

MOTHERS' WORK ENGAGEMENT, WORK DEPENDENCY, AND THEIR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS: THE LINKS

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Abstract

This article aims to reveal the links between children's strengths and difficulties and their mothers' work engagement and work dependency. Analysis of scientific research shows that scholars have sought connections between maternal work engagement, work dependency, and children's strengths and difficulties, yet this topic has received little academic attention. The study participants displayed high levels of work dependency. It was found that the older the women and their children, the less importance they attached to work. As women's work dependency increases, their work performance and workplace stress indicators rise, while their assessment of work's importance declines. The quantitative expression of strengths and difficulties in mothers' reports on their 5- to 11-year-old children aligns with established norms for this age group.

Keywords: work engagement, work dependency, children's strengths and difficulties, motherhood.

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. A woman who works and raises children finds herself in an especially complex space within modern society. Mothers engaged in career or professional work face alternating and increasingly stringent demands on their maternal commitments related to time, experience, energy, and emotions (Edgley, 2020). Actively combining work, motherhood, and life can more closely resemble frantic juggling than a calm, balanced life activity. Both work and motherhood ideologies tend toward various restrictions and punitive judgments for work that is improperly or incompletely performed. When women return to work after maternity leave, they may initially strive to justify themselves to the utmost and become perfectionists (Crompton & Harris, 1998) in both work and motherhood spheres, but ultimately conclude that being 'indispensable' in both domains undermines harmonious existence in family, work, and their relationship with themselves.

Two major types of human investment in work can be distinguished: work dependency and work engagement. According to numerous authors who have extensively studied work dependency, employment constitutes not just an important condition for personal wellbeing. Frequently, work begins to dominate over other life activities and often substantially limits them. This implies various threats may emerge to employee health and social relationships, particularly family connections (Hauk & Chodkiewicz, 2013). Work dependency is defined as a tendency to work excessively hard and to be obsessed with work, which moreover manifests in compulsive work behavior. Work engagement, in contrast to work dependency, is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related mental state characterized by vigor and dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Although both work dependency and work engagement involve active, work-related states that indicate high involvement in work, the underlying motivation of these two phenomena is different. In other words, workaholism features high effort with negative effects, whereas work engagement involves high effort with positive effects (Morkevičiūtė & Endriulaitienė, 2021).

The ideology of intensive mothering holds that proper or ideal mothering practice is "child-centered, constantly informed by expert knowledge, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive" (Hays, 1996; cited in Sakaluk, Breitreutz & Kushner, 2022, p. 309). According to this ideology, good mothers are completely devoted to self-sacrifice and to meeting their children's needs comprehensively. Hattery (2001, cited in Sakaluk et al., 2022, p. 312) conducted research and identified four orientations within the intensive mothering ideology: conformist, anti-conformist, pragmatic, and innovative. Conformist mothers identified staying at home with children as the only option that allows active focus on child-rearing and the implementation of intensive mothering ideology. Mothers who displayed a pragmatic orientation in the study combined caring for their children with financially providing for them. Innovative mothers, like pragmatic ones, balanced both intensive mothering and financially providing for the family. However, unlike the pragmatists, they sought various

alternatives for implementing this idea that were unrelated to conventional work-family balance options – for example, establishing a business that mothers could run and develop from home, thereby simultaneously dedicating time to both family and its financial well-being (Sakaluk et al., 2022).

Unlike the three aforementioned orientations in which women embraced intensive mothering ideology, anti-conformist mothers rejected this ideology and the idea of constant childcare at home, emphasizing a sense of personal responsibility – both financially and emotionally – to nurture and care for their children (Sakaluk et al., 2022). Nevertheless, in striving to fulfill the emotional role of a working mother who financially supports her children, various difficulties arise in family life, especially for the children. Because of fatigue and work stress, women find it hard to devote themselves fully to raising and caring for their children. O’Sullivan et al. (2022) argue that mothers tend to assume more responsibility for caregiving and household duties than fathers. Although men acknowledge the importance of domestic responsibilities, they often ignore them. Consequently, children may react more sensitively to maternal than to paternal parenting behavior (Jiang et al., 2010) and more readily notice the caregiving of tired mothers becoming neglectful.

Research problem. Today, there is growing concern about the mental health of children and adolescents, as family, social, and demographic changes have left marks on their psychological state: in pursuit of better livelihoods, parents opt for higher-paying jobs abroad, leaving children at home with grandparents or older siblings. Even when parents don’t relocate, they often work long hours and cannot devote sufficient attention to their offspring, or the attention they provide is inadequate, affected by stress and tension. In such situations, children become more withdrawn and sad; unexpressed experiences and emotions can give rise to anxiety and irritability. Formerly, men bore greater responsibility for the family’s financial support. Today this responsibility is shared almost equally by men and women, so children may lack maternal attention because of mothers’ heavy workloads and may consequently experience developmental difficulties.

Object of research. Mothers' work engagement and work addiction, and children's strengths and difficulties.

The aim of the study is to reveal the connections between children's strengths and difficulties and the characteristics of their mothers' work engagement and work addiction.

Research objectives:

1. To develop a questionnaire for assessing mothers' work engagement and to verify its reliability.
2. To evaluate the characteristics of mothers' work engagement and work addiction based on the sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants.
3. To assess the correlations between indicators of mothers' work engagement and work addiction.
4. To reveal the manifestations of children's strengths and difficulties as perceived by mothers and to analyze them in the context of sociodemographic indicators.
5. To reveal the correlations between mothers' work efficiency, emotional tension at work, work importance, and work addiction indicators and the nature of their children's strengths and difficulties.

Research methodology. A quantitative research design was selected. The study involved 162 respondents. At the beginning of the questionnaire, an important screening criterion was stated: only working women raising children aged between five and eleven years should complete the questionnaire. Personal invitations were also extended to acquaintances who met the selection criteria. Participants were informed that the questionnaires were anonymous and that the research was conducted for educational purposes. The questionnaire consisted of 3 scales with a total of 59 questions. The first questionnaire was designed to assess women's work engagement and was developed by the author of the study. It consisted of 24 statements divided into three subscales of 8 statements each: Work Ability, Work Tension, and Work Importance. The second questionnaire assessed work addiction (Dutch Work Addiction Scale – DUWAS-10) (Schaufeli & Taris, 2004), consisting of ten statements divided into two subscales – working excessively (WE) and working compulsively (WC). The third questionnaire assessed children's strengths and difficulties (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – SDQ) (Goodman, 1997), using an adapted Lithuanian version (Gintilienė, Girdzijauskienė, Černiauskaitė, Lesinskienė, Povilaitis & Pūras, 2004). The questionnaire consisted of 25 statements divided into five scales: prosocial behavior, hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and peer problems.

SPSS version 20.0 was used for data processing and chart presentation.

Research data collection methods: analysis of scientific literature; questionnaire survey.

1. Literature review

1.1. Concept and research overview of work engagement and work addiction

Work engagement is typically defined as an indicator reflecting employee performance, company success, and improved financial outcomes (Bates, 2004; Richman, 2006; Saks, 2006; cited in Braganza, Chen, Canhoto & Sap, 2022, p. 1537). Leadership and job characteristics influence engagement. High employee engagement provides organizations with a competitive advantage, as more engaged employees actively contribute to task completion (Mirza & Prasetyo, 2022). Highly engaged individuals tend to identify strongly with their work, experiencing it more intensely and valuing it beyond just a source of income. A review of the scientific literature suggests that work engagement is often difficult to distinguish from workaholism, which represents the opposite state – a negative internal drive to work. Thus, individuals may feel engaged for positive reasons but actually work because they see no alternative, rather than out of genuine motivation (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Therefore, a person often feels engaged in their work for positive reasons, but in reality, they work because they see no other way out, rather than due to genuine motivation (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). However, working and engaged mothers may face psychological exhaustion due to maternal stress, especially when it affects their mental health and leads to a loss of internal resources (Berinato, 2020; Bhattarai, 2020).

The term workaholism is defined as an addiction involving an uncontrollable need or compulsive urge to work continuously (Oates, 1971). Researchers propose distinguishing between workaholism and work addiction. According to Griffiths, Demetrovics, and Atroszko (2018), work addiction is a psychological phenomenon describing pathological behavior, whereas workaholism is a broader term encompassing non-pathological, context-driven work-related behavior that changes with circumstances. Workaholism also includes behavioral aspects such as uncontrollable work-related behavior, where the individual worries about work and thinks about it even when not working, as well as a tendency to work excessively hard (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the separation of workaholism and work addiction as two distinct phenomena has not yet been scientifically confirmed. Workaholism should also be distinguished from related constructs such as work engagement, which refers to "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor and dedication" (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Unlike workaholism, engagement is positively associated with job satisfaction and health. Engaged employees typically report strong support from coworkers, whereas work-addicted individuals describe the opposite (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011; Halbesleben, 2011; Halbesleben, Harvey & Bolino, 2009).

1.2. The Working Mother: The Dilemma and Compatibility of Work and Motherhood

Women often face the challenge of performing a double shift – being active employees and mothers – which forces them to grapple with the dilemma of balancing work and family life (Chrzan-Dętkoś, Kosakowska-Berezecka & Pawlicka, 2011). This frequently compels mothers to work irregular hours or outside normal working time, for example on weekends or during lunch breaks (Behson, 2002), which in turn interferes with household chores. A woman who has given birth and returns to work after childcare leave tends to strive to combine her professional duties with motherhood. Often, mothers strive to perform both jobs – professional and maternal – as precisely, as thoroughly, and at as high a level as possible. According to Borjas (2013), factors that encourage mothers to work include the level of wages, the comparison of wages in the market with the reservation wage, as well as levels of education, technology, leisure, and skills. However, the decision for mothers to work may also be influenced by financial circumstances when male partners cannot work (Duflo, 2011), women's desire to improve family living standards and pursue careers (Heilman & Okimoto, 2008), and the aspiration to enhance social life (Mendolia, 2014).

It can be argued that mothers' involvement in work may lead to dysfunctional family functioning just as work addiction can. Although working mothers differ in many respects from work-addicted women, research findings show that work-engaged mothers also tend to continue unfinished or desired tasks at home (Bakker et al., 2011; George, 2011), thereby upsetting the balance between family life and work. In such cases, the amount of time allocated to activities that mothers enjoy or to being with their children decreases. More and more mothers engage in paid work to improve their family's situation, which consequently reduces their enjoyment of household tasks and the quality time available for childcare.

1.3. Children's strengths and challenges in the context of mothers' personalities and work experiences

Children's strengths are assessed by considering the challenges they face, with particular emphasis on their healthy development and successful transition into adulthood. If these challenges are not managed, their strengths may remain unrealized. Strengths refer to children's positive traits, potential, and adaptive abilities. A child's strengths and competencies describe their personal and ecological resources, and this information helps tailor interventions that uncover and reinforce existing strengths and individual resources (Provense, Erikson, Vater & Palmeri, 1995; cited in Epstein, Synhorst, & Cress, 2009). Regarding psychological factors influencing a child's behavioral, emotional, and other difficulties, Riahi, Amini & Salehi Veisi (2012) emphasize the critical importance of the psychological bond between mother and child. Since the mother is the first person a child meets upon entering the world and usually spends the most time with, she assumes the most important role in developing the child's psychological and emotional traits, and her behavior can be regarded as a causal factor in the child's well-being.

D'Souza, Waldie, Peterson, Underwood, and Morton (2017), while investigating the causes of children's behavioral difficulties, observed that maternal self-efficacy and self-assessment significantly influenced child development outcomes: they found that as a mother's self-efficacy increased, so did her child's cognitive development level. Furthermore, higher maternal self-efficacy was linked to better social and emotional functioning as well as greater adaptability in children. The same study also revealed that maternal stress during pregnancy was the sole prenatal factor affecting a child's behavior by age 2. This means higher maternal stress during pregnancy correlated with an increased risk of clinically significant emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, inattention, and other common difficulties. Perfectionists' childhood experiences show that, as children, they could expect parental love, attention, and affection only when everything was done flawlessly (Kontrimienė, 2014). Consequently, like links in a chain, other factors follow: such children fear taking risks, constantly need encouragement, reassurance, and confirmation that they are doing well and will not be criticized. Research has found that overly frequent and destructive criticism can lead to depression and anxiety in children (Melero et al., 2020). As we can see, perfectionism – which can influence the manifestation of various child strengths and difficulties – often correlates with those strengths and difficulties, and one of the factors shaping the development of perfectionism is the nature of upbringing experienced in childhood.

2. Research Results and Discussion

2.1. Demographic Statistics

The study included 162 mothers aged 24 to 53 (mean age = 37, SD = 5.52) (see Table 1). The children of surveyed mothers ranged from 5 to 11 years old (mean age = 8, SD = 3.52). The gender distribution of children whose behavior was assessed was balanced: 82 girls and 80 boys. Mothers with two children formed the largest group (94 participants, 58.4%), followed by those with one child (26.7%, 43 participants), and those with three children (24 participants, 14.9%).

Table 1. Sociodemographic Data

Table 1. Sociodemographic Data				
Distribution of study participants by number of children				
Sociodemographic characteristic	Raising 1 child	Raising 2 children	Raising 3 children	
Number of respondents	43	94	24	
Distribution of study participants by marital status				
Sociodemographic characteristic	Raising child(ren) alone	Raising child(ren) alone with help from my parents or other relatives	Raising child(ren) together with husband/partner	
Number of respondents	15	3	140	
Distribution of respondents by education level				
Sociodemographic characteristic	Secondary	Higher college	Higher university	Vocational
Number of respondents	10	30	107	15
Distribution of respondents by work type				
Sociodemographic characteristic	I work at my workplace outside the home	I work remotely (from home)	Hybrid work: part of the day (week) at the workplace, part remotely	
Number of respondents	119	18	23	
Distribution of study participants by their positions				
Sociodemographic characteristic	Leadership level	Mid-level specialists	Junior / support staff	
Number of respondents	30	104	31	

Source: Compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

Of the participants, 140 mothers (86.4%) were raising children with a husband or partner (see Table 1). Fifteen participants (9.3%) reported raising children alone, while three (1.9%) stated they were raising children alone with help from their parents or relatives. When calculating correlations between family status and work engagement, job dependency, or child ability/difficulty assessments, the group of women raising children alone was merged with the group of women raising children alone with help from their parents or other relatives.

The data obtained during the study (see Table 1) show that 107 mothers (66%) have a higher university education. The second largest group of surveyed women have a higher college education, accounting for 18.5% of all respondents (30 participants). There are 15 participants (9.3%) with vocational education. The smallest group consists of 10 participants (6.2%) – women with secondary education. No participants indicated having only basic education.

Table 1 shows the distribution of study participants by their work arrangement. The recorded data indicate that the majority of participating women work on-site outside their homes (73.46%, 119 women). The second largest group differed significantly from the first – these are mothers working in a hybrid manner: partly on-site and partly remotely (23 participants, 14.2%). The third largest group was similar to the second – participants working fully remotely (from home) (11.1%, 18 women).

Table 1 also presents the distribution of participants by their job positions. Mothers holding mid-level specialist positions form the largest group (104 mothers, 64.2%). The groups of participants in leadership roles and those in regular or auxiliary staff positions are similar in size: 30 participants (18.5%) belong to leadership, while 31 (19.1%) are part of the regular (auxiliary) staff group.

2.2. Research Results

The first objective of the study was to develop a questionnaire to assess mothers' work engagement and test its reliability. First, the internal consistency of the Work Engagement Questionnaire for Women was evaluated (see Table 2). After calculating the internal consistency of the statements for each of the three scales using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, it was found that in the parts capturing different aspects – except for Work Importance – the values ranged from 0.813 to 0.856. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Work Importance scale was 0.598. While acceptable for research, values above 0.70 are often preferred to consider a scale or question group as consistent (Pakalniškienė, 2012).

Table 2. Reliability Assessment of the Work Engagement Questionnaire for Women

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha values
Work performance	0,856
Workplace stress	0,813
Job importance	0,598

Source: Compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

The intercorrelation of the subscales of the Women's Work Engagement Questionnaire was also examined. The results (see Table 3) reveal a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between Workability and Work Tension, as well as between Workability and Work Importance. Thus, women with higher workability and greater perceived work importance experience work tension more frequently. No statistically significant correlation was found between the Work Importance and Work Tension subscales.

Table 3. Intercorrelation of subscales in the Women's Work Engagement Questionnaire

	Work stress	Job significance
Productivity	0,41*	0,41*
Work importance	-0,01	-

Source: Compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

To reveal how mothers perceive their work engagement, descriptive statistics were used. The instrument was developed for the specific aims and tasks of this study; therefore, normative data are unavailable. Results were evaluated with reference to the mean, mode, median, and possible score range (8–32 points). According to the findings (see Table 4), participants' mean Workability score was moderate ($M = 17.72$, $Md = 17$), while the most frequently reported Workability score was slightly below average ($Mo = 14$). The mean Work Tension score and the most frequently reported score were above moderate ($M = 20.23$, $Md = 20$, $Mo = 19$). Likewise, the mean Work Importance score and its frequency were also slightly above moderate ($M = 20.23$, $Md = 20$, $Mo = 20$), given the score range and the maximum possible total (32 points). It should be noted that the Women's Work Engagement Questionnaire is most accurate for individual assessment; therefore, the sample means reflect the overall work-engagement indicator of the study participants.

Table 4. Results of work engagement assessment

Scale name	N	Mean	Mode	Median	Standard deviation
Work efficiency	162	17,72	14	17	4,99
Work stress	162	20,23	19	20	2,98
The importance of work	162	20,23	19	20	2,98

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

The second research objective was to assess mothers' work engagement and work dependency characteristics according to participants' sociodemographic profiles. To identify associations between mothers' work-engagement patterns and their age, Spearman's correlation coefficient was computed. Correlation analysis (see Table 5) showed statistically significant links ($p < 0.05$) between scores on the Work Tension and Work Importance scales and maternal age: very weak negative correlations were found between Work Tension and age and between Work Importance and age. This indicates a significant trend: the older the participants, the less work-related tension they experience and the less importance they attach to work.

Table 5. Associations between maternal age and work engagement characteristics

	Subscale names		
	Work performance	Work stress	Job importance
Correlation coefficient	0,08	-0,17	-0,17
P value	0,311	0,035	0,035

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

To examine associations between mothers' work engagement and their children's age, Spearman's correlation coefficient was again calculated (see Table 6). A weak but statistically significant negative correlation emerged between the importance mothers place on work and their children's age: the older

the children, the lower the importance mothers assign to work.

Table 6. Children's age in relation to mothers' work-engagement patterns

	Subscale names		
	Work performance	Work stress	Job importance
Correlation coefficient	-0,08	-0,08	-0,26
P value	0,33	0,33	0,001

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

When examining the links between mothers' work engagement and their education, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used. Results (see Table 7) showed that scores on the Importance of Work subscale differed significantly ($p < 0.05$). Further analysis (see Table 8) revealed statistically significant differences in the perceived importance of work between mothers with university degrees and those with vocational education. To identify which education group reported higher Importance of Work scores, the median for each group was calculated. It was found (see Table 7) that the median score for the perceived importance of work was higher in the secondary or vocational education group than in the university education group. Thus, mothers with secondary or vocational education are more inclined to regard work as important in their lives. No significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were found for the Productivity or Work Tension subscales across education levels.

Table 7. Differences in perceived importance of work scores among mothers by education level

Title	Education	N	<i>p value</i>	Median
Work importance	Secondary / vocational	25	0,01	22
	Higher university	107		20

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

Table 8. Differences in work-engagement scores among mothers by education level

Title	Education groups	PostHoc criterion (<i>p-value</i>)
Work importance	Higher university and higher college education	0,32
	Higher university and secondary / vocational education	0,003
	Higher college and secondary/vocational education	0,1

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

To determine whether differences exist in the work-engagement profiles of mothers holding different positions, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used. The p-values show (see Table 9) that statistically significant differences in Work Stress and Job Importance subscale scores were found among women in different roles. Post-hoc Dunn tests were used to identify which position-based groups differed significantly on these variables. Statistically significant differences in Work Stress subscale scores were found between the managerial group and the rank-and-file/support-staff group, as well as between the mid-level specialist group and the rank-and-file/support-staff group (see Table 10). Significant differences in Job Importance subscale scores were detected between the managerial and rank-and-file/support-staff groups. To determine which position group reported higher Work Stress and Job Importance scores, median values were calculated. The results (see Table 9) showed that mothers in managerial positions had the highest median Work Stress scores, while those in the lowest-ranking positions had the lowest. The Job Importance median was higher among rank-and-file/support staff than in the highest-ranking position group. Thus, women in managerial positions experience the most work-related stress, while work importance is most valued by participants belonging to the lowest staff tier. No statistically significant differences in Workability scale scores were found across position groups ($p > 0.05$).

Table 9. The relationship between mothers' job positions and their work-engagement characteristics

Title	Position held	N	<i>p-value</i>	Median
Workplace stress	Leading link	30	0,001	22
	Mid-level specialist tier	104		20
	Regular / auxiliary staff	31		16
Job importance	Management level	30	0,03	19
	Regular / auxiliary staff	31		21

Source: compiled by the author from the research data, 2024

Table 10. Differences in work-engagement scores across maternal groups by job position

Title	Occupational position groups	Post hoc criterion (<i>p-value</i>)
Workplace stress	Managerial and mid-level specialist tiers	0,35
	Link between managerial and line/support staff	0,001
	Link between middle management and line/support staff	0,001
Job importance	Link between managerial and mid-level specialists	0,06
	Link between management and line/support staff	0,01
	Link between mid-level specialists and line/support staff	0,25

Source: compiled by the author from the research data, 2024

The second research objective was to assess and compare work engagement and workaholism characteristics across sociodemographic groups. Descriptive statistics were used to examine how mothers rate their workaholism traits (see Table 11). Because Lithuanian normative data for the questionnaire are unavailable, the analysis relied on the author's norms, while recognising that cultural differences may require substantial adjustments—especially for individual assessment. When analysing the results, the overall work-addiction index is examined and interpreted, because the scores of the individual subscales are not interpreted on their own. Moreover, the percentage score is calculated specifically for work addiction by summing the values of both subscales – Excessive Work and Compulsive Work. As the results show (see Table 11), the participants rate their level of work addiction as high (mean = 22.32, corresponding to 55.8 %). It should be noted that the Work Addiction Questionnaire is most accurate for individual assessment; therefore, the sample means reflect the general manifestation of work-involvement indicators within the sample.

Table 11. Results of work addiction assessment

Dependency on the work questionnaire subscale	Standard	N	Average	Standard deviation
Overall level of dependence on work	>5% – very low level of dependence on work; 5–25% – low level of dependence on work; 25–75% – high level of dependence on work; 75%< – very high level of dependence on work;	162	22,32 (70 %)	5,74

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

When examining the relationships between mothers' work addiction characteristics and their age, their children's age and number, and family status, Spearman's correlation coefficient revealed no significant associations. No significant relationship was found between mothers' education, job type, and their work addiction either.

To determine whether work addiction characteristics differed based on mothers' job positions, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used. Considering *p*-values (see Table 12), statistically significant differences in Overwork subscale scores were found among women holding different positions ($p < 0.05$). Post-hoc analysis using Dunn's test (see Table 13) revealed significant Overwork subscale differences between executive-level and mid-level specialist groups. Based on calculated median values of the Overwork subscale in these two position groups, the median was higher in the mid-level specialist group than in the executive group. This indicates that participants holding mid-level positions showed a greater tendency toward overwork. No significant differences in Compulsive Work subscale scores were found based on participants' positions ($p > 0.05$).

Table 12. Associations between mothers' job positions and their work addiction characteristics

Title	Position held	N	P value	Median
Overwork	Leading link	30	0,007	12
	Mid-level specialists	104		13

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

Table 13. Associations between mothers' job positions and their overwork characteristics

Title	Occupational groups	Post hoc criterion (<i>p-value</i>)
Excessive workload	Management and mid-level specialist tiers	0,02
	Management and rank-and-file / support staff tiers	0,6
	Mid-level and rank-and-file / support staff tiers	0,7

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

The third research objective was to evaluate the relationships between mothers' work engagement and work addiction indicators. The results (see Table 14), obtained through correlation analysis, revealed significant relationships between mothers' work addiction and work engagement metrics. A statistically significant positive moderate correlation was found between Work Overcommitment and Workability, while Work Overcommitment and Work Tension showed a weak positive correlation. Conversely, Work Overcommitment and Work Importance ratings exhibited a weak negative correlation. The relationships between Compulsive Work and both Workability and Work Tension were weakly positive, while Compulsive Work and Work Importance showed a weak negative correlation. Thus, the higher the mothers' work addiction, the more they demonstrate workability, experience greater work tension, but tend to undervalue the importance of their work.

Table 14. Associations between mothers' work engagement and their work addiction characteristics

Scale names	Women's Work Engagement Questionnaire Scales		
Dutch Work Addiction Scale	Workability	Work strain	Work significance
Workaholism	0,62 *	0,34 *	-0,34 *
Compulsive work	0,49 *	0,32 *	-0,31 *

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

Note: Spearman's correlation coefficient was used; * - $p < 0.05$;

The fourth research objective was to examine and compare manifestations of children's strengths and difficulties according to their mothers' sociodemographic indicators. Descriptive statistics were used to reveal how mothers evaluated their children's strengths and difficulties. According to the results (see Table 15), participants reported that their children's Prosocial Behavior (mean – 7.39), Hyperactivity (mean – 4.28), Emotional Symptoms (mean – 2.93), Conduct Problems (mean – 1.96), and Peer Problems (mean – 2.1) scores fell within normal ranges based on the provided norms (Gintilienė et al., 2004). It is important to note that the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is adapted for individual assessment, therefore the sample means can only indicate that no major outliers were recorded in mothers' evaluations of their children.

Table 15. Children's strengths and difficulties assessment results

Title	Normative	N	Average	Standard deviation
Sociability	6–10 – normal range; 5 – threshold; 4–0 – deviation	162	7,39	1,97
Hyperactivity	0–5 – normal range; 6 – threshold; 7–10 – deviation	162	4,28	2,22
Emotional symptoms	0–5 – normal range; 6 – borderline; 7–10 – deviation	162	2,93	2,3
Behavioral issues	0–3 – normal range; 4–5 – borderline; 6–10 – deviation.	162	1,96	1,61
Peer relationship problems	0–3 – normal range; 4 – borderline; 5–10 – deviation.	162	2,1	1,74

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

When examining the relationships between mothers' assessments of their children's strengths and difficulties and their age, Spearman's correlation coefficient was calculated. The correlation analysis (see Table 16) revealed a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), weak negative correlation between mothers' ratings of their children's Peer Problems and maternal age. Thus, the older the mothers, the fewer peer-related problems they notice in their children.

Table 16. Associations between maternal age and children's strengths and difficulties

	Sociability	Hyperactivity	Emotional symptoms	Behavioral problems	Peer problems
Correlation coefficient	0,119	-0,149	0,041	-0,087	-0,168
P-value	0,13	0,058	0,601	0,272	0,033

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

Table 17 shows a statistically significant association, allowing us to conclude that the older the children, the fewer hyperactive behaviors mothers observe in them.

Table 17. Associations between children's age and their strengths and difficulties

	Sociability	Hyperactivity	Emotional symptoms	Behavioral problems	Peer problems
Correlation coefficient	0,101	-0,225	0,004	-0,181	-0,060
P-value	0,202	0,004	0,955	0,021	0,445

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

To examine differences in children's strengths and difficulties by gender, the non-parametric Mann–Whitney U test was used. Table 18 shows significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in Emotional Symptoms and Conduct Problems scale scores. Based on mean ranks, boys displayed statistically significantly higher Emotional Symptoms scores, whereas higher Conduct Problems means were found among girls. Thus, emotional symptoms appear more often in boys than in girls, whereas mothers of girls reported behavioural problems more frequently. Children's strengths and difficulties showed no significant differences by either family size or maternal marital status.

Table 18. Associations between assessed children's gender and their strengths and difficulties

Title	Child's gender	N	P value	Mean rank
Emotional symptoms	Girls	82	0,01	72,29
	Boys	80		90,94
Behavioral issues	Girls	82	0,04	88,55
	Boys	80		74,27

Source: compiled by the author based on research data, 2024

To identify associations between children's strengths and difficulties and their mothers' education, the non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis test was employed. Results (see Table 19) revealed significant differences in Sociability scale scores across maternal education groups ($p < 0.05$). Post-hoc analysis with Dunn's test (see Table 20) showed statistically significant differences in Sociability scores between mothers with a university degree and those with a college degree. As shown in Table 20, the median Sociability subscale score was higher in the college-educated group than in the university-educated group. Thus, mothers with a college education were the most likely to notice and value their children's strengths. Mothers' workplace and job title were unrelated to children's strengths and difficulties.

Table 19. Comparison of strengths-and-difficulties scores among children of mothers with different levels of education

Title	Mother's education	N	p-value	Median
<i>Socialum issues</i>	Higher college	30	0,04	8
	Higher university	107		7

Source: compiled by the author from the research data, 2024

Table 20. Differences in children's sociability scores across groups of mothers with different education levels

Title	Education groups	Post hoc criterion (<i>p</i> -value)
<i>Sociability</i>	Higher university and higher college education	0,045
	Higher university and secondary/vocational education	0,06
	Higher college and secondary/vocational education	0,97

Source: compiled by the author from the research data, 2024

The fifth and final study objective was to reveal associations between mothers' work engagement, emotional strain at work, job importance and work-dependency indicators and the nature of their children's strengths and difficulties. To this end, Spearman correlation coefficients were calculated. Table 21 shows statistically significant correlations between the Sociability and Work Importance subscale scores ($p < 0.05$), with very weak negative relationships observed. This indicates a significant tendency that mothers who value work more are less likely to notice their children's strengths. Statistically significant weak positive correlations were also found between Work Addiction and children's Hyperactivity, Emotional Symptoms, Behavioral Problems, and Peer Problems. Statistically significant weak negative correlations were observed between mothers' Work Stress and children's Hyperactivity, Emotional Symptoms, and Peer Problems. Thus, the greater the mothers' work stress, the more they notice their children's difficulties. Mothers experiencing greater work stress also tend to respond more to their children's hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, and peer problems. No statistically significant correlations were found between the remaining children's strengths and difficulties and work engagement or work addiction scores ($p > 0.05$).

Table 21. Associations between mothers' work engagement and work addiction indicators and their children's strengths and difficulties

Scale names	Dutch Work Dependence Questionnaire scales	Women's Work Engagement Questionnaire scales		
Child Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire scales		Work ability	Work stress	Work importance
Sociability	-0,113	-0,071	0,15	-0,188 *
Hyperactivity	0,286 *	0,005	-0,212 *	0,083
Emotional symptoms	0,24 8 *	0,031	-0,218 *	0,035
Behavioral problems	0, 191 *	-0,053	-0,086	0,055
Peer-related problems	0,23 2 *	0,047	-0,179 *	0,022

Source: compiled by the author from the research data, 2024

Note: Spearman's correlation coefficient was used; * – $p < 0.05$.

In summary, the analysis of relationships between mothers' work engagement and work addiction indicators with their children's strengths and difficulties revealed that mothers who value work more are less likely to notice their children's strengths. It was also found that the greater the mothers' work addiction, the more they emphasize their children's difficulties. Mothers experiencing greater work stress also tend to highlight their children's hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, and peer problems more.

Conclusions

- The following characteristics of working mothers' work engagement and work addiction, and their relationships with sociodemographic factors, were revealed:
 - ✓ Study participants exhibited high levels of work addiction.
 - ✓ The older the women and their children, the less importance they attach to work.
 - ✓ Work was valued more highly by women with secondary and vocational education in the lowest staff tier.
 - ✓ Women in higher positions experience workplace stress more frequently; the older the women, the less stress they feel while working.
 - ✓ The tendency to overwork is more common among women in middle-level positions.

2. As women's dependence on work increases, their work engagement and job-related stress rise, but their valuation of work's importance declines.
3. The following significant correlations emerged:
 - ✓ Older mothers assess their children's difficulties more leniently; the older the children, the less pronounced their hyperactivity.
 - ✓ Mothers with higher education perceive stronger manifestations of their children's abilities.
 - ✓ Mothers of boys more frequently report emotional symptoms, while mothers of girls report behavioral problems.
4. Correlations were revealed between working mothers' job involvement, work dependency characteristics, and their children's strengths and difficulties:
 - ✓ The more mothers value the importance of work, the less likely they are to recognize their children's strengths.
 - ✓ The greater a mother's work dependency and job-related stress, the more pronounced the child's difficulties appear.

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MOTINŲ ĮSITRAUKIMO Į DARBĄ, PRIKLAUSOMYBĖS NUO DARBO IR JŲ VAIKŲ ELGESIO YPATUMŲ SĄSAJOS

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Santrauka

Mokslinių tyrimų analizė rodo, jog mokslininkai ieškojo sąsajų tarp motinų įsitraukimo į darbą, priklausomybės nuo darbo ir vaiko galių ir sunkumų, tačiau ši tema moksliskai nagrinėta mažai. Tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti vaikų galių ir sunkumų

sąsajas su jų motinų įsitraukimo į darbą bei priklausomybės nuo darbo ypatumais. Motinų įsitraukimo į darbą vertinimui panaudotas darbo autorės sukurtas Moters įsitraukimo į darbą klausimynas. Priklausomybės nuo darbo įvertinta Olandijos Priklausomybės nuo darbo klausimynu (angl. Dutch Work Addiction Scale – DUWAS-10) (Schaufeli & Taris, 2004)), o savo vaikų galias ir sunkumus motinos vertino Galių ir sunkumų klausimyno (angl. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – SDQ), sukurto R. Goodman (Goodman, 1997), adaptuota lietuviška forma (Gintilienė, Girdzijauskienė, Černiauskaitė, Lesinskienė, Povilaitis ir Pūras, 2004). Tyrime dalyvavo 162 dirbančios ir vaikus nuo penkerių iki vienuolikos metų auginančios motinos. Tyrimo duomenys surinkti internetinės apklausos būdu. Darbo tikslui pasiekti autorės sukurtas Moters įsitraukimo į darbą klausimynas atitiko patikimumo kriterijus ir leido įvertinti tyrimo dalyvių darbingumą, darbe patiriamą įtampą ir požiūrį į darbo svarbą. Atskleisti šie dirbančių motinų įsitraukimo į darbą, priklausomybės nuo darbo ypatumai ir sąsajos su sociodemografiniais požymiais: tyrimo dalyvės pasižymėjo aukštu priklausomybės nuo darbo lygiu; kuo vyresnės moterys ir kuo vyresni jų vaikai, tuo mažiau vertinama darbo svarba; darbo svarbą aukščiau vertina moterys, turinčios vidurinį ir profesinį išsilavinimą ir priklausančios žemiausiai personalo grandžiai; įtampą darbe dažniau patiria aukščiausias pareigas užimančios moterys; kuo vyresnės moterys, tuo mažiau įtampos jaučia dirbdamos; polinkis perdėti daug dirbti labiau būdingas vidurinei personalo grandžiai priklausančioms moterims. Didėjant moterų priklausomybei nuo darbo, auga jų darbingumo ir įtampos darbe rodikliai, bet mažėja darbo svarbos vertinimas. Motinų reflektuojamų vaikų galių ir sunkumų kiekybinė išraiška atitinka nustatytas šio amžiaus normas. Vyresnės motinos atlaidžiau vertina vaikų patiriamus sunkumus; kuo vyresni vaikai, tuo mažiau išreikštas jų hiperaktyvumas; aukštąjį išsilavinimą turinčios motinos mato stipresnę savo vaikų galių raišką; emocinius simptomus dažniau reflektuoja berniukų, o elgesio problemas – mergaičių motinos. Kuo labiau motinos vertina darbo svarbą, tuo mažiau linkusios vertinti savo vaikų galias; kuo didesnė motinų priklausomybė nuo darbo ir darbe patiriama įtampa, tuo stipriau reflektuojami vaiko sunkumai.

Raktiniai žodžiai: įsitraukimas į darbą, priklausomybė nuo darbo, vaikų galios ir sunkumai, motinystė.