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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND PRIVATE LIFE OF ROMANIAN MANAGERS

Empirical study

Keywords

Manager
Gender
Professional life
Private life

JEL Classification

O15, Y80

Abstract

Purpose—The investigation of relationship between professional and family life of managers from Romania in terms of time allocated to these aspects.

Design/methodology/approach – This study was conducted on 111 managers from Arad County (56 men and 55 women) from various fields of activity.

Findings – The results support the idea that leisure time decreases after taking over the position of manager.

Practical implications/originality/value – There is no significant association between gender and the amount of leisure time. Although we expected women to report less leisure time after taking over the top management position (and men more leisure time) this situation cannot be reported. Explanations: 1. there are differences but they could not be depicted through the manner the data were collected 2. Women managers get help from other people (parents, in-laws, husband, housekeeper) after taking over management positions.

The society we live in is very dynamic; consequently we constantly have to adjust our expectations to complex situations. There are many studies about promoting women in top management positions written by foreign researchers (Shein, 2002; Powell&Graves, 2003; Metcalfe& Metcalfe, 2005; Fein et al., 2010) as well as Romanian researchers (Curşeu & Boros, 2003; Popescu, 2006; Ciolac, 2014). This issue generates debates about social dynamics, about the manner and extent to which individuals balance professional and private responsibilities and also about the emergence of family-work conflicts.

Researchers such as (Nikandrou et al., 2008) show great interest for this topic. The results have revealed that accomplishment is connected with the fulfilment of family objectives, lower education, little competition between professional and private responsibilities and lack of financial concerns (Lee et al., 2006).

Objectives and hypothesis

The aim of our research was the investigation of relationships between professional and private life of Romanian managers. Investigation is specific to quantitative studies. The idea of this study occurred to me after obtaining data from a quality research. The research was performed based on semi-directive interviews with women managers (Ciolac, 2011).

One of the topics approached during the research investigated the relationship between careers and family of women manager (Ciolac, 2011) and the attempts to find solutions for solving the conflict between work and family. Most participants brought up the way they were trying to handle professional and private responsibilities but also the difficulties they were facing in effective time management. Some participants were pleased with their efforts; others pointed out the compromises and sacrifices they had to do (professionally or privately).

Considering that a management position involves extra responsibilities and less leisure time, we have set **data collection about managers` leisure time as first objective of our research.**

The first hypothesis of this study was formulated according to this objective and to previous results:

Hypothesis 1. Leisure time decreases after taking over a management position

Starting from the information acquired during the quality study where women managers rarely mentioned their partner`s involvement in household activities, we anticipated that taking over a management position would dramatically influence their leisure time. Apart from professional responsibilities they have to cope with most household and family responsibilities. Thus, we have formulated the second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2. After taking over a management position women report less leisure time while men think they have more leisure time.

Moreover, we thought that managers who own the business they run have more leisure time because they have control over their lives, have freedom in delegating responsibilities to other employees and don`t report to anyone. A study conducted in the USA (Scandura & Lankau, 1997) highlighted that women with flexible working hours are more satisfied and more loyal to their company compared to women without flexible working hours. The research was conducted on a sample (general managers from various fields of activity) of 80 women and 80 men. It has been determined that flexible schedule reduces stress and conflicts between work and family (Beauvais & Kowalski, 1993). The third hypothesis was formulated based on the results of this study:

Hypothesis 3. Managers running their own business have more leisure time and managers who work for someone else have less.

Research methodology

Participants

111 managers from Arad County took part in this study. 56 were men and 55 women working in various fields of activity: sales, light industry, heavy industry, education, health, public administration, mass-media, IT, research-development.

17 participants have high school and postsecondary studies, 55 have academic studies and 39 have postsecondary studies; 94 have urban residency and 17 rural. 21 managers are aged 20 to 25, 49 are aged 26 to 30, 21 are aged 31 to 35, and 20 are aged 36 to 40. We have again faced difficulties in interviewing older managers.

Research variables and their operationalizing. Description of used instrument.

The main independent variables of this study were the managers` gender, age, whether they have children or not and business ownership (the manager him/herself or somebody else). Each variable was operationalized by a question with pre-set multiple choice answers (Appendix 1).

More data were collected besides these variables in the attempt to control as many variables as possible. Some variables focus on socio-demographic characteristics such as studies, origin area (rural/ urban), residency (rural/ urban), marital status (married or single), type of family but also belonging. Another series of variables focused on professional characteristics: manner of obtaining the position, management seniority, number of people in control, team`s gender distribution, field of activity. Each variable was operationalized by a question with pre-set multiple

choice answers based on data collected from literature (Appendix 1).

Another type of variable was analysed according to the subjects' gender and referred to their leisure time before and after promotion to management positions.

Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed separately to each subject. It was administered by field operators who had been previously instructed on how to apply it in individual meetings with us. The subjects were asked to read the items carefully and then choose the answers that suit them best.

Validation of hypothesis

Hypothesis 1. Leisure time decreases after taking over a management position

We have applied the chi² Test to validate this hypothesis.

First we investigated how leisure time was allotted before and after taking over the management position.

Results show that before holding a management position, 34 of the interviewed persons had less than 5 hours of leisure time daily and 77 reported over than 5 hours. The chi² Test ($\chi^2(1)=16,65$, $p<0,001$) shows that the number of people with over 5 hours leisure time daily is significantly higher than the number of people with less than 5 hours.

After taking over a management position, 84 of the interviewed persons report less than 5 hours of leisure time daily while 27 report over 5 hours. The chi² Test shows that this difference is significant ($\chi^2(1)=29,27$, $p<0,001$). A significantly higher number of respondents report less than 5 free hours daily after taking over a management position.

Based on the above listed types of analysis we can support the idea that the first hypothesis is empirically validated. If before holding a management position most respondents claim having over 5 hours of leisure time, after taking over the position they report less than 5 hours daily. We can assume that this change is generated by the responsibilities and supplementary tasks they have to deal with after taking over the position.

Hypothesis 2. After taking over a management position women report less leisure time while men think they have more leisure time

We have applied the chi² Test to validate this hypothesis.

The results show that there is no significant association between the managers' gender and their leisure time (*Figure No. 1*) after taking over a management position ($\chi^2(1)=2,23$, $p=0,13$)

Moreover, results show no significant difference between the gender of managers and the

amount of leisure time (*Figure No. 2*) before taking over a management position ($\chi^2(1)=2,51$, $p=0,11$).

This similar pattern of leisure time of male and female managers before and after taking over a management position is quite surprising.

In terms of traditional gender roles, we would have expected women to report more frequently having under 5 free hours daily and men to report over 5 hours daily. We expected these differences to occur due to women's more active involvement in household and family activities compared to men. The engagement in professional activities is similar for men and women.

We have asked direct questions during data collecting process and therefore we have checked gender differences in these situations.

There are no gender differences in terms of household responsibilities (item 22) ($t(109)=0,53$, $p=0,12$). Nor have we registered such differences in the involvement in child education ($t(109)=0,63$, $p=0,53$).

It is though possible that men and women understand differently household responsibilities and child education. Men and women involvement can be continuous but they can experience different levels of involvement: there is one thing to spend 3 hours daily with household activities and another thing to spend just 30 minutes.

Another explanation for the lack of leisure time differences between men and women managers can refer to the rational perspective on the conflict work-family: men spend more time on professional activities and women with household and family. Another explanation for the lack of gender differences can be issued in terms of other leisure time amounts. Maybe gender differences in terms of daily leisure time sum up 5 hours. We cannot issue graded answers because the manner the question was asked doesn't allow us to collect more accurate answers (leisure time evaluation on a continuous scale).

Since the study didn't contain very specific questions about time management, we cannot gradate the explanations about similarities. Further studies would respond to this question.

Hypothesis 3. Managers running their own business have more leisure time and managers who work for someone else have less.

We have applied the chi² Test to validate this hypothesis.

The results show that reporting under or over 5 hours leisure time daily is not connected with managers' running of their own business ($\chi^2(1)=0,63$, $p=0,43$).

Lack of significant differences suggests that owning their own business does not have any impact on the amount of leisure time – at least if we refer to under or over 5 hours daily (*Figure No. 3*). If the answers had been collected in a more

analytical manner, on a scale with more ranks (or free answers), differences might have occurred.

Another possible explanation for the lack of difference is that the variable (owning the business or not) is irrelevant for the amount of leisure time. It is possible that this variable has an impact on other aspects related to the attempt of integrating professional and family responsibilities.

Conclusions

The first aspect that needs to be highlighted is that there are little differences between men and women managers involved in this study in terms of social-demographic, family and organizational variables. Socio-demographic variables show that between men and women managers involved in our study there are rather similarities in terms of studies, area of origin, residency, marital status, parenting or not, the type of family they come from and belonging. The same similarities are registered under organisational aspects. Generally, there are no differences among the participants to our study referring to the number of men or women managers or to the manner they got the management positions. Nor are there any differences related to owning the business or not, management seniority or the number of people in control.

Only one significant difference was identified: women managers are more likely to be in teams with more women and rather seldom in male teams. We have explained this result by the fact that a woman has more changes in becoming a formal leader in a women predominant organisation and less chances in a male dominant organisation.

Research hypothesis on leisure time support the idea that leisure time is reduced after taking over a management position. We can infer that this change is the consequence of extra responsibilities and tasks that managers have to face after being promoted. It is interesting that there is no significant association between gender and the amount of leisure time (over or less than 5 hours daily).

In terms of traditional gender roles, we would have expected women to report less leisure time after taking over the management position (and men more time) but the results didn't indicate this. We have two possible explanations. The first refers to the existence of these differences but also to the inability of reporting those due to the manner the data on leisure time were collected. The second explanation refers to the help women managers get from other people (parents, in-laws, husband, and housekeeper) after taking over a management position.

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Appendices
Appendix A

Applied Questionnaire

We are kindly asking you to answer the following questions about women and men managers' leisure time which are necessary to conduct a study on this topic. Concrete data are required to be able to link personal needs to opportunities of improvement or change in professional and personal relationships.

1. Gender	Male	
	Female	

2. Age:

between 20-25 years of age	between 26-30 years of age	between 31-35 years of age	between 36-40 years of age	between 41-45 years of age	between 46-50 years of age	between 51-55 years of age	between 56-60 years of age	between 61-65 years of age

3. Last graduated educational institution:

- a) high school
- b) post college studies
- c) university
- d) postgraduate studies

4. The family I come from is:

- a) traditional – patriarchal – you keep close relationships to your relatives
- b) modern – random relationships with relatives
- c) single parent
- d) divorced

5. Place of birth:

- a) urban
- b) rural

6. Were you married when you took over the management position?

- a) yes
- b) no

7. Are you currently married?

- a) yes
- b) no

8. Your current family is:

- a) traditional - patriarchal
- b) modern – interrupted relationships with relatives
- c) mono-parental
- d) divorced

9. Do you have children?

- a) yes
- b) no

10. Residency:

- a) urban
- b) rural

11. Is the business that you run yours or somebody else's?

- a) mine
- b) somebody else's

12. You achieved this position (manager, administrator) through:

- a) appointment
- b) contest
- c) self-appointment

13. How long have you been in charge with this position?

- a) 3 years or less
- b) between 4-9 years
- c) between 10-14 years

- d) between 15-19 years
- e) 20 years or more

14. *Point the number of people you have in control:*

- a) under 10 people
- b) between 10 and 59 people
- c) between 60 and 100 people
- d) over 100 people

15. *My teams consists of:*

- a) more women
- b) more men
- c) mixt team
- d) only women
- e) only men

16. *What field of activity do you work in:*

- a) sales
- b) services
- c) production in light industry
- d) production in heavy industry
- e) education
- f) health
- g) public administration
- f) mass-media
- g) IT
- h) research and development
- i) other: name your field _____

17. *How much leisure time have you got since you took over this position?*

- a) more than 5 hours daily
- b) between 1 and 5 hours daily
- c) under one hour daily

18. *How much leisure time did you have before taking over this position?*

- a) more than 5 hours daily
- b) between 1 and 5 hours daily
- c) under one hour daily

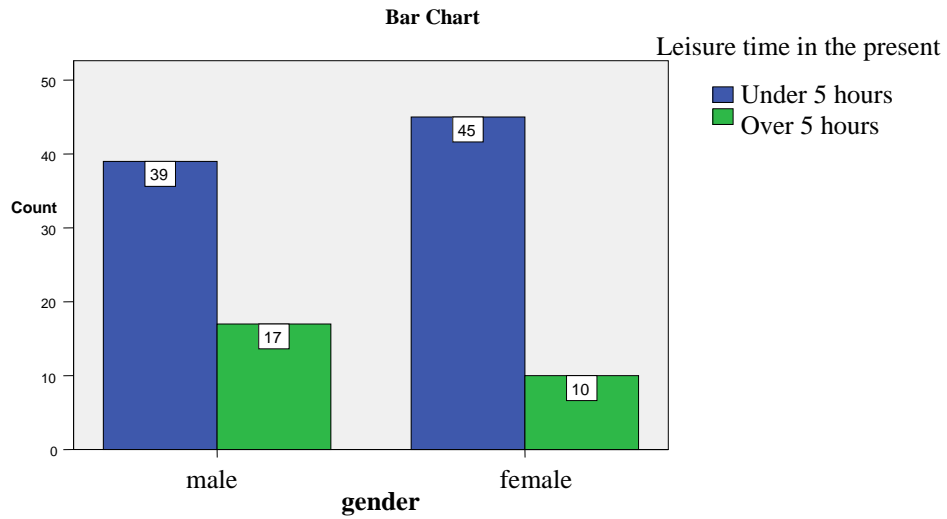


Figure No. 1. Leisure time of male and female managers in the present

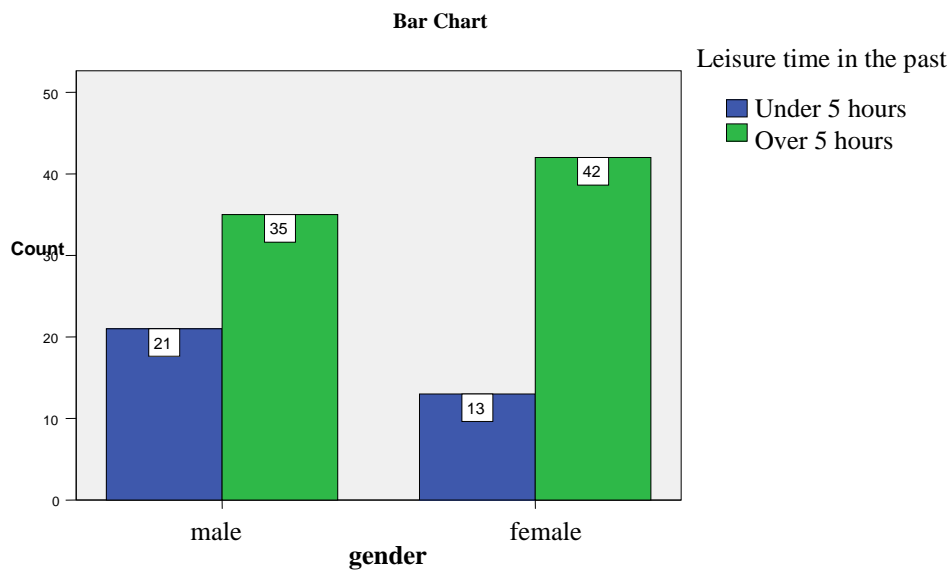


Figure No 2. Leisure time of male and female managers before taking over a management position

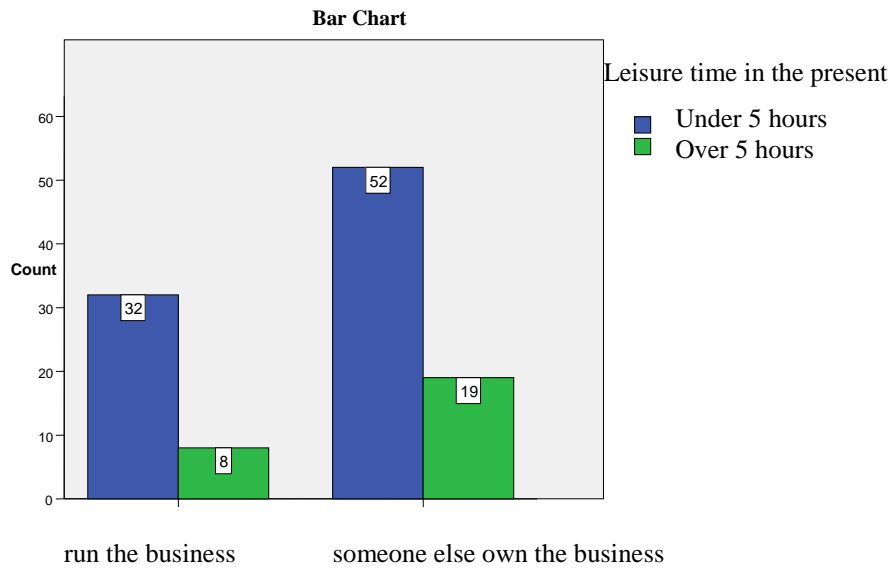


Figure No 3. Leisure time of managers owning a business or not