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MSc HRM Thesis

"The factors that affect the work-life balance of female

professionals in Cyprus''

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, the working environment has become very challenging for women. Over the years a woman's role in society has evolved drastically. Modern women reflect a multifaceted role as an equal part of the workforce, a wife, a mother, a caregiver to loved ones, a mentor and a household manager. It is important to emphasise that no matter how many roles a woman might take over, their essence as individuals should never be overshadowed. Moreover, it is often questionable how a woman can effectively manage an eight-hour workday, while fulfilling all the roles that are expected of her, and simultaneously maintain a healthy work-life balance (WLB)? To get a thorough understanding of whether Cypriot women manage to achieve WLB, this research is conducted, with the aim of exploring "The factors that affect the work-life balance of female professionals in Cyprus''. The factors that will be explored are the woman's relationship status (single/ in a relationship/ married), motherhood (whether they are a mother/ single mother/ or how many children they have), and the flexibility provided from their workplace. It is crucial to remember that everyone perceives work-life balance differently, so what works for one woman might not work for another. Finding balance usually requires making decisions on a personal level, asking for help, and standing up for helpful laws and working conditions or policies that help women effectively combine their obligations to their families and careers. In the article "Why Women Still Can't Have It All", Anne-Marie Slaughter highlights the difficulties faced by women in the workplace, such as not having flexible work schedules, the need for constant travel, and societal expectations that are holding back women from reaching top positions. The article also mentions how important it is to have supportive partners to help you in achieving work-life balance and suggests changes in workplace policies to foster family needs (Slaughter, 2015). The author also shares personal experiences and insights to illustrate the struggles women face in high-powered roles. Ultimately, Slaughter advocates for societal changes to enable women to pursue both career success and a fulfilling family life (Slaughter, 2015).

This research will contribute to the Cypriot literature regarding work-life balance for women as there has been little research conducted in the Cypriot market. Moving on, this essay will give a picture of the Cypriot culture using Hofstede's (Hofstede, 2005) cultural dimension model. It is important to understand the Cypriot culture in order to gain a more thorough understanding on woman's role in Cyprus and understand the way business works.

2. Literature review

This literature review section aims to dive into the existing research regarding women's work-life balance and explore previous research done in Cyprus. Before delving deeper into the research done in Cyprus, it is essential to have a clear image of the Cypriot culture and the way Cyprus does business.

2.1 Cypriot Culture

Determining a nation's sociocultural composition has been a major focus of social science research, especially anthropology, sociology, politics, and management. This approach makes it possible to compare societies and it's a conversation starter about how culture affects people management and leadership. Nations are divided into groups based on their shared geography and culture, such as the Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Nordic Europe. Cyprus, which is located at the intersection of Europe, Asia, and Africa, is a perfect illustration of a nation that does not easily fit into a particular group. To convey findings based on Hofstede's value dimensions and the World Values Survey (WVS), it is necessary to comprehend past social conditions. Additionally, changes in family structure and features, as well as diversity within society, must be discussed (Epaminonda, 2021). Although Cyprus has a reputation for being a conservative culture, the country's current World Values Survey scores are comparable to the global average on the two key dimensions that are used to summarize the survey's findings. Relationship-related values have undergone significant shifts, and there is a notable contrast in views among those in the local community who don't have the same exposure, and those who have done research in foreign nations in recent decades (Epaminonda, 2021).

Cyprus's society was characterized for most of its history and up until recently, by a somewhat conservative social attitude about gender roles, with a strong emphasis on family values and

relationships. The primary unit of society and the economy is frequently the nuclear family, which consists of the parents and the kids, as well as the extended family, which includes grandparents, younger siblings, and even uncles and aunts (Epaminonda, 2021). For most European countries, these might sound extraordinary and out of reality, but this is the Cypriot family reality. Moreover, there are strong bonds between the family members but there are also individual aspirations and interests that were usually ignored in the name of maintaining the family unit, which is comparable to a societal condition known as "amoral familism", which was first noted in southern Italy. In such situations, the nuclear family is usually viewed as the most important group, and people prioritize their family's interests over societal principles (Epaminonda, 2021).

Moving on, the data we have from Greece can also be used for Cyprus, as these two societies have a lot of similar characteristics (Costea et. al. 2006). In multiple papers, before having data from Hofstede's model for Cyprus, the example of Greek culture is used. Greece has been characterized by competitive atomism by several writers and it has been observed that interpersonal relationships are surrounded by intense competition and insidious jealousy. Furthermore, it has been observed that in Greek society, there is a tendency towards "anarchic individualism", which is the tendency to view freedom and liberty as synonymous to complete negligent behaviour towards the general population and the community (Sykiotis, 2004 in Epaminonta, 2021). Taking into consideration the atomistic behaviour, it has been observed that it often comes as a barrier when there is a need to work as part of a team (Sykiotis, 2004 in Epaminonda, 2021). A particularistic value system, in which decisions are made based on subjective standards rather than objective criteria, is likewise a result of an excessive emphasis on self-interest. The code of conduct that applies to others initially excludes individuals, who make up excuses, to explain individual action that serves to advance self-interest in an unethical manner. A moral code that applies to others is frequently extended to those who are close to the individual, such as friends and relatives. When this way of thinking is combined with the competitive character of relationships, it creates "clients," a system of relationship-based, reciprocal, and consensual exchange relationships between people who have unequal political influence and engage in politically advantageous transactions (Epaminonda, 2021). This connection, between individuals with sometimes

divergent social positions is based on a shared desire to keep their respective peer and adversary groups away. Thus, objectivity and impartiality have a limited role in such an atmosphere (Sykiotis, 2004).

2.1.1. Hofstede's model

Moving on, focus will be given to Hofstede's model. The model when it was first developed had four dimensions which are: Power-distance, Individualism-Collectivism, Masculinity-Femininity, and Uncertainty-Avoidance. Later, after the development of the model, a fifth dimension was added, which is long-term orientation and lately, a sixth dimension was added, Indulgence vs. Restrain. Following, a review of the findings will be presented regarding the five dimensions, as that's all the data we have for Cyprus (Epaminonda, 2021).

2.1.1.1. Power-Distance

The concept of Power-Distance discusses the extent to which those with less authority in a country's institutions and organizations, receive and expect the unequal distribution of power. The fundamental issue with Power-Distance is how a society handles differences among its components (Epaminonda, 2021). Societies with significant Power Distances recognize a hierarchical structure, in which everyone stays in their assigned place and doesn't need to prove it further. On the other hand, in societies with minimal Power-Distance, there is an effort to achieve a balance of power and a need for explanations when power disparities occur. Interactions in high Power-Distance civilizations are typically more authoritarian and paternalistic, with a strong emphasis on centralized authority (Epaminonda, 2021). Lower Power-Distance societies, on the other hand, show more democratic or advisory personal encounters (Epaminonda, 2021). A study conducted by PwC in 2011, revealed that in approximately half of the organizations operating in Cyprus, women were underrepresented at the director level. These statistics are explained by the highly patriarchal culture of the country, in which males have more control than women in society (Hofstede, 2005). Women entered the workforce after the 1974 Turkish invention in Cyprus and they were mostly in low-paid and not reputable jobs. The situation changed when Cyprus entered the European Union in 2004 and the women were given a voice,

but the integration of the EU laws and reinforcement did not happen instantly (Cockburn, 2004 in Socratous et. al 2016).

2.1.1.2. Individualism-Collectivism

Moving on, individualism and collectivism can be interpreted through the prism of social structures and cultural values. Individualism is characterized by a preference for a loose social framework that emphasizes autonomy and personal drive (Epaminonda, 2021). In individualistic societies, social identity is often linked with individual efforts, focusing on personal achievement. This point of view promotes greater mobility in employment, as individuals are expected to pursue their interests first and then consider society (Epaminonda, 2021).

In contrast, collectivism in Cyprus represents a preference for a tight social context, where individuals rely on their family or group members for support in exchange for loyalty. In societies with a collectivist approach, social identity is often dependent on the extent an individual contributes to the group, emphasizing collective success. Consequently, individual initiative may not be highly valued, and deviation from group rules may have consequences (Epaminonda, 2021). Hofstede's assessment of individualism scores in Cyprus reveals that the Cypriot sample is close to the international average (Costea et. al. 2006). This is determined through factors such as the importance given to job characteristics, including living in an attractive neighborhood, cooperation at work, and good working conditions. The scores indicate a balance between collectivism and individualistic trends in Cyprus (Epaminonda, 2021).

2.1.1.3. Masculinity- Femininity

The third dimension that is presented is masculinity vs femininity. According to Hofstede, social gender roles are clearly distinguished in more "masculine" societies: men are assigned to be self-sufficient, resilient, and focused on materialistic goals and success, while women are perceived as to be more reserved, affectionate, and considerate with quality of life. In societies dominated by masculinity, the emphasis is on acting and achieving, rather than thinking and observing (Epaminonda, 2021). In feminine societies, social gender stereotypes overlap, and both men and women are seen to be

restrained, cautious, and concerned about quality of life. In masculinity-dominated organizations, performance and results are very important, while social class is the case for success, unlike in feminist cultures where the people-oriented approach prevails, small is beautiful, and social status is not very important. Cyprus' masculinity was 58 (Japan was the highest with 95, Sweden was the lowest with 5 and the average was 50), so it can be classified as moderate with a high tendency to masculinity (Costea et. al. 2006).

2.1.1.4 Uncertainty-Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is defined as the level at which the individuals of a culture feel endangered by uncertain circumstances (Epaminonda, 2021). To be more specific, cultures demonstrating high uncertainty avoidance preserve inflexible belief systems and show no tolerance against non-traditional actions and ideologies. On the other side, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance seem to maintain a less tight approach where actions count more than values (Epaminonda, 2021). In order to measure uncertainty avoidance, Hofstede applied a set of questions examining how deep the ideology of the organizational rules/policies should not be bridged is, not even if the employee believes it will benefit the company. Also, Hofstede examined the confidence that an employee will keep working for their current employer for a long time and how often an individual experiences stress and tension at work. The results demonstrated that Mediterranean countries and Japan have the highest scores for uncertainty avoidance. Specifically, Cyprus scored 115, which was the highest score from all the countries that took part in the survey. Cultures like Cyprus, which demonstrate high scores of uncertainty avoidance, have a preference for regulations, laws, and a societal structure. Employees in high uncertainty avoidance countries are less likely to take initiative without consulting an authority figure (Epaminonda, 2021).

2.1.1.5. Long-term orientation

The fifth dimension explored by Hofstede is Long-term orientation, which is high in societies that show the tendency to be future-oriented. On the other side, short-term-oriented societies are the ones focusing on the present and short-term future. The cultures that score low on long-term orientation

have been observed to have a preference for keeping their traditions and societal norms alive and honored,and are resistant to societal modifications. Cultures with high long-term orientation have a more realistic point of view and they support preparation for the future through education (Epaminonda, 2021). Cyprus' score was 59 which would be described as medium to high.

To sum up, the results indicate that Cyprus is a country that shows medium to high power distance, medium individualism, very high uncertainty avoidance, medium to high masculinity, and medium to high long-term orientation.

2.2. Work-life balance

Work-life balance is described by the ability to achieve a healthy balance between personal life and work-life demands, and of finding a way of meeting all work responsibilities while having time for outside of work interests as well. Moreover, it is about creating a sustainable lifestyle at work, work-related activities, hobbies, family time, and self-development. Finding a way to achieve work-life balance is a way to reduce everyday stressors and improve overall well-being. Additionally, work-life balance is positively correlated with high job satisfaction (Deloitte, 2023).

Work-life imbalances for a modern woman often arise from gender roles and societal expectations, dual income, economic pressures, lack of flexibility in the workplace, stress and health issues and the need for recognition and identity (Agarwal et. al, 2015).

2.2.1 Work-life balance and Hoftede's model

To begin with, cultural dimension such as individualism and collectivism change the way individuals perceive work-life balance as in collectivistic cultures work-life balance has a different meaning as family usually comes above individual needs whereas in individualistic cultures personal achievement and individual's needs are prioritized (Haar et al., 2014).

Moreover, exploring Hoftstede's model gives us the opportunity to understand gender equality or inequality in a country. It is crucial to understand if men and women have equal opportunities for

career growth as this will have an impact on their work-life balance (Haar et al., 2014). Moreover, different cultures have different gender roles norms, for example in some cultures, with Cyprus among them, women are expected to prioritize their family life over their careers and are often criticized if they choose a different path (Valery et al., 2023). Similarly, cultures with high gender equality support women and men equally to achieve work-life balance through work-life balance policies and practices, whereas old fashioned gender norms in cultures with less equality can make it more difficult for women to balance work and life effectively (Haar et al., 2014; Valery et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding cultural dimensions can help to design and implement work-life balance policies that are culturally appropriate and effective which can also help to improve mental health. Understanding the cultural context of a country is important to gain insight to work-life balance because cultural norms and expectations have a significant impact on how individuals choose to prioritize their work and personal lives' responsibilities. Hofstede's cultural dimensions model includes aspects like individualism and collectivism and gender equality (Haar et al., 2014; Valery et al., 2023).

2.2.2 Motherhood and work-life balance

In another paper regarding gender equality in Cyprus, there are several issues presented for mothers in the workplace (Socratous, et al. 2016). A mother faces several obstacles to climb to the top of the corporate ladder and the Cypriot culture is feeding those obstacles with the way women are perceived in society. This study, conducted in 2016, focuses on women in academia and accountancy sectors. While acknowledging that data may differ from 2016 to the present, we can utilize this study to examine trends over the past decade in Cyprus. The Cypriot business world shows significant gender inequalities.

Maria Socratous, Laura Galloway, and Nicolina Kamenou conducted research in 2015, employing a qualitative approach and targeting chartered accountants from the Big Four companies (PwC, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG) in Cyprus, as well as academics at the University of Cyprus. The findings of this study in Gender Inequalities were in the setting of the organizational development,

perspective on women's career progression, the view of motherhood as a barrier for businesswomen, and efficient policies to support working mothers (Socratous et. al, 2015).

First, referring to gender inequalities in organizational development there were gender inequalities in both accounting firms and academic jobs. It was also observed that in 2015 there were only 10% of women business partners and there was no female representation for professors at the University of Cyprus. The point that the academic and accountancy sectors have in common is that in both sectors motherhood is a crucial factor that feeds gender disparities (Socratous et. al, 2015). Moreover, the study gave us valuable insights into the perception of women's organisational development. As a start, males, as well as females, expressed the belief that little to no progression within the organisations was a matter of choice, often because women wanted to focus on their families. Moreover, regarding participants working in the academic sector in particular, males believed that the responsibilities a family woman has can be an obstacle to potential development opportunities. Additionally, the participants of the study showed a tendency to ignorance toward the impact of the business culture on women's choices and also showed ignorance of the glass ceiling effect in women's organizational progression.

Furthermore, in the study, it was identified that participants found it difficult to identify family-friendly policies that supported working mothers within the organisation. Additionally, academics showed a positive attitude towards flexible working hours but women in academia felt pressure to work extra despite the flexible working hours to prove their value. On the other side, accountants faced a lot of stress and had to work extra hours, even in organisations with flexible working hours. Usually, they could not take advantage of this benefit due to the demanding nature of their job. In addition, the "mother's scheme" within the company was an obstacle to the working mother's career progression (Socratous et. al, 2015). To finish off, the participants of the research suggested that it is important to make changes in the culture of the organizations to foster a work-life family-friendly environment. Additionally, participants suggested that there should be childcare facilities that are aligned with the

modern way that people work and keep up with the working hours to promote parents healthier work-life balance (Socratous et. al, 2015).

Moreover, a study conducted by Sarah Cote Hampson (2018) in the United States has revealed that there are some common stereotypes that women face in the workplace. Firstly, there is the perception that working mothers cannot be committed enough to their work compared to other childless employees (Hampson et. al, 2018). As a result of their "lack of commitment," they are less productive, and they find it extremely difficult to achieve work-life balance as they are pressured by societal expectations to prioritize their family and home responsibilities over their career development. On the other hand, working mothers are discriminated against by their employees as being less focused on their work due to family obligations (Hampson et. al, 2018). Additionally, women often come across gender bias in organisations, and they are compared with male employees and discriminated against during the recruitment process. Also, there is a lack of inclusive policies that are meant to support working mothers in the U.S. Lastly, a major issue woman in the workplace might face is microaggressions such as people assuming they cannot do certain things and assigning them fewer complex tasks (Hampson et. al, 2018). These microaggressions and discriminative behaviours can put working mothers under extreme pressure and lead them to overwork in order to prove their ability of completing their duties.

2.2.3. Marital status and work-life balance

In the last decade, the work-life balance of faculty mothers has gained a lot of attention and raised discussions (Sallee et. al, 2017). There are a lot of challenges for working mothers in academia but there are also noticeable difficulties for single women as well. Moreover, to be more specific the term ''singlism'' (DePaulo, 2006) describes the stereotyping against childless single women who are expected to work more than their married-with-children colleagues as they are perceived to have less outside of work obligations. A study conducted by Nida Denson and Katalin Szelényi in 2020, took an inclusive approach and researched both male and female academic members and aimed to raise awareness of the work-life balance of all employees disregarding their marital and child status. The results of the study were unexpected as it revealed that single faculty members reported having less

work-life balance as they dedicated more hours to their professional life (Denson et. al, 2020). On the other side married, and partner members showed a higher ability to balance their work and personal life obligations (Denson et. al, 2020). Both findings were regardless of whether they have children or not. Overall, from the findings of the study it was concluded that it is not only important to implement policies about working parents, but have policies for all different people to promote work-life balance (Denson et. al, 2020).

Furthermore, a study was conducted exploring work-life balance satisfaction for different relationship statuses was conducted among married people, single people, LAT (Living Apart Together) couples and cohabiting partners (Kislev et. al, 2023). The different relationship statuses and circumstances can impact work-life balance. For example, cohabitating people need to invest less time in their relationships and have lower levels of uncertainty in their lives (Connidis et al., 2017). Additionally, the aforementioned study by Kislev (2023) has revealed that married employees are more likely to face long working hours as a stressor due to at-home obligations whereas single employees face long working hours as an obstacle to their social and dating life. Additionally, women are more likely to face difficulties in balancing work and personal life as they usually have more responsibilities regarding domestic work (Scott et al., 2015 Haines et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design aiming to gain an understanding on the factors that influence the work-life balance of a female professional in Cyprus.

3.1.1. Participants

The study has a sample size of 87 working women participants. It should be noted that 4 more people started the questionnaire but decided not to proceed with it. The sampling methods of this research can be identified as selective sampling (Rai & Thapa., 2015), because of the specific criteria of the sample to be working women employed in organisations based in Cyprus. Furthermore, the

population of the research has a direct relationship with the research question of this study, as the sample should help us to further understand the work-life balance of female professionals in Cyprus in this specific context. Lastly, it can be identified as a selective sample, as the sample was a targeted subgroup of the Cypriot population. Selective sampling gives researchers the ability to focus on the groups that are relevant and valuable to their research. The 87 working women consist of a sufficient sample to explore the work-life balance amongst female professionals in Cyprus.

3.1.2. Materials

The data for this study was collected by using a structured questionnaire, developed specifically for this study. The questionnaire had a section focusing on demographic questions, more specifically regarding the age of the participant. Next, there were questions regarding daily working hours, followed by a relationship status question and a question on whether the participant is a mother and if yes, how many children they have. Also, those who stated that they were mothers, answered an additional question for the case of single motherhood. After the questions, there was the main section of the questionnaire in which there were 14 Likert-Scale questions and 1 open ended question. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1. Lastly, the data analysis was done using Microsoft Excel, and its formulae.

4. Results

4.1. Demographics

Table 1: Participants' age groups

Age group-Ηλικία
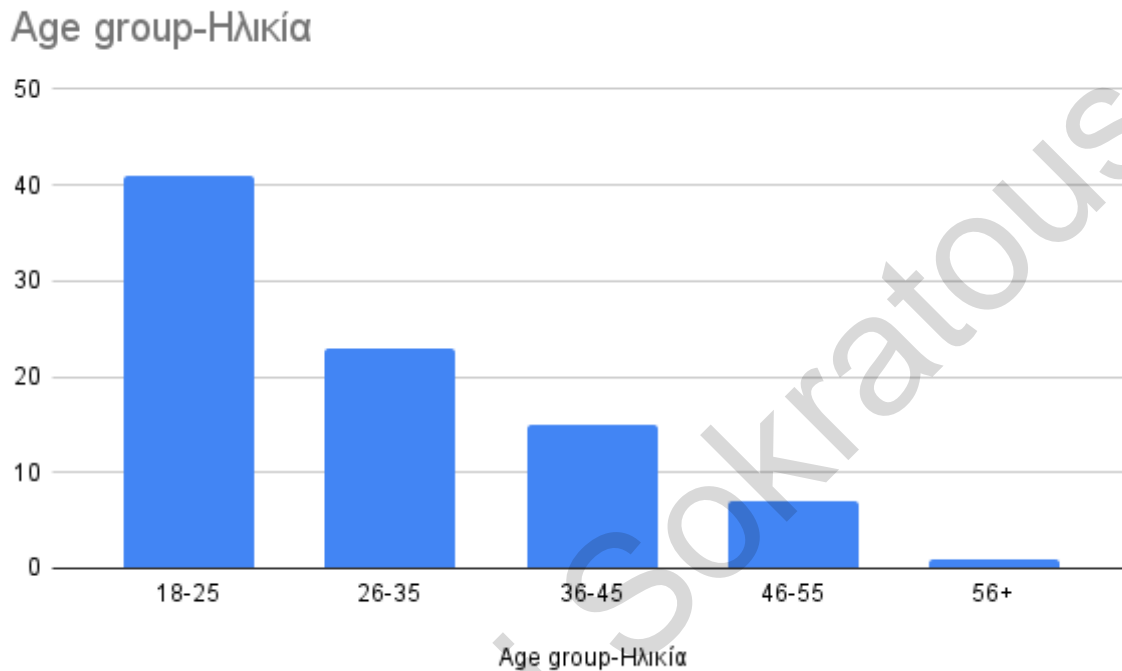
The questionnaire provided to the participants had 5 age group options 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55 and 56+. Among the 87 females that participated in this study, 41 belonged to the 18-25 years old age group, this age group is the 47.1% of the total sample and it is the biggest group of the study's sample. The next biggest group is the 26-35 years old group, which consists of 23 women and is 26.4% of the total sample size. Following, the 36-45 years old group had 15 participants and consisted of 17.2% of the total sample size. Also, the 46-55 year olds have 7 participants and is 8% of the total sample size. Lastly, the study only has one person who is older than 56 years old.

Table 2: Participants' relationship status

What best describes your relationship status?
Ποιο από τα παρακάτω περιγράφει καλύτερα την οικογενειακή
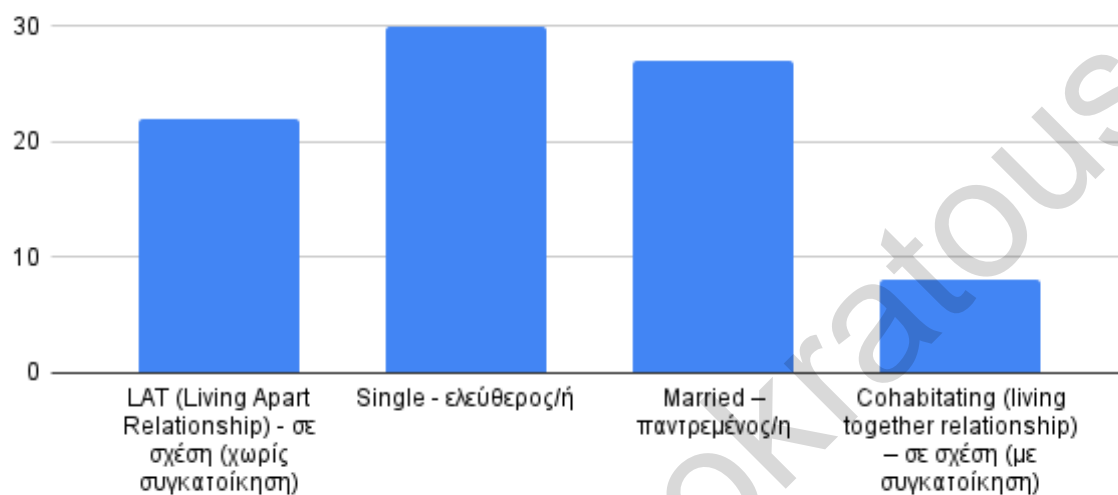
What best describes your relationship status?

Regarding the relationship status of the participants, the participants were given 4 options: Single, LAT (Living Apart Relationship), Cohabitating (living together relationship) or married. The biggest group was single women, with 30 women out of the 87 reporting to be single, meaning that 34.5% of all the participants were single. Following, 31% of the participants reported to be married, meaning that 27 women of the study were married. Also, 25.3% of 22 women reported to have a living apart relationship. Lastly, the smallest group consisted of 8 women and that is the 9.2% of the total sample reported to be in a living together relationship.

Table 3: Are you a mother? & Number of Children.

Are you a mother? & Number of Children.

Are you a mother? If yes how many children do you have?
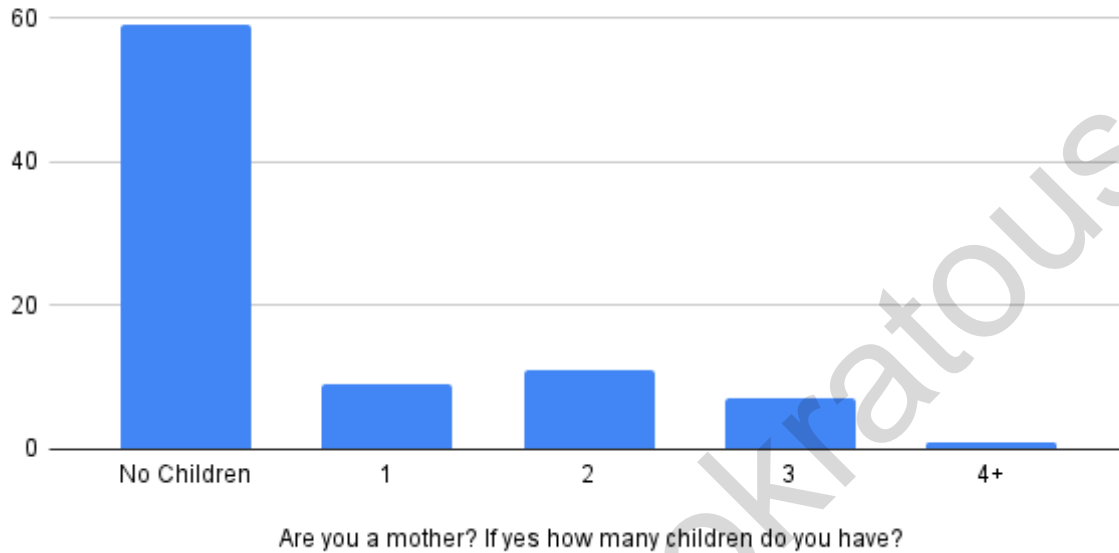
The majority of participants had no children, to be more specific 67.8% of the participants of the study which are 59 women had no children. On the other side 32.2% of the women participating in the study reported having children. Specifically, 12.6% of the women had 2 children, 10.3% had 1 child, 8% had 4 children which is 11 women, 9 women, 7 women and 2 women respectively for each category. Making a total of 28 women.

Table 4: Are you a single mother?

Are you a single mother?
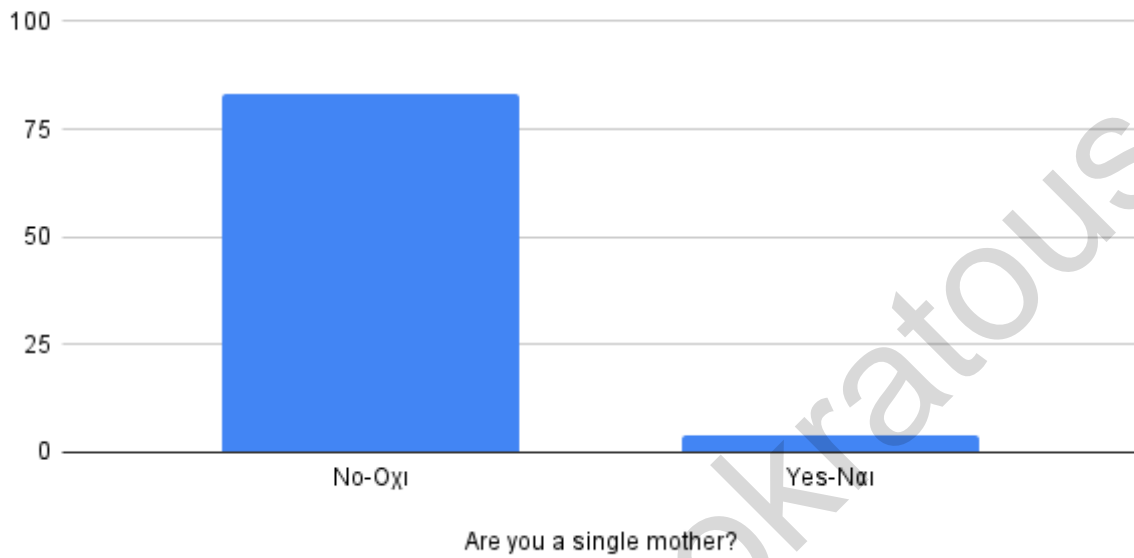
As reported above 32.2% of the women participants of this study reported to have kids. When asked the following question, 12.5% of those women reported to be single mothers, these are 4 single mothers among 28 mothers. Those who are single mothers are 2 mothers with 3 children, 1 mother with 2 children and 1 mother with 1 child.

Table 5: How many hours per day do you work?

How many hours per day do you work?
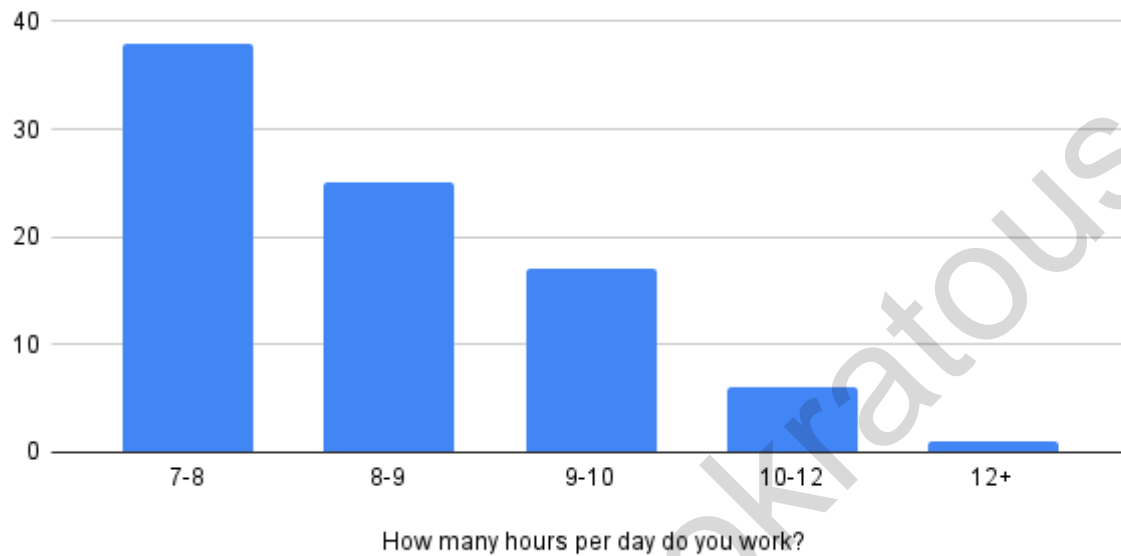
The participants also stated how many hours per day they are working. The questionnaire provided the participants with 5 choices. The majority of the participants which were 38 women (43.7%) reported to work between 7 and 8 hours per day. The next largest group, which consisted of 25 women (28.7%) reported to work 8 to 9 hours per day. Moving on, 17 women (19.5%) reported to work 9-10 hours per day. Moreover, 6 women (6.9%) reported to work 10-12 hours per day and lastly 1 woman (1.1%) reported to work more than 12 hours every day.

Table 6: Number of Participants responded to each question

Number of Participants Responded to each the Question
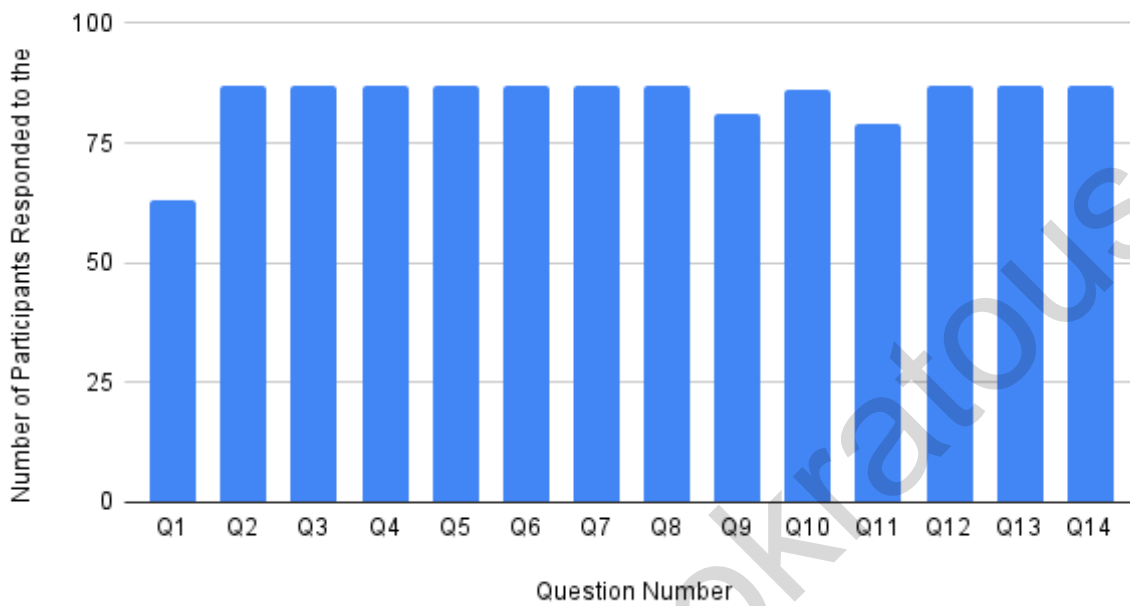
Question 1 received responses from 63 participants, this is reasonable as this question was not mandatory. Question 9 had 81 responses as it was non mandatory as well. Question 10 had 86 responses. Question 11 received 79 responses. The rest of the questions received 87 responses as they were mandatory questions.

Table 7: Likert Scale Questions Median and Mean values

Column1	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
Median	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
Mean	3.07	3.19	3.01	3.14	2.80	2.81	3.72
	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
Median	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00
Mean	1.79	2.29	2.25	2.89	2.86	2.14	2.13

For Question 1 Mean is 3.07, these numbers indicate that participants' answers leaned slightly towards an agreement with the statement '' I receive support from my partner regarding family responsibilities''.

For Question 2 with a Mean of 3.19, participants' responses indicate a tendency towards agreement with the statement '' I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life'', implying a moderate level of agreement.

For Question 3 The mean value of 3.01 suggests that participants' responses were evenly distributed around the neutral point of the Likert scale for Q3. This indicates a balanced perspective or uncertainty among participants regarding the statement '' My work allows me to effectively balance my professional and personal life''.

For Question 4 Participants' responses leaned slightly towards agreement with the statement/question posed by Q4, with a mean value of 3.14, suggesting a moderate level of agreement with the statement '' I often worry about work when I am outside of work''.

For Question 5 and Question 6 the mean value of 2.80 and 2.81 respectively is slightly lower than 3, suggesting a slightly weaker tendency towards agreement with the statement '' I feel that I miss quality time with my loved ones because of work'' and the statement '' My organization offers flexible work arrangements''.

For all the questions from 1 to 6 the median value is 3. The median value of 3 in Likert scale questions indicates that, for the aforementioned statements, the participants' responses are centred around the neutral point of the Likert scale. Also, it can be explained by a balance between agreement and disagreement among participants.

For Question 7 the median value of 4.00 and the mean value is 3.72. The higher mean value compared to the other questions in this set indicates a stronger level of agreement among participants with the statement '' I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options.

These statistics indicate that respondents generally leaned towards giving positive ratings to question 7, with most responses falling around 4 or higher on the Likert scale. However, there might be a subset of respondents who rated it lower, affecting the average score.

For Question 8, the median value is 1.00 and the mean value is 1.79. The lower mean value compared to the other questions in this set indicates a tendency towards disagreement among participants with the statement "I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance."

These statistics indicate that respondents generally leaned towards giving lower ratings to question 8, with most responses falling towards the lower end of the Likert scale. This suggests that participants may not perceive flexible work arrangements as positively impacting their work-life balance, potentially indicating dissatisfaction or lack of alignment with organizational policies or practices.

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For Question 9, the median value of 2.00 and the mean value is 2.29. These statistics suggest a moderate level of agreement among participants with the statement "I am the primary caregiver for a relative (apart from children)."

These statistics indicate that participants generally leaned towards agreeing with the statement in Question 9, with responses centered around the middle of the Likert scale. This suggests that while some participants may identify as primary caregivers for relatives other than children, there is also a notable portion who may not identify as such.

For Question 10, the median value of 2.00 and the mean value is 2.25. These statistics indicate a moderate level of agreement among participants with the statement "I feel that being in a relationship impacts my work-life balance."

These statistics suggest that participants' responses to Question 10 were relatively balanced, with some leaning towards agreement and others towards disagreement. This indicates varying perceptions among participants regarding the impact of being in a relationship on their work-life balance.

For Question 11, the median value of 3.00 and the mean value is 2.89. These statistics suggest a higher level of agreement among participants with the statement "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options."

These statistics indicate that participants generally agreed with the statement in Question 11, with responses leaning towards the higher end of the Likert scale. This suggests that many participants frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options. However, it's important to note that while the median and mean values indicate a tendency towards agreement, there may still be some variability in responses, as indicated by the range of values observed in the dataset.

For Question 12, the median value of 3.00 and the mean value is 2.86. These statistics indicate a tendency towards agreement among participants with the statement "I feel that being in a relationship has impacted my work-life balance."

These statistics suggest that participants generally agreed with the statement in Question 12, with responses leaning towards the higher end of the Likert scale. This indicates that many participants perceive their relationships to have had an impact on their work-life balance.

For Question 13, the median value of 2.00 and the mean value is 2.14. These statistics suggest a tendency towards disagreement among participants with the statement "I have felt that being a mother impacts/has impacted my work-life balance."

These statistics indicate that participants generally leaned towards disagreeing with the statement in Question 13, with responses tending towards the lower end of the Likert scale. This suggests that while some participants may perceive an impact, there is also a notable portion who may not feel that being a mother significantly affects their work-life balance.

For Question 14, the median value of 3.00 and the mean value is 2.13. These statistics suggest a moderate level of agreement among participants with the statement "I feel supported in my career development within the organization."

Table 8: Question 1 – "I receive support from my partner regarding family responsibilities."

I receive support from my partner regarding family responsibilities.
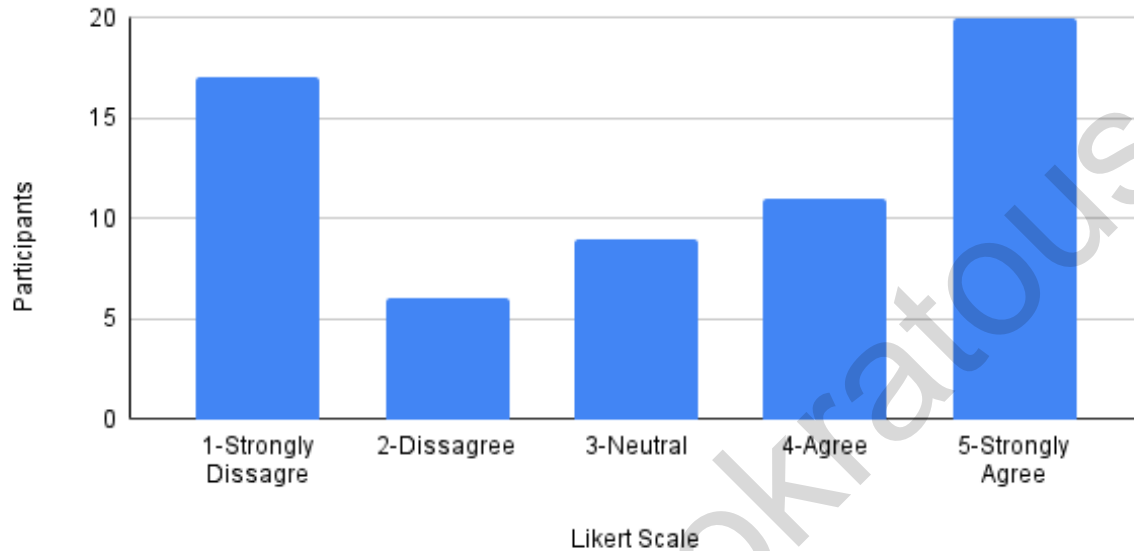
Among the 87 participants 63 participants responded to the question '' I receive support from my partner regarding family responsibilities.''

The breakdown of the responses shows that most of the participants who responded to this question stated that they strongly agree, those were 20 participants. The next largest group were 17 participants who strongly discharged with the statement of question 1. Following 11 participants' statements that they agree with the statement, 9 remained neutral with this statement and 6 participants disagreed.

Table 9: Question 2-"I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life."

I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life.
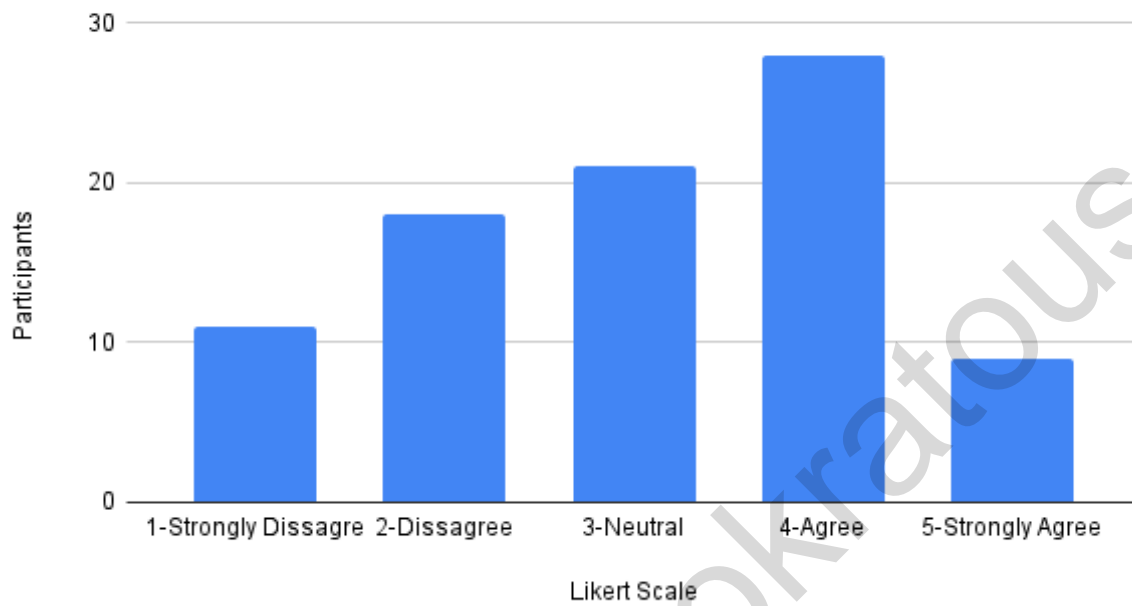
For question 2, to the statement ''I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life'' the most frequent answer was agreed, from 28 people. The next most common answer was by 21 participants who remained neutral. Next, 18 participants stated to disagree with the above statement. Lastly, 11 participants stated to strongly disagree, and 5 participants stated to strongly agree.

Table 10: Question 3- "My work allows me to effectively balance my professional and personal life."


My work allows me to effectively balance my professional and personal life.
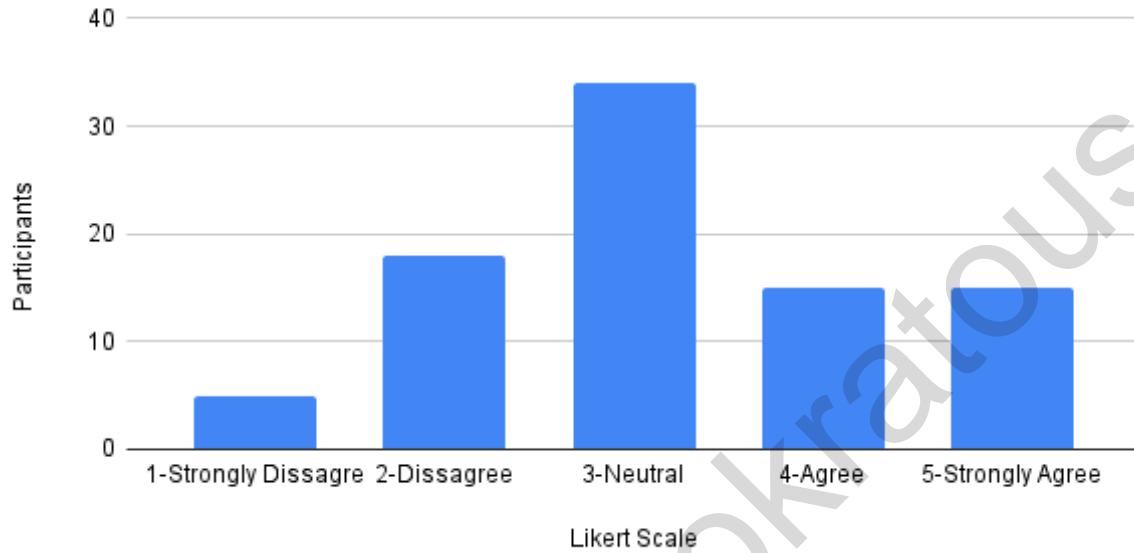
For Question 3, regarding the statement "My work allows me to effectively balance my professional and personal life" 5 people strongly disagreed, while 18 disagreed. On the other hand, 15 agreed, and another 15 strongly agreed with the statement. A significant number of 34 remained neutral.

Table 11: Question 4- "I often worry about work when I am outside of work."

I often worry about work when I am outside of work.
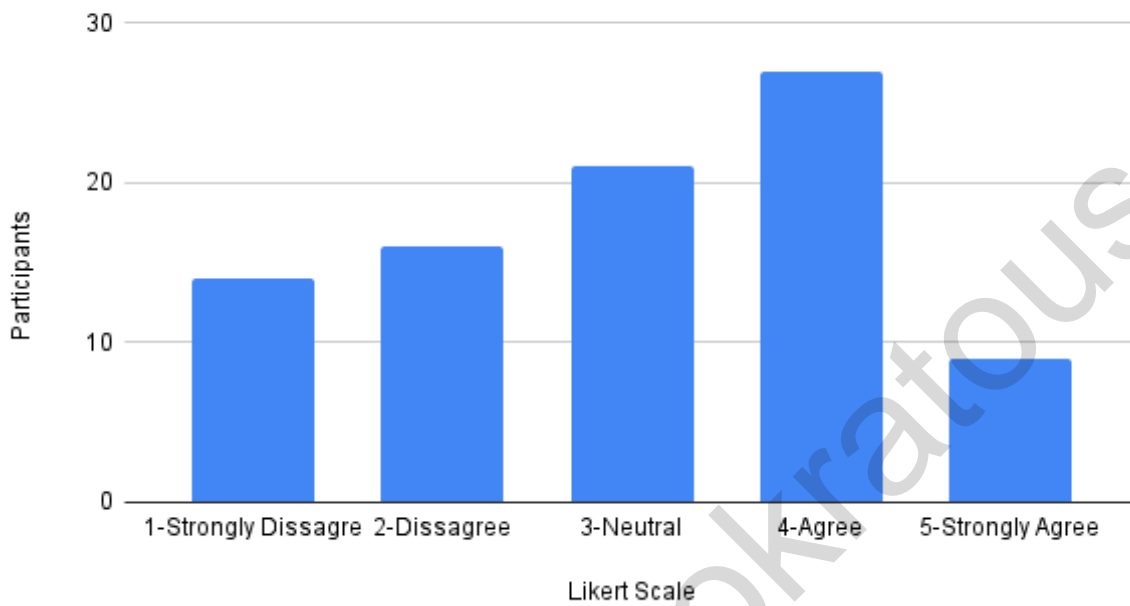

Responses to Question 4, "I often worry about work when I am outside of work," revealed varying perspectives. Out of the 87 participants who answered the question, 14 participants strongly disagreed with the statement, while 16 disagreed. On the other hand, 27 individuals agreed with it, and 9 strongly agreed. Additionally, 21 respondents remained neutral on the statement.

Table 12: Question 5-, "I feel that I miss quality time with my loved ones because of work,"

I feel that I miss quality time with my loved ones because of work.
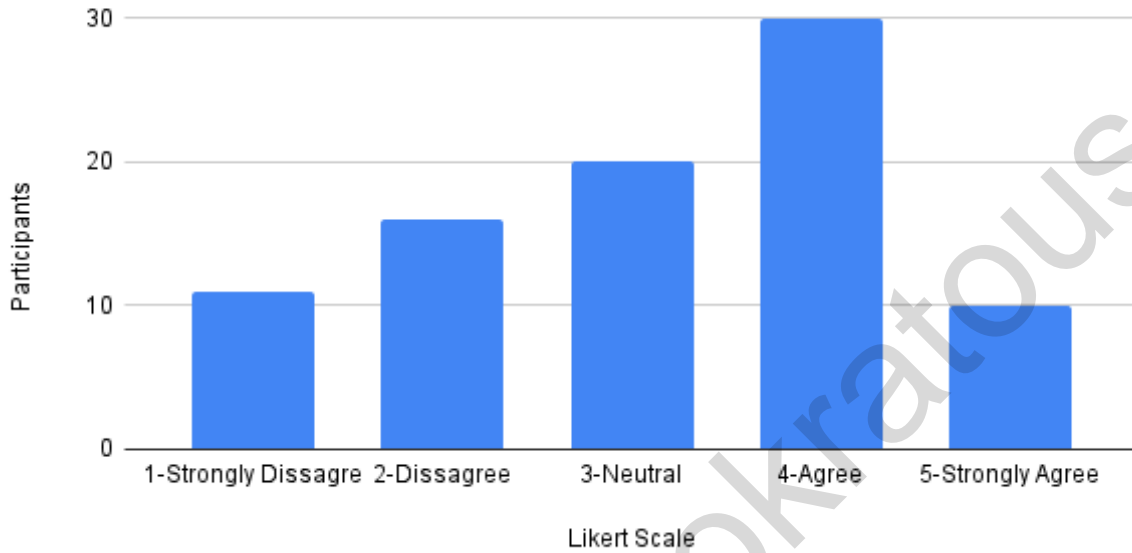
Question 5 which was the statement, "I feel that I miss quality time with my loved ones because of work," participants expressed varied sentiments. Out of the 87 participants 11 individuals strongly disagreed with the statement, while 16 disagreed. On the other hand, 30 respondents, which is the majority of the participants, agreed with an additional 10 strongly agreeing. Meanwhile, 20 participants remained neutral on the matter.

Table 13: Question 6- "My organization offers flexible work arrangements."

My organization offers flexible work arrangements.
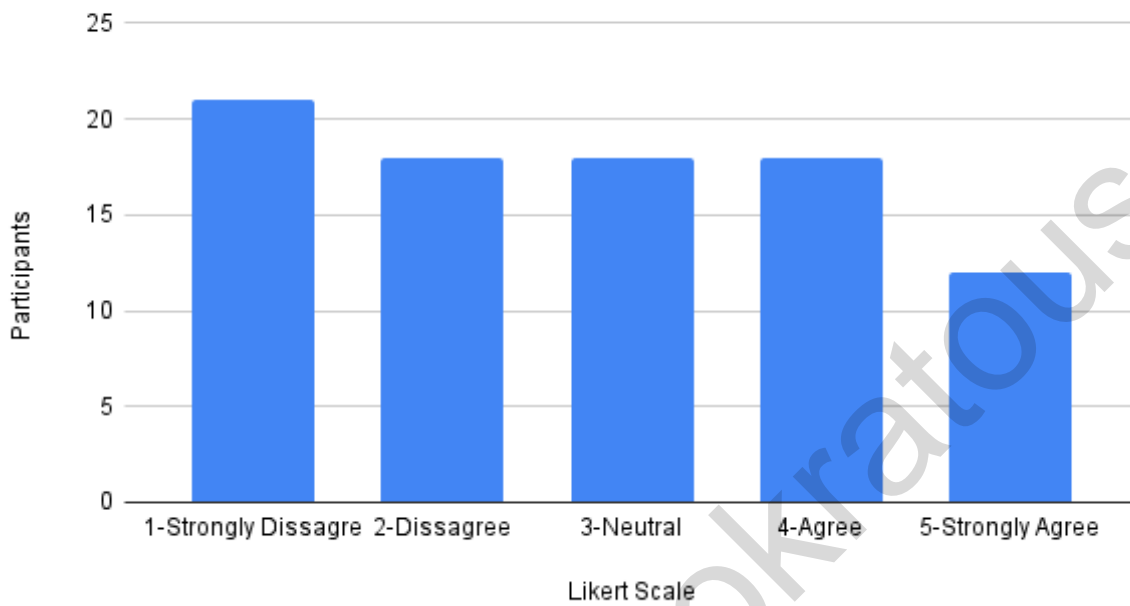
For Question 6, which stated, "My organization offers flexible work arrangements," participants provided diverse responses. Out of the 87 participants surveyed, 21 individuals strongly disagreed with the statement, while 18 disagreed. Similarly, another 18 participants remained neutral. However, there was an equal number of 18 respondents who agreed that their organization provides flexible work arrangements, with an additional 12 strongly agreeing.

Table 14: Question 7- "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options."

I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options.
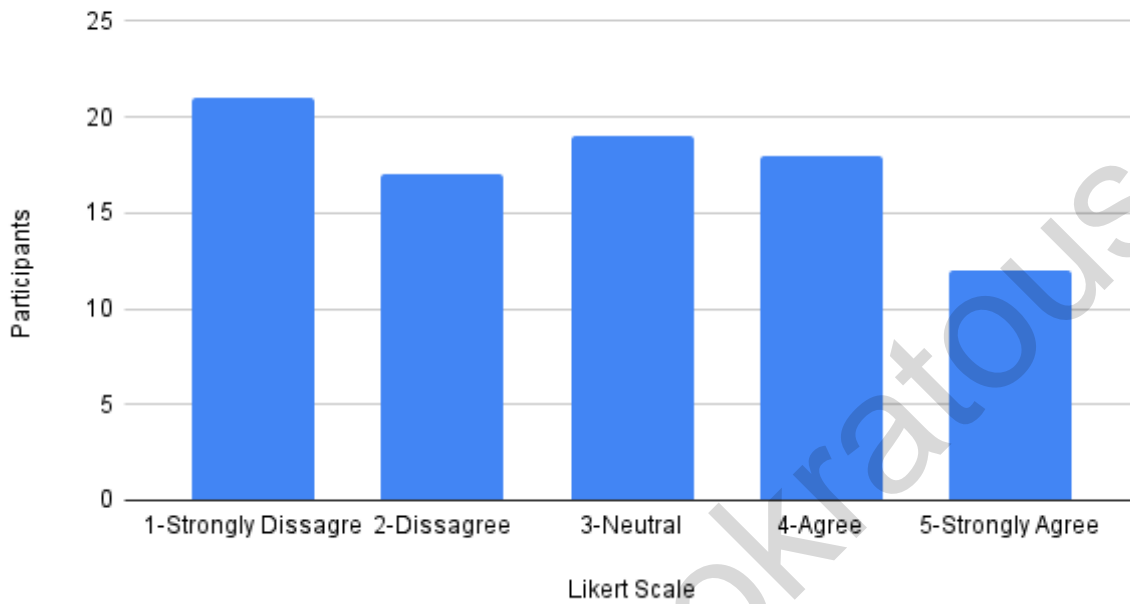
For Question 7, which stated, "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options," participants' responses varied. Among the 87 participants surveyed, 21 individuals strongly disagreed with the statement, while 17 disagreed. Additionally, 19 participants remained neutral. Conversely, 18 respondents agreed that they frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options, and an additional 12 strongly agreed.

Table 15: Question 8- " I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance."

I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance.
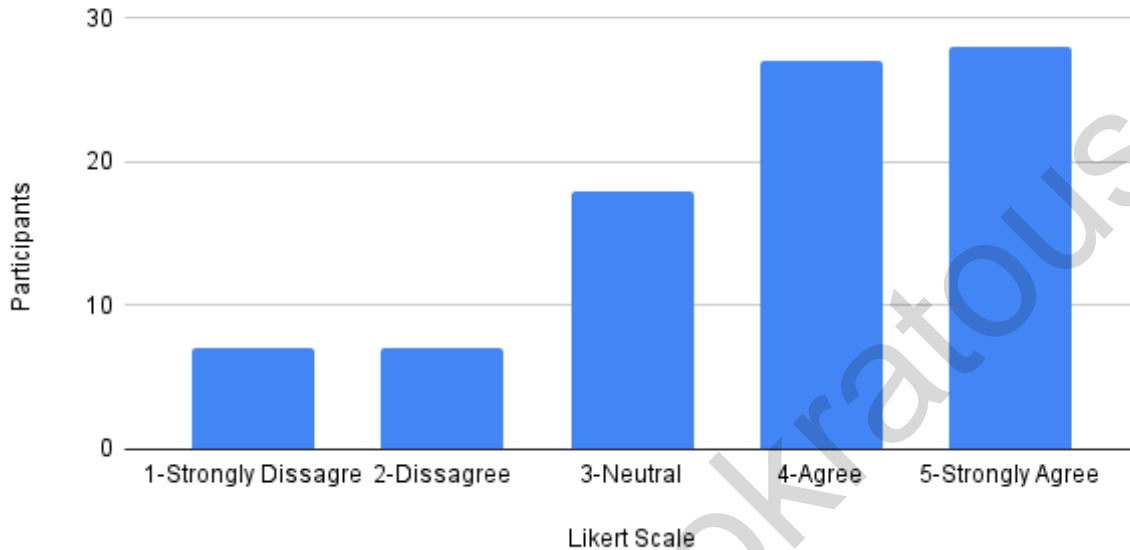
For Question 8, which stated, "I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance," participants' responses displayed a range of perspectives. Out of the 87 participants surveyed, 7 individuals strongly disagreed with the statement, while another 7 disagreed. Additionally, 18 participants remained neutral. Conversely, a notable majority of 27 respondents agreed that flexible work arrangements positively impact their work-life balance, with an additional 28 strongly agreeing.

Table 16: Question 9 - " I am the primary caregiver for a relative (apart from children)."

I am the primary caregiver for a relative (apart from children).
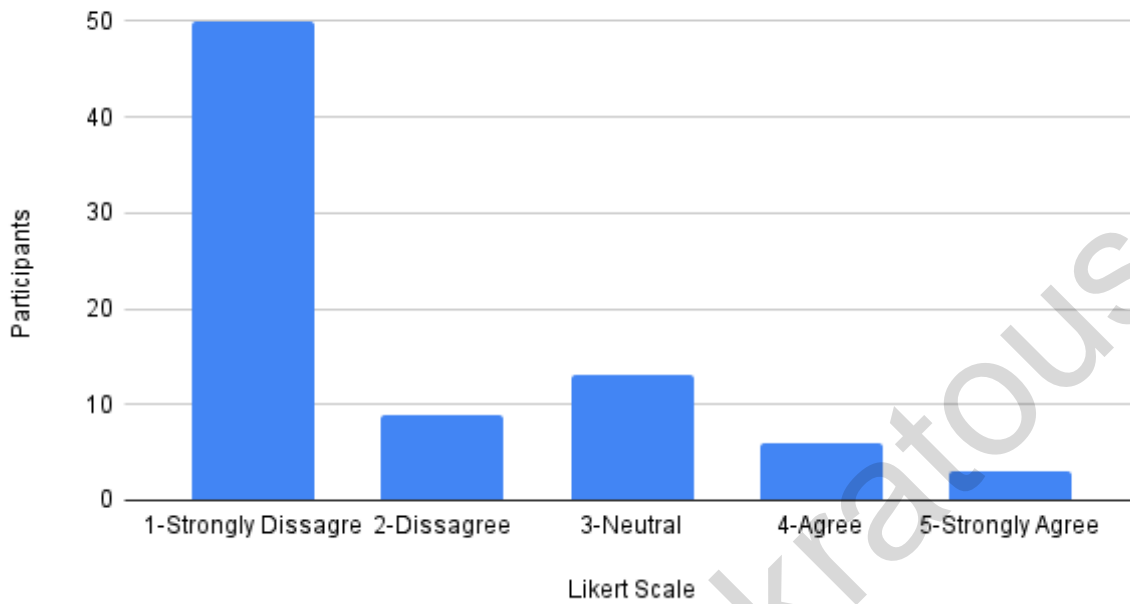
For Question 9, which addressed the statement, "I am the primary caregiver for a relative (apart from children)," respondents' perspectives varied significantly. Among the 81 participants surveyed, the majority, 50 individuals, strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they are not the primary caregiver for a relative other than children. Conversely, 9 participants disagreed, while 13 remained neutral on the matter. Furthermore, a small number of respondents, comprising 6 individuals, agreed to being the primary caregiver, with an additional 3 strongly agreeing.

Table 17: Question 10 - "I feel that being in a relationship has impacted my work-life balance."

I feel that being in a relationship has impacted my work-life balance.
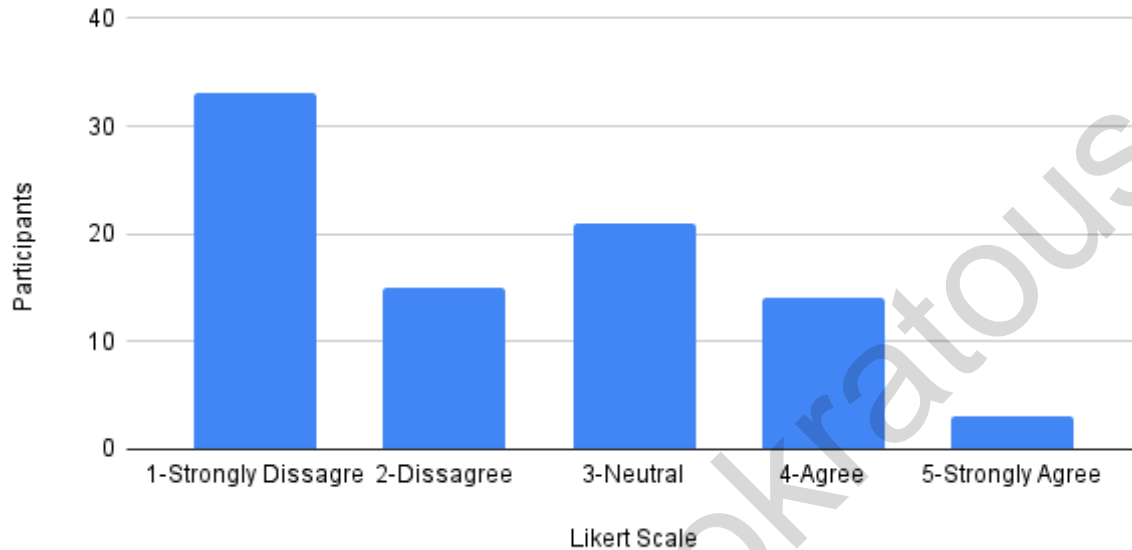
For Question 10, which addressed the statement, "I feel that being in a relationship has impacted my work-life balance," respondents' viewpoints exhibited a range of perceptions. Among the 87 participants surveyed, 33 individuals strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not perceive being in a relationship as impacting their work-life balance. Similarly, 15 participants disagreed, while 21 remained neutral on the matter. Conversely, a portion of respondents, comprising 14 individuals, agreed that being in a relationship has affected their work-life balance, while 3 strongly agreed.

Table 18: Question 11 - " I have felt that being a mother impacts/has impacted my work-life balance."

I have felt that being a mother impacts/has impacted my work-life balance.
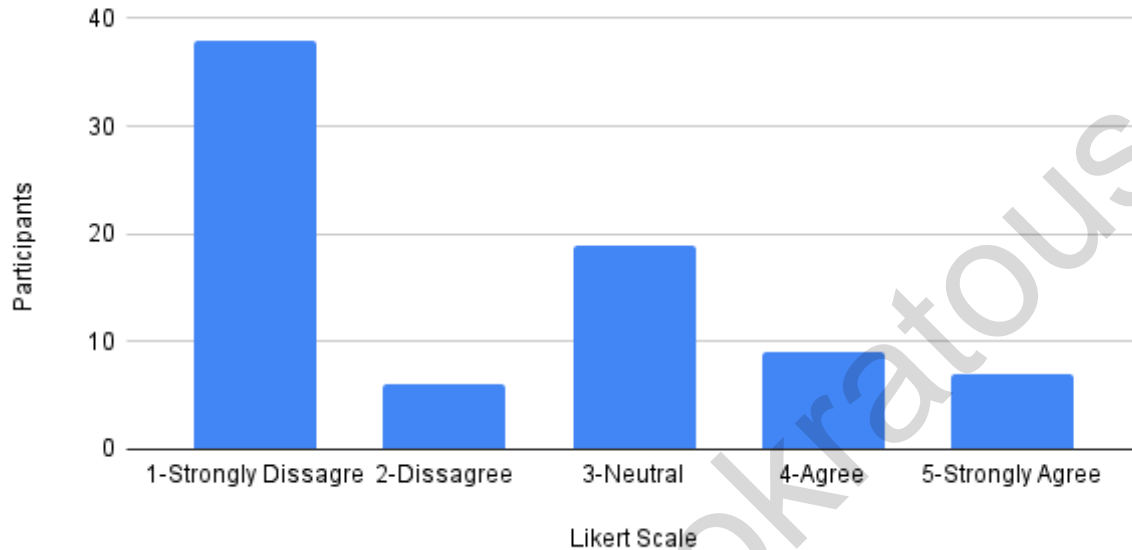
For Question 11, which addressed the statement, "I have felt that being a mother impacts/has impacted my work-life balance," respondents' viewpoints exhibited diverse perceptions. Among the 79 participants surveyed, the majority (38 individuals) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not perceive motherhood as impacting their work-life balance significantly. Additionally, 6 participants disagreed with the statement, while 19 remained neutral. On the contrary, a portion of respondents (comprising 9 individuals) agreed that being a mother has affected their work-life balance, and 7 individuals strongly agreed.

Table 19: Question 12 - "I feel supported in my career development within the organization".

I feel supported in my career development within the organization.
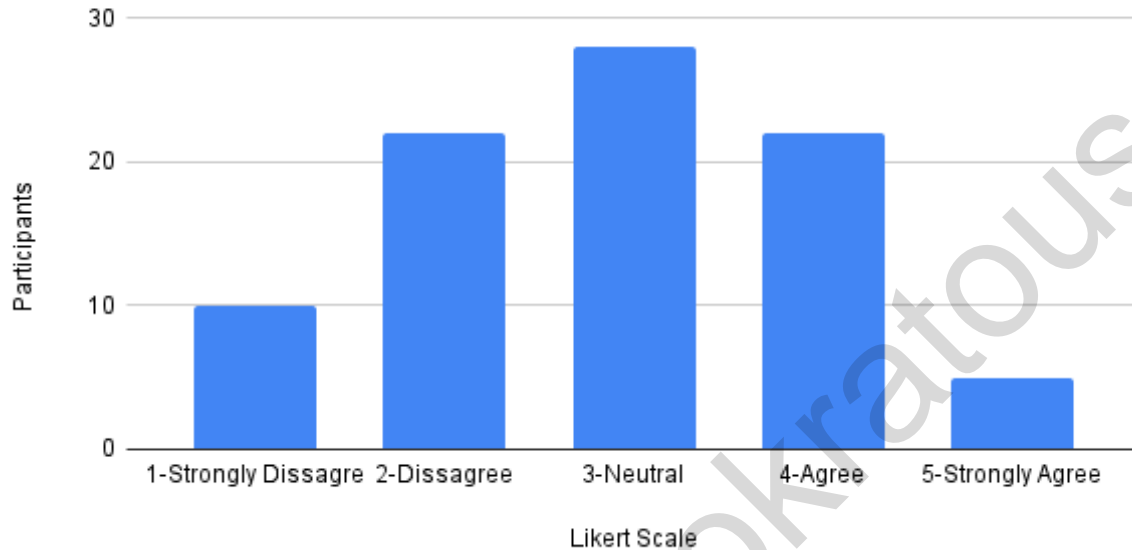
For Question 12, which addressed the statement, "I feel supported in my career development within the organization," respondents' viewpoints exhibited diverse perceptions. Among the 87 participants surveyed, a minority (10 individuals) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not feel supported in their career development within the organization. Additionally, 22 participants disagreed with the statement, while 28 remained neutral. On the contrary, a substantial portion of respondents (comprising 22 individuals) agreed that they feel supported in their career development within the organization, and 5 individuals strongly agreed.

Table 20: Question 13 - " I am satisfied with the support provided by the organisation I work for in helping employees achieve work-life balance."

I am satisfied with the support provided by the organisation I work for in helping employees achieve work-life balance.
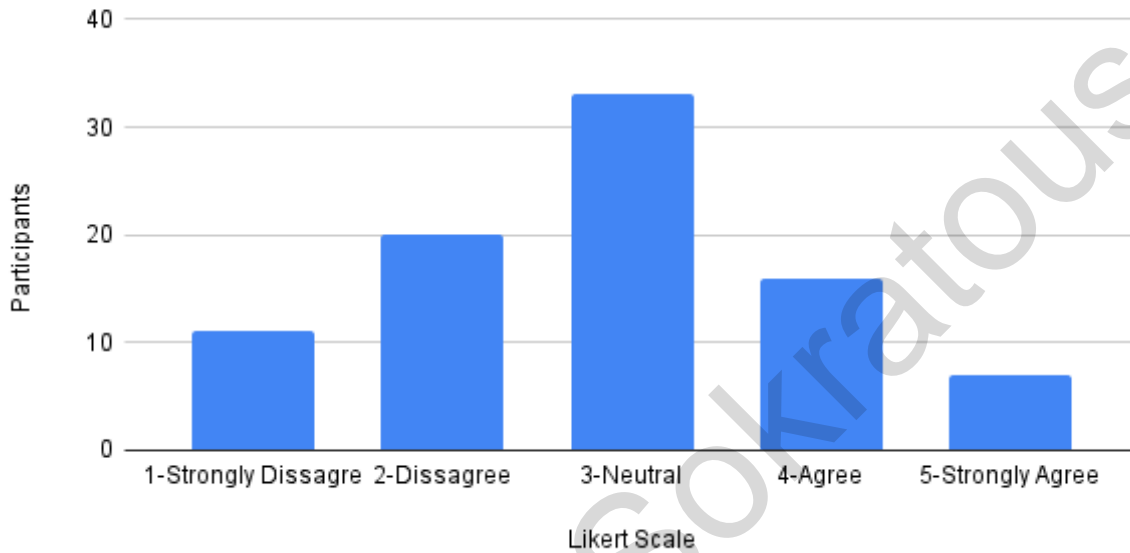
For Question 13, which addressed the statement, "I am satisfied with the support provided by the organization I work for in helping employees achieve work-life balance," respondents' viewpoints exhibited diverse perceptions. Among the 87 participants surveyed, a minority (11 individuals) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating dissatisfaction with the support provided by the organization in helping employees achieve work-life balance. Additionally, 20 participants disagreed with the statement, while 33 remained neutral. On the contrary, a portion of respondents (comprising 16 individuals) agreed that they are satisfied with the support provided by the organization, and 7 individuals strongly agreed.

Table 21: Question 14 - "In the past I have utilized support programs or resources offered by my organization to enhance work-life balance."

In the past I have utilized support programs or resources offered by my organization to enhance work-life balance.
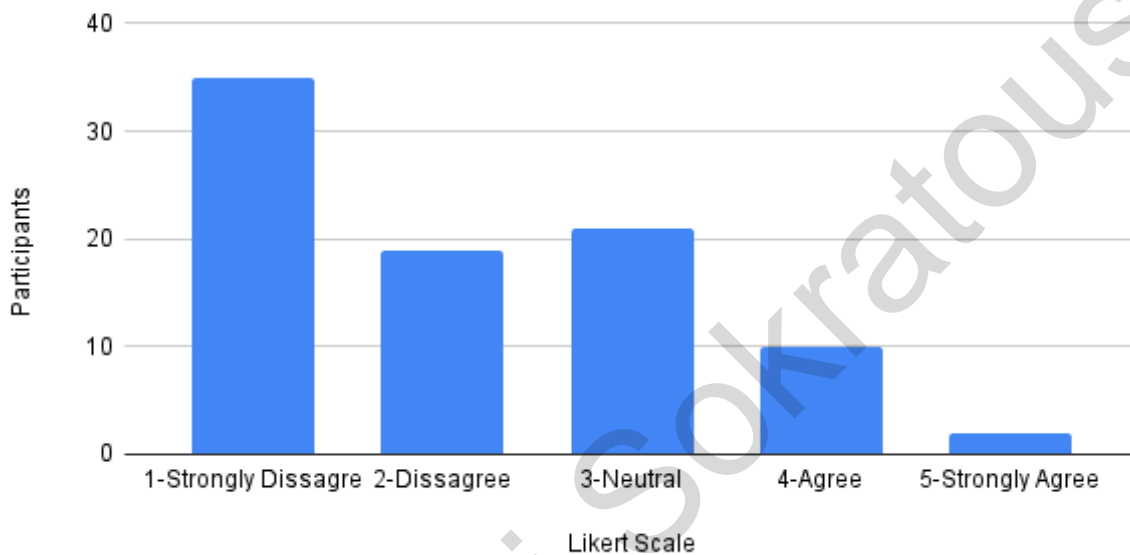
For Question 14, which addressed the statement, "In the past, I have utilized support programs or resources offered by my organization to enhance work-life balance," respondents' viewpoints exhibited diverse perceptions. Among the 87 participants surveyed, a majority (35 individuals) strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they have not utilized support programs or resources offered by their organization to enhance work-life balance. Additionally, 19 participants disagreed with the statement, while 21 remained neutral. On the contrary, a smaller portion of respondents (comprising 10 individuals) agreed that they have utilized such support programs or resources in the past, and only 2 individuals strongly agreed.

4.2 Correlation analysis results

Correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between various variables related to work-life balance among participants. Using the CORREL function in Microsoft Excel, correlation coefficients were calculated to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationships

between these variables. The variables examined included age group, the number of hours worked per day by the participants, relationship status, motherhood status, perceptions of work demands interfering with personal/family life, effectiveness of work-life balance, concerns about work outside of working hours, perceived impact of work on quality time with loved ones, availability and utilization of flexible work arrangements, primary caregiver responsibilities, perceived impact of relationship status and motherhood on work-life balance, satisfaction with career development support, satisfaction with organizational support for work-life balance, and utilization of flexible work practices or resources offered by the organization.

By observing the correlations, several noteworthy relationships occurred. Firstly, a significant negative correlation of -0.699 is observed between the variables "Are you a mother?" and "I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life." This suggests that individuals who identify as mothers are more likely to perceive that work demands interfere with their personal or family life.

Also, Positive Correlation between Flexible Work Arrangements and Utilization. It is worth mentioning that there is a strong positive correlation (0.729) between the variables "My organization offers flexible work arrangements" and "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options." This indicates that employees who have access to flexible work arrangements tend to utilize them more frequently to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives.

Similarly, a strong positive correlation (0.728) is observed between "My organization offers flexible work arrangements" and "I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance." This suggests that individuals who have access to flexible work arrangements tend to perceive them as positive showing that has a positive impact on their overall work-life balance.

A moderate positive correlation (0.561) is found between "My work allows me to effectively balance my professional and personal life" and "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options." Conversely, a moderate negative correlation (-0.427) is observed between "I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life" and "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options."

Finally, a strong positive correlation (0.637) is found between "I am satisfied with the support provided by the organization I work for in helping employees achieve work-life balance" and "In the

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past I have utilized support programs or resources offered by my organization to enhance work-life balance." This suggests that employees who are satisfied with organizational support for work-life balance are more likely to have utilized support programs or resources offered by the organization in the past to enhance their work-life balance. These correlations provide valuable insights into the dynamics between various factors related to work-life balance, organizational support, and individual perceptions and behaviours.

5. Discussions section

This discussion section aims to restate the results provided above and interpret and implement the results. This section also aims to critically analyze the findings compared to the existing literature and research done before.

5.1. Interpretation of findings

5.1.1. Age group

To start with, we are going to summarize and restate the results before we start the interpretation of findings. First of all, the age distribution of our sample revealed that the largest represented demographic group is amongst the youngest population which is the 18-24 age group and is 47.1% of the total sample size. This demographic dominance suggests a significant representation of young professionals or recent graduates in the study. Also, 26.4% of the total sample is falling into the 26-35 category. This percentage shows that there are med-care professionals among the study's sample size. Upon that, 17.2% of the sample were individuals that belong to the 36-45 years old category, these are people which are more likely to have a senior role in the organisation. The age group 46-55 years was relatively low, with only 8% of the total sample falling within this age range.

Also, only one participant aged 56+ participated in the study, indicating a minimal representation of older individuals in the study population. This finding is most likely influenced by sample selection biases and it significantly highlights the importance of considering age diversity when seeking the sample size of our study.

5.1.2. Relationship Status

Moving on, the analysis of the participants' relationship status revealed that 34.5% of the total sample identified as single. This finding may underlie several factors. For example, the participants may not want to invest in a romantic relationship and focus on their career development, maybe it is a personal choice or just the current life stage of the individuals. The fact that the largest proportion of the sample size is single reveals that it is an important country in individual autonomy for work-life balance. Interestingly, 25.3% of the participants reported to be in a LAT. This can be explained as the vast majority of the participants are younger individuals and it is more likely that they are not yet living together with their partner. The presence of a LAT suggests that there are certain arrangements that the females in those relationships have to make to meet with their partners during their working days.

A smaller percentage which is 9.2% of the total sample, reported to be in a living together relationship/cohabitating. Acknowledging the nature of different kinds of relationship statuses helps us understand better how those couples live.

5.1.3. Motherhood

Almost two-thirds of the sample are women without children, it suggests a significant portion of female professionals in the study are currently not juggling the demands of parenting alongside their work responsibilities. On the other side, the minority are women with children. Over a third of the sample, who appear to have children indicates the frequency of dual roles among female professionals as both caregivers and employees. The different numbers of children reported by each participant demonstrate the diversity of family sizes and the responsibilities coming along with it within the sample. Specifically, 12.6% of the women had 2 children, 10.3% had 1 child, 8% had 4 children.

These findings emphasize the importance of recognizing and accommodating the diverse needs and challenges faced by female professionals in navigating their career trajectories while managing familial obligations. The findings in this category can be explained by the fact that Cyprus is a country with a low extramarital birth rate. Marriage in Cyprus is really important especially for religious groups. The importance of marriage in Cyprus might hold women back from having children due to social

pressure. Also, marriage in Cyprus may come late as it is not a simple day and the most common practice in Cyprus is to have a large expensive and extravagant religious ceremony and reception. These findings were reported in the cultural atlas in Cypriot Culture in the Family section (Evason, 2018).

5.1.4. Single Mothers

Among the total of 28 reported mothers in the study, 12.5% were single mothers, a total of 4 mothers, which is a very low percentage to reach any conclusions about single mothers.

5.1.5 Hours of work per day

The majority of the women who responded to the survey (43.7%) reported working 7-8 hours per day. This indicates standard working hours among the participants of the study. Moreover, a noteworthy percentage of 28.7% of the sample reported working about 8-9 hours per day, which also is within the average of normal hours of working that is 8 hours per day, but this can be due to some companies working 8.5 hours per day, so they can have a half day of work every Friday.

While the majority of the participants' working hours are conventional full-time schedules, there is also a 19.5% of the total sample that reported to work 9-10 hours every day. This may include the people with higher responsibilities in the workplace or roles with more seniority. Lastly, only 6.9% of the participants reported to work 10-12 hours per day which inevitably will affect their work-life balance.

5.2. Mean and Median Values

The analysis of mean and median scores provides detailed insights into the views and perceptions of work-life balance among the women who participated in the study. While there is a medium support level for family responsibilities from partners indicated by the mean score of 3.07 and median of 3.00, there is a slightly higher level of interference of family and personal responsibilities due to work demands, as underlined by the mean score of 3.19 and median of 3.00.

The results of the first two questions on the likert scale that participants had to answer indicate that while partners may offer support, the demand of work entails significant challenges to the way to

achieve a sufficient level of balance between professional and personal life. Interestingly, despite the perceived interference, respondents express medium level satisfaction with their ability to balance professional and personal commitments, as evidenced by the mean score of 3.01 and median of 3.00. However, there are several levels of concern about work-related issues outside of the workplace, with a mean score of 3.14 and median of 3.00, indicating that work-related issues trouble many participants beyond office hours. Moreover, the data reveal multiple points of view regarding the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance, with a mean score of 2.81 and median of 3.00, suggesting that while such arrangements are accessible, their effectiveness in promoting work-life balance may vary among individuals. Notably, respondents express moderately favourable perceptions of the positive impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance, with a mean score of 3.72 and median of 4.00, underscoring the potential importance of flexible work arrangement policies in enhancing overall well-being.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the diverse role of personal relationships and caregiving responsibilities in forming work-life balance lifestyles. While participants report moderately positive views on the effect of relationships and motherhood on work-life balance levels, as indicated by the mean scores of 2.29 and 2.25, respectively, also express moderate to low levels of caregiving responsibilities for relatives other than children among the participants of the study, with a mean score of 1.79. The aforementioned results show that even though relationships may have a positive effect on work-life balance levels they also have additional responsibilities and may be a complex situation that needs work on its incorporation into work and personal life. Furthermore, the female participants of this study demonstrate moderate satisfaction with organizational support for achieving work-life balance, as reflected in the mean score of 2.86 and median of 3.00. This shows that there is room for improvement in utilizing organizational support programs, with a mean score of 2.14 and median of 2.00. These results may be because some participants may not have the freedom to utilazie the support programs even though they exist. For example, in the final suggestions open ended question some participants reported that they have several vacation days that they cannot utilise and there is high demand at their department at work. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of considering individual

circumstances and organizational policies in promoting a supportive work environment that facilitates optimal work-life balance for women professionals.

5.3. Correlations

It's noticeable that many of the correlation coefficients that came from the result analysis are quite low, indicating weak relationships between the variables. This suggests that the variables most probably are not strongly associated with each other in the dataset. In a more statistical language, the closer to zero the correlation coefficient the more it implies that there is a very low to no linear relationship between the variables. Consequently, in this context, the lack of significant correlations may be based on the fact that these variables have low influence on each other.

Firstly, a significant negative correlation of -0.699 is observed between the variables "Are you a mother?" and "I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life." This suggests that individuals who identify as mothers are more likely to perceive that work demands interfere with their personal or family life. In a literature review paper, it was shown that there are several factors that might affect work-life balance and motherhood like time limitations, strain conflict, behavioural conflict, career development, gender bias, guild and pressure (Dizaho et al., 2016).

As a start, regarding time limitations, it is extremely difficult to balance work demands and motherhood and working mothers may face difficulties on how to allocate their time between work and their children. Working mothers often find themselves racing against the clock, to make time to be excellent at their work, meet their work deadlines, be present for their kids' responsibilities and manage to keep up with household responsibilities. The pressure and guilt to make time for everything is often overwhelming. Also, working mothers usually prioritise their work and their family and the least of their concerns is to make time for themselves. Moreover, the lack of self-care and personal development time can contribute to the exhaustion, fatigue and burnout of the individuals. Furthermore, time limitation can lead to negative interactions with individuals' families as the mother may feel exhausted by the time they get to their family and while being home, they might have a feeling that they are in a

rush and they lack the ability to be completely present and spend quality time with their partners and children. Moreover, working mothers often must deal with family matters during working hours, and sometimes they feel that they need to take on additional hours and responsibilities in order to compensate for the missing time. Overall, time limitations are an obstacle that working mothers have to overcome and find a balance between work and motherhood responsibilities (Dizaho et al., 2016).

Moving on, in the article the issue of strain conflict as a factor that might affect work-life balance is explained. Based on the literature review, participants in previous studies reported that they experienced both physiological and emotional distress due to the pressure to live up to their high demanding roles. They have reported that they feel the pressure all the time to be the best employees, caregivers, homemakers which usually leaves them exhausted and overwhelmed. Moreover, participants have reported that due to the constant pressure they have they have been experiencing symptoms of disturbance in their sleeping schedule, anxiety and challenges with focus and attention span. Additionally in another study, it has been found that due to strain-based conflict participants might experience physical symptoms such as physical, emotional and mental burnout which is the most often reason for missing work (Duxbury and Higgins 2012). Furthermore, the study suggests that strain conflict can also impact interpersonal relationships as communication issues may arise due to high constant stress. The communication issues may leave the working mothers feeling isolated, unsupported and challenge their everyday lives even more.

Moving on, behavioural conflict is another challenge for working mothers. Behavioural conflict refers to challenges that are coming from the behavioural expectation that one role has that might conflict with the behavioural expectation of another role (Dizaho et al., 2016). For example, working mothers might find it difficult to switch from the high-pressure and demand role they have at their work all day to a more patient and nurturing role at home. To be more specific a mother might have had a long and difficult day at work, and they are feeling tense and irritated and they need to instantly switch to a calmer and more patient attitude, failure to do so might result in a conflict with their kids. (Duxbury and Higgins 2012) Due to this conflict a lot of mothers are accused of always being tense. It can also

cause internal conflict due to role shifting demand (Duxbury and Higgins 2012). Also, the conflict between personal values and societal expectations for mothers can cause an identity crisis. Furthermore, behavioural conflict can cause trouble with interpersonal relationships at work and family relationships at home due to the stress to constantly shift to the most appropriate role which might make the individual feel disconnected from themselves and others (Dizaho et al., 2016).

On another note, working mothers might also face difficulties in their career development. Working mothers might need to make some tough decisions and choose between their career and their families. The constant shift between work and family life might affect a working mothers' capacity to be fully devoted to her professional role. This can lead to low to no motivation and if they consequently must do the minimum effort for one of their roles it will consequently be their work. Consequently, it will decrease their productivity and they will have lower quality of results at their work which will also decrease their job satisfaction level (Dizaho et al., 2016).

In addition, gender stereotyping, guild and pressure can impact work-life balance for working women. To start with, women often have the burden of stereotyping society. Women usually carry the image of the primary nurturer, and homemaker while at the same time they are being accused if they have professional aspirations. This may result in women being passed on for career advancement opportunities due to their at-home responsibilities (Dizaho et al., 2016). Moreover, working mothers are constantly guilty about missing moments from their children's lives. For example, they are feeling guilty for losing certain milestones such as their first words, their first steps, school plays performances due to their work responsibilities. Also, working mothers often have to rely on childcare support for their children which makes them feel guilty as they are often told that they leave their children to strangers when in reality they really need their mothers (Maclean et al., 2020). Undeniably, women face a lot more pressure to be the primary caregivers, even after the breastfeeding stage, than fathers do (Maclean et al., 2020).

Moving on, a strong Positive Correlation between Flexible Work Arrangements and Utilization was found. It is worth mentioning that there is a strong positive correlation (0.729) between the variables

``My organization offers flexible work arrangements" and "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options." This indicates that employees who have access to flexible work arrangements tend to utilize them more frequently to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives. The aim of the two questions was to explore if employees are able to utilise the flexible work arrangements that are offered to them. There are several reasons why an employee would not be able to use flexible work arrangements. For example, lack of managerial support can prevent employees from making the most out of flexible work arrangements. A specific example could be if a manager supports that "Work from home is not effective" this consequently will affect their team (Azar et al., 2018). Moreover, it is a common phenomenon of employees not being able to utilize flexible or even basic work arrangements due to the high job demands, to be more specific there are some jobs that require the employees to be physically present for the job, like client meetings (Azar et al., 2018). Furthermore, there are employees that cannot utilize flexible work arrangements due to technological barriers like poor internet quality at their area of living or lack of the necessary equipment (Azar et al., 2018). Lastly, employees might be unable to utilize flexible work arrangements due to poor training, as work from home brings responsibilities and employees need proper training to understand how to effectively manage their own tasks. Training and guidance on remote work practices can help employees(Azar et al., 2018). Taking all of that into consideration the strong positive correlation that was revealed from the study shows a positive work environment within the Cypriot companies that the female participants in the study work for. Related to that, a moderate positive correlation (0.561) is found between "My work allows me to effectively balance my professional and personal life" and "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options." This indicates that individuals who are able to utilize flexible work arrangements are more likely to achieve a balance between their work and personal life. Conversely, a moderate negative correlation (-0.427) is observed between "I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life" and "I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options." This suggests that individuals who perceive work demands as interfering with personal or family life are less likely to utilize flexible work-life balance options frequently.

Furthermore, "My organization offers flexible work arrangements" and "I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance" have a strong positive correlation (0.728) This suggests that individuals who have access to flexible work arrangements tend to perceive them as positive showing that has a positive impact on their overall work-life balance based on the aforementioned research. Finally, a strong positive correlation (0.637) is found between "I am satisfied with the support provided by the organization I work for in helping employees achieve work-life balance" and "In the past I have utilized support programs or resources offered by my organization to enhance work-life balance." This suggests that employees who are satisfied with organizational support for work-life balance are more likely to have utilized support programs or resources offered by the organization in the past to enhance their work-life balance. Both available practices that affect work-life balance and actual usage of the programs are very important as mentioned above. In previously conducted studies it was shown that organisations that provided work-life practises and support their employees have shown lower levels of employee turnover and high levels of job satisfaction (Shockley et al., 2017). This suggests that a supportive culture acts as a mediator between work-life balance practices and overall company performance (Kar & Misra, 2013).

Furthermore, the strong positive correlation shows that employees who feel supported by the organisation they work for, make the most out of the available support programs (Kar & Misra, 201).

Also, a strong positive correlation (0.728) is observed between the statement "My organisation offers flexible work arrangements" and "I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance." This suggests that individuals who have access to flexible work arrangements tend to perceive them as positive and they have a positive impact on their overall work-life balance. It is well known that flexible work arrangements have a crucial part in work-life balance as they can take away a lot of the daily pressure an individual can go through (Hashim et al.,2017). Furthermore, for example flexible work hours or remote working give individuals autonomy and enhance employee empowerment and provide them with the ability to manage their personal commitments without interfering with the quality of their work as it can reduce stress (Smeltzer et al., 2016).

6.Limitations and Suggestions

6.1. Limitations

There are certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. First of all, the current study has a sampling bias as selective sampling as the participants of this study were women working in organisations in Cyprus. As the sample of the study was retrieved from social media this limits the ability of generalisation in the study to the broader population of Cypriot women (Rai & Thapa., 2015) & (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015). Moreover, the sample size of 87 participants can provide useful insight regarding work-life balance of working women in Cyprus; it can probably limit the strength of the results. Furthermore, the use of a questionnaire holds the danger of response bias, where participants may have given the answers that they think are most socially desirable answers rather than giving the answers based on their real experiences (Mercado, 2019).

6.2 Future research and Suggestions

Even though this study explores multiple factors that might influence work-life balance for working women, better results could be achieved through a larger sample size. For example, the motherhood factor did not show any significant results as most of the participants of the study were childless. On the other side, if a larger sample size occurred it would be more inclusive and representative for several groups of people. (Mercado, 2019).

6.3 Suggestions on how to promote work-life balance for working women

In order to promote work-life balance for working women in Cyprus, organisations need to massively adopt flexible work arrangements. It is noteworthy that some of the participants in the last open ended question mentioned that they don't agree with the governments length for maternity leave as it is too little and also they would like it if the government gave some sick leaves extra to working mothers. Furthermore, the government can promote on-site childcare facilities to reduce stress and increase satisfaction for people that are working on-site on a daily basis. Moving on an organisational

level could adopt flexible work arrangements like introducing flexible work hours, for example employees can start working in the morning from 7-10 and they can stop working after they have completed their 8 hours of work, this way they can adjust their work-schedule to their day-to-day life plans. Also, remote working is a policy that gives employees a lot of flexibility and enhances work-life balance as you save valuable time as employees don't need to commute to their workplace and back home every single day. Furthermore, employers would pay attention to adopting regular feedback mechanisms, like giving to all the teams withing the organisation and employees to all level regular feedback forms and also arrange one-to one meeting with employees and managers. Moreover, it is important that the company does well-being initiative as provie access paid or with a reduce price to psychologists, give gym discounts and arrange well-being days and team bonding activities. Also, a very positive well-being initiative would be to give free fruits daily showing appreciation and care for employee's health.

7. Conclusion

The presented study explored the factors that affect work-life balance for working women in Cyprus focusing on personal and organisation factors. The analysis of factors such as age, relationship status, motherhood status, working hours and perception on organisational support policies can provide insights on the difficulties and the way to achieve work-life balance.

Moving on highlighting the key findings of this study it is important to mention that the study identified a significant negative correlation (-0.699) between motherhood and the perception that work demands interfere with personal/family life. This finding aligns with existing literature, which highlights the unique pressures working mothers face in balancing professional responsibilities with parenting duties. Factors such as time limitations, strain conflict, and behavioural conflict exacerbate these challenges, leading to feelings of guilt, pressure, and burnout among working mothers. Furthermore, regarding flexible work arrangements the study revealed strong positive correlations between the availability of flexible work arrangements and their utilization (0.729), as well as their perceived positive impact on work-life balance (0.728). This underscores the importance of flexible

work policies in promoting a healthy work-life balance. Organizations that offer and encourage the use of flexible work options can significantly enhance employee well-being and productivity. Also, there is a notable positive correlation (0.637) between satisfaction with organizational support for work-life balance and the utilization of support programs. This indicates that employees who perceive strong organizational support are more likely to take advantage of available resources, leading to better work-life balance outcomes. The study suggests that fostering a supportive workplace culture is crucial for employee satisfaction and retention. Lastly, on the key findings of the study the analysis revealed a moderate negative correlation (-0.427) between the perception of work demands interfering with personal/family life and the utilization of flexible work options, which highlights the need for organizations to address high job demands and offer realistic workloads to allow employees to benefit fully from flexible work arrangements.

Moreover, this study has explored the numerous factors influencing work-life balance for working women in Cyprus. The findings illuminate the critical role that supportive work environments play, particularly those that offer flexible work arrangements. These arrangements are especially crucial for working mothers who navigate the demanding responsibilities of both their professional and personal lives.

Additionally, this research offers valuable takeaways for policymakers, organizational leaders, and human resource professionals. By prioritizing initiatives that promote work-life balance, organizations can cultivate a more equitable and supportive work culture. Such a culture would empower women to flourish in both their careers and personal lives.

However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The sample size of 87 participants restricts the generalizability of the findings, and the reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of response bias. Future research endeavors should aim to incorporate larger and more diverse samples to enhance the representativeness of the results. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding of the long-term effects that organizational support and flexible work arrangements have on work-life balance.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities related to work-life balance for working women in Cyprus. By addressing these factors and implementing the recommendations outlined here, organizations can create a work environment that fosters the well-being and productivity of their female employees. This, in turn, can lead to a more empowered and successful workforce for Cyprus as a whole. While this research provides a strong foundation, further exploration with a broader scope and a deeper dive into individual experiences can illuminate even more effective strategies to achieve true work-life balance for Cypriot working women.

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Survey

1.Confirm that you understand what the purposes of the research project are, what will be involved and that you agree to take part. If you are happy to participate, please initial each box to indicate your agreement, sign and date the form, and return to the researcher.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions if anything is unclear or if you would like more information about any aspect of this research. It is important that you feel able to take the necessary time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

By checking the box below you agree that:

I confirm that I have read and understood the <u>Participant Information Sheet</u> for the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that all the information I provide will be held securely and treated confidentially. I understand who will have access to any personal data provided and what will happened to the data at the end of the research project.

I understand my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation and data, without giving a reason, by contacting the lead <u>at any time</u> until the date specified in the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand the results of this research will be used in academic papers and other formal research outputs.

I agree to take part in the above research project.

Επιβεβαιώνω ότι έχω διαβάσει και κατανοήσει το Φύλλο Πληροφοριών για το συγκεκριμένο ερευνητικό έργο και έχω είχα την ευκαιρία να θέσω ερωτήσεις.

Κατανοώ ότι όλες οι πληροφορίες που παρέχω θα διατηρηθούν με ασφάλεια και θα χειριστούν με εχεμύθεια. Κατανοώ ποιος θα έχει πρόσβαση σε οποιαδήποτε προσωπικά δεδομένα παρέχονται και τι θα συμβεί με τα δεδομένα στο τέλος του ερευνητικού έργου.

Κατανοώ ότι η συμμετοχή μου είναι εθελοντική και ότι είμαι ελεύθερος να αποσύρω τη συμμετοχή μου και τα δεδομένα μου, χωρίς να δώσω λόγο, επικοινωνώντας με τον υπεύθυνο έως την ημερομηνία που προσδιορίζεται στο Φύλλο Πληροφοριών του Συμμετέχοντα.

Κατανοώ ότι τα αποτελέσματα αυτής της έρευνας θα χρησιμοποιηθούν σε ακαδημαϊκά άρθρα και άλλες επίσημες ερευνητικές εξόδους.

Συμφωνώ να συμμετάσχω στο παραπάνω ερευνητικό έργο

Options:

I agree with the above statements

I don't want to proceed

2.Age group-Ηλικία

18-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56+

3.How many hours per day do you work?

Πόσες ώρες εργάζεστε καθημερινά;

7-8

8-9

9-10

10-12

12+

4. What best describes your relationship status?

Ποιο από τα παρακάτω περιγράφει καλύτερα την οικογενειακή σας κατάσταση;

Single - ελεύθερος/ή

LAT (Living Apart Relationship) - σε σχέση (χωρίς συγκατοίκηση)

Cohabitating (living together relationship) – σε σχέση (με συγκατοίκηση)

Married – παντρεμένος/η

5. Are you a mother?

Είστε μητέρα;

If yes how many children, do you have?

Αν ναι πόσα παιδιά έχετε;

Mark only one oval.

No Children

1

2

3

4+

6. Are you a single mother?

Είστε μόνη μητέρα;

Mark only one oval.

Yes-Ναι

No-Οχι

Rate the below statements on a 1-5 scale. Βαθμολόγησε τις πιο κάτω δηλώσεις με την κλίμακα 1-5.

1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

1- Διαφωνώ πολύ, 2-Διαφωνώ, 3-Ουδέτερο, 4-Συμφωνώ, 5-Συμφωνώ πολύ

7. I receive support from my partner regarding family responsibilities.

Λαμβάνω βοήθεια από τον/την σύντροφο μου σχετικά με τις οικογενειακές υποχρεώσεις.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Not applicable

8. I feel that work demands interfere with my personal/family life.

Νιώθω πως οι υποχρεώσεις της δουλειάς επεμβαίνουν με την προσωπική/οικογενειακή μου ζωή.

1

2

3

4

5

9.My work allows me to effectively balance my professional and personal life.

Η δουλειά μου μου επιτρέπει να ισορροπώ αποτελεσματικά την επαγγελματική μου και προσωπική

ζωή.

1

2

3

4

5

10.I often worry about work when I am outside of work.

Συχνά ανησυχώ για τη δουλειά όταν δεν βρίσκομαι εκεί.

1

2

3

4

5

11.

 I feel that I miss quality time with my loved ones because of work.

Αισθάνομαι ότι χάνω ποιοτικό χρόνο με τα αγαπημένα μου πρόσωπα λόγω της δουλειάς.

1

2

3

4

5

12. My organization offers flexible work arrangements.

Η εταιρία για την οποία εργάζομαι μου προσφέρει ευέλικτες διατάξεις εργασίας.

1

2

3

4

5

13. I frequently utilize flexible work-life balance options.

Χρησιμοποιώ συχνά επιλογές ευέλικτης εργασίας.

1

2

3

4

5

14. I feel that flexible work arrangements positively impact my work-life balance.

Νιώθω ότι οι ευέλικτες διατάξεις εργασίας επηρεάζουν θετικά την ισορροπία μεταξύ εργασίας και προσωπικής ζωής.

1

2

3

4

5

15. I am the primary caregiver for a relative (apart from children).

Είμαι ο κύριος φροντιστής για ένα συγγενή (πέραν των παιδιών).

1

2

3

4

5

16. I feel that being in a relationship has impacted my work-life balance.

Νιώθω ότι η σχέση μου έχει επηρεάσει την ισορροπία μεταξύ εργασίας και προσωπικής ζωής.

1

2

3

4

5

17. I have felt that being a mother impacts/has impacted my work-life balance.

Έχω αισθανθεί ότι το να είμαι μητέρα επηρεάζει/έχει επηρεάσει την ισορροπία μεταξύ εργασίας και

προσωπικής ζωής.

1

2

3

4

5

18.I feel supported in my career development within the organization.

Νιώθω πως έχω στήριξη στην επαγγελματική μου εξέλιξη εντός του οργανισμού.

1

2

3

4

5

19. I am satisfied with the support provided by the organisation I work for in helping employees achieve work-life balance.

Είμαι ικανοποιημένη/ος με την υποστήριξη που παρέχει ο οργανισμός που εργάζομαι για την επίτευξή της ισορροπίας μεταξύ εργασίας και προσωπικής ζωής.

1

2

3

4

5

20.In the past I have utilized support programs or resources offered by my organization to enhance work-life balance.

Στο παρελθόν, έχω χρησιμοποιήσει προγράμματα υποστήριξης ή πόρους που προσφέρονται από τον οργανισμό μου για την ενίσχυση της ισορροπίας μεταξύ εργασίας και προσωπικής ζωής.

1

2

3

4

5

21.Please provide one recommendation for your company that would enhance your work-life balance.

Παρακαλώ παρέχετε μία σύσταση για την εταιρεία σας που θα ενισχύσει την ισορροπία μεταξύ εργασίας και προσωπικής ζωής.