

University of Warsaw

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**Impact of career advancement on work-life balance –
gender differences**

**Wpływ rozwoju kariery zawodowej na równowagę pomiędzy pracą
a życiem prywatnym – różnice płci**

**SUMMARY of the doctoral dissertation
in the discipline of management and quality studies**

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Introduction

“At a time when women can offer almost everything that men can in terms of ability, skills and experience, time becomes an important differential feature which makes men more suitable than women.”

Sarah Rutherford¹

Career advancement is often viewed as a necessary step in achieving success and personal fulfilment. However, this pursuit of success can come at a cost, as it is not uncommon for individuals to experience higher levels of job-related stress and a decreased level of work-life balance (WLB) as they strive to advance their careers.

Boundaries between work and life domains have been significantly blurred through implementation of the new ways of working associated with temporal and spatial flexibility, and common usage of information communication technologies. Their impact on the employee's well-being is contradictory – on one hand they experience increased fatigue and mental workload², on the other teleworking has been proved to allow for higher control over one's daily agenda which may positively influence health factors³.

With multiple approaches to work-life balance research, there still has been no universal, unanimous approach to the work-life balance definition⁴. At the same time there are different approaches to how work-life balance should be defined, researched, and measured⁵. Researchers⁶ have most often conceptualized balance as the absence of role conflict or presence of role enrichment. The Business Dictionary⁷ defines “work-life balance” as: “a comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between an employee's primary priorities of their employment position and their private lifestyle”. Others⁸ refer to the work-life balance from a two-dimensional perspective – first of a “role engagement in multiple roles in work and nonwork life”, and second as “minimal conflict between work and nonwork roles”.

In the daily functioning of employees, and especially of those with advanced careers – holding highly-skilled jobs or managerial positions, implications of the technological and social acceleration are more visible than ever. High level of task discretion and required organisational

1 (Rutherford, 2001) p.275
2 (Korunka & Kubicek, 2017b)
3 (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023)

4 (Sirgy & Lee, 2018a)
5 (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007)
6 (Beigi et al., 2019)

7 cf. Business Dictionary online
8 (Sirgy & Lee, 2018b)

participation, combined with excessive cognitive demands, and increasing workload make managerial jobs multidimensional. Managers work under constant pressure for high performance, measured mainly in economic terms⁹, and the higher they are in the business hierarchy, the more intense are their experiences. Such a composition of job demands requiring their time and attention shows clearly what kind of burden it entails for employees with high professional status.

At the same time, the share of household-related work has not been measured for the economy purposes, let alone included in the official indicators of growth¹⁰. And yet, most of it is done by women, and it is not only underrated, but also unpaid. Although it has real economic value and brings huge added value to the society it seems to be invisible¹¹. Failure to recognise domestic work, care work, and the general household management duties as formal economy components devaluates effort put in these activities and those who perform them – women.

Despite progress in employment rates, gender inequality in the labour market persists substantially due to the unequal distribution of unpaid work between men and women. These changes have the potential to promote a more equitable distribution of unpaid work between men and women, ultimately reducing gender disparity in that respect.

Gender equality can be viewed as a spectrum, where societies closer to achieving gender equality will experience more equal impacts from various shocks. Conversely, persistent gender inequalities will lead to outcomes that are also gendered. Therefore, if crises lead to gender-unequal outcomes, policies aimed at alleviating the negative impacts of such crises must incorporate a gender-sensitive approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of examining different areas of gender equality in tandem rather than isolation. Gender imbalances are pervasive across various facets of life and are intricately interlinked, influencing one another. Positive changes in one area can have a positive domino effect in others and vice versa. For example, reducing gender disparities in unpaid care work can have the potential to reduce gender gaps in the labour market.

Cognitive load associated with decision-making accompany leaders for most time. They are expected to make decisions quickly and rightly, often in uncertainty and with certain level of risk-taking. Managers are confronted with high job demands on a daily basis – including time constraints, competitive pressures, cognitive overload, extreme working hours, and generally high workload leading to backlogs and irreconcilable work-related strains¹².

Insufficient personal resources in a situation of manager's overload) can result in:

- physical and emotional fatigue at work¹³ negatively affecting job performance,
- negative stress-related implications¹⁴, such as reduced well-being, deteriorated level of health¹⁵, and burnout, accompanied by exhaustion, cynicism, as well as reduced motivation and professional efficacy¹⁶,
- limited attention span and inability to effectively process information¹⁷,
- work intensification, especially visible in flexible working forms, involving longer hours, requiring greater work effort, causing social isolation, and limiting networking, harming reputation as less committed, increasing conflict between work and life domains, and significantly reducing career advancement opportunities¹⁸.

Therefore, the main objective of the dissertation is to investigate the impact of career advancement and overload related to managerial function on work-life balance among employees with high professional status (including managerial function). In this exercise a special focus has been put on gender and generational differences.

9 (Lucier et al., 2003)

10 (Coyle, 2021)

11 (Criado-Perez, 2020)

12 (Stock et al., 2014)

13 (Barnes & Van Dyne, 2009)

14 (Mauno et al., 2022)

15 (Mauno et al., 2022)

16 (Maslach et al., 2001)

17 (Sherf et al., 2019)

18 (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018)

Dissertation Structure

The empirical dissertation contains of 4 chapters and the Appendix.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1, titled **“Literature background of the theoretical model used”** is organized in 4 sections of various length. Their volume has been determined by the amount of research that has been identified in respective areas and presented for the purpose hypotheses development.

In the twenty-first century, when the number of publications on any topic is growing exponentially, a difficult decision was made to focus the literature review on the specificity of career advancement and the WLB context. A full list of the bibliographic items used in the dissertation can be found in the ‘References’ section.

The most influential works on the theoretical model I tested empirically were (in alphabetical order): (Amstad et al., 2011), (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), (Beigi et al., 2019), (Casper et al., 2018), (Demerouti et al., 2014), (Eurofound, 2021), (Folke & Rickne, 2020b), (Frone, 2003a), (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988), (Green et al., 2022), (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000), (Haar et al., 2018), (Heslin, 2003), (Judge et al., 1995), (Kelliher et al., 2019), (Kinnunen et al., 2010), (Korunka & Kubicek, 2017b), (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998), (Lyness & Judiesch, 2008), (Marks & MacDermid, 1996), (Magda & Lipowska, 2022), (Mauno et al., 2022), (Newman & Olivetti, 2018), (Parent-Thirion, 2017), (Powell et al., 2019), (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008), (Sirgy & Lee, 2018), (Straub, 2012), (Sturges, 1999), (Syrda, 2020), (Villamor et al., 2022), (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

Section 1, titled **“Types of work”**, addresses the implications of the technological and social acceleration in terms of the work tasks (what people do at work), and the work context (how people do their work). This section discusses various approaches to the career success and specific character of the managerial function, as well as job demands, and psychosocial risks associated with it. The section ends with the justification for the special focus on the specific character of a managerial function and and associated overload.

Section 2, titled **“Globalisation and transformation of work”**, discusses the new ways of working and the special and temporal aspects of digitalised work environment. A review of the literature shows that there are multiple implications for employee’s well-being both in the work and outside-of work contexts. Lack of the empirical studies can be considered as an identified research gap. The section provides knowledge on the new ways of working, spatial and temporal challenges, and their implications to employees, including those with a managerial function.

Section 3, titled **“Work-life balance”**, presents various approaches to how work-life balance has been defined, researched and measured. A review of the literature shows that there are differences in WLB depending on the professional status of employees, which significantly impact employee work- and non-work-related experienced well-being. This section ends with identification of a research gap concerning underestimated managerial function in the household and its possible impact on gender differences in experiencing WLB, which was tested in the empirical part.

Section 4, titled **“Gender and social changes”**, presents the literature review concerning changes of social roles of women and men and impact of egalitarianism on the job market. The review showed that women are still more likely to experience career interruptions and reduced work hours due to caregiving responsibilities, which can have long-term effects on their career advancement and earnings. This section ends with justification for testing WLB in the context egalitarian attitudes in three various ways – direct, indirect and experimental.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2, titled “**Methods and objectives of the empirical part**”, presents the methodological paradigm ‘WiW’, which set the framework for all research and analyses carried out in this presentation. Chapter 2 concludes by identifying the dissertation objectives and research tasks.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3, titled “**Results**”, contains analyses of data from 4 studies. In my own studies there were 1030 students (describing own parents) and 616 employees participating in surveys, as well as 497 respondents (mix of students and employees) in an experimental research. On top of that, 3475 employees participated in research where my pre-existing data comes from.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4, titled “**Discussion of the findings, research limitations and direction for future research**”, contains a discussion of the findings of the 4 studies, research contributions, limitations, and directions for further research.

Appendix

In the appendix there are supplementary materials that are not necessary to track the course of the argumentation but are necessary for those who would like to learn about the distributions of variables, details of the analyses carried out, or to replicate the analyses carried out on other dataset (detailed description of research procedures).

Research objective, tasks, and hypotheses

The main objective of the dissertation is to investigate the impact of career advancement on the satisfaction with work-life balance among employees with high professional status (including managerial function). In this exercise a special focus has been put on gender and generational differences.

Work on the doctoral dissertation began with conducting several in-depth interviews with "successful" women – but they were interrupted due to the pandemic. An interesting observation was that women were more likely to arrange an interview with f2f than with a remote conversation.

The analysis of the interviews showed it is worth using quantitative methodology in further research. This was dictated not only by the restrictions related to the pandemic, but also to make comparisons with people who are not highly successful professionally.

Research tasks

Realisation of the main objective of the dissertation was allocated across five research tasks:

- (1) Literature review of factors contributing to the work-life balance among employees with high professional status, including those with managerial functions, concluded with identification of research gaps.
- (2) Development of a strategy to construct an index of professional success based on survey data.
- (3) Development of a new research procedure for estimating WLB using an external view, in which adult children (Generation Z) assess the WLB of parents (Generation X), allowing to eliminate distortions related to attributive egocentrism, which leads to an overestimation of the amount of work performed by the person performing that work.
- (4) Testing various forms of studying Gender-Career stereotype, linking professional careers with men and family duties with women, accompanied by the development of experimental

manipulation of target descriptions of specific situations posing threat to WLB due to career advancement.

- (5) Analyses of pre-existing data and conducting own research, aimed at testing research hypotheses.

Hypotheses

In the course of the research the following hypotheses have been tested in four studies:

H1. Higher professional success in women does not translate to lower involvement in household duties, and especially in home management (i.e., planning and organization of household activities, leading and controlling their execution).

H2. Women bear higher costs of professional success (career advancement) compared to men.

Higher costs of professional success among women are associated with lower:	2a. work-life balance
	2b. emotional wellbeing
	2c. health condition
H3. WLB gender stereotypes are stronger in men than in women.	

Research studies

The research has been conducted in the form of re-analyses of pre-existing data (Study A) and conducting 3 own studies (B, C, D) via the Internet (CAWI):

- Study A. WLB in British generation X (N=3475 employees all born in 1970);
- Study B. WLB in Polish generation BB, X, Y (N=616 employees);
- Study C. WLB in Polish Generation X evaluated by their adult children (Generation Z; (N=486)
- Study D. Strength of Gender-Career stereotype depending on gender (N=143 + other participants from Study B or C).

Hypothesis 1 was tested on both Polish data (own research – Study B of three generations) and British Cohort Survey of 46-year-olds (Study A).

Hypothesis 2 was tested in Study C.

Hypothesis 3 was tested in Study D.

Summary of findings

The empirical part is organized around 3 hypotheses formulated in the dissertation. Labels of the tables and figures presented in this summary are aligned with the dissertation's outline.

Test of H1 – Home involvement depending on professional success and gender

H1. Higher professional success in women does not translate to lower involvement in household duties, especially in home management (i.e., planning and organization of household activities, leading and controlling their execution).

Analysis 1. Household duties (British Cohort Survey=Study A)

I LOWER success
I HIGHER success

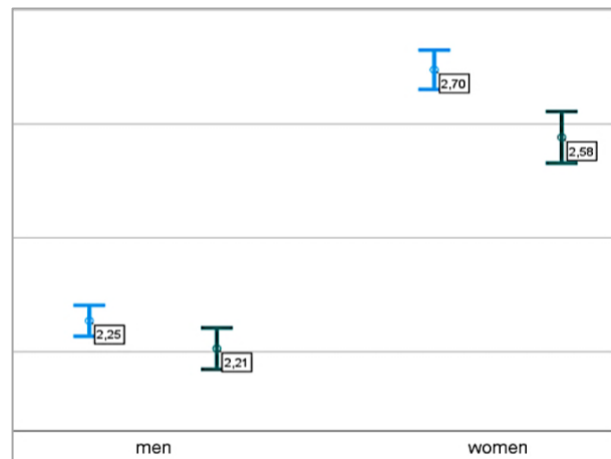


Figure 1. Household duties depending on gender and professional success (Study A).

Women are significantly more overloaded with household duties than men (see Figure 1), regardless of their respective level of professional success.

Although people of higher professional success are less involved in household duties (main effect of professional success), the interaction was significant on the level of statistical tendency only.

Analysis 2. Home involvement (Study C)

The analysis has shown:

- (1) two significant main effects: (1) of DOMAIN meaning that “summing up both parents” job (M=4.39) was higher than home involvement (M=4.01); of PARENT meaning that “summing up both domains” mothers (M=4.44) were involved more than fathers (M=4.01);
- (2) and two significant interaction effects of professional TYPE: (1) with DOMAIN of involvement (job, home); (1) with PARENT (mother, father) by DOMAIN of involvement (job, home).

Interaction of professional TYPE by DOMAIN of involvement (job, home) was shown in Figure 2 below.

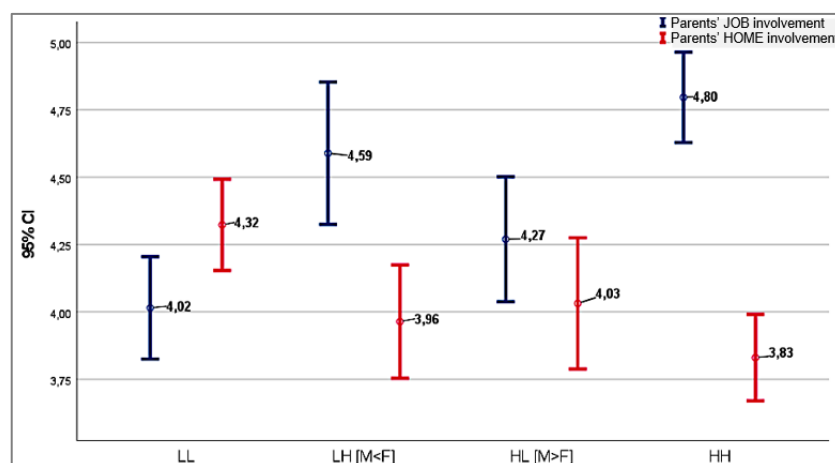


Figure 2. Parents' domain of involvement (job, home) depending on professional type (Study C).

The difference between job involvement and home involvement is the highest in HH type, while in LL professional type, parents' home involvement seems higher than job involvement (but the difference is statistically insignificant).

Interaction of professional TYPE by PARENT by DOMAIN of involvement (job, home) was shown in Figure 3 below.

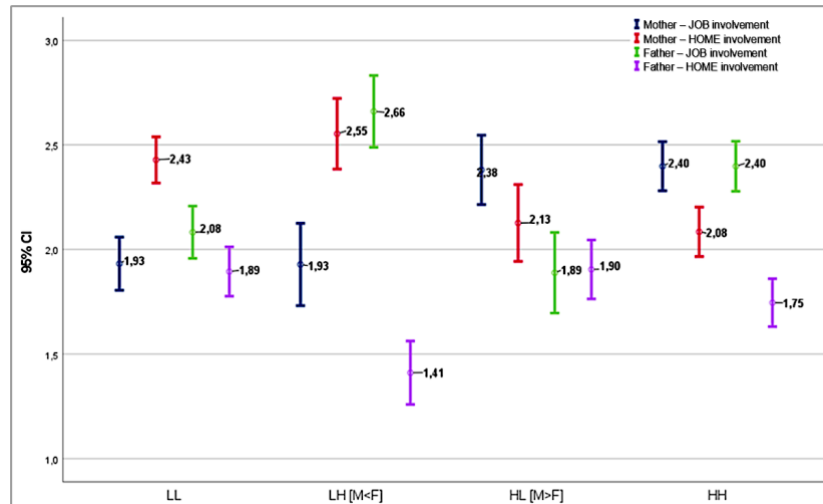


Figure 3. Domain of involvement (job, home) depending on professional TYPE and parents' gender (Study C).

As shown in Figure 3:

- (1) In Fathers: the highest JOB involvement and the lowest HOME involvement is in LH type (with father's professional success higher than mother's). It is significantly higher and lower respectively than in HH marriages (with high professional success of both parents).
- (2) In Mothers: HOME involvement is higher in LL & LH than in HL & HH professional type, which is fully predictable, the opposite can be said on JOB involvement.

It is important to note that predicted negative correlation between home and job involvement was much stronger for fathers ($r = -0.46$) than mothers ($r = -0.15$).

Mothers' involvement in household duties ($M = 2.36$) was significantly higher ($t(451) = 13.52$, $p < 0.001$) than that of fathers' ($M = 1.75$), which remains consistent with the results of Analysis 1 of Study A.

Analysis 3. Home management (Study C)

Analysis 3 tested the second part of H1 by asking who the HOME MANAGER is, by analysing the impact of parents' professional success on who plays the role of the home manager in their shared household.

H1: Lower WLB is associated with workload not only from higher involvement in performing household tasks, but additionally from HOME MANAGEMENT (ie. planning and organization of household activities, leading and controlling their execution).

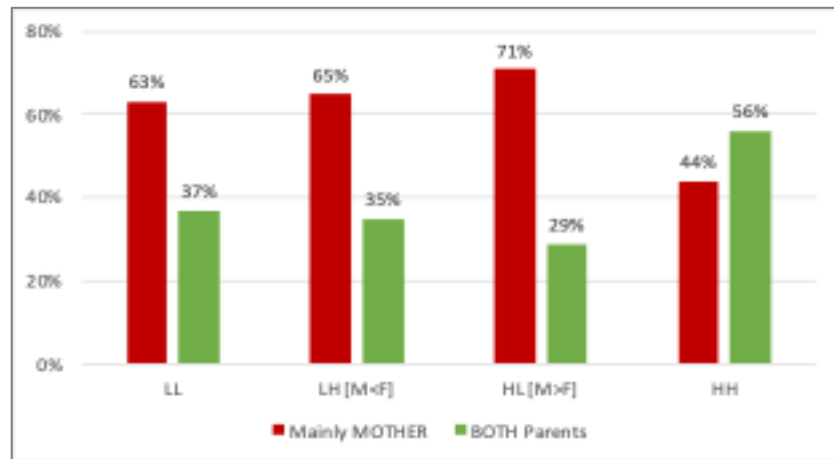


Figure 4. Home manager role, divided by parents' professional type (Study C).

Figure 4 shows who is the home manager divided by four categories of parents' professional type. χ^2 test showed significant relationship between HOME MANAGER (mainly mother vs. both parents) and professional TYPE $\chi^2(3,468)=16.98$.

- (1) It was MOTHERS who mainly performed the HOME MANAGER role in students' homes. Only in HH professional type (both parents with high level of success) majority of the respondents (56%) pointed that BOTH PARENTS shared the home management function rather equally.
- (2) The highest percentage (71%) of MOTHERS as a SOLE home manager was in HL marriages, which may suggest a DOUBLE managerial role for a mother (both at work and at home) with respective overload associated with double managerial function.

In the next step the differences regarding home management in the daughters' and sons' eyes. In the latter, relationship between professional type and household manager was insignificant [$\chi^2(3,468)=16.98$]. In daughters: relationship between professional type and household manager was significant [$\chi^2(3,333)=17.6$].

Adult children pointed mainly at MOTHERS as a HOME MANAGER. The general difference between sons and daughter's perception was not statistically significant [$\chi^2(1,468)=2.4$], but there was statistical trend ($p=0.074$). It showed there is difference in respondents' views – daughters more often pointed at mothers as SOLE home managers (62%) than sons (54%).

Test of H2 – WLB depending on success level and gender

H2. Women bear higher costs of professional success (career advancement) compared to men. Higher costs of professional success among women are associated with lower:

- H2a. work-life balance
- H2b. emotional wellbeing
- H2c. health condition

Analysis 1 (H1a). WLB predicted by success level and gender

2x2 ANCOVA of WLB with Household duties index as a covariate has shown 2 significant main effects: of Gender and of Success index.

Successful employees ($M=3.27$) report lower level of WLB than less successful ($M=3.51$). And it is especially true among successful women (3.18 vs. 3.32 – see Figure 5). No interaction effect confirmed for the WLB between the professional success and gender. Impact of covariate was not significant, either.

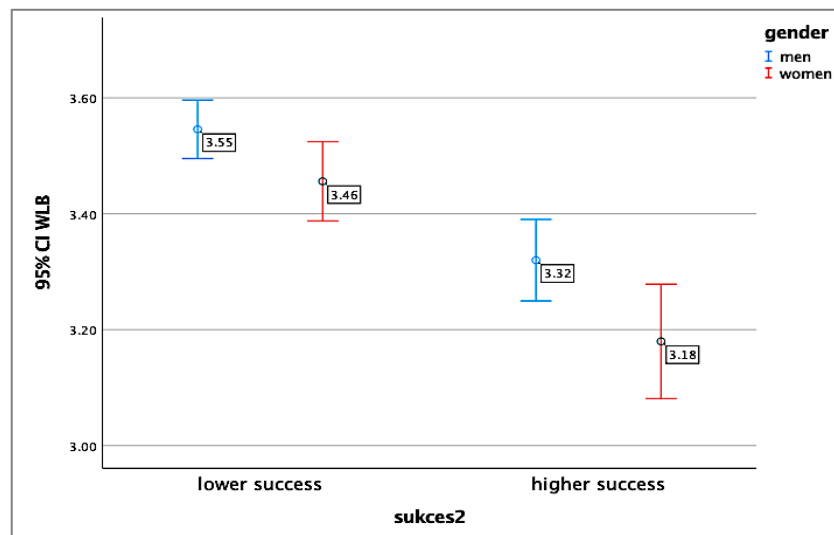


Figure 5. WLB depending on professional success and gender (Study A).

Analysis 2 [H2b]. Emotional wellbeing predicted by success level and gender

2x2 ANCOVA of Emotional wellbeing index with WLB and Household duties index covariates has shown 2 significant main effects: of Gender and of Success index and significant impact of both covariates.

Successful employees ($M=8.75$) report higher level of emotional wellbeing than less successful ($M=8.41$). As it is seen in Figure 5 Women ($M=3.36$) reported lower level of emotional wellbeing than men ($M=8.7$). No interaction effect confirmed for the emotional wellbeing between the professional success and gender. Impact of covariates was not significant, either.

The strongest covariate for emotional wellbeing was WLB (the higher WLB, the better emotional wellbeing). Household duties index was significant in this analysis, but simple correlation between these two variables was very low $r=-0.08$ $p<0.001$.

No interaction effect confirmed for the emotional wellbeing between professional success and gender.

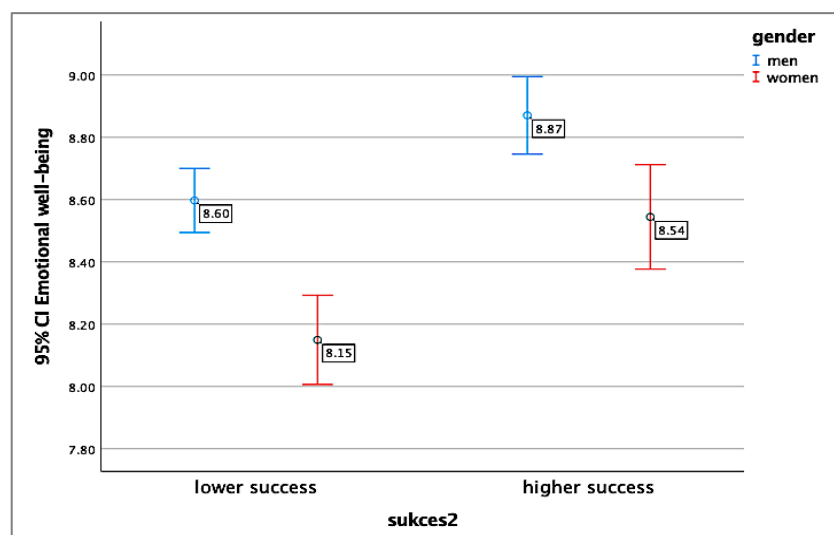


Figure 6. Emotional wellbeing depending on professional success and gender (Study A).

Analysis 3 [H1c]. Health condition predicted by success level and gender

To test H1c, 2 x 2 ANCOVA of **Health condition** index with WLB and Household duties index and Emotional wellbeing index as covariates has shown 2 significant main effects: of Gender and of Success index and significant impact of 2 covariates.

Level of professional success and gender significantly differentiate health condition of employees. Forty-six-year-old women (M=71.6) generally report better health than forty-six-year-old men (M=69.9). Successful employees (M= 72.8) estimate their health as significantly better than less successful (M=69.5).

Both WLB and Emotional wellbeing index are significant covariates. The better WLB, the Emotional wellbeing index, the better Health condition index. No interaction between the gender & success level was confirmed.

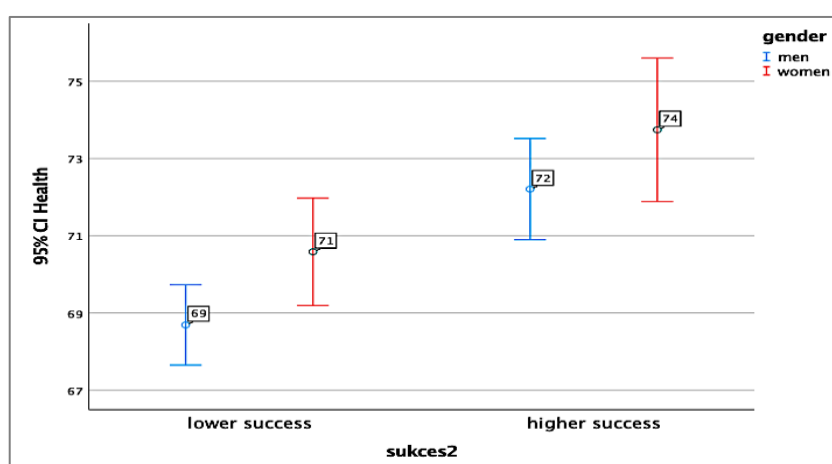


Figure 7. Health condition depending on professional success and gender (Study A).

Analysis 4. [H3] WLB gender stereotypes are stronger in men than in women (Study B, C, D)

Analyses of H2 conducted on data collected in study B do not show any significant impact of professional success and gender (see Attachment 1). The strongest predictor of WLB variables was generation. $\chi^2(2,396)=6.0$; $p=0.05$.

The younger generation, the more employees want to work less (37 % of BB, 47% of X and 55% of Y).

Test of H3 – Gender-career stereotype is stronger in men than in women

Strength of gender-career stereotype has been tested in three different ways, following the WiW Paradigm's triangulation rule, through:

- Test D1. Direct measurement – in survey described in Study B (N=616).
- Test D2. Experimental design with TARGET DESCRIPTION manipulation – testing differences in evaluation of differences in partner's reaction to the situation when a woman (Eve) sacrifices family life for a career, compared to the situation when a man (Adam) does it (N=1102).
- Test D3. Indirect measurement – using Implicit Association Test measuring strength of stereotypical association of women with family and men with career (N=143).

Although the WIW Paradigm would require testing the same hypothesis separately on employees from generations BB, X, Y participating in study B and students (Gen Z) participating in Study C, both sets were combined when the variables were operationalised identically in both studies.

The pooled data set allowed cross-generational comparisons. WLB is understood as balancing between work demands and home/family duties.

Test D1. Direct measurement of gender-career stereotype

2x2 ANOVA of egalitarianism has shown 2 significant main effects: of Gender and of Generation (BB, X, Y, Z) and their interaction.

In all generations women have shown higher egalitarianism than men. The generational differences in men are insignificant. The group that stood out with high egalitarianism level is women in Gen Z.

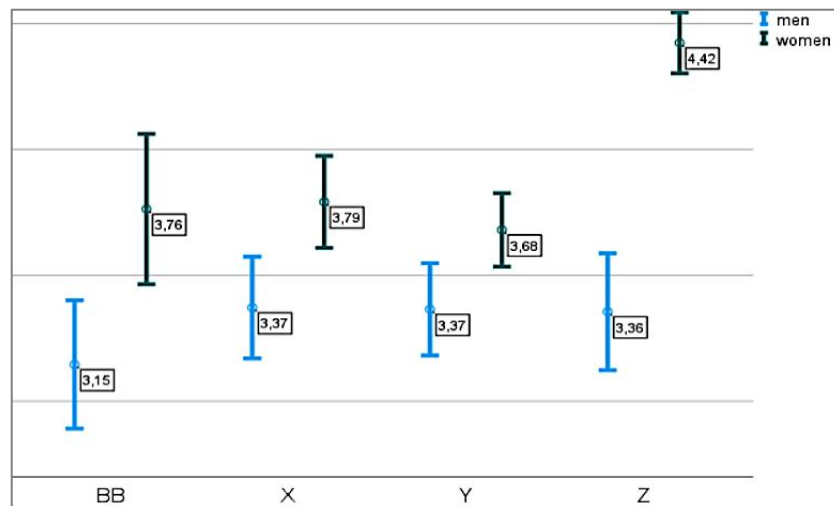


Figure 8. Egalitarianism index depending on generation and gender (Test D1).

Approval for Feminatives

Additional question was asked about approval for feminatives, which correlates highly with egalitarianism index ($r=0.3$ $p<0.001$ $N=841$).

Generational changes were significant in women $\chi^2(6,495)=82.3$ $p<0.001$. Generational differences in men are less vivid $\chi^2(6,340)=11.8$ $p=0.068$. Generally, differences in approval level for feminatives are **not significant** in 3 older generations – $\chi^2(4,618)=2.2$ $p=0.69$. It is Generation Z that makes the significant change in approval attitude.

Test D2. Experimental test of gender-career stereotype with TARGET DESCRIPTION manipulation

An experimental study using target descriptions has been conducted as a part of one of the three SSA studies with 486 students, and 616 employees – in total 1102 participants.

Analysis 1. Four WLB-related TARGET descriptions (Study B)

Respondents were asked to assess satisfaction of both Adam and Eve as a result of their WLB-related situations – promotions rejected vs. accepted, by either Adam or Eve. The gender of the person being assessed (Adam or Eve) was a within-person variable.

The condition “promotion rejection” which poses no WLB threat, does not show any significant impact of who was promoted (Adam vs. Eve) so the analyses were focused on condition of “acceptance of promotion” which caused WLB threat. When Adam experiences threat to his WLB (EX3): Women rate Adam's satisfaction significantly higher than men do.

Analysis 2. Impact of WLB threat in 4 generations

In the next step, the analyses focused on EX3 and EX4 posing a threat to WLB. To broaden the scope, results from of a group of 486 students were added.

The analysis results did not confirm the hypothesis – women react negatively to WLB threat as an outcome of partner’s overworking.

Test D3. Indirect measurement of gender-career stereotype by Implicit Association Test

“Gender-Career” Implicit Association Test results were obtained from 143 students whose gender and birth generation was known (Generation Z vs. Generation X). The results were compared with data from more than 846,000 people who completed this test on the Harvard University website with open access.

Polish sample seems more egalitarian, which could be likely connected to respondents’ age (no information about age on “Harvard” data, while my sample consists of relatively young people, below the age of 45, with majority of Generation Z) and specific time of research. My data were collected in 2022, while data on Harvard web page collected between January 2005 and December 2015.

To analyse the gender differences in gender-career stereotype strength test χ^2 was conducted. Figure 9 illustrates the gender-career stereotype strength in men and women separately.

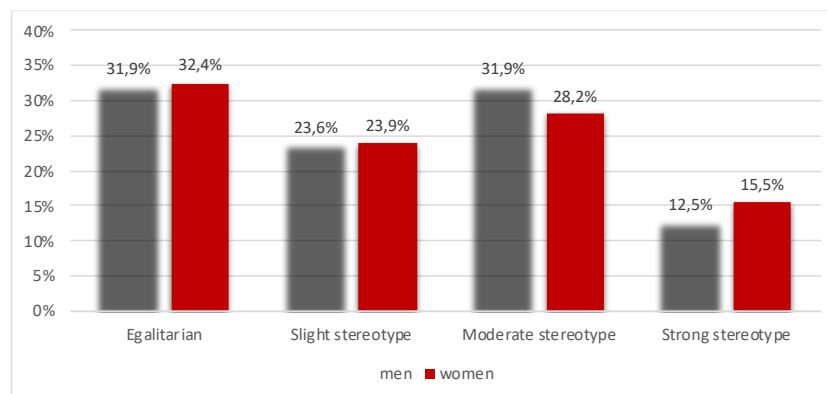


Figure 9. Strength of gender-career stereotype in men and women (Test D3).

χ^2 test showed **no significant gender differences** in implicit associations $\chi^2(3,143)=0.94$.

Gender-career stereotype strength in 2 generations was tested separately – χ^2 test showed **significant generational differences** in implicit associations $\chi^2(3,143)=50.7$.

Discussion of the findings

To put the discussion of the results in a broader context, I will start with the limitations.

Research limitations

First class of limitations relate to **samples**. In the social sciences, we rarely study random samples because people can be randomly selected¹⁹ but cannot be forced to participate in the study. Hence each study is limited by the nature of the sample that participated in it.

In my empirical dissertation in accordance with the WiW Paradigm, I tested hypotheses on very different data sets, being aware of their limitations.

The participants of **Study B** (616 Polish employees) were drawn from a panel of over 250,000 participants – but even this impressive number does not allow to assume that people with high professional achievements have been a part of the sample. Panel participation is voluntary and pro-active registration of very professional successful respondents might not be achievable.

In Study C we indirectly studied the parents of WZ students, who are certainly not representative of the population. This, however, is probably the only sample with such a high proportion of people with high and very high professional achievements.

The **British Cohort Survey (Study A)** looks like the best source of data, free of auto-selection bias: all respondents born in the first week of April 1970 have been studied throughout their lifetime. But attrition rate and lack of some information important for the construction of professional success are limitations of this study. Information about earnings was partially used to indicate professional success, but there was no accurate information about the specific place of residence of the respondents – and this might have had a big impact on the financial situation – e.g., GBP1000 depending on the residence may translate to completely different purchasing power. There was also no information on how many people were managed by individual respondents, which can change the index of professional success.

Second class of limitations relates to **measurement issues**. Most of the prior WLB research relies on self-reports, and this limitation also applies to Study A and B. In Study D I made attempts to go beyond self-reporting by introducing experimental manipulations of TARGET descriptions in accordance with the WiW methodological paradigm. When we ask for an assessment of, for example, home management, we never know to what extent answers result from the perception biases of the respondent. By asking for an assessment of TARGET descriptions, we can be sure that all respondents evaluate the same situation.

I also used in the research **The Implicit Association Test (IAT)** (available online since 1998), enabling to uncover hidden associations that we may not have been aware of. Opinions about the effectiveness of the IAT are divided, as evidenced by a 2013 meta-analysis²⁰. The study revealed weaker correlations between IAT scores and discriminatory behaviour than the previous meta-analysis, leading to controversy about the test²¹. Other researchers²² point out the multitude of conceptual, psychometric, and validity issues related to the IAT that make it difficult to precisely evaluate either implicit biases or associations. Let it be due to the ‘implicit bias’ vague definition, or unclear measurement through reaction times²³, studies in multiple meta-analyses have demonstrated that IAT scores can predict discriminatory behaviour to some degree.

19 E.g. (Wieczorkowska et al., 2016)

20 (Oswald et al., 2013)
21 (Greenwald et al., 2009)

22 (Jussim et al., 2020)
23 (Schimmack, 2021)

After these remarks on research limitations, I shall now turn to the discussion of the results obtained.

The results of the **28 of interviews** on impact of career advancement on work-life balance, that were interrupted by the pandemic showed the necessity to extend the research sample outside those described in the title. In order to show the characteristics of people with a high level of professional success (impact of career advancement), it is not enough to study only this group in isolation. When describing the colour red, it is necessary to contrast it with other colours – hence the decision to extend the survey to all employees made it possible to compare successful women with successful men and within gender – those with successful careers with those without successful careers.

The main objective – investigation of the impact of career advancement on the satisfaction with work-life balance among employees with high professional status – has been translated in the form of 5 research tasks, so the discussion of the results will be organised around them.

Research task #1

Literature review of factors contributing to the work-life balance among employees with high professional status, including those with managerial functions, concluded with identification of research gaps.

A literature review presented in chapter #1 indicated that **women are particularly OVERLOADED**, especially when **combining successful careers** with **family-related** responsibilities. It was confirmed in the 28 interviews with successful women. They said they work much more than men and were overloaded with family duties. **Research gap** in the literature pointed at the lack of research in impact of being home MANAGER on WLB. Numerous studies and literature have extensively described the theme of increased proportion of women involved in **HOUSEHOLD DUTIES**²⁴, however, no attention (and research accordingly) has been paid to the overload caused to a vast proportion of women by being a **HOME MANAGER**.

The manager's work at paid work is appreciated and well paid – unpaid work at home, and especially as **home manager is invisible**. Undoubtedly, managers' work requires specific skillset²⁵, including a certain level of cognitive resources, decision latitude, and relational/ social competences. Irrespective of the occupation and industry, every employee with management function – **so also at HOME** – is expected to **PLAN, ORGANISE, LEAD, and CONTROL**.

These several types of activities are widely considered to be the best way of describing the manager's job, as well as the best means to express what contributes to the success of a manager²⁶. Home managers on a daily basis are involved in multi-dimensional work, too²⁷. Their work demands impose on them the necessity to constantly **solving unforeseen problems, coming up with new ideas, dealing with various tasks** at different pace simultaneously, temporal and spatial **flexibility, high decision latitude** and **organisational participation** of some sort.

24 E.g. (Buunk et al., 2000)(Coltrane, 2000)(Ganster et al., 2018)(Radcliffe & Cassell,

2015)(Raza et al., 2021)(Waring, 1997)
25 (Cangemi et al., 2008)

26 (Sims, 2021)
27 (Stock et al., 2014)

Research task #2

Development of a strategy to construct an index of professional success based on survey data.

The literature on defining career success has frequently overlooked the fact that individuals may use **diverse referent points** to evaluate their success, leading to incomplete operationalizations. The concept of career success is not fixed, but rather dynamic and changes as managers progress²⁸ through different developmental stages or adapt to their **evolving perceptions** of personal success²⁹.

Survey data in the studies was limited in terms of sophisticated variables. Hence the task was to reflect such achievements that they could be easily verified and compared and fit in relatively tangible areas. Therefore, it was crucial to compose such ‘professional success’ indicators in respective studies that they could have been **measured in objective terms**. Objective factors of career success have the advantage of not only being readily available or easy to collect in a **non-biased form** (if not collected solely through self-reports) but are also **standardised** – thus comparable between subjects³⁰.

Professional success index in my research has been created to distinguish between employees with low and high professional status which would enable between-groups comparisons within sample.

With a composition of intrinsic and extrinsic indicators the following elements have been used in respective measurements:

- (1) Indicators describing person as holding **MANAGERIAL FUNCTION** or a **HIGH JOB POSITION**, such as highly specialized, requiring special qualifications or knowledge occupations, including self-employed. These indicators aim at confirming hierarchical position and reflecting societal perceptions of the power and authority connected with respective careers.
- (2) Indicator based on perception of **PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS** – other-referent (in case of this research – peers of the assessed were treated as a general point of reference) assessment of professional success based on either self-reporting or other-reporting – lower, average, or higher than that of their peers’ (on a 5-point scale). Such an assessment allows to confirm hierarchical position of the assessee.
- (3) Indication of **EDUCATION** level – high educational level or vocational qualifications are predictors of high professional competence. Graduation from tertiary education with at least bachelor’s degree, number of years of education above 15, or a professional equivalent in the form of a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at least at level 4 has been one of the signals of the professional success.
- (4) Quantitative indicators referring to high involvement in work – such as number of **WORKING HOURS** or **INCOME**. The former reflects objective (hourly) involvement in performing job duties, while the latter allows for estimation of the material success in a form of tangible benefits achieved by the respondents.

28 (Super, 1980)

29 (Sturges, 1999)

30 (Judge et al., 1995)

Studies have shown that assessing extrinsic and intrinsic factors of career success can result in distinct outcomes, as these factors are not strongly correlated³¹. Regardless of the definition used, the core of the matter lies in two dimensions of career success: objective and subjective. The evaluation of objective career success³² is based on how well **individuals have performed** in their careers and how they are **perceived by others**, while subjective career success reflects individuals' own perceptions of how well they have done³³.

It should be underlined that the construction of indicators **differs in samples** to some extent – it is difficult to use the same Professional success index for sample consisting of 46-year-old Britons and sample consisting of three Polish generations. The **conclusion** is that the indicator of PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS is always context-dependent. Professional success within samples is comparable to a much higher degree than between samples.

Research task #3

Development of a new research procedure for estimating WLB using an external view, in which adult children (Generation Z) assess the WLB of parents (Generation X).

Getting information about **parents' professional success** and role of home manager by asking their **grown-up children** was very **successful**. Much more challenging was the assessment of internal states like WLB. In general, the external view method works best with variables that are **easily observable** such as behaviours – e.g., who is the home manager, rather than when we ask about feelings of others' – e.g., whether the mother was happy.

This technique allows to obtain information about BOTH PARTNERS – which is extremely difficult to acquire otherwise. Only with this method could we show that a successful woman's situation would change depending on whether her partner is also successful. The highest percentage (71%) of mothers as sole home managers was in HL relationships, which may suggest a **double managerial role** for a mother (both at work and at home) with respective overload associated with double managerial function.

It seems that information about both parents from their adult children has **more value** than the information of the research participants' own commitment and that of their partners. In the latter case, the distortions associated with **attributive egocentrism** and self-serving bias are greater.

Of course, children's assessments can also be distorted, and the analyses showed (at the statistical trend level) there is difference in their views – daughters more often pointed at mothers as SOLE home managers (62%) than sons (54%). This, however, is impossible to rule out this is due to differences in perception or the fact that the respondents are from different families.

Research task #4

Testing various forms of studying Gender-Career stereotype.

Studies on **gender-career stereotype** are extremely important because it influences **management decisions** and can lead to discrimination in the workplace. For a long time, there has been a belief that working long hours demonstrates dedication, hard work, and loyalty to a company. Work

31 (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007)

32 (Gattiker & Larwood, 1986)
33 (Gunz & Mayrhofer, 2011)

culture is often cited as a reason for working long hours. Thinking about time as a resource is helpful, especially since men have more access to it than women due to the **gendered division of labour** at home. Men can only work longer hours if they spend less time on household duties, and as their pay increases, they are freed from household responsibilities³⁴.

Organizations that need their workers to take on extra workloads can encourage this culture. The ability to work long hours has become a highly valued **management attribute**. This is most evident in the senior positions, which require the **ability** and **willingness to work** very long hours. **Internal competition**, especially in high-paying positions, can **fuel the long hours culture**, as people fear missing out and spend longer hours in the office. Senior managers work long hours to maintain their hold on their positions, and there is an expectation that the **more senior** and higher-paid one is, the **more hours** they work.

As a result, few women with families can hold these positions, and the business rationale for this is not being challenged. Research suggests that in areas of prestige and high status, the long hours culture may act as a way to exclude women, implicitly or explicitly. At a time when women can offer almost everything that men can in terms of ability, skills, and experience, **time availability** becomes an **important differentiating feature** that makes men more suitable than women.

In order for organizations to **effectively reduce** gender-career stereotype's impact on various management decisions, it is important to comprehend the underlying dynamics that drive it. Acknowledging the nature and functions of gender-related stereotypes can contribute to **fair judgments**, particularly in situations where stereotypes are likely to **influence important processes**. Additionally, when people are aware of their biases, they are more likely to engage in **self-regulation**, which can help **break the cycle** of prejudice.

Research task #5

Test of H1

Higher professional success in women does not translate to lower involvement in household duties, and especially in home management (i.e. planning and organization of household activities, leading and controlling their execution).

Based on women's higher involvement in household duties, and their higher overall dedication to both paid and unpaid work compared to men, I hypothesise that women of higher professional success follow the gender segregation rule, related to social gender norms and roles of women and men, in terms of their involvement in household duties.

Study A conducted on a sample of British 46-year-olds confirmed that women are significantly more overloaded with household duties than men, regardless of their respective level of professional success. And although people of higher professional success are slightly less involved in household duties (main effect of professional success level), only a tendency toward interaction of the professional success and gender was observed. The difference in involvement in household duties between women with lower success and women with higher success is larger than between men from these two respective groups. This may suggest that in case a woman achieves professional success, household duties are more often "outsourced" to other people.

³⁴ (Rutherford, 2001)

According to research³⁵, **outsourcing of household tasks** is more common among highly skilled employed women. This practice has been adopted to decrease the time spent on housework, thereby increasing the time that can be devoted to paid work. However, there has been limited progress³⁶ in encouraging men to take on more unpaid care responsibilities at home.

The measurement in British Cohort Survey (study A) used estimation of hourly time report of seven various household duties. And even though it did not show the two-fold difference between women and men spent on performing these activities as in the European research³⁷, the results could have been different if controlled for number of children at home (and especially under the age of 10). It can be assumed that a lot of home management activities stem from children care-related responsibilities. In my analyses controlling for number of children doesn't change the results. It could be explained by the respondents' age. For 46-year-old parents – which took part in study A – their children – if presented in the household – are already rather independent in their daily functioning.

Study C being a research conducted on adult children assessing their both parents, allowed to measure professional success of both a mother and a father individually and as a couple. This gave a unique insight into sharing patterns of household duties and the function of a home manager between the two spouses.

It was **CONFIRMED** that mothers' involvement in household duties was significantly higher than that of fathers'. The finding remains consistent with the results of Study A. It is important to note that predicted negative correlation between home and job engagement was much stronger for fathers than mothers. What is interesting is the situation when a mother is more professionally successful than a father. In such a case, women are **SIGNIFICANTLY** more involved in **HOME MANAGEMENT** than men. This corroborates with American sample³⁸ research, which suggested that the more successful women are in their careers, the more such responsibilities they take on themselves (compared to their partners). Authors connected it with an impact women's professional success might have on their relationships with their life partners. Male spouses felt least happy when they were losing dominant role as breadwinners³⁹, and as a woman started earning more than a man, she tended to compensate for it by spending more time on household duties and childcare. Current research is mostly focused on the job-related commitments conflicting with the family role demands⁴⁰, indicating that the work sphere constitutes a bigger threat to fulfilling family commitments than the other way round.

It was **MOTHERS** who mainly performed the **HOME MANAGER** role in students' homes. Only in HH professional type (both parents with high level of success) majority of the respondents (56%) pointed that **BOTH PARENTS** shared the home management function rather equally. It may suggest that a career change necessitates a change in family life.

Due to the gendered division of household duties, women are less likely to have equal access to time in comparison to male colleagues, while men's time is often made available to them by their female partners at home⁴¹. This might also be the case of the students' homes. Mothers' total

35 (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020)
36 (Raz-Yurovich & Marx, 2019)

37 (Eurofound, 2017)
38 (Bertrand et al., 2015)
39 (Syrda, 2020)

40 (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998)
41 (Rutherford, 2001)

engagement has been of similarly high values regardless of their success level, unlike fathers' – whose higher job engagement has always been accompanied by much lower home engagement.

Studies on the disparities between men and women in their overall working hours have exposed subtle gender differences arising from differences in time allocation between mothers and fathers⁴². While there has been some improvement in promoting gender equality in paid work, progress in addressing the unequal distribution of unpaid work has been much slower.

When both partners are equally happy about their professional status and share of household duties, happiness level in their relationship might be higher – otherwise, well-educated couples might be more likely to split⁴³.

Research⁴⁴ has shown that the division of household and childcare duties with their partner has a significant impact on women's WLB. Women in more egalitarian partnerships report higher WLB, while adhering to traditional gender roles is linked to increased work-family conflict. Support from spouses can enhance the perception of WLB, whereas a lack of such support is associated with greater work-family conflict, particularly for women⁴⁵.

The highest percentage (71%) of MOTHERS as a SOLE home manager was in HL marriages, which may suggest a DOUBLE managerial role for a mother (both at work and at home) with respective overload associated with DOUBLE MANAGERIAL FUNCTION.

Similar values of total overload can be observed in case of women in LL, HL, HH professional types (expressed in their total engagement) and it ranges between 4,48-4,51. For comparison – men's total engagement ranges between 3,79 in HL to 4,15 in HH, values much lower than those of women.

Hypothesis 1 has been positively verified in a case highly successful men are the comparison group. Home engagement of highly successful women is lower, though, in comparison to the group of women with lower professional success. However, the total engagement (home engagement & job engagement together) is similar for women in any professional type. This suggests similar level of overload that women experience, regardless of the situation, which may be especially high in case of DOUBLE managerial function in HL & HH professional types.

This allowed us to show that mainly women play the home manager role – the number of indications of a father or other person managing the home was marginal. It is worth noting that – the highest number of indications for a woman as a home manager was when her professional success was higher than that of her husband.

Is this due to the transfer of the managerial role – is being a manager at work translates to being a manager at home when your partner does not have a managerial position in his paid job? Could it be because she is the one managing work, not her partner, that she is more likely to take on the role of the manager at home? We must remember that this is the first – to our best knowledge – study of the role of the home manager, so it needs to be replicated.

Research suggests that men with high earning potential tend to be in relationships where the focus is on their career, while women with similar earning potential tend to be in dual-earner relationships, where they take on the primary caregiver role⁴⁶.

42 (Craig, 2007)

43 (Bertrand et al., 2015)

44 (Buunk et al., 2000)

45 (Schieman & Glavin, 2008)

46 (Ely et al., 2014)

To sum up – H1 pointing at a greater burden of household chores in women has been positively verified, if the comparison group is highly successful men. Home engagement of highly successful women is lower, though, only in comparison to the group of women with lower professional success.

Test of H2

Women bear higher costs of professional success (career advancement) compared to men. Higher costs of professional success among women are associated with lower: work-life balance, emotional wellbeing, health condition).

H2 was based on the assumption that HOME MANAGEMENT is similarly overloading as any managerial function in paid work circumstances. Some research⁴⁷ suggest, that individuals who hold multiple roles as a spouse, parent, and paid worker altogether, tend to have higher levels of psychological wellbeing compared to those who hold only one of these roles. Additionally, parents who work over 40 hours a week or have a highly qualified job tend to experience lower or similar levels of psychological distress compared to those who are less engaged in multiple roles⁴⁸. Being strongly engaged in both work and family life has a positive impact on one's health and wellbeing⁴⁹. However, the psychological benefits of holding multiple roles may be most significant when family responsibilities are not excessively burdensome⁵⁰.

In my analyses interactional effects predicted by H2 were not confirmed. Comparing to men women have lower WLB (in Study A, but not in Study B), but showed higher level of emotional wellbeing and better health in British Cohort Survey (Study A). The lack of significant results in Study B may be due to the specificity of the sample. Participants of online panel are self-selected – therefore they do not have to be representative of the employee's population. The problem of self-selection of research participants in management sciences is common – which is why the British Cohort Survey sample is probably the most resistant to this error, because the decision to participate in the study was made many years before achieving professional success, when they were in their adolescent age.

Test of H3

Gender-Career stereotype is stronger in men than in women.

Even in progressive countries like Sweden, prioritizing the husband's career over the wife's remains prevalent⁵¹, also among highly-skilled women. Unless there is a significant shift towards gender specialization in the opposite direction, with the wife as the primary breadwinner and the husband taking on childcare responsibilities, women aspiring for demanding top jobs are likely to face heightened family stress.

Strength of gender-career stereotype has been tested in three different ways, following the WiW paradigm's triangulation rule, through:

- Test D1. Direct measurement.

47 (Rushing & Schwabe, 1995)
48 (Nordenmark, 2004)

49 (Walters et al., 1998)
50 (White et al., 1986)

51 (Anxo et al., 2007)

- Test D2. **Experimental design** with TARGET DESCRIPTION manipulation– testing differences in evaluation of differences in partner’s reaction to the situation when a WOMAN (Eve) sacrifices family life for a career, compared to the situation when a MAN (Adam) does it.
- Test D3. **Indirect measurement** – using Implicit Association Test measuring strength of stereotypical association women with family and men with career.

Gender differences in stereotypical attitudes were shown only in case of direct measurement. Women declare their egalitarianism to be of a higher level than men – regardless of the generation they represent. Noteworthy is the group of women from generation Z, which stands out in the analysis of egalitarianism. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that while Generations BB, X, Y come from a panel sample of employees, Generation Z comes from a sample of WZ students – so there is no reason to assume that it is representative for the entire Generation Z.

Significant generational change which was unpredictable by my hypotheses result of the analyses (but congruent with other results in our research group⁵²) shows, among others, that representatives of an older generation (Generation X) have shown to hold more stereotypical associations of career with a man and family with a woman than younger generation (Generation Z). It is worth to continue this line of research.

The hypothesis that men will be less susceptible to situations threatening WLB is based on the fact that it is a core identity for men (association of career with men). Research (Adam and Eve) has shown that there is no difference in the perception of the respondents – no protests were raised by men when Eve could have chosen a career. Contrary to expectation, participants predicted protest of Eve’s if Adam would have chosen a career. Probably the WLB threat descriptions used in study D2 were too “ideal” – referring to situations posing a threat to entertaining/hedonistic lifestyle describing childless couple without financial problems. In the following studies the TARGET descriptions should be more conflicting in their nature – e.g., financial problems, children’s diseases, need to take care of parents.

Although our hypotheses were not confirmed – the study, which used target descriptions, is worth continuing by further manipulating the descriptions of different types of WLB THREATS.

Conclusions

A review of literature and interviews with successful women showed that they experience lower WLB than men, although analysis of the data collected from pre-existing studies and own research did not confirm this fully. Tests of 3 hypotheses derived from the literature showed no strong empirical support for two (H2 and H3) of them on various data sets.

It is true that if WLB is treated as balancing between work demands and home/family duties, women are much more burdened with housework (confirmed in Study A and C) and home management (confirmed in Study C).

It can be concluded that in the light of the analysed data, no interactional effect of gender and professional success level was found – successful **women are “no different from successful men”**.

52 (Wilczynska, 2023)

This, however, does not mean that the assumption is wrong, it might well be the matter of the analysed samples. In WLB generational are much stronger than gender differences with the question mark for the youngest generation Z, which should be carefully observed in the future research.

General limitations and future directions

The survey measurement is a subject to a range of universal problems, including social desirability bias, self-report bias, invalid or unreliable measures, lack of consistency, confounding factors, and cultural differences. The technological expansion in the area of research methods will allow to get better measurement tools in the future.

The research presented in the dissertation is limited in its scope – only several features impacting satisfaction with work-life balance were examined, and in future research this might be extended to include temperamental and individual differences of the subjects.

All of the own research was carried out at a time when the world was fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic. Companies were changing work designs, adjusting employees' salaries and the situation on the labour market and in many companies was tense and unpredictable. The economic crisis has contributed to layoffs of workers, reduction of their wages, or minimization of working time per week. For many people, work in a remote or hybrid model has intensified, limiting and changing flexibility and discretion over daily agendas. Therefore, responses could have been influenced by change in the nature of work and an unstable situation in a company. It is not known to what extent this would have affected the results obtained, but such an impact cannot be ruled out.

Further limitations of the tests performed may result from the data samples and the time these were carried out. Only those who agreed to participate, participated in the studies, so they are not representative of the entire employee population, they were not drawn and did not constitute a representative sample.

According to the WiW methodological paradigm, replication of the same conclusions on different data sets (triangulation of data), and with different operationalizations (triangulation of operationalization) and analysed with different statistical methods e.g. use of parametric and non-parametric tests (triangulation of statistical methods) increases the external validity of the conducted research. Naturally, it is impossible to say whether the conclusions would be repeated on – inaccessible units, but this is the limitation of ANY study, because people can be drawn, but they cannot be forced to participate in research.

Research on WLB has made significant progress in understanding the factors that influence individuals' ability to balance their work and personal lives. However, there are still several limitations in the field that need to be addressed to further advance our knowledge. It is a multidimensional concept that entails balancing various aspects of life such as work, family, and personal life. Therefore, a comprehensive and multidimensional approach is necessary for studying work-life balance. This also involves employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches for a comprehensive understanding of work-life balance.

Most studies on WLB described in the literature (1) have focused on middle-class, privileged knowledge workers who work in large organizations and struggle to make time for non-work activities due to demanding workloads; (2) have been constrained⁵³ by their reliance on self-reported data, prompting a need for the incorporation of multisource measures to enhance accuracy and comprehension. Nonetheless, the limited studies⁵⁴ that have integrated multisource measures have primarily concentrated on the viewpoints of individuals outside of the work setting, such as employees' close friends or spouses.

When conducting research on WLB, it is recommended to consider cultural values related to traditional gender roles, which may moderate the relationship between work and family domains or lead to different perceptions for female and male managers⁵⁵.

Work-life balance is influenced by individual, organizational, and societal factors. Hence, it is crucial to consider the context in which work-life balance is studied. The managerial function can be overloading to both women and men, but the factors that contribute to this overload may differ. This is because women and men often have different expectations and responsibilities in their personal lives, which can impact how they experience the demands of their managerial roles. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach, including changes in workplace policies and cultural attitudes towards gender roles, as well as support for employees to manage their workload and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Over the past few decades, significant changes have taken place in gender roles and social norms, which have impacted female job market participation. Traditionally, women have been expected to prioritize family and household responsibilities over their careers. However, with increasing gender equality and social changes, women have gained greater access to education and opportunities for paid employment. Achieving greater gender equality in the job market requires a broader societal shift towards more egalitarian gender roles and attitudes. This shift will require sustained efforts from all stakeholders, including employers, policymakers, and the broader community. By promoting greater gender equality in the job market, a more prosperous and inclusive society can be created.

Work-life balance is a subjective experience and individuals may have varying definitions and expectations. Therefore, individual differences must be considered when studying work-life balance. Although individual differences in temperament are closely related to the amount and intensity of cognitive overload experienced by people, this issue is not often raised in the context of work-life balance⁵⁶. Individual studies referring to the concept of "work-life conflict" or "work-to-life spillover" suggest that extraversion is one of the factors determining easier coping with problems at work and family life⁵⁷.

Identification of temperamental and personality factors negatively impacting one's work-life balance satisfaction may allow for a better understanding of the relationship between these issues. The variation in the temperamental characteristics (expressed in the level of extraversion or employee's energy resources) suggests that some employees are more immune to stressful situations than others⁵⁸. The impact of stressful situations (related to, for example, the need to perform a managerial function in both spheres of life – work and home) may also vary between

53 (Casper et al., 2007)

54 E.g. (Shaffer et al., 2001)

55 (Lyness & Judiesch, 2008)

56 (Demerouti et al., 2005)

57 (Frone, 2003a)

58 (Major & Burke, 2013)

subjects. Thus, temperamental and personality factors can help determine whether the demands of the area of work and family will be reconcilable – expressed by a high work-life balance or will pose a threat to this balance.

The findings could potentially affect the efficacy of training initiatives and organizational policies designed to minimize the clash between work and personal life of workers. Coaches and managers ought to acknowledge the considerable impact of individual differences on an individual's selection of coping mechanisms.