

THE CAREER CONCEPTS OF WOMEN IN HUNGARY

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to get to know the career concepts of women in Hungary. The public opinion is to expect double sets of obligations of women; they need to take part in the traditional family role, while parallel women have to be active on labor market. The question is whether these processes have got any effects on women's career. In 2017, the authors conducted a comprehensive experiment in order to find out what women's views are on their own career paths and to find out what kind of factors influence on this view either positively or negatively. The survey confirmed that women accept tasks assigned to them through the gender roles, but parallel they would like to reach their career goals.

Keywords: family, career paths, professional and private life, 'doing-gender' theory, conflict

JEL Classification: M53

INTRODUCTION

The balance between the professional and private life of women is nowadays commonly referred to as 'work-life balance', to which people give a definition in a multitude of ways. In this article, we shall use the following definition: work-life balance is the situation of an individual, with concerns to its dynamic balance, 'which helps to enhance the quality of life of the individual, in a way so that they can simultaneously carry out the requirements and expectations set out by society.' (Juhász, 2010)

It was in the 1960s when research started into the mutual effects of work and family on each other. This was also quoted in Williams's 2016 work (Williams et al., 2016) and since then the amount of research material has grown exponentially. In spite of this fact, the conflict between work and private life is still entirely relevant today. This is despite the fact that the subject has been examined from more and more angles, some of which shall be enumerated: family relationships and work related stress, work-life balance and company efficiency, the effects that the roles an individual has in the family and in the work place have on each other (Juhász, 2010).

According to the statistics published by the World Bank (The World Bank, 2016), between 1990 and 2016, the number of working women was steadily rising, and regarding the working population, the percentage of women increased from 44.4% to 45.8%. This change also clearly suggests that the perceptions of working women, those starting work, as well as working mothers, was changing for the better and this trend was becoming more and more evident (Donelli et al., 2015). At the same time, the conflict of work-life balance for women took centre-stage. The problem can, in essence, be examined from two distinct perspectives. One of these examines how the various factors at work affect women's family life, which is referred to as WIF, that is 'Work Interference' regarding family life. Conversely, the second perspective explores this dichotomy as FIW, in other words, 'Family Interference' regarding work.

The terms WIF and FIW, that is the mutual, reciprocal effects which work and personal life have on each other, were published by Friedman and Greenhaus in 2000 (Friedman, Greenhaus, 2000). Work-life duality also appears in other approaches: Work/family border theory, person–environment fit theory (Edwards, Rothbard, 1999), bargain/exchange theory (Blood, Wolfe, 1960), women’s independence theory (Oppenheimer, 1997). One of the outcomes of these theories is that while the independence of working women grows, it generally leads to conflicts within the family. At the same time, there is no literature regarding the question as to why this does pose a problem to families who have two providers of income, rather than creating a happier and more stable relationship, making the best use of the increasing income. This is the case, even though, generally speaking, women very often start work for financial reasons. This is also proved by the fact that women’s incomes tend to play a greater role in the monthly earnings of lower-income families.

Generally, the ‘doing-gender’ theory (West, Zimmerman, 1987) is the starting point for studies related to work-life balance. The essence of the theory is that regarding the characteristics of gender, everything other than the biological gender is brought about by a series of dynamic interactions which take place on the individual, the organisational and the social level. One example of such a modifying factor would be the characteristics of work and of the family (Ollier-Malaterre, Foucreault, 2017), or gender roles and the differences in gender equality in culture (Fahlén, 2014), (Duxbury, Higgins, Lee, 1991, 1994). The latter, as well as the boundary theory (Nippert-Eng, 1996), draws the conclusion, that women tend to act in a more sensitive way than men to problems faced at home. Furthermore, this is also generally apparent in their performance at work (FIW). As women feel relationships in more intense way than men, and as they are not capable of separating their work from their family life the same way that men can, Ashfort and his colleagues came to the conclusion that the FIW and the WIF correlation is also more intense for women than it is for men (Ashforth et al., 2000, Rau et al., 2002).

Through numerous studies, Diekman and Eagly showed the erosion of the traditional gender roles (Diekman, Eagly, 2000). Often the convergence towards masculine behavioural models is visible in working women (decisiveness, aggression, competitiveness, the pressure to perform). In addition, for women, working also results in them stepping out of the traditional family setting. If the women starting work cannot, at least in part, let go of the traditional feminine attitudes, then she will become a ‘maternal gatekeeper’ (Allen, Hawkins, 1999). This typical mother-model would hinder her partner in doing his part of the tasks that need to be done at home, which in the long run, can lead to family conflicts.

In their 2017 article, Shockley and his colleagues examined the work-life relationship, regarding the genders, using meta-analysis to create a series of hypotheses (Shockley et al.). This is developed further in Fellows and his colleagues research (Fellows et al., 2016), which focused on studying the romantic relationships of couples. For women, they concluded that, for the work-life relationship, FIW conflicts are usually caused by:

- the female gender
- the increase in the number of hours spent at home and the subsequent decrease for those spent at work
- a good family atmosphere
- close family relationships

To overcome the problem, some women prefer to focus on working from home or choose part-time work instead.

According to the research of Fellows and his colleagues (Fellows et al., 2016), conflict between work and private life has a destructive effect on romantic relationships, and this effect is much stronger in North America than it is in Europe. Due to women being more involved in the relationship, this is, therefore, more stressful for them. Hagqvist and his colleagues, by examining working European women (Hagqvist et al.,

2017), came to the conclusion that work has a more prominent negative effect on women in countries where women are fully emancipated, and where there is a 'safety-net' around and support of work for these women. By working, women also take on a 'second shift', which includes raising children and housekeeping. This is something which is not always sufficiently supported by the husband. Nevertheless, the energy that women put into these tasks also provides men with the necessary hinterland. This is why the work actions and measures taken by workplaces and politicians alike have proven to be incredibly important. To create a suitable action plan requires a more thorough investigation into the conflicts of work-life balance for women. In Hungary, the situation in this field is close to that of the developed countries. In the west, we can primarily relate the influx of women into the labour market to women's emancipation. In the ex-socialist countries, before the regime change, it was seen as an honour and also highly regarded in socialism, to take part in the working world. Afterwards, however, it was the need to earn a living. We can see in their 2014 article, that with regards to the Hungarian population, Győrffy and his colleagues studied a specific subsample: female doctors (Győrffy et al., 2014). To measure the level of interference between work and family life, primarily burnouts were studied, in addition to their relationship to reproductive problems. According to the results, the female doctors who are in the reproductive age are significantly more overworked, and burnout and a depersonalisation of their work as a doctor is also more common than for women in general. To supplement the study, it would also be beneficial to study the condition of women working from home, for, if the hypothesis that work related stress has a negative effect on both health and on family relations is correct, then we can expect much better results from them. A reduction in the work-load of women, based on the points mentioned above, would no doubt improve the situation, as it would improve 'border-crossing' (Clark, 2000) between the work and family setting. By doing that, it would also help women form an equilibrium between these two areas. Luckily, such efforts are becoming increasingly strong in Hungary too, from which the most commonly known term is 'family-friendly'. The work-load can be reduced by making use of a variety of alternative styles of work, such as flexible hours, working from home, or even by hiring apprentices (Juhász, 2010). For women with young children, solving the potential problem of day-care could be achieved by there being an increase in company-run day-care and nurseries, which could also help reduce the pressure on women. The family-friendly concept contains multiple levels (macroeconomic, company and family levels), however, the WFC problem lies on the lowest — although arguably the most important — level of the family and private life (Juhász, 2010). By using this model to implement the necessary measures, the work-load of women can be reduced on all three of the levels, therefore, creating the possibility of a more harmonious, happier and more human life for working women.

1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

In 2017, the authors conducted a comprehensive experiment in order to find out what women's views are on their own career paths and to find out what kind of factors influence this view either positively or negatively. The participants have been asked to fill in an online survey, which was completely anonymous and voluntary. Snowball sampling was used in order to gather the data, nevertheless, the data cannot be considered truly representative. 203 people have completed the survey.

The topic of the survey has been analyzed through a wide range of thematic questions. The first set of questions contained the specifications of the sample, id est the participants' age, address, marital status and position at their workplace. The second set of questions addressed the time devoted to both work and to family. The third set of questions analyzed the role of the participants' career in their life, and proceeded to discuss the viewpoints regarding female and male careers. The survey used closed questions, which were comprised of metric and nominal versions. The results have been obtained through the use of both individual and multiple statistical methods: frequency, average, standard deviation, chi-squared test and nonparametric, factor and cluster analysis.

This coming hypothesis is to be analyzed in this current report:

Women's views on careers, regarding their own careers, have become stronger, however, they still feel that men's careers are still prioritized over theirs.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 203 women have become involved in the survey, who were allocated into categories according to their age. More than a third (36.9%) of the women were between 21 and 30. They were followed in representativity by people in their forties, while adolescents (below 20) accounted for only 1 percent less of the sample (21.2% and 20.2%). The smallest percentage of the sample was made up of people above 51 (3.9%). Six out of ten participants (60.1%) live in Central-Hungary and a further 11.3% live in the adjacent Central Transdanubia. Northern-Hungary was the second most frequent residence, with 13.8% of the 203 living here. Further regions appeared as well with a minimum of 2 to 3 people living in each. 87.2% of the participants are urban. 44.3% of them in Budapest and its agglomeration, while the rest lives in towns in the countryside.

Regarding level of education, 71.9% finished secondary school with final exam, and a further 26.1% even achieved a tertiary education degree or equivalent. Simultaneously, 50.2% are employees and 29.1% are unemployed. Women who are in managerial positions are primarily at a middle management level (10.8%), and only 2.5% of participants were part of senior management. 13.3% of the participants have jobs in middle or senior management. 80% of those in senior management have degrees. Furthermore, 52.8% of the women who have degrees are working as employees. 7% of the employees stated that they do not participate in any housework, while all of the women in senior positions also participate in running the household. At the same time, it is visible that managers, on every level, will carry on working at home. For example, 40% of the senior managers, in the survey, continue working for an extra 4 hours at home. It is a stereotype that careers and children are not compatible, but the results of this survey do not support such a conclusion. This is due to the fact that, in this sample, there was no sound or verifiably significant correlation between the woman's position and the number of children. (Pearson's chi-squared test: 76.405 df: 16 sign.: .000 $p < 0.05$, however, in 64% of the cells, the expected value was less than five).

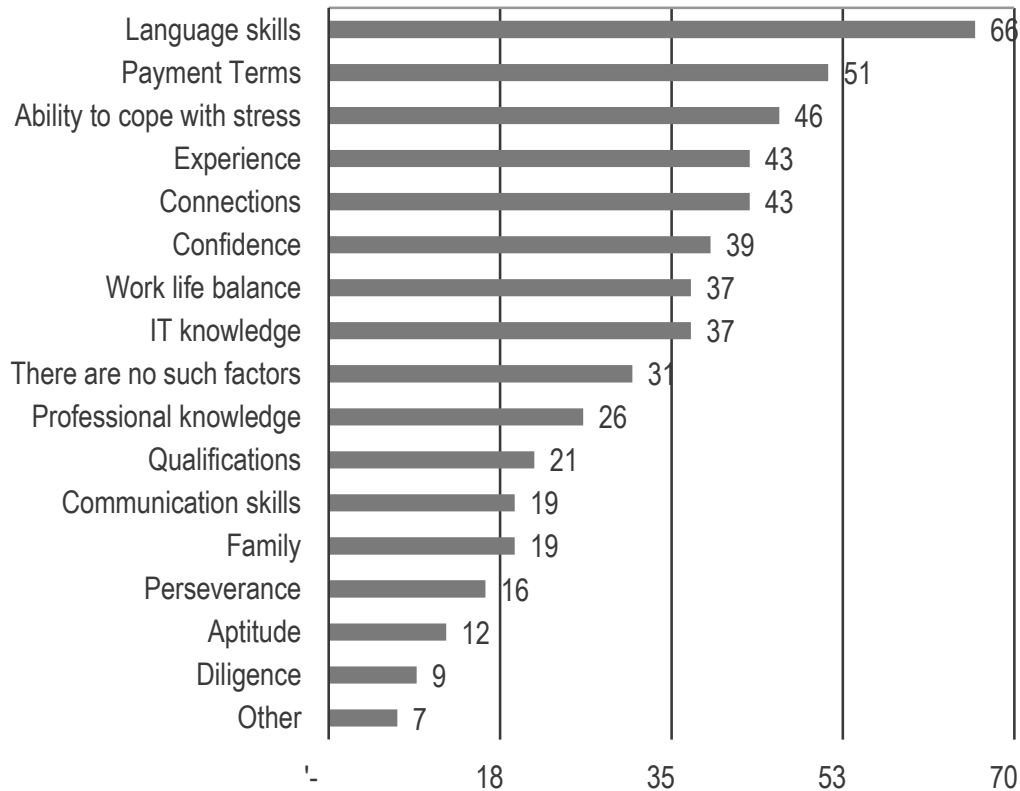
72% of those asked believes their career to be important, which is also supported by the fact that half of the participants also have the ability to progress career-wise at their current employer. That being said, a larger percentage of managers believe this to be the case (over 70%), whereas 65% of employees view this to be the case. An even larger proportion of the participants discussed their potential career opportunities outside of their current workplace. 62% of participants believe that they have career opportunities within their field of work, but outside the company which they currently work for. A significantly large proportion of managers (over 85%) believe that they have career opportunities (within their profession) outside their current workplace. This number interestingly stands for 100% of those who are in senior management. The majority of the participants stated that their professional careers are more important than their careers at the company with the exception of those being in middle management.

Yet, the results from the 21st question surprisingly show that 80% of senior managers are also willing to accept a career at home. However, for all the women taken together, this number falls to 76.9%. These female senior managers will probably become the typical gatekeeper mother.

73.4% of the participants live with their family or in a relationship. (For the rest of the report, these will be referred to as marriage, couples or family.) They also have to consult with their partners regarding the roles in both work-life and family-life. The majority of participants started working with the intent of creating financial security. In 56.7% of dual-earner families the male earns more (which strengthens the traditional roles). In the meantime, husband and wife almost equally contribute to the family budget in 58.7% of these families. This fact also expresses how women can be determined to work for purely financial matters.

The participants were also asked to make a conclusion on each factor's level of negative contribution to a female career. Graph 1 shows the frequency of the factors having been chosen in the answers in total:

Fig. 1 Factors negatively affecting women's careers (N)



Source: Own processing, 2017

The data in Figure 1 show that language skills, payment terms, in addition to the ability to cope with stress, can have negative effects on a woman's career. At the same time, it is interesting, that the problem of coordinating work life and family life is only near the middle of the chart. In their earlier research, the authors asked 191 men about what kind of factors can negatively influence their career. Their reflections represented the answers given by the women. According to that study, men saw the need for language skills as the factor potentially having the most negative consequences following the payment terms and work-life balance.

The results regarding male and female careers were the following for married employees: 70% of women believe that men must build a professional career, while women do not. This is a highly traditional approach, which is supported by the fact that when the question was asked differently, only 6.9% of women stated that the man's professional career is more important than their partner's. 68% of families thought that questions regarding both of their careers have to be discussed together. However, 7.4% stated that they alone decide on their careers. It is these women who are very career oriented and their independence and decisiveness is also masculine in nature. However, the 7.4%, which was mentioned above, was too large, as in response to another question, only 3% stated that they do not discuss their career with their partner. In their statements, women strongly went against tradition: 76% expect their husbands to support their careers, while 85.2% expect their partner to also help with the housework. On the other hand, this anti-traditional approach is contradicted by the fact that 91.6% place family over careers and 76.9% would like to fulfill their role in the family and so are willing to find a balance between work and family life. The strength of the traditions is

also confirmed by the fact that in over half of families, men earn more, in addition to the fact that 70% of women believe that men must build a career and that they support them in this.

The survey also addressed women's opinions on their own and also on men's careers. The authors of the survey constructed a series of statements, which the women had to rate on a five level Likert-scale, regarding to what extent they agreed with each statement.

Number one represented to strongly disagree, while number five was to strongly agree. The table below shows the average and standard deviation of the results.

Tab. 1: Participants' opinions regarding male and female careers (average, standard deviation)

Statements	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Men must build a career.	203	0	3.09	1.224
Women must build a career.	203	0	2.81	1.136
A man must support his partner's professional career.	203	0	4.05	.999
A man must support his partner's family career.	203	0	4.32	.929
A man must always discuss his career opportunities with his partner.	203	0	3.85	1.020
A woman must always discuss his career opportunities with his partner.	203	0	3.84	1.014
A man's professional career should be more important than his partner's.	203	0	1.72	1.022
A woman's family career should be more important than her partner's.	203	0	1.87	1.082
I accept that it is easier for men to build a professional career, than it is for women.	203	0	2.96	1.382
I accept that men are paid more for the same job than women.	203	0	2.12	1.331
I accept that men's career prospects are better and are more likely to be promoted.	203	0	2.22	1.322
A woman must support her partner's professional career.	203	0	3.99	1.015

Source: Own processing, 2017

Data in Table 1 shows that according to the women who participated in the survey, couples must aim to prioritize their careers equally, in other words, creating an order of priority between the male and female careers is not widely accepted. The fact that men must have a career is more widely accepted than the same statement for women. At the same time, it is important for a woman to support her partner in building his career. Simultaneously, however, a sense of discontent becomes evident in women regarding the fact that men's career opportunities and also payment prospects are better.

For the rest of the analysis, the authors analyzed the metric variables using factor analysis. The statements were appropriate to conduct factor analysis on: KMO value: .601, Bartlett's test: the approximation. Chi-square: 1071.362 df: 66 sign: 0.00. The communalities of some of the variables were higher than the 0.25 value (Székelyi-Barna, page 46), which is accepted as a rule of thumb. The rotation of the factor was, with an orthogonal method, and within that with varimax rotation. All of the factor weights were more than the important absolute value of 0.5 and, therefore, a number of variables also contributed to the factor analysis. The fraction of the variance of the factors was 60.291%, which is an acceptable amount. Based on the factor weights, the factors can be identified in the following ways:

- Factor 1: The precedence of men's career opportunities in comparison with women's careers
- Factor 2: The requirement for couples to build a career
- Factor 3: The support for building a professional career, regarding couples

Using the three factors, clusters were formed, the purpose of which was to create separate and homogenous groups, with regards to the four factors. Clustering was done with K-means clustering, with which 3 clusters were formed. The groups were separated based on the cluster centers:

Tab. 1: Cluster Centers

	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Cluster 1	-.71052	1.11371	-.10060
Cluster 2	.23234	.23237	-.48230
Cluster 3	.57561	.38817	-1.03294

Source: Own processing, 2017

- Cluster 1: The professional career was strongly supported in this group.
- Cluster 2: In this cluster, the priority of men's careers is quite determinant.
- Cluster 3: Women in this group do not necessarily support the viewpoint that couples must support each other's careers.

Lastly, the authors examined the data to see whether there was a connection between the cluster assigned and the position one works at their workplace. The chi-squared test did not confirm a significant relationship between the two: Pearson's chi-squared test: 3.331 df: 8 sign: .912 $p > 0.05$. The majority of the employees belonged to cluster 3, while the majority of senior staff belonged to the first cluster.

CONCLUSION

The report shows some of the results of the research carried out this year. The report examined women's career planning. Home studies show that women are increasingly open to career questions and aim to reach their career goals in a more flexible way and alongside their traditional roles. Using the research, the authors of the report also came to the same conclusions, and they can only partially accept the hypothesis.

The women who participated in the research, although they accept and complete the tasks assigned to them through the gender roles, also bravely pursue their career goals. As a matter of fact, the view had strengthened by 2002 that being employed is one of women's "natural demands", which doesn't affect families negatively by all means, according to the researches of Zsuzsanna Blaskó (2005).

In addition, an increasing number of people believe not only that couples must support each other in career planning, but also that prioritizing a man's career, within the family, is getting weaker.

These results correspond with the previous scientific findings of the authors (Juhász, 2016) to a great extent when researchers – analyzing the aspects of family-career planning – could come to the conclusion that it had not been undoubtedly verifiable that only women or men could make a career, while playing down the career of the partner. This fact didn't even fade in case of family constraints. The process of career planning depended on several factors related to couples i.e. willingness to compromise or make a sacrifice, patience and possibilities of harmonizing work and private life. On the other hand, work opportunities and professional knowledge were considered least significant that incites thought also because successful career is hardly imaginable without these factors. These findings also emphasize that those views are becoming more important which state that female career planning needs to be worth as much as the male one.

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