impact of ethical leadership. Thus, in view of Bakker & Demerouti (2016), Bandura (1977), Youngkeun (2013), Choi (2013), Chughtai (2015), Russell (2013), Bouchamma & Brie (2014), Loi et al. (2015), Kalshoven, et al. (2016), the third research hypothesis was formulated:

3. The relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout of the employees who perceive their manager as characterised by a more ethical leadership style is less expressed than of the employees who perceive their manager as less characterised by an ethical leadership style.

The previous research suggests that the experience with workaholism and occupational burnout may be different due to certain socio-demographic characteristics of employees (Lopez et al., 2011; Kompier, 2006; Andreassen, 2014). Furthermore, some studies have reported an



association between a perceived ethical leadership style and employees' age, gender, education, work duration in the current organization (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2016; Feng, 2011). Thus, it may also influence the relationship between a perceived ethical leadership style, employees' workaholism and occupational burnout. We considered these possibilities in this study and examined how certain socio-demographic characteristics of employees may influence our results.

## METHOD

**Sample.** The research was organized and conducted in accordance with the requirements for research ethics (APA, 2017). Both managers and employees were given general information about the research such as its purpose and the consequences of participation. Furthermore, a survey was held only after securing participants' free and informed consent. The study involved 302 employees of business and education organizations in Lithuania, who were recruited through convenient sampling. In order to increase the response rate and quality of responses, we firstly obtained consent from top executives at the target companies. The response rate was around 90%.

All respondents were non-executive employees. Most of them had direct contacts with customers as a part of their daily work routine. More women (261) than men (41) participated in the study. The majority of respondents had higher education. Participants worked for the same organization from one month up to 45 years, with a mean of 12.72 years ( $SD=10.60$ ). The age range was from 20 to 79 years (mean 44.20 years;  $SD=12.65$ ).

**Assessment instruments.** A self-report questionnaire was used. The 10-item Dutch Work Addiction Scale (DUWAS-10) developed by Schaufeli, Taris, & Bakker (2009) was used to assess employees' workaholism. The Lithuanian version of this scale was prepared by Jočienė & Endriulaitienė (2015). DUWAS-10 measures workaholism across two dimensions: five items assessed working excessively and five items assessed working compulsively. For instance, "I spend more time working than socializing with friends, on hobbies or on leisure activities" and "I feel obliged to work hard even if it is not enjoyable" respectively. Each

item of the questionnaire was evaluated according to a five-point Likert scale (1 – never / almost never, 5 – always). An increasing number of the points shows that a respondent has a higher level of workaholism (Falvo et al., 2013). The internal reliability of this questionnaire was .806. The internal reliability of the working excessively subscale was .735; of the working compulsively subscale – .679.

Occupational burnout was assessed by Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) developed by Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen (2005). CBI was translated into Lithuanian and then back-translated by two independent translators. CBI measures burnout across three dimensions: six items assess personal burnout, seven items assess work-related burnout, and six items assess customer-related burnout. For instance, “How often are you emotionally exhausted?”, “Does your work frustrate you?”, and “Do you find it hard to work with clients?” respectively. Each item of the questionnaire was evaluated according to a five-point Likert scale (1 – never / almost never, 5 – always). An increasing number of the points shows that a respondent has a higher level of occupational burnout (Kristensen et al., 2005). The internal reliability of this questionnaire was .919. The Cronbach’s alphas for the three subscales of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory in the present study were .856 (personal burnout subscale), .754 (work-related burnout subscale), .875 (customer-related burnout subscale).

A 10-item scale (ELS), created by Brown, Trevino, & Harrison (2005), was used to evaluate an ethical leadership style. ELS was translated into Lithuanian, based on a standard translation/back-translation procedure. Each item (e.g. “Discusses business ethics or values with employees”) was evaluated according to a five-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 5 – strongly agree). The higher score indicates the more expressed ethical leadership style perceived by employees. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was .922.

In order to compare the relationships between workaholism and occupational burnout in two groups of a perceived ethical leadership style (higher and lower), based on the recommendations of previous studies, an average score of ethical leadership ( $M=41.0608$ ). Thus, a higher perceived ethical leadership style is mirrored when the respondent shows higher than average scores in ELS. A lower perceived ethical

leadership style is reflected when there are lower than average scores in ELS (DeConinck, 2015; Engelbrecht et al., 2014).

To determine whether items reflect the constructs they are intended to measure, the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) of the scales (DUWAS-10, CBI, ELS) were conducted. In short, the results of the CFA provided support for the construct validity of the variables used in the current study: workaholism, occupational burnout and ethical leadership style.

In order to assess the normality of data, Shapiro-Wilk test was used. Shapiro-Wilk test coefficients for DUWAS-10, CBI and ELS were .987, .990 and .931 respectively. For all three questionnaires the parameters of skewness and kurtosis ranged between -1 and 1 (e.g. DUWAS-10, skewness = .205, kurtosis = .615; CBI, skewness = .325, kurtosis = -.162; ELS, skewness = -.990, kurtosis = .939). This shows that the data come from a normal distribution and therefore in further analysis parametric statistical tests were used.

The results were analysed with the help of descriptive statistics, Student's t tests and correlational analyses. Then the correlations are conducted on the same variables by two different groups, and if both the correlations are found to be statistically significant (particularly when a sample size is small), Fisher's r-to-z transformation is recommended (Corey, Dunlap, & Burke, 1998; Silver & Dunlap, 1987). Therefore, to compare the relationships between workaholism and occupational burnout in two groups of a perceived ethical leadership style, Fisher's r-to-z test was used.

## FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics in terms of mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the study variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *Descriptive statistics of the study variables*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Workaholism	293	26.3038	6.41434
Occupational burnout	290	47.6690	11.42816
Perceived ethical leadership style	296	41.0608	6.53567

In order to examine workaholism, occupational burnout and a perceived ethical leadership style in different socio-demographic groups of employees, t-test of independence was used. It found no statistically significant differences of workaholism in different socio-demographic groups of study participants ( $p > .05$ ). Further, our results revealed that occupational burnout is only related to work duration in the current organization: occupational burnout is stronger among the employees whose work duration in the current organization is longer than among those whose work duration is shorter ( $p < .05$ ). It was also determined that a perceived ethical leadership style is related to employees' age: older employees (aged 45–79) perceive their managers as being more ethical than the younger (aged 20–44) ones ( $p < .05$ ).

Partial correlation was used to determine whether there is a relationship between a perceived ethical leadership style, workaholism and occupational burnout. This test was used in response to hypotheses 1 and 2. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *The relationship between a perceived ethical leadership style, workaholism and occupational burnout controlling for employees' age and work duration in the current organization*

	<i>Ethical leadership style</i>		
	<i>r</i>	<i>Degrees of freedom (df)</i>	<i>p value</i>
Excessive work	-.149	271	.014
Compulsive work	-.144	271	.017
Personal burnout	-.291	266	.000
Work-related burnout	-.252	264	.000
Customer-related burnout	-.075	263	.221
	<i>Ethical leadership style</i>		
Workaholism (general)	-.164	267	.007
Occupational burnout (general)	-.217	258	.000

Table 2 indicates that an ethical leadership style significantly negatively correlates with employees' excessive work ( $p < .05$ ). Similarly, an ethical leadership style showed a negative and significant association with the employees' compulsive work and general workaholism ( $p < .05$ ).

Furthermore, there is a weak but significant negative correlation between an ethical leadership style and employees' personal burnout, work-related and general burnout ( $p < .05$ ). The relationship between an ethical leadership style and customer-related burnout is also negative, but this correlation did not reach statistical significance ( $p > .05$ ).

Partial correlation was used to determine whether there was a relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout in each group of a perceived ethical leadership style. Further, Fisher's  $r$ -to- $z$  transformation was used to compare these relationships in two groups of a perceived ethical leadership style. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *The relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout in different groups of a perceived ethical leadership style controlling for employees' work duration in the current organization*

	Perceived ethical leadership style	$r$	Degrees of freedom ( $df$ )	$Z$	$p$ value
The relationship between personal burnout and excessive work	Higher	.285*	143	1.52	.1285
	Lower	.447**	125		
The relationship between personal burnout and compulsive work	Higher	.296**	143	1.49	.1362
	Lower	.454**	125		
The relationship between work-related burnout and excessive work	Higher	.330**	142	1.38	.1676
	Lower	.474**	123		
The relationship between work-related burnout and compulsive work	Higher	.323**	142	1.03	.303
	Lower	.433**	123		
The relationship between customer-related burnout and excessive work	Higher	.288**	139	1.99	.0466
	Lower	.496**	125		
The relationship between customer-related burnout and compulsive work	Higher	.254*	138	.60	.5485
	Lower	.323**	125		
The relationship between workaholism and occupational burnout	Higher	.390**	133	1.96	.05
	Lower	.578**	123		

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

Fisher's *r*-to-*z* transformation showed no significant differences of these relationships between two ethical leadership style groups: personal burnout and excessive work; personal burnout and compulsive work; work-related burnout and excessive work; work-related burnout and compulsive work; customer-related burnout and compulsive work ( $p > .05$ ). However, our results revealed a significant relationship between customer-related burnout and excessive work, also between general burnout and workaholism in a different ethical leadership style groups ( $p < .05$ ). It was found that the relationship between customer-related burnout and excessive work of the employees who perceive their manager as characterised by a more ethical leadership style is less expressed than of employees who perceive their manager as less characterised by an ethical leadership style.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the significance of a perceived ethical leadership style for the relationship between employees' workaholism and occupational burnout. Some findings were consistent with the previous research. Other findings did not support the previous research on a perceived ethical leadership style, employees' workaholism and occupational burnout.

The study results showed that employees who perceive their manager as characterised by a more ethical leadership style have a lower level of workaholism than employees who perceive their manager as less characterised by an ethical leadership style. The obtained results confirm the findings of Choi (2013), Engelbrecht et al. (2014), Macey et al. (2009). The results can be interpreted in accordance with Walumbwa & Schaubroeck (2009), Choi (2013). Ethical managers of the respondents, who participated in this study, are likely to have been focused on each employee's progress and did not create a competitive working environment. As a result, employees did not feel tension to be superior to their colleagues, continuously improve their productivity and quality of work (Engelbrecht et al., 2014; Macey et al., 2009). Our results extend previous findings and suggest that such managers' ethical behavior does not lead to the emergence of workaholic environment.

Our second hypothesis was partially supported: it was revealed that employees who perceive their manager as characterised by a more ethical leadership style have a lower level of personal burnout, work-related burnout and general burnout than employees who perceive their managers as less characterised by an ethical leadership style. Contrary to the studies of Russell (2014), our findings showed that an ethical leadership style and customer-related burnout do not interrelate. On the other hand, the obtained results confirm the findings of Bouchamma & Brie (2014), Peterson et al. (2012), Kanste et al. (2007). Such results can be explained by an ethical manager's behavior. An ethical manager is orientated towards the subordinates and focused on maintaining good relationships with them. Therefore, employees feel less stressed and tensed, become more confident with the manager. Consequently, this leads to a positive evaluation of the ethical leader. As a result, the probability of personal and work-related burnout decreases (Bouchamma & Brie, 2014; Kanste et al., 2007).

Our third hypothesis was also partially supported: it was found that the relationship between customer-related burnout and excessive work, also between general burnout and workaholism of the employees who perceive their manager as characterised by a more ethical leadership style is less expressed than of the employees who perceive their manager as less characterised by an ethical leadership style. As mentioned earlier, an ethical manager influences harmonious relationships between employees, which are based on understanding, support and trust (Chughtai, 2015). Therefore, employees become friendly with each other, the organization creates an environment of cooperation; colleagues begin to perceive each other not as competitors, but as assistants. Ethical managers constantly communicate with employees, encourage them to move away from work, to reflect, to turn to their own needs. Finally, the ethical manager allows employees to control certain work processes, independently solve problems and influences subordinates' behavior by rewarding their well-structured activity. Due to this manager behavior, an appropriate relationship with the work of employees is formed, and psychological and physical well-being is improved.

The results of the study revealed that occupational burnout is only related to the work duration in the current organization: occupational burnout is stronger among the employees whose work duration in the

current organization is longer than among those whose work duration in the current organization is shorter. These results coincide with the findings of Montero-Marín, García-Campayo, Fajó-Pascual, Carrasco, Gascón, Gili, & Mayoral-Cleries (2011). It can be assumed that over the long years of work in the same organization employees lose professional enthusiasm. A well-known organization and activities, lack of change and new challenges bar the way to the professional and personal development. As a result, the organization's environment and work activities begin to tire an employee. We have also observed a relationship between a perceived ethical leadership style and employees' age: older employees perceive their managers as being more ethical than the younger ones. Our findings can be interpreted in accordance with Feng (2011): older employees are more aware of the importance and benefits of moral and ethical behavior. Therefore, older employees are more considerate and sensitive to morality demonstrated by an ethical leader.

It was established that there are no differences of workaholism in different socio-demographic groups (gender, education, age, work duration in the current organization) of study participants. Furthermore, gender, education and age of employees were not related to the occupational burnout. Lastly, perception of ethical leadership does not differ between men and women, employees who have or do not have higher education, as well as between those who work longer and shorter in the organization. The obtained results can be explained by the composition of study participants. For instance, workaholism and occupational burnout are more likely to occur at a younger age (Taris, van Veen, & Schaufeli, 2012; Kunigauskaitė, 2011). On the other hand, the structure of the study participants was specific: the average age of respondents was 44 years. This means that respondents of the younger age who participated in this study in the general population would be considered as middle-aged and older employees. Such results can also be explained by the impact of factors which were not analysed in this research.

It is important to consider some limitations of the current study when interpreting these findings. First, due for participation in the study, more organizations were contacted, however, only a small number of them agreed to participate in the survey. Therefore, there is a possibility that the managers of the studied participants in the general population would reach a high level of ethical leadership. Another limitation is that



the majority of the respondents were women. This threatens the generalizability of our findings. Thirdly, objective instruments were not used for the collection of survey data. Therefore, there is a possibility that the investigation occurred in a social desirability bias, which could distort the results of the survey because of studied participants' propensity to assess ethical leadership with high scores and the fact that rating their supervisor's leadership style may feel insecure. Lastly, workaholism and occupational burnout are defined differently by various authors. The discrepancies of this and previous studies were possibly influenced by different concepts of the phenomena and different instruments used to measure it. Therefore, further researchers should first pay attention to the conceptual workaholism and occupational burnout problems.

The results of this study support the theory and research, suggesting that working conditions created by ethical leaders may play an important role in the extent to which employees experience workaholism and occupational burnout. The finding implies that ethical behavior should be emphasized in planning and designing interventions for managing employees' workaholism and burnout. It is worth to invest in managers' development; managers should be introduced to the concept of an ethical leadership style and its effects on employees. In order to determine more aspects of the relationship among an ethical leadership style, occupational burnout and workaholism, more research is needed.

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## SUBJEKTYVIAI SUVOKIAMO ETIŠKO VADOVAVIMO STILIAUS REIKŠMĖ POLINKIO PER DAUG DIRBTI IR PROFESINIO PERVERGIMO SĄSAJOMS

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**Santrauka. Mokslinė problema.** Remiantis mokslinių tyrimų rezultatais, etiškas vadovavimo stilius gali turėti tiek teigiamų, tiek neigiamų pasekmių darbuotojams. Ankstesniais tyrimais nustatyta, kad etiškas vadovavimo stilius gali prisidėti prie darbuotojų polinkio per daug dirbti ir profesinio pervargimo vystymosi, tačiau šių reiškinių sąsajos vertinamos nevienareikšmiškai. **Tyrimo tikslas.** Nustatyti subjektyviai suvokiamo etiško vadovavimo stiliaus reikšmę darbuotojų polinkio per daug dirbti ir profesinio pervargimo sąsajoms. **Tyrimo metodai.** Tyrime dalyvavo 302 įvairiose Lietuvos organizacijose dirbantys respondentai (41 vyras ir 261 moteris). Etiškam vadovavimo stiliui vertinti naudotas M. E. Brown, L. K. Trevino, D. A. Harrison (2005) klausimynas. Polinkiui per daug dirbti matuoti naudota Olandijos polinkio per daug dirbti skalės trumpoji versija (DUWAS-10) (Schaufeli, Taris, Bakker, 2009). Profesiniam pervargimui vertinti naudotas T. S. Kristensen, M. Borritz, E. Villadsen ir K. B. Christensen (2005) Kopenhagos Profesinio pervargimo klausimynas. **Rezultatai.** Tyrimu nustatyta, jog darbuotojai, kurie savo vadovo elgesį suvokia kaip labiau etišką, mažiau linkę per daug dirbti, mažiau kenčia nuo asmeninio ir su darbu susijusio pervargimo nei tie darbuotojai, kurie savo vadovo elgesį suvokia kaip mažiau etišką. Darbuotojų, kurie savo vadovo elgesį suvokia kaip labiau etišką, su klientais susijęs pervargimas yra mažiau susijęs su perdėta sunkiu darbu nei tų darbuotojų, kurie savo vadovo elgesį suvokia kaip mažiau etišką. **Išvados.** Nustatyta, kad darbuotojų požiūris į vadovą yra svarbus polinkio per daug dirbti ir profesinio pervargimo vystymuisi, todėl ateityje svarbu tyrinėti veiksnius, kurie galėtų keisti darbuotojų požiūrį į organizacijos aplinką ir savo vadovą.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** subjektyviai suvokiamas etiškas vadovavimo stilius, polinkis per daug dirbti, profesinis pervargimas.

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