

**Women who choose
Work-life balance contribute
to the Glass Ceiling**

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Abstract

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The area of Work-life balance has become increasingly important for Human Resource Management in today's 24/7 society. Research carried out in the area includes multiple studies that explore the benefits of work-life policies in various organisations around the world. More and more companies are beginning to see the positive effects of employees having a good work-life balance. There is a gap in the research in relation to work-life balance and the relationship it has if any with career advancement. A questionnaire was used as the research method in the current study.

The sample was taken from randomised individuals in employment. The sample contained respondents with different demographics such as gender, age, marital status, family status, education level and employment status. The questionnaire was created using pre-existing literature and the research objectives were outlined. An analysis was completed and the results were further examined. The findings indicated that in this particular sample that there is evidence for both sides of the argument. The analysis testing confirmed that there is a relationship between good work-life balance and good career advancement; however, there is also evidence which confirms that there is a relationship between good work-life balance and a low level of career advancement, therefore, work-life balance acting as a barrier to career advancement that is the glass ceiling.

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List of Abbreviations

WLB = Work-life Balance

CA = Career Advancement

SWAN = Scientific Women's Academic Network

EI = Enterprise Ireland

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1. Introduction

The proposed research is to gain insights in to whether or not women working in the corporate environment who choose Work-life balance (WLB), defined as the balance between work and an individual's life that is essential in modern society (Bhalla, 2016), whether this affects the glass ceiling metaphor, defined as invisible barriers that prevent the ascension of women and other marginalized groups to advance in their positions of leadership and in their careers (O'Callaghan and Jackson, 2016).

There has been a lot of recent research carried out over the last number of decades in the area of WLB and indeed the glass ceiling metaphor, both very important topics in the corporate sector, however, there has been little research conducted on whether WLB has an impact or direct relationship on the glass ceiling concept. It is worthy of study to test whether or not there is a relationship between one and the other. The literature has been reviewed, in relation to the topics of WLB and career advancement and it is clear that there is a gap in the research which gave way to identifying if a relationship exists or not between them.

This research proposes to examine the topical areas, the work will draw upon the research of many, Drummond, O'Driscoll, Brough, Kalliath, Siu, Timms, Riley, Sit and Lo (2017), Brennan (2018), O'Carroll (2015) and O'Callaghan and Jackson (2016), in relation to work-life balance and from Ugwu, Kekeocha, Chukwu and Oluchi (2018), Boone, Veller, Nikolaeva, Keith, Kergen and Houran (2013) and Naschberger and Finstad-Milion (2017) on the glass ceiling concept. This will be tested amongst a random sample of women and men working in the corporate environment.

1.1 Women in the corporate sector in Ireland

European Institutions set about implementing policy and legislation between the 1990s and 2008 to promote women's participation in the workforce (Wikipedia, 2019). In accordance with the European Working Time Directive, the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997, states the average

working week must not exceed 48 hours with a certain amount of resting break periods (Irish Statute Book, 2019). Irish maternity leave entitlement is 26 weeks versus 2 weeks for paternity leave (Citizens Information, 2019).

The Irish are a nation that traditionally value the institution of family, according to the Central Statistics Office the birth rate in Ireland had increased from 15,222 in Quarter 2 2017 to 15,419 in Quarter 2 in 2018, however, overall there were fewer births 1.037 in 2018 than 2017 (CSO, 2019). The population of Ireland currently stands at 4.85m (CSO, 2019). According to the 2016 Census in Ireland, the number of women 55.1% with third level education is higher than that of men 42.9%, also confirming that the population of women who are living longer, is higher than that of men. This census also confirmed that there is a higher participation rate of men 67.8% in the labour force (CSO, 2019). The average age at which women in Ireland gave birth to their first child decreased over the period 1955-1975 from 27.5 years to 24.8 years. Subsequently, then this average age increased to 30.5 years in 2014 and for 2018 it was 31.1 years (CSO, 2019). According to agreed labour force assumptions there will be increased labour force participation, in persons from 24-74 years, across most five year age groups to 2031 for both males and females (CSO, 2019).

Over the last decade, there has been significant progress socially and economically on gender issues, to include Ireland's National Women's Strategy 2017-2020 where all women will enjoy equality with men (IBEC, 2019). In Ireland, the government intends to introduce mandatory gender pay gap reporting, in order to address female participation rates and employment gender gaps (IBEC, 2019). At present, in Ireland the lack of female participation is a real concern for economic growth and competitiveness and if it not addressed the gender balance issues will increase and it will cost the exchequer in terms of benefit payments and lost tax revenue (IBEC, 2019).

1.2 Work life balance (WLB) overview

In Ireland the issue of WLB is regarded as a fundamental employment right, recent in its origin from the 1970s and 1980s, it is becoming increasingly

important as with the rest of the world, according to research from Bhalla (2016), life is a balancing act for women executives who balance their time between family and career commitments. The findings of research from O'Carroll (2015) show that the challenges women face are that of trying to meet work demands while facing childcare and family obligations outside of work.

1.3 Glass Ceiling overview

Originally, the glass ceiling concept was research that was conducted on gender discrimination in the workplace, more often it includes gender discrimination that increases with women's movement up the employment hierarchy, effecting gender pay differences, promotions and position attainment (O'Callaghan and Jackson, 2016). In recent years, there has been a lot of research carried out in the area of WLB; however, there is limited research in relation to the challenges that women face with particular focus on career progression (O'Carroll, 2015).

1.4 Aims and objectives of the study

The study will investigate the areas of WLB and career advancement for women in the corporate sector and whether or not WLB directly affects or acts as a barrier to advancement for working women. The objective of the study is to determine whether women who choose good WLB contribute to the glass ceiling, is there a correlation between the measurement of WLB and career advancement for women. The aim of the research is not to arrive at definite conclusions but more so to ask significant questions in the areas and raise concerns in the areas.

1.5 Structure of the study

This research is divided in to a number of sections, the introduction contains information about women working in the corporate environment to include definitions and statistics and it confirms a gap in the literature research and

the main areas for concern. The literature review contains all theory and more in depth definitions related to the topics in question. The research question is discussed, the research methods that are carried out in this study are identified and the reasoning behind a quantitative research approach. The research findings and analysis is completed and the discussion chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the literature, to include its limitations and strengths. Possible future research is suggested and conclusions are made from the current study. Furthermore, recommendations will be made for the future, to include a costing analysis on the topics presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Work life balance

According to research from Drummond, O'Driscoll, Brough, Kalliath, Siu, Timms, Riley, Sit and Lo (2017), the impact of work-family conflict on well-being outcomes is well established, however, not as established is the relationships of this for different groups of respondents. In this study a sample of 2183 employees from Australia, New Zealand, China and Hong Kong were examined, their mediating relationships between social support, work-family conflict and well-being outcomes and their relationship to gender, geographical region and whether the respondents had dependents (Drummond et al., 2017). The findings from this research demonstrate that different types of support are important for different groups of people in reducing work and family conflict and for improving health, attitude and well-being (Drummond et al., 2017). Research from Brennan (2014) on Work-life balance within an Irish retail sector suggests that those who work part time experience a higher level of work-life conflict compared to that of full time. Work-life balance can have an impact of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and motivation (Brennan, 2014).

According to a survey on the Academic Staff on Working Conditions at Dublin City University carried out by the SIPTU Section Committee, out of a total of 398 responses, more than half of the staff participants found their job stressful and nearly half of all respondents confirmed that they were tired coming home after work and were unable to do the things they enjoy, was happening often or almost always for the participants. As a result of their job, 40% of staff participants reported it difficult to maintain their personal lives. Due to the demands of their work, 41% of the respondents confirmed that they had often or almost always neglected their personal needs. As a result of work commitments, 28% of the staff participants indicated that they often or always missed out on important personal activities. Only 17% of the respondents indicated that their job is frequently or always putting them in a better mood when at home. There was also one respondent who felt that working hard did not necessarily impact on his work life-balance. Findings in

this report also confirmed that both women and employees with a disability felt particularly discriminated against when they were attempting to apply for a promotion.

Research from Lucia-Casademunt, Garcia Cabrera and Padillo-Andulo (2018), carried out on 664 females and 749 males from 27 European countries participating in the 6th European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS-2015) with children under the age of one revealed the impact of perceived WLB on women's well-being after childbirth. This research found significant differences between women and men after childbirth, the impact of WLB on them and their perceived job well-being (Lucia-Casademunt et al., 2018). The results suggest that gendered WLB practices should be promoted in organisations.

Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) is a charter managed by the UK that promotes research towards the advancement of gender equality, a study from Ovseiko, Chappel and Edmunds (2017) was based on online surveys of 42 women and 17 men, of these participants 37 face to face interviews of women confirmed that participation in Athena SWAN had brought about an increased support for women's careers and persistence in lack of work-life balance. This was a positive impact in advancing gender equality (Ovseiko et al., 2017).

The increase associated with women participating in the labour force in Germany, with the exception of the Nordic Countries and Switzerland, is the highest numbers of women in paid work has been linked to the decline in time spent on unpaid home and care work (Adema, Clarke and Frey, 2017). Partnerships should be promoted in which fathers and mothers share the child and family responsibilities enable a better work-life balance and could ensure both male and female reach their full potential in the labour market (Adema et al, 2017).

Norway is viewed as one of the most gender equal countries in the world through the use of allocating parental leave/benefits and is seen as a highly enabling environment for women to combine career and family, according to

research from Seierstad and Kirton (2015). To consider there, is the re-occurring fact that there is a greater likelihood that women take the primary responsibility for home and family, in addition to their careers and are underrepresented in high-level positions (Seierstad and Kirton, 2015).

2.2 Flexibility

In our technological age of work 24/7, the 9-5 workday no longer exists, according to CIPD survey of 2019 most organisations have experienced skills shortage 84% up from 81% in 2018, this research reflects the findings in the CIPD 2017 survey and demonstrates that Ireland's economy continues to improve, there are a number of job opportunities that are increasing and with the skills shortages there are more employee incentives based around job flexibility. The CIPD 2019 survey had over 500 respondents, over 80% of organisations reported to offer some form of remote and flexible working, however, in practice 50% offer remote working on limited basis (CIPD, 2019). The survey also found that flexible working is increasing to help address the challenges around diversity and the gender pay gap (CIPD 2019). The number of temporary contracts (71%) increased, casual working/ as and when required (63%) and agency workers (60%), also four out of five companies confirmed an increase in the number of employees who availed of part-time hours (81%), flexible working (74%) and remote access working (60%), (CIPD, 2018).

Research from Phillips, Hustede, Bjorkman, Prasad, Sola, Wendling, Bjorkman and Paladine (2016), found that in a study of 24 women family physicians in rural communities in the United States, in order to facilitate successful WLB there were a number of strategies that needed to be developed to include flexible working hours, supportive relationships and clear boundaries around their work lives. In other research, WLB practices such as flexible arrangements may also work against women as they may be viewed as having a lack of organisational commitment (Lucia-Casademunt et al., 2018).

2.3 Glass Ceiling/ Career Advancement

According to research from Ugwu, Kekeocha, Chukwu and Oluchi (2018), a study was completed on the impact of work-family conflict on career advancement of 84 female professionals in four different Commercial Banks of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The findings confirmed that there was a positive relationship between work-family conflict and career advancement of females and the need for females to balance work and family responsibilities in order to achieve self-fulfillment and their career objectives (Ugwu et al., 2018).

Research from Steele Flippin (2017) confirms that there are barriers for women advancing in their careers, these are concerned with gender bias and family-planning departures, however, with the retirement of the baby boomers; more women will progress in to leadership roles. Organisations will be compelled to invest in succession-planning approaches for the Generation X women (Steele Flippin, 2017). Mentoring and coaching are among the most effective ways to improve career development (Steele Flippin, 2017).

Research from Hakim (2016) outlines that China, the country with a one child policy is the country with the lowest level of occupational segregation in the world and that Sweden has the highest level of occupational segregation among industrial countries and the largest glass ceiling. The participation numbers of women in the world's workforce are one of the most significant changes over the last century; a study of 63 female public service employees in Malaysia at Perak Secretariat in the capital city of Ipoh confirmed that WLB and gender stereotypes have a significant relationship toward barriers for upward career advancement among women in the public sector in Ipoh (Saadin, Ramli, Johari and Hadin 2016).

According to the study of 69 Canadian undergraduate women in business, their perception of the glass ceiling indicates that work-family choices are obstacles to their advancement (Ezzedeen, Budworth and Baker 2015). This

research found that participants believe the glass ceiling to be forming a barrier to their ability to advance and parental anxieties, participants confirmed their belief that career aspirations are at the expense of family, others, family at the expense of career aspirations and other aimed for career-family balance (Ezzedeen et al., 2015). Based on the research from Ezzedeen, Budworth and Baker (2015), there is a flawed suggestion that the glass ceiling concept may in fact disappear over time, this has not been tested and is based on a presumed mass of ambitious women looking to advance.

According to the findings from a study on the implications of WLB challenges for Nigerian female doctors confirm that work pressure, culture expectations, unsupportive relationships, challenging work environment, gender roles challenges, lack of voice/ participation moderate the ability to manage WLB and social sustainability (Mushfiqur, Mordi, Oruh, Nwagbara, Mordi and Turner 2017).

Nashberger and Finstad Milion (2017) carried out research that involved a study of 93 women and 5 men attending a networking event in France, findings indicated that female career is closely associated with work-life balance by both men and women, with 60% women acknowledging more the existence of the glass ceiling in their organisations. According to managers perceptions of what a female career is in the study from Naschberger and Finstad-Milion (2017), 43% of female and male participants associated a female career path with work-life balance choices and that both are entwined. Interestingly in this study the male non-manager observed that he had a female career, as he followed his wife, took a one-year parental leave, juggled his own work-life balance, working hours and childcare obligations, he labeled this as his life choice (Naschberger and Finstad-Milion, 2017). The concern in the research is that it is the individual's reflection of their own career path which must include awareness and taking ownership of career choices. A further limitation of the research is that nature of the French female networking event, men were significantly less in numbers than women (Nashberger and Finstad Milion, 2017).

Although efforts have been made to advance women towards science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) roles, little research has examined women's perspectives in strategies for advancing in to male dominated areas (Amon, 2017). Forty-six STEM women graduate students completed research and the findings indicated issues relating to career strategies, barriers to achievement and methods for managing barriers (Amon, 2017).

2.4 Leadership

The term glass ceiling is traditionally associated with workplace barriers, where women are the minority in the highest levels of executive leadership, however, newer research is suggesting women have self-imposed barriers to their leadership advancement (Boone et al., 2013). According to this research of fifty-four male and forty five global industry leaders, men and women hold essentially the same views on home and career life, in this study both genders emphasised self-imposed barriers such as family and home-life accountabilities over workplace barriers as the major difficulty to women and their career advancement, together with the lack of leadership development. This research argues that organisations need to review the resources they offer such as mentoring, career planning and leadership development for potential leaders, both men and women to attract and retain top talent (Boone, et al., 2013). There is the suggestion that the workplace barriers are in existence from leadership failures rather than gender discriminations.

A study investigating the glass ceiling concept and the role of in senior-level positions for teaching faculty and academic leaders, examines to what extent male and female employees differ on various indicators of career advancement (O'Callaghan and Jackson, 2016). Findings from this study showed that WLB issues such as childcare benefits and leave policies produced only minimal impact on the career prospects of male or female employees (O'Callaghan and Jackson, 2016).

According to Bots, Zuidgeest and Gohar (2018), few women occupy the top leadership positions in scientific decision-making, at hiring level there is an unconscious bias that can lead to a preference for male candidates. Gender diversity has become a top concern for leadership in many organisations (Bots et al., 2018). It is suggested by Bots et al (2018) that with the introduction of artificial intelligence algorithms and gender champions during recruitment this may be a solution in restoring balance to men and women receiving equal opportunity in the workplace. When women are not provided with opportunity to progress in the workforce, while raising a family, they lose time and traction. Businesses are moving towards policy adjustments in order to recruit and retain women future leaders (Gilbert, 2015). In recent decades the participation of women in the workforce has increased significantly, women now make up an important part of the global workforce, however, men continue to dominate leadership positions worldwide (Cimirotic, et al., 2017).

2.5 Gender pay gap

According to the July 2019 report from CIPD, the gender pay gap legislation is drawing closer and the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill is expected to become law in autumn 2019. This report confirms that Ireland's 13.9% is falling behind Europe's 16.6%, in relation to gender pay gap reporting (CIPD, 2019).

According to data from the CSO in 2017, on average women are paid 14% less than men, highlighting that gender pay differences are increasing from 12% in 2012. As women are obtaining higher educational qualifications this is not translating in to earning power in their organisations (CSO, 2019).

According to the study of women in the labour market, gender pay gaps, segregation, discrimination and human capital characteristics in 26 European countries, findings showed that female working conditions in the labour market are best in the Scandinavian countries while Ireland like many other European countries ranked at the bottom of the list, however, there are still medium levels of gender pay gap in these northern countries (Castellano and

Rocca, 2014). The study also confirmed gender pay gaps in the European Union and outlined that by developing policies to reduce the gender pay gap this would improve economic growth and standard of living (Castellano and Rocca, 2014).

Iceland was rated as the most gender equal country in the world (World Economic Forum, 2017). In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, Iceland has been the frontrunner for the ninth year in a row; Ireland was number eighth on the list (World Economic Forum, 2017). Iceland has become the first country in the world to enforce equal pay, within four years from January 2018, any public or private body in Iceland 25+ employees that has not been independently certified as paying equal wages for work of equal value will face daily fines (Henley, 2018).

3. Research Objectives

From a review of the literature, work-life balance and career advancement are challenging areas of human resource management affecting organisations throughout the world. The aim of the research is to investigate when women who choose a good work-life balance if this has an impact on their career advancement.

The first research objective will identify how to measure what is a good work-life balance and to see if there are any trends in relation to demographics such as gender, age, marital status, family, and employment and education status. A consideration of culture and what family-friendly benefits are offered may affect an individual's work-life balance. Research from Brough, Timms, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Siu, Sit and Lo (2014), demonstrates a valid measure of work-life balance that was tested in four independent samples.

The second research objective will identify how to measure career advancement and to see if there are any trends also, in relation to demographics such as gender, age, marital status, family, and employment and education status. Ugwu, Kekeocha, Chukwu and Oluchi (2018) use a valid career advancement scale tested in their study.

The third research objective will analyse if there is a correlation between work-life balance and career advancement, with a focus on women in particular. The research will highlight if there is a concern about work-life balance and the glass ceiling. Do women believe that they can "have it all" (Seierstad and Kirton, 2015).

The research hypothesis is whether work-life balance does influence or has significance on career advancement for women. The concept of the glass ceiling is a barrier to career success, measurement to that success is open to interpretation. The aim of the research includes how women and men perceive their own work-life balance and their own career success to date and to see if one might influence the other.

Other areas for concern in the research study are the gender pay gaps, leadership and the flexibility of organisations including working hours and remote access.

The research findings and analysis will include a discussion, limitations, strengths of the study and possible future research. Practical recommendations for employees and organisations will be made and learnings from this study. A costing analysis will be prepared in relation to further recommendations to investigate this topic. These areas will follow in later chapters.

4. Research Methodology

This chapter will investigate the research questions for further analysis and review.

4.1 Research Philosophy

According to research from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), research philosophy is concerned with the beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. Saunders et al., (2016) suggest that there are three types of research assumptions firstly, ontology referring to the nature of reality, secondly, epistemology referring to the acceptable, legitimate and the communication of knowledge and thirdly, axiology referring to ethical values in the research process. To be objective, the social reality is that research must be external to us, alternatively, the social reality made from perceptions and consequent actions of people, is subjective (Saunders et al., 2016). For this research, an objective and external approach is taken so that the data collected and information gathered cannot be altered (Saunders et al., 2016). The study is based on individual's subjective perceptions of their work-life balance and career success to date.

Positivism is associated with the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and working with an observable social reality to produce generalisations (Saunders et al., 2016). The research philosophy of positivism is adopted in this study when using existing theory in order to gather data from a quantitative view as the results gathered from the questionnaires cannot be altered to test for the hypothesis. Previous theories and scales have been researched to create the content of the questionnaire which was then used to form the hypothesis for the study. The topics include personal questions so that views can be clearly expressed.

Interpretivism emphasises that humans are different from physical phenomena and that they create meaning (Saunders et al., 2016).

Interpretivism was developed as a critique of positivism with a subjective perspective (Saunders et al., 2016). It is important to understand differences between individuals in our role as social actors (Saunders et al., 2016).

Individuals differ, their cultural backgrounds and assumptions. The objective

of interpretivist research is to create new understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts (Saunders et al., 2016). The history of interpretivism is derived from two knowledgeable traditions phenomenology, referring to the way humans make sense of the world around us and symbolic interactionism referring to how humans understand the world around us (Saunders et al., 2016). Businesses and organisations deal with complex situations on a daily basis it is important to adopt an empathetic view (Saunders et al., 2016).

4.2 Research Approach

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), an inductive research approach is where the implications of findings for the theory provoked the whole exercise. This theory which often relates to qualitative research, allows for findings and observations to be outlined so that they can be fed back into the theories they have chosen to include in their research (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

According to Bryman and Bell, (2015), a deductive research approach is opposite to that of inductive, it represents the mutual view of the relationship between theory and research. On the basis of what is known about a domain and its theoretical considerations, a hypothesis is then deduced and this must be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman and Bell, 2015). When research is carried out a hypothesis will be drawn from a particular theoretical framework regarding the research objectives, hypotheses are subjected to examination and how data will be collected is to be established (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A deductive approach for this research study will be used with pre-existing theories and pre-existing scales to formulate a specific questionnaire.

4.3 Research Strategy

A quantitative approach has been chosen as it may be the most appropriate method for this study in relation to investigating the areas and gathering data from respondents. The literature review was used to pinpoint the different theories relating to the topics of work-life balance and career advancement. It

is important to remain objective when reviewing the data collected against the literature review and the research objectives outlined. The research carried out in this study examines the measurement of accurate data on work-life balance and career advancement and if there is a relationship between them.

Brennan (2018) adopted a quantitative method using a survey among male and female participants who were employed on a full time, part time or fixed term basis all in the retail industry. O'Carroll (2015) also adopted a quantitative method using a survey among participants working full time and part time with different marital status from about six different companies. This study will adopt a similar approach, however, the context is slightly different, and a study will be used to gain information from full time, part time or fixed term working individuals employed from a number of different companies and industry sectors and also self-employed. This study has an objective role to analyse data, identify if there are similarities or differences between association of work-life balance and career advancement. The literature review was used to identify the different theory around these areas work-life balance and the glass ceiling. Data has been collected from participants in order to provide clear and effective evidence for the arguments for both sides. The research theory was collated as this basis for preparing evidence that will be assessed against the proposed collected data sample. The affect if any on the glass ceiling from salary data, position achievement data and job promotion data is collected as part of quantitative research.

The survey is comprised of three areas, Section 1 Demographics Q1-7, Section 2 Work-life Balance Q8-23 and Section 3 Career Advancement Q24-45. Data questions 8-11 were collected from the Work-life balance survey scale that was carried out by Brough et al., (2014) on 6,983 Australian and New Zealand workers. In their research, question 9 was reverse scored, however, for the purpose of this study the question has been adjusted so that it is positively trending with the other questions on the scale. Questions 10 and 11 have been changed as they were very similar to question 8. Data questions 12-15 were collected from the Work-life balance survey scale that was carried out by Ugwu et al (2018), in the study of 84 female professionals

in Commercial Banks of Ebonyi State on the impact of work-family conflict on career advancement. A number of opinion questions were also created for learning purposes 16 through to 23. In Section 3, questions 24-27 were used from the career advancement survey scale that was carried out by Ugwu et al (2018). A number of opinion questions were created for learning purposes 28 through to 45. In this questionnaire, open-ended questions were created at the end of both Section 2 and 3 so that further information can be obtained and for participants to be able to explain their own views and situations. The survey was tested in advance of the link being sent out. A consent form was used and an information sheet to introduce, outline the research and confirm anonymity. See appendix for the information sheet, consent form and survey. It was interesting to see that the survey generated a surge in responses on the Monday morning at 9am when individuals were back in work.

The results of the validity and reliability testing of each of the scales is included in the survey, both work-life balance scales have four items each, the first career advancement scale has four items and the second career advancement scale which was created for this study has 10 items. In the current study;

- The Cronbach's Alpha scale achieved a reliability value of .684 on Work-life Balance Scale 1 taken from Brough et al (2014) is slightly lower than the acceptable reliability level. With the removal of Q11 item 4 that was changed on the original scale, the Cronbach's Alpha scale achieves a higher reliability of .829
- The Cronbach's Alpha scale achieved a reliability value of .782 on Work-life Balance Scale 2 taken from Ugwu et al (2018) which is more reliable and a better scale than the first. If we remove any of the items on this scale, the Cronbach's Alpha scale achieves a lower reliability of .776, therefore, none should be removed and this is a reliable scale
- The Cronbach's Alpha scale achieved a poor reliability value of initially .145 on Career Advancement Scale 1 taken from Ugwu et al (2018). By reverse coding Q25, 26, 27 items 2, 3, 4 on the scale this returns a reliability value of .498. With the removal of Q24 item 1 on

the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha scale achieves a reliability of .517. The scale's internal consistency is tested, the degree to which the items/ questions hang together on the scale (Pallant, 2016). It is indicated that they are not all measuring the same construct. CA Scale 1 is a small scale and is more sensitive, low Cronbach Alpha's are more common in these. This scale is not reliable in this study, reasons for this may include that the study selected female only employees from four banks, geographical coverage of this study is in Ebonyi State, Nigeria, and there are different cultures between Africa and Europe to consider

- The Cronbach's Alpha scale achieved a reliability value of .864 on the Career Advancement Scale 2 which was a created scale and which is a much better result of reliability. If we remove Q29 item 2 on the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha scale achieves a higher reliability of .877.

4.4 Sampling Strategy

The sample strategy for this study is made up of male and female participants either single, married/ cohabiting, divorced/ separated, widowed, with or without dependents children/parents, who are employed on a full time/ part time/ fixed term basis or also self-employed in a number of different areas and organisations in Ireland. An online survey was created by Google Forms and sent out to friends, family members and work colleagues to obtain an overview of the topics for the research study. Literature has suggested that those who are single and without children may experience much less challenges compared to those married with children. Of the 119 participants that were surveyed, there were 42 respondents that were male and 77 respondents that were female. The majority of respondents had children as dependents and indicated that they were between the ages 35-44. The majority of respondents were married/ cohabiting, employed on a full time basis and were educated to the level of a Bachelor's degree.

The sample strategy used in this research study included one distribution method that was an online survey using Google Forms. All information and

data collected is stored in a private and secure location for this research study. The survey was distributed in July 2019. In total, there were 119 surveys completed and the numbers continue to increase.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

All participants accepted and read the information sheet and consent form as a requirement prior to answering any further questions on the survey. The process was voluntary with no identifiable data was collected neither personal detail nor names were requested for this research. All information obtained is private and confidential. Bryman (2015) research outlines harm to participants either physical or mental such as loss of self-worth or stress is unacceptable. The topics of work-life balance and career prospects are very personal to individuals. These areas can be quite emotive and being morally correct and ethical is of vital importance.

4.6 Quantitative Data Analysis

Primary research was carried out by the creation of the questionnaires and the distribution and collection of the surveys online. Analysis of the data from the respondents was carried out using descriptive statistics. With the assistance of excel and SPSS Statistics Application, the data was analysed in a clear and concise way. A number of tables and figures have been completed and presented in the dissertation. The results have been recorded by the answers given from the participants. The application of SPSS, identifies the reliability and validity testing results of each scale used in the questionnaire and will be compared against the variables in the questionnaire. The demographics of the data are displayed in Table 1. The sample is made up of areas such as marital status, gender, age, those with dependents, employment status and education level and as a result of this trends and patterns can be identified and analysed.

Table 1: Breakdown of Research Sample

Education Status %		Marital Status %	
Bachelors	35%	Married/Cohabiting	67%
Diploma	16%	Separated/Divorced	3%
Doctoral	9%	Single	29%
Leaving Cert	10%	Widowed	2%
Masters	29%	Grand Total	100%
Grand Total 100%		Employment Status %	
Age %		Fixed term	3%
18-24	8%	Full time	90%
25-34	23%	Part time	8%
25-44	1%	Grand Total	100%
35-44	51%	Dependents %	
45-54	9%	Children	54%
45-55	1%	No	45%
55+	7%	Parents	2%
Grand Total	100%	Grand Total	100%
Gender %			
Female		65%	
Male		35%	
Grand Total		100%	

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the research methodology used in the dissertation. Both the research philosophy and approach have been outlined. The research strategy and sampling strategy have been examined with a review of the ethical considerations. The questionnaire and the sample size of this research have been discussed. The next chapter will discuss the results of the research methodology, empirical findings and analysis of the research.

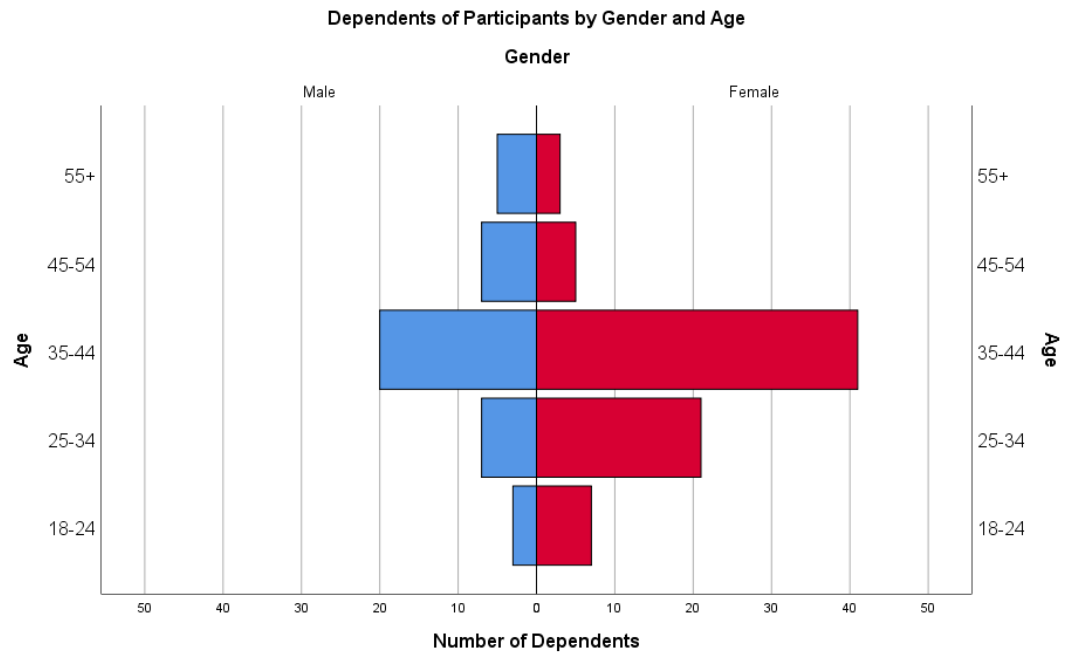
5. Research Findings and Analysis

The previous chapters discuss the research methods and objectives used in this study. The tool chosen for this investigation has been a questionnaire. There were a total of 119 respondents who participated in the survey. This chapter will examine and analyse the findings from the questionnaire. The sample collected will be skewed as it is predominantly females. The aim of the study was to establish if those women who choose having a good work-life balance contribute to the barrier of career advancement. The study will identify what part demographics have to play when it comes to analysing the results. There were two scales used in relation to the work-life balance being measured previously tested that relate to how satisfied the individual is with their personal and work life. There were two scales used in the measurement of career advancement and how satisfied the individual is with their organisations and their own career prospects. One of the career advancement scales was previously tested and the second scale was created and tested for this study. A number of opinion statements were created alongside several open ended questions for both topics work-life balance and career advancement that received some interesting insights from the respondents. The next section will include a breakdown of the demographics of the study.

5.1 Breakdown of Demographics

In Figure 1 next, we see the majority of respondents who participated in our survey with dependents whether children or parents were females and the majority of those females who had dependents were in the age bracket 35-44 years old.

Figure 1: Dependents of Participants by Gender and Age



In Table 2 below the breakdown of Demographics includes in the family status the majority of respondents 67.2% were married/ cohabiting, 28.6% were single, 2.5% separated/ divorced and 1.7% of the respondents were widowed. In the breakdown of gender the majority of respondents 64.7% were female and 35.3% were male. In the breakdown of age the majority of respondents 51.3% were aged 35-44, 23.5% were aged 25-34, 10.1% were aged 45-54 and 6.7% of the respondents were aged 55 years and older. In the breakdown of the number of dependents the majority of respondents 53.8% had children, 44.5% had no dependents and 1.7% had parents as dependents at home. In the breakdown of the employment status the majority of respondents 89.9% were full time, 7.6% were part time and 2.5% were working on a fixed term basis.

Table 2 Breakdown of Demographics

Family Status		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	34	28.6	28.6	28.6
	Married/Cohabiting	80	67.2	67.2	95.8
	Separated/Divorced	3	2.5	2.5	98.3
	Widowed	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	42	35.3	35.3	35.3
	Female	77	64.7	64.7	100.0
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	10	8.4	8.4	8.4
	25-34	28	23.5	23.5	31.9
	35-44	61	51.3	51.3	83.2
	45-54	12	10.1	10.1	93.3
	55+	8	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

Dependents		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Children	64	53.8	53.8	53.8
	Parents	2	1.7	1.7	55.5
	No dependents	53	44.5	44.5	100.0
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

Employment Status		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Full time	107	89.9	89.9	89.9
	Part time	9	7.6	7.6	97.5
	Fixed term	3	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	119	100.0	100.0	

5.2 Work-life Balance

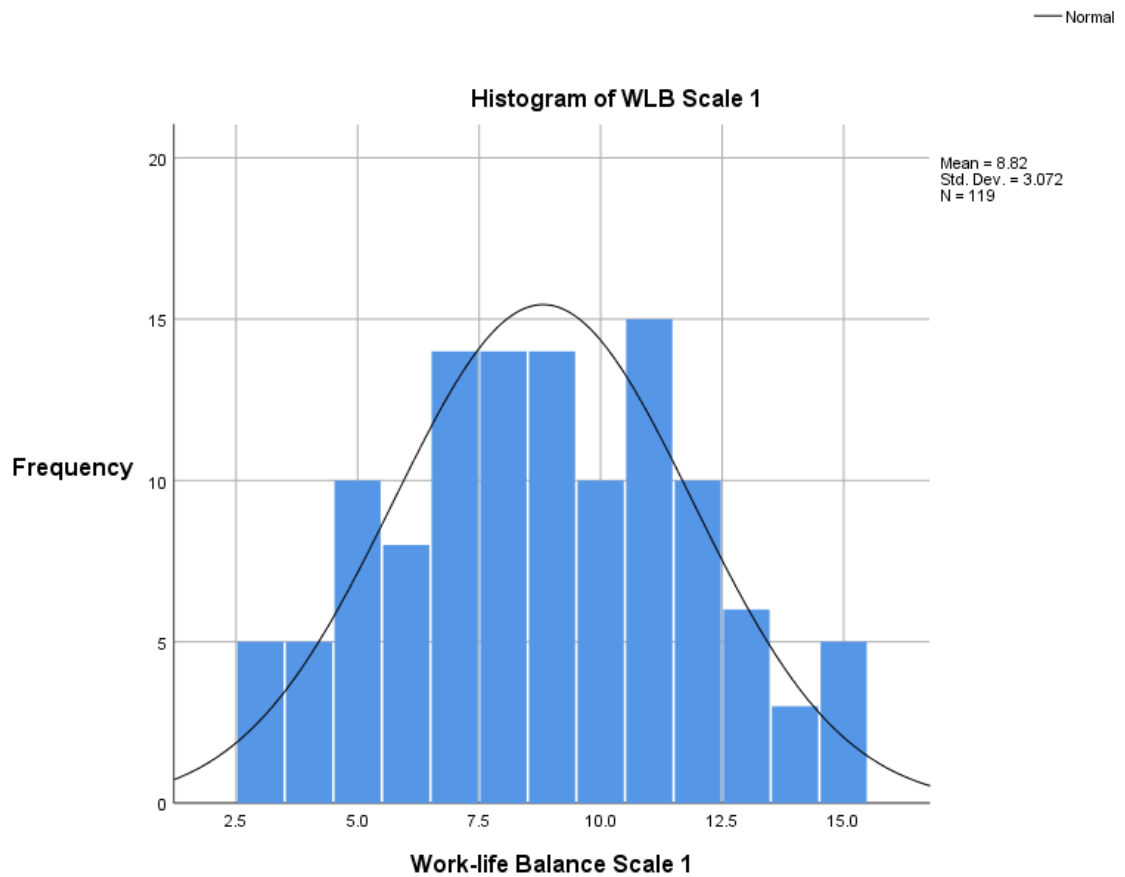
This section discusses the reliability analysis results as applied to the Work-life balance scales which were calculated using SPSS Statistics application. According to Pallant (2016), Nunnally recommends a Cronbach Alpha value of .7, Saunders et al (2016) also confirms that .7 and above is considered acceptable for reliability. The work-life balance scale was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. The reliability analysis as discussed in the research methodology chapter was carried out on the two scales for this research and their Cronbach values were returned and considered in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Work-life balance scales reliability test results for this study

Scale Name	Cronbach's	
	Alpha	0.7
WLBScale 1	0.829	Reliable
WLBScale 2	0.782	Reliable

The real distribution of a continuous variable for Work-life Balance Scale 1 (WLB scale 1) is represented in the histogram below. The horizontal axis represents the work-life balance scale and the vertical axis shows the number of respondents. The combined mean of all items on the scale is 8.82 and the combined standard deviation is 3.072.

Figure 2: Histogram of WLB Scale 1



The Shapiro-Wilk Test, which is the test to indicate for normality shows the significance .025 also known as the P value is less than .05 which is used to infer normality for the responses on the scale, in Table 4 below. Less than 0.05 is not the typical predefined level for testing. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this particular sample in WLB Scale 1 does deviate from normality. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis as it can be seen that the data is not normally disturbed as the significance value is less than 0.05.

Table 4: Tests of Normality WLB Scale 1

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
WLBScale1Sum	.089	119	.021	.975	119	.025

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The Non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test is used to indicate whether the median values of the distributions are different to each other. This can be carried out on the WLB Scale 1 as the males and females are both similarly skewed. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference. The sig. (2 tailed) or the P value is .121 as shown in Table 7 below, therefore; we cannot reject the null hypothesis as the significance is not less than .05. There is evidence to suggest that there is no difference between the median values of the males and females.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics WLB Scale 1

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	25th	Percentiles 50th (Median)	75th
WLBScale1Sum	119	8.82	3.072	3	15	7.00	9.00	11.00
Gender	119	1.65	.480	1	2	1.00	2.00	2.00

Table 6: Mean Ranks WLB Scale 1

Ranks				
	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
WLBScale1Sum	Male	42	66.61	2797.50
	Female	77	56.40	4342.50
	Total	119		

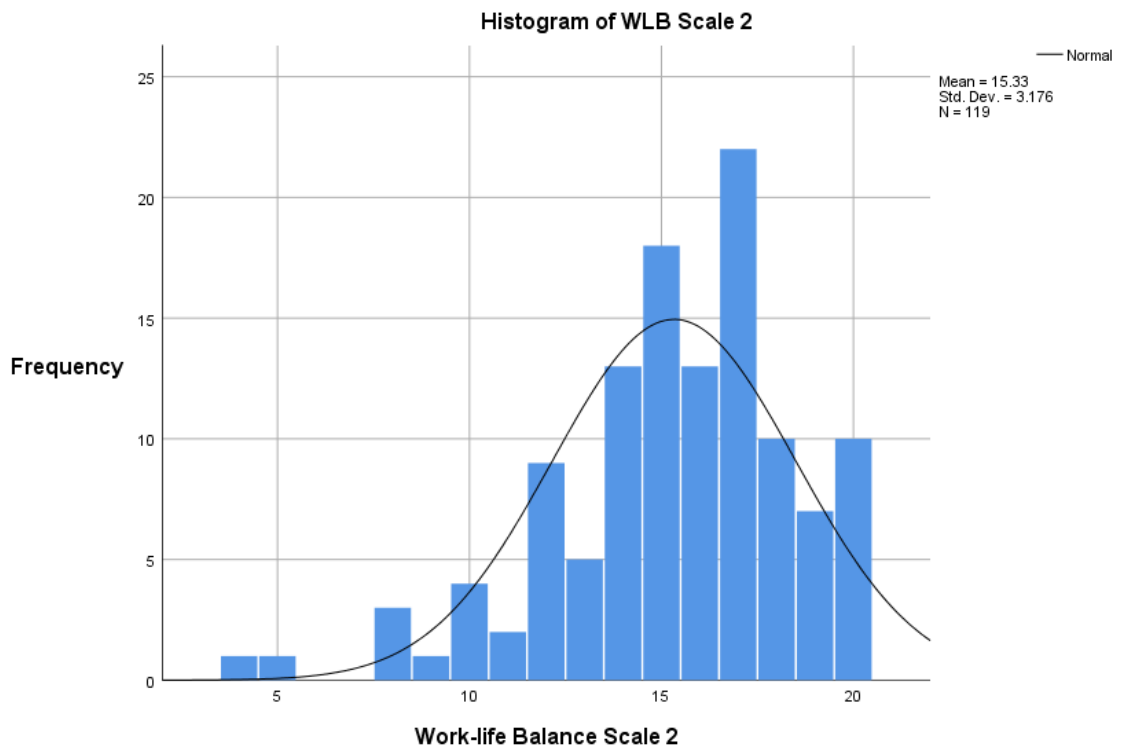
Table 7: Test Statistics WLB Scale 1

Test Statistics ^a	
	WLBScale1 Sum
Mann-Whitney U	1339.500
Wilcoxon W	4342.500
Z	-1.550
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.121

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

The real distribution of a continuous variable for Work-life Balance Scale 2 (WLB Scale 2) is represented in the histogram below. The horizontal axis represents the work-life balance scale and the vertical axis shows the number of respondents. The combined mean of all items is 15.33 and the combined standard deviation is 3.176. The modal peak value is very high which indicates that there seems to be a high degree of kurtosis, a greater degree of kurtosis would normally be expected for a normally distributed distribution. The distribution is negatively skewed.

Figure 3: Histogram of WLB Scale 2



The Shapiro-Wilk Test is used to test the normality of WLB Scale 2 significance or P value of .000, in Table 8 below. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this particular sample WLB Scale 2 does deviate from normality. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis as it can be seen that the data is not normally disturbed as the significance value is less than 0.05.

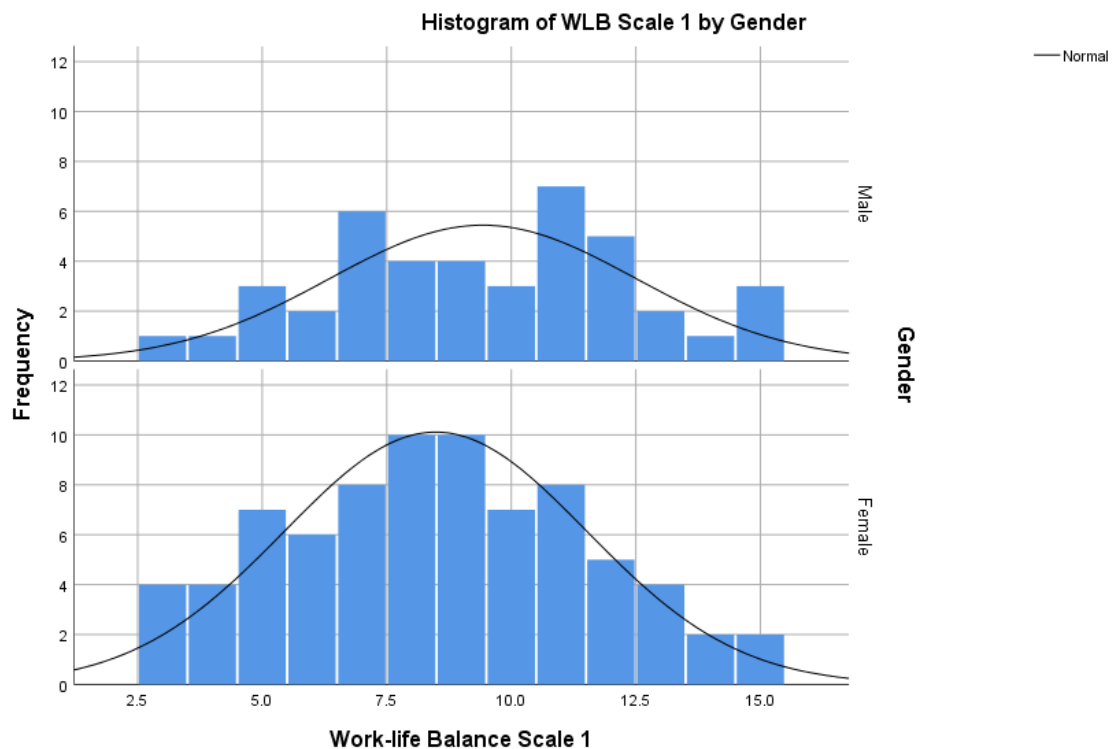
Table 8: Tests of Normality WLB Scale 2

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
WLBScale2Sum	.131	119	.000	.935	119	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

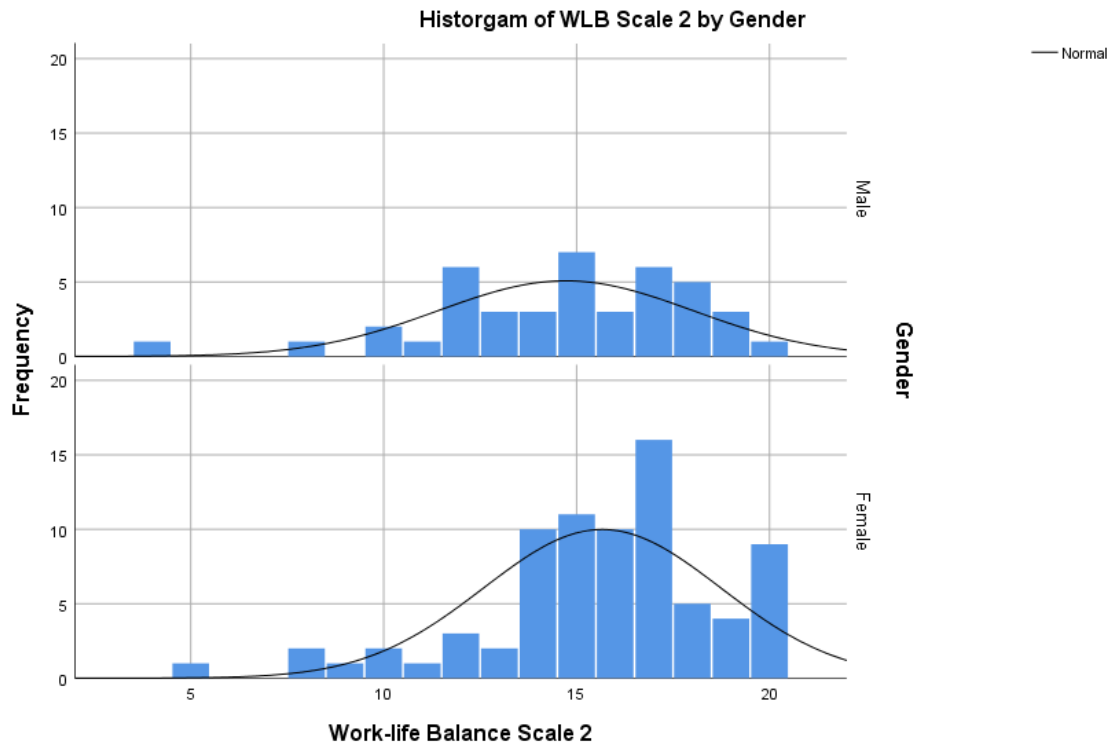
The histograms below indicate that females seem to have a better work-life balance. The horizontal axis represents the work-life balance scale and the vertical axis shows the number of respondents, however, we note that 64.7% of the respondents were females.

Figure 4: Histogram of WLB Scale 1 by Gender



The histogram of WLB Scale 2 by Gender below indicates that females are more negatively skewed; there is a modal peak and a greater level of kurtosis.

Figure 5: Histogram of WLB Scale 2 by Gender



The Non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test is used to indicate whether the median values of the distributions are different to each other. This can be also be carried out on the WLB Scale 2 as the males and females are both similarly skewed. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference. The sig. (2 tailed) or the P value is .126, in Table 11 below, therefore; we cannot reject the null hypothesis as the significance is not less than .05. There is evidence to suggest that there is no difference between the median values of the males and females.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics WLB Scale 2

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	25th	Percentiles 50th (Median)	75th
WLBscale2Sum	119	15.33	3.176	4	20	14.00	16.00	17.00
Gender	119	1.65	.480	1	2	1.00	2.00	2.00

Table 10: Mean Ranks WLB Scale 2

		Ranks		
	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
WLBScale2Sum	Male	42	53.50	2247.00
	Female	77	63.55	4893.00
	Total	119		

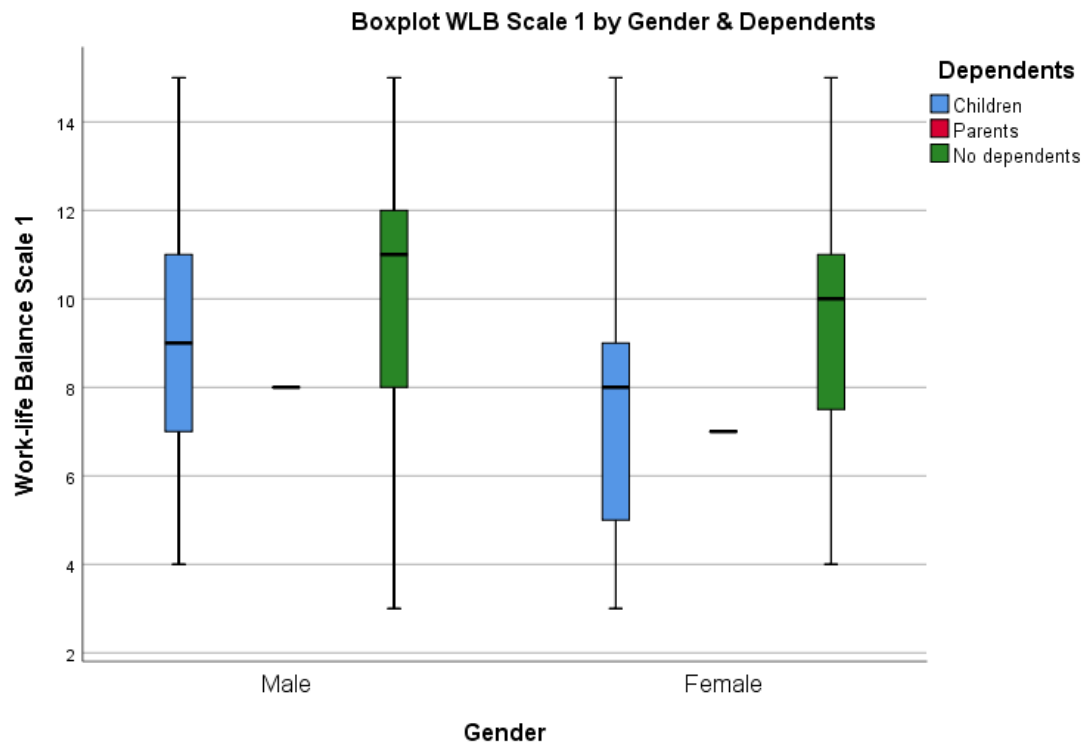
Table 11: Test Statistics WLB Scale 2

Test Statistics ^a	
	WLBScale2 Sum
Mann-Whitney U	1344.000
Wilcoxon W	2247.000
Z	-1.529
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.126

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

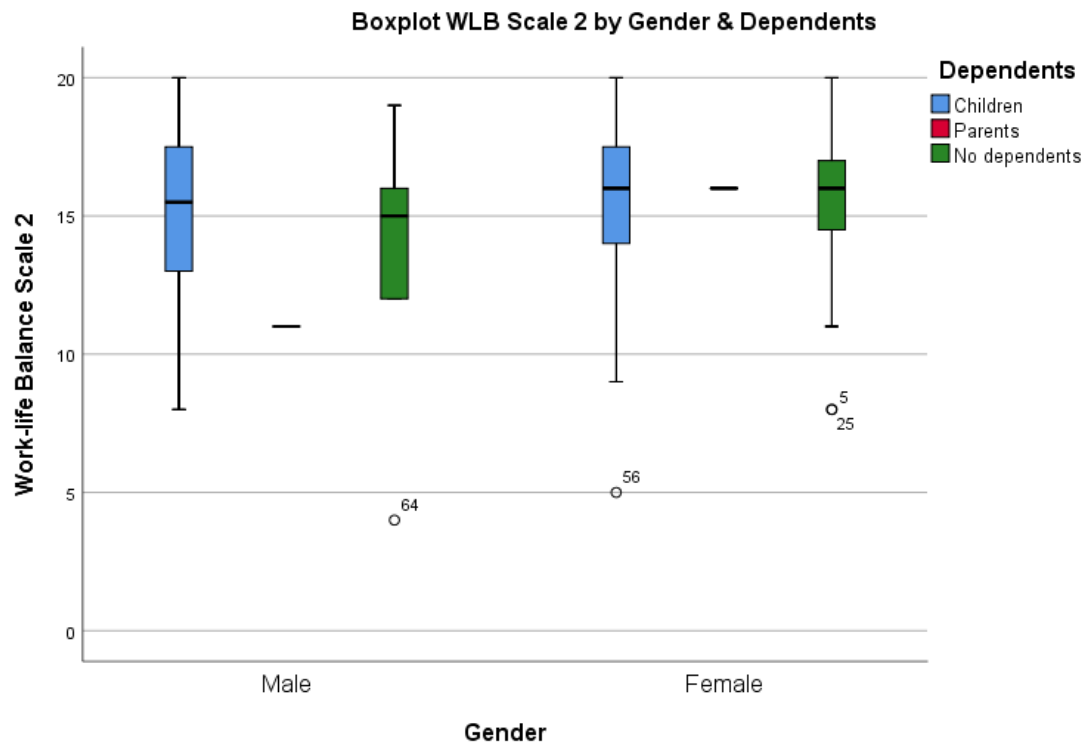
The boxplots in the figures 6 and 7 below are testing for outliers. In relation to WLB Scale 1 there are no outliers to be removed from the analysis. There are a number of reasons for this, we are not predicting future data, the outliers are not errors and the data collected is correct and representative of the population. If we delete the outliers this does not affect the model either way. The distribution is skewed positively in relation to males with no dependents and negatively to females with children.

Figure 6: Boxplot WLB Scale 1 by Gender and Dependents



In relation to WLB Scale 2, Figure 7 below, the boxplot has been analysed in relation to outliers. The outliers are not to be removed from the analysis. The distribution is skewed positively, in relation to both males and females with children.

Figure 7: Boxplot WLB Scale 2 by Gender and Dependents



5.3 Career Advancement

The career advancement scales as mentioned in Table 12 below were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. The reliability analysis was carried out on the two scales and their Cronbach values were returned and considered in this study.

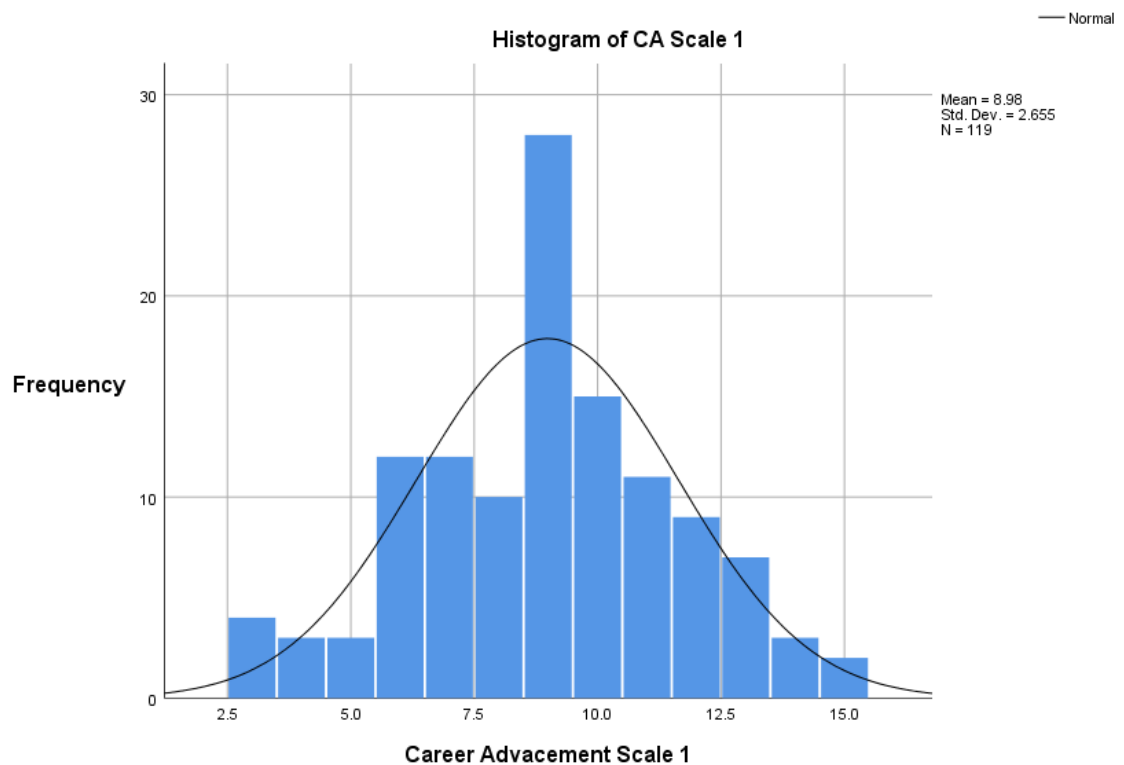
Table 12: Career Advancement scales reliability test results for this study

Scale Name	Cronbach's Alpha	
CAScale 1	0.517	Not Reliable
CAScale 2	0.877	Reliable

The real distribution of a continuous variable for Career Advancement Scale 1 (CA Scale 1) is represented in the histogram in Figure 8 below. The horizontal axis represents the career advancement scale and the vertical axis

shows the number of respondents. The combined mean of all items 8.98 and the combined standard deviation is 2.655. The modal peak value is very high which indicates that there seems to be a high degree of kurtosis, a greater degree of kurtosis would normally be expected for a normally distributed distribution.

Figure 8: Histogram CA Scale 1



The Non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test is used to indicate whether the median values of the distributions are different to each other. This can be also be carried out on the CA Scale 1 as the males and females are both similarly skewed. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference. The sig. (2 tailed) or the P value is .327 in Table 15 below, therefore; we cannot reject the null hypothesis as the significance is not less than .05. There is evidence to suggest that there is no difference between the median values of the males and females.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics CA Scale 1

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	25th	Percentiles 50th (Median)	75th
CAScale1Sum	119	8.98	2.655	3	15	7.00	9.00	11.00
Gender	119	1.65	.480	1	2	1.00	2.00	2.00

Table 14: Mean Ranks CA Scale 1

Ranks				
	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
CAScale1Sum	Male	42	64.15	2694.50
	Female	77	57.73	4445.50
	Total	119		

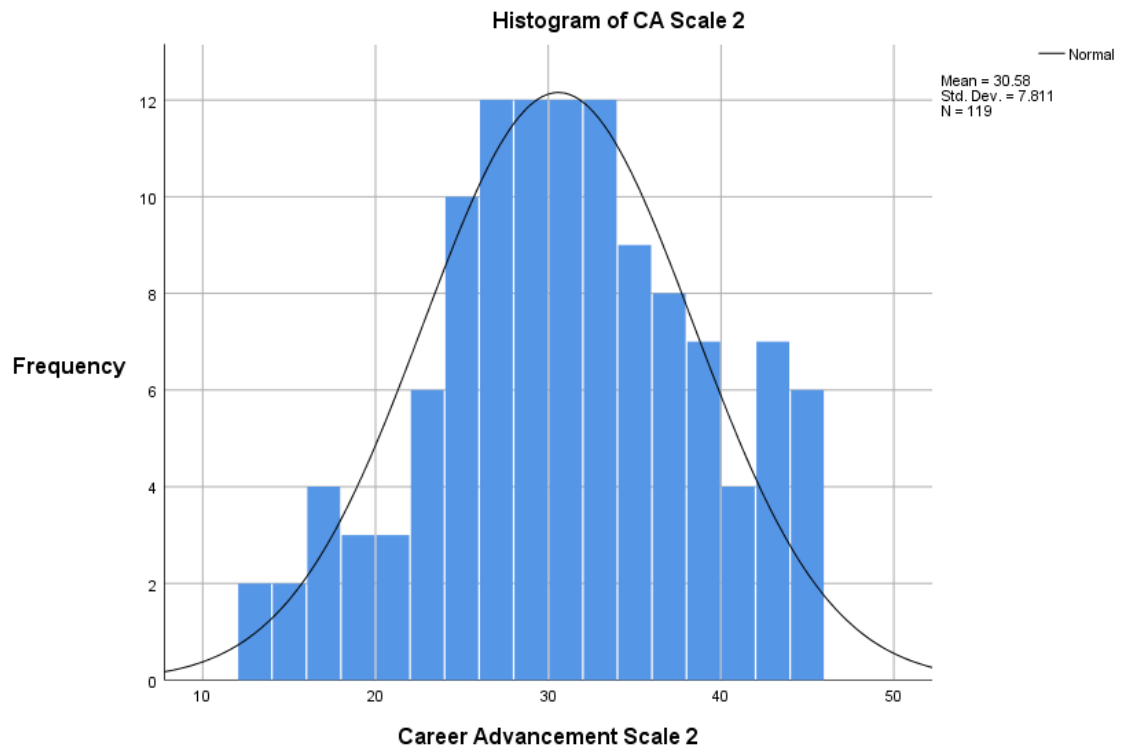
Table 15: Test Statistics CA Scale 1

Test Statistics ^a	
	CAScale1Sum
Mann-Whitney U	1442.500
Wilcoxon W	4445.500
Z	-.980
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.327

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

The real distribution of a continuous variable for Career Advancement Scale 2 (CA Scale 2) is represented in the histogram Figure 9 below. The horizontal axis represents the career advancement scale and the vertical axis shows the number of respondents. The combined mean of all items 30.58 and the combined standard deviation is 7.811.

Figure 9: Histogram CA Scale 2



The Shapiro-Wilk Test is used again to test for normality shows the significance or the P value .039 in Table 16 below is less than .05 which is used to infer normality for the responses on the scale. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this particular sample CA Scale 1 does deviate from normality. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis as it can be seen that the data is not normally disturbed as the significance value is less than 0.05.

Table 16: Tests of Normality on CA Scale 1

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
CAScale1Sum	.133	119	.000	.977	119	.039

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The histograms below Figures 10 and 11 indicate that males have better career prospects with steady growth over a wider scale. The horizontal axis represents the career advancement scale and the vertical axis shows the number of respondents. It is important to note that there were a much higher number of female respondents than males.

Figure 10: Histogram CA Scale 1 by Gender

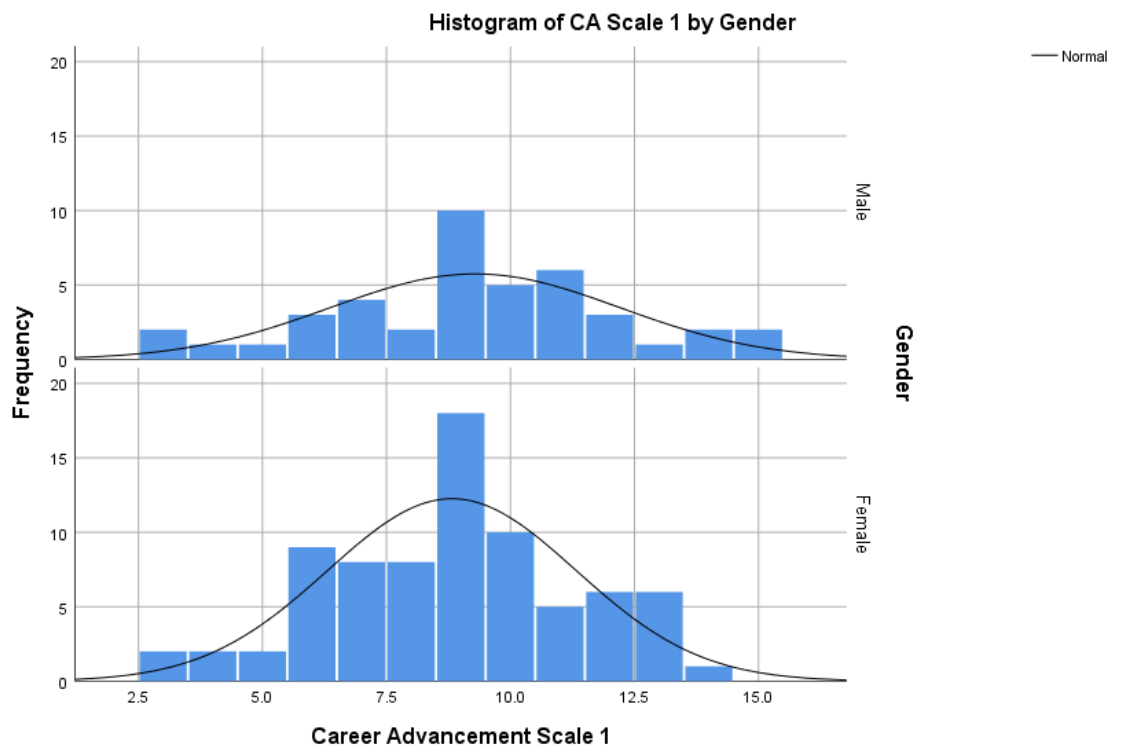
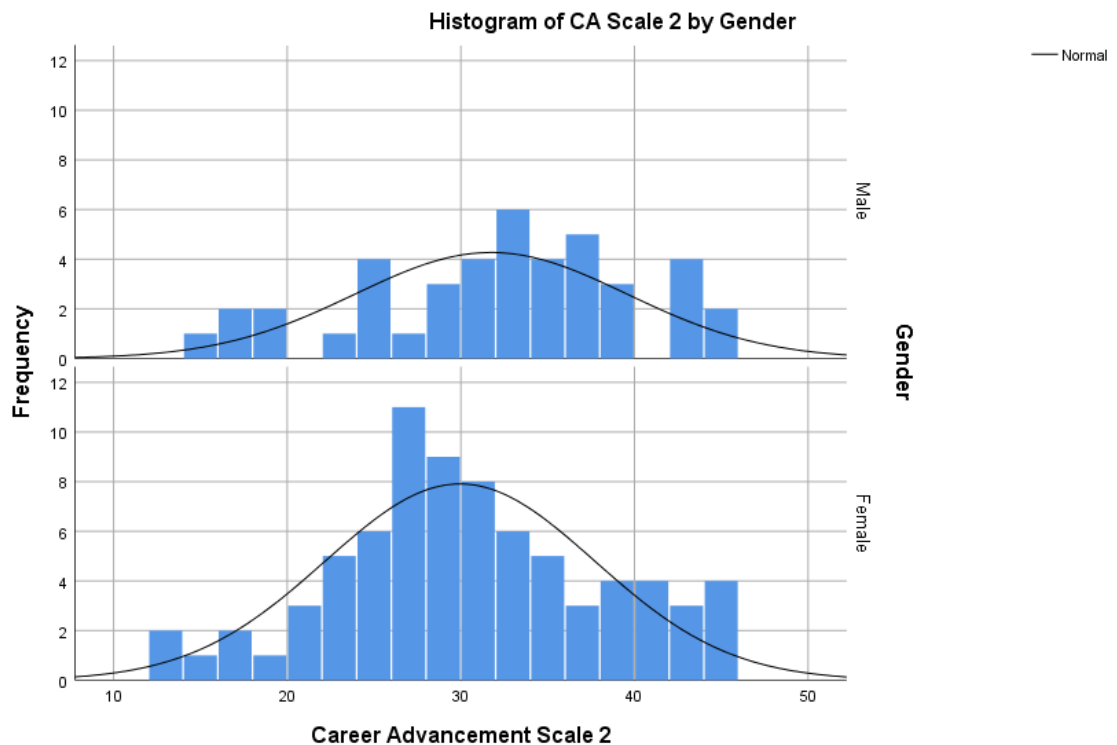


Figure 11: Histogram CA Scale 2 by Gender



The significance .106 or the P value in Table 17 below, in CA Scale 2 is not less than .05, which is the typical predefined level for testing. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this particular sample does not deviate from normality. In this case, we cannot reject the null hypothesis, so we will proceed and assume the data set is normally distributed. The histogram indicates that there are slight deviations from normality and there is a tendency to increase kurtosis.

Table 17: Tests of Normality on CA Scale 2

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
CAScale2Sum	.045	119	.200*	.982	119	.106

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The null hypothesis for the Shapiro-Wilk test on CA Scale 2 which is broken down by gender in Table 18 below is one of no difference that is that the sample does not significantly deviate from normality. In this case to reject that our sig must be less than 0.05 and the males .114 and females .221 are not less than 0.05. We should proceed with the assumption that the male and female samples have both been drawn from populations that are normally distributed. We are eliminating the chance associated with the sampling error.

Table 18: Tests of Normality on CA Scale 2 by Gender

		Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Gender	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
CAScale2Sum	Male	.129	42	.075	.957	42	.114
	Female	.071	77	.200*	.979	77	.221

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

An independent sample T test is used to test the CA Scale 2 variable in Table 20 below, to see if there is a significant difference between male and female responses on average. A pre-condition associated with the independent sample T test is that the samples have been drawn from reasonably normally distributed populations. To test if there is a significant difference between the average responses from the males versus the females on the CA Scale 2 we use the independent sample test, the test for equality of means. The sig. of P value .975 in Table 20 below is not less than .05; therefore, we assume the samples have been drawn from equal populations. The sig. (2-tailed) .975 is not less than .05; we therefore, cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is not a significant difference between the two mean samples. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that these two samples have been drawn from populations with similar means. The mean for males of 31.74 and the mean for females 29.95 are not significantly different as a result of the independent sample t test as shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Group Statistics CA Scale 2 by Gender

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CAScale2Sum	Male	42	31.74	7.849	1.211
	Female	77	29.95	7.768	.885

Table 20: Independent Samples Test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
CAScale2Sum	Equal variances assumed	.001	.975	1.197	117	.234	1.790	1.496	-1.172	4.752
	Equal variances not assumed			1.193	83.629	.236	1.790	1.500	-1.193	4.774

In the boxplots below Figure 12 CA Scale 1 we do not require the outliers to be removed from the analysis. The skewness of the distribution is not normal, this does not necessarily indicate a problem with the scale, but rather reflects the underlying nature of the construct being measure. The distributions below are positively skewed in relation to males and females with children and their career progression. Figure 13 CA Scale 2 is more normally distributed.

Figure 12: Boxplot CA Scale 1 by Gender and Dependents

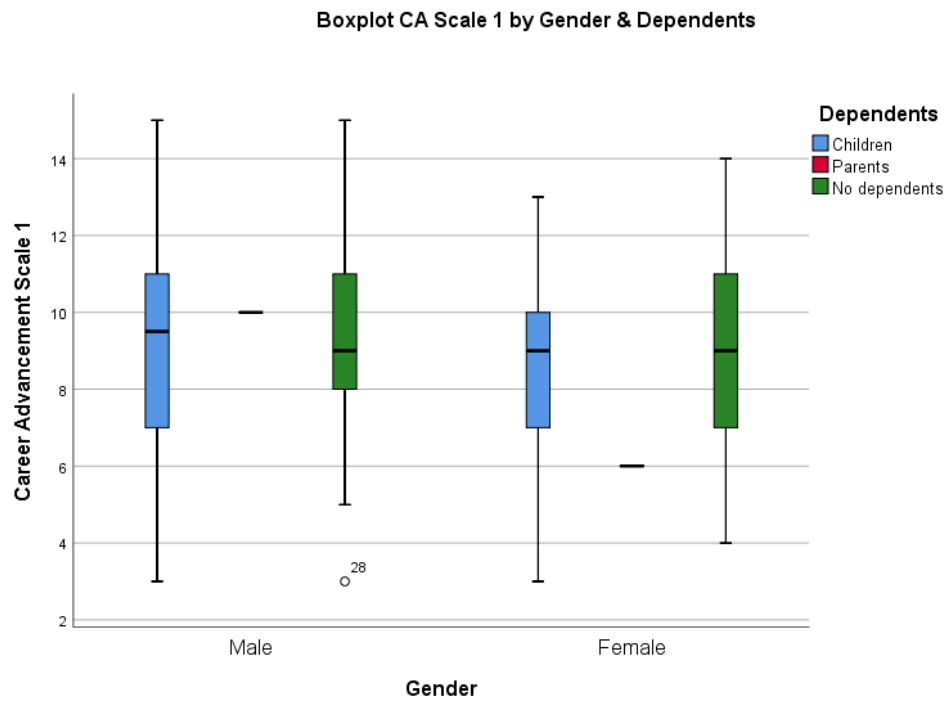
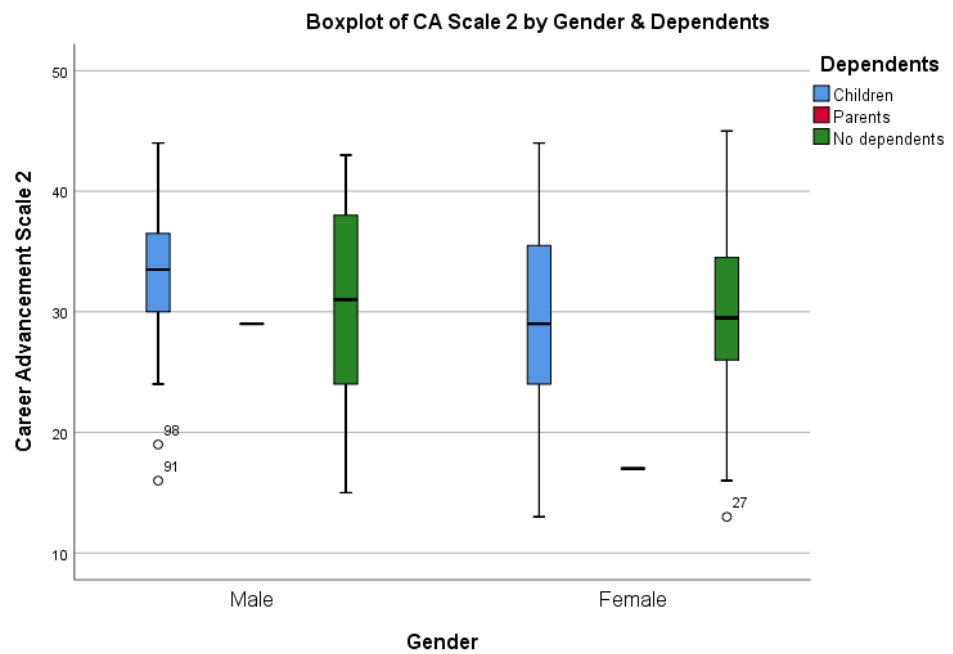


Figure 13: Boxplot CA Scale 2 by Gender and Dependents



5.4 Relationship between work-life balance and career advancement

The scatterplot charts below depict the trends from the scales used where an analysis of the relationship between work-life balance and career advancement was completed. The graphs infer that there is a correlation between work-life balance and career advancement. The Person correlation coefficient determines the mathematical strength of the association of work-life balance and career advancement. The results are presented in the scatterplots below. The horizontal axis represents the factors of having good work-life balance and the vertical axis represents the respondent's career prospects.

The first scatterdot WLB Scale 1 and CA Scale 2 Figure 14 below indicates from the line of best fit that there is a positive relationship between having a good work-life balance and a good career. The greater the work-life balance the better career prospects you are likely to have, however, the correlation of .255** Table 21 below indicates that there is a low level of evidence to suggest that there is an association between good work-life balance and good career prospects. The sig. or P value of .005 being less than .05 indicates that there is a statistical significance between the two variables.

Figure 14: Scatterdot WLB Scale 1 and CA Scale 2

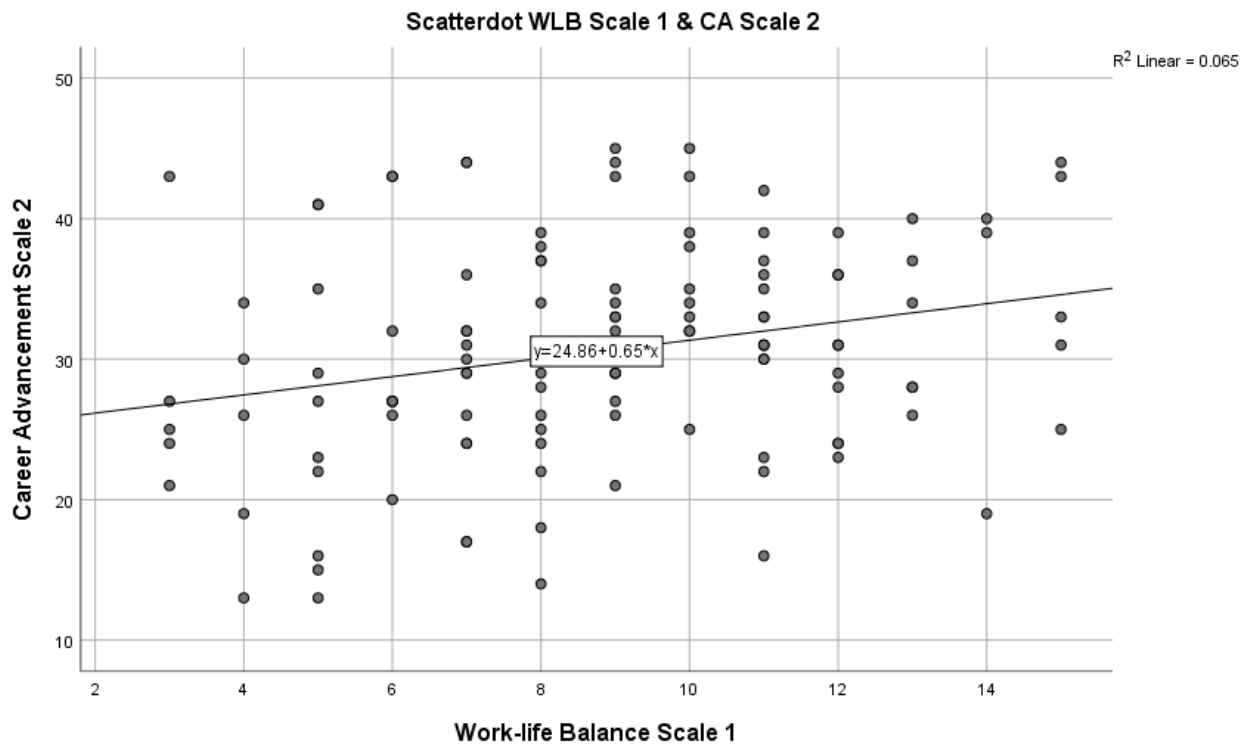


Table 21: Pearson Correlation of WLB Scale 1 and CA Scale 2

Correlations		WLBScale1	CAScale2S
		Sum	um
WLBScale1Sum	Pearson Correlation	1	.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	119	119
CAScale2Sum	Pearson Correlation	.255**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	119	119

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second scatterdot WLB Scale 2 and CA Scale 2 Figure 15 below indicates that there is a negative relationship between having a good work-life balance and a good career through the line of best fit. The Pearson

correlation $-.262^{**}$ Table 22 below indicates that there is no evidence to suggest that there is association between good work-life balance and good career prospects. The sig. or P value of .004 being less than .05 indicates that there is a statistical significance between the two variables. The second graph confirms that if work-life balance is good this may influence the barrier to career advancement.

Figure 15: Scatterdot WLB Scale 2 and CA Scale 2

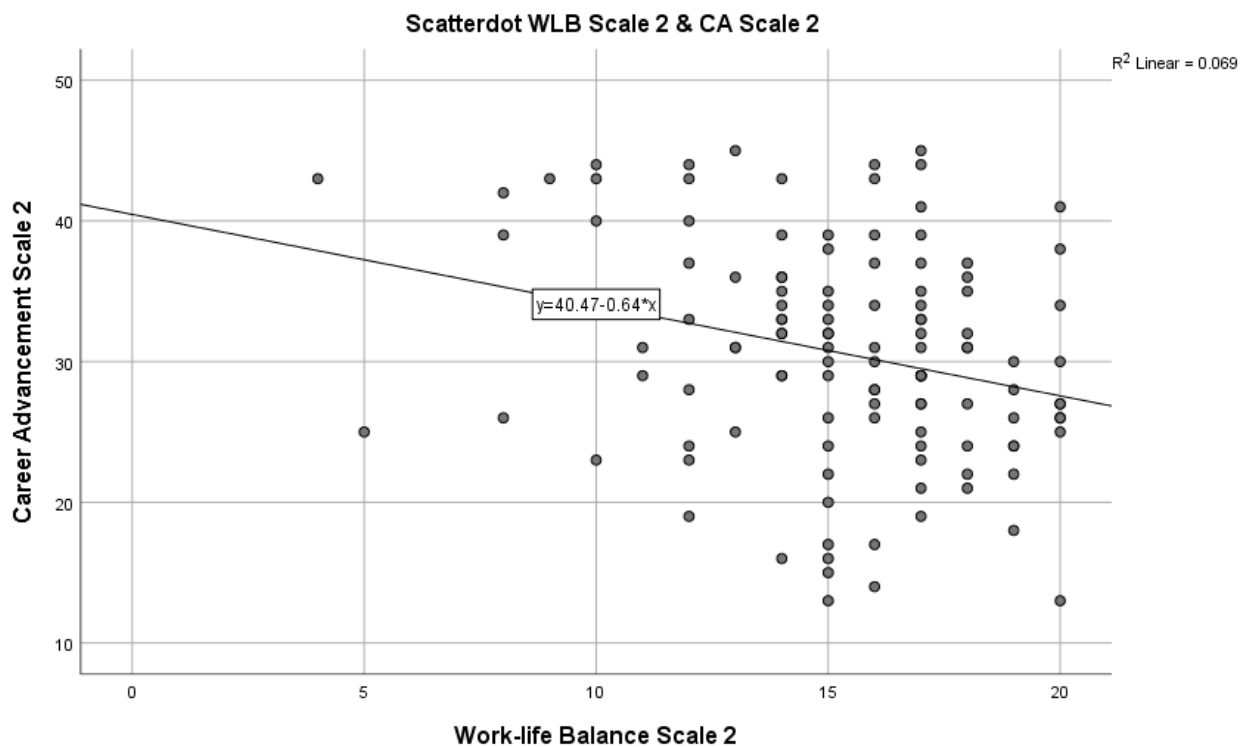


Table 22: Pearson Correlation of WLB Scale 2 and CA Scale 2

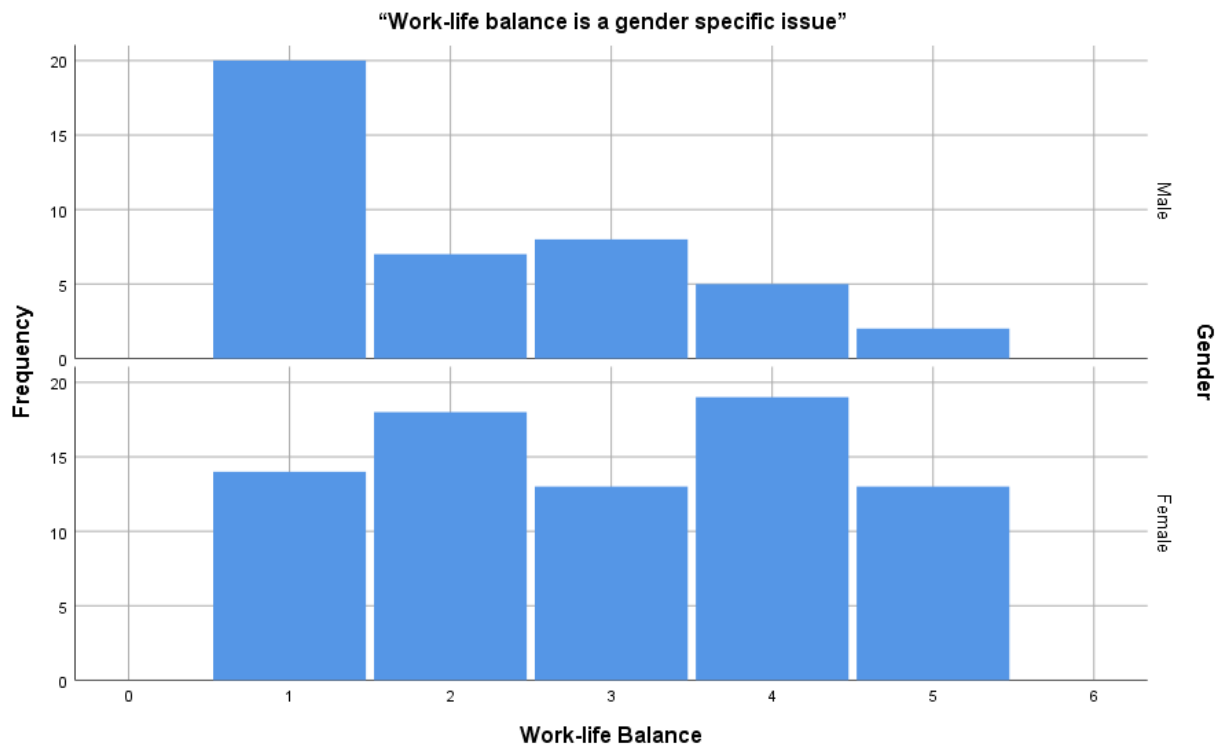
Correlations		WLBScale2Sum	CAScale2Sum
WLBScale2Sum	Pearson Correlation	1	-.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	119	119
CAScale2Sum	Pearson Correlation	-.262**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	119	119

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5.5 Survey Results

A number of work-life balance statements were created in the questionnaire. Number 16 states “I do not require help to balance work life with family life”, 26.3% of the respondents indicated “strongly disagree” and a further 26.3% indicated “neutral”. Number 17 on the questionnaire states “I get time to spend to myself each week”; the majority of responses 27.1% agreed that they have time to themselves. Number 18 states how often “I go on family outings” the majority of responses 48.3% indicated “weekly”. In relation to statements number 19 and 20 “there are negative effects of poor work life balance” and “poor work life balance can affect your psychological health”, the majority of respondents “strongly agreed” to these 80.5% and 83.9% respectively. Number 21 states that “Work-life balance is a gender specific issue”, the majority of respondents “strongly disagreed” with this statement. In the breakdown of the male and female responses in the figure below, more males “strongly disagreed” than females and also more females “agreed” with this statement than males.

Figure 16: “Work-life balance is a gender specific issue”.



The results recorded from the open ended questions in relation to work-life balance and career advancement were interesting. The first open-ended question in the questionnaire was “how would you summarise your work-life balance?” The majority of respondents 63% confirmed that their work-life balance were either “ok” or a negative remark saying that it was not good. The remaining 37% of the respondents reported to have a good work-life balance due to reasons such as job change, semi-retirement and shorter working hours. A number of these respondents also pointed out that their work-life balance may not be as good if/ when they have children to care for. One respondent pointed out that work-life “is more balanced than ever before, however, sacrifices were made as there were fewer opportunities when not living near Dublin”.

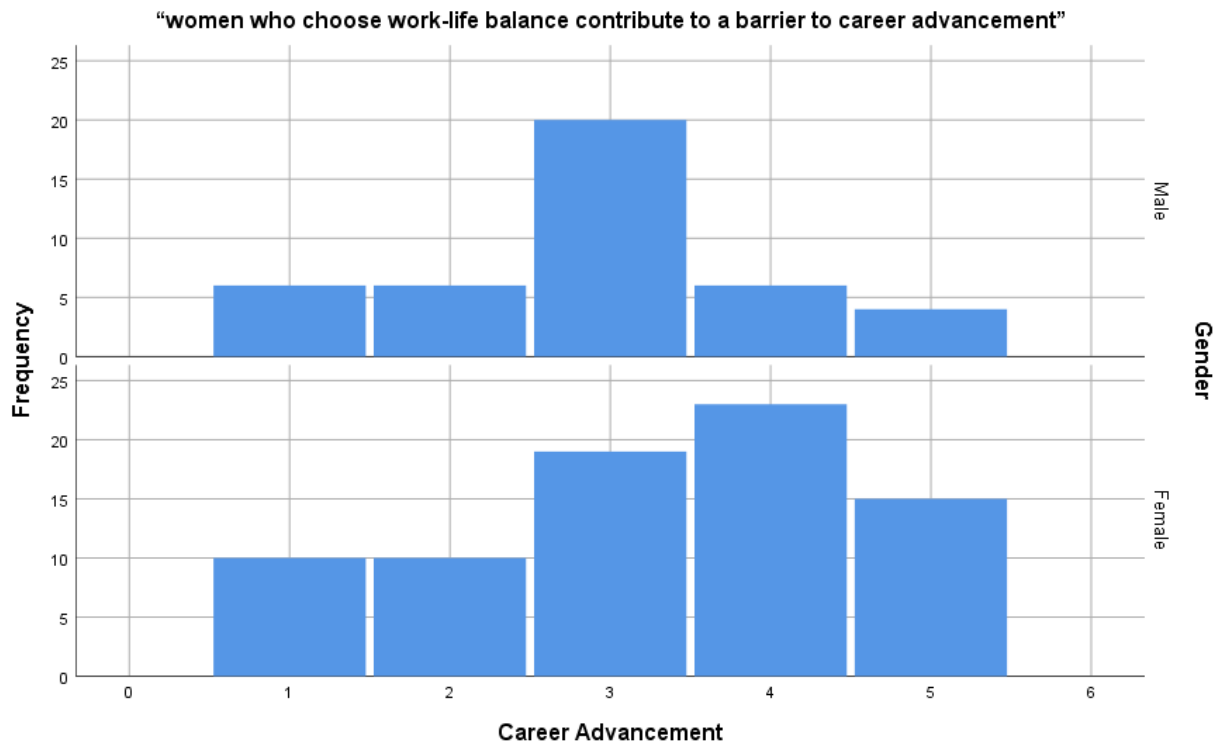
The second open-ended question in the questionnaire was “what could your employer do to improve work life balance?” The majority of respondents 89% suggested a number of ways to improve while the remaining 11% of the

respondents confirmed there were no improvements their employer needed to make, however, some of the responses noted that they were self-employed people, therefore would have more control over their own work-life balance.

A number of career statements were created in the questionnaire number 38 and 39 states “there are gender balance initiatives in my organisation” and “there are unique characteristics that influence female advancement in my organisation” the majority of responses 33.9% and 39% respectively indicated “neutral”, an assumption can be made that if organisations do have gender balance initiatives or if they promote females advancement then the individuals are not aware of these. The majority of the respondents “strongly agreed” that “parenthood remains more difficult for women than men”.

Number 41 states that “putting family ahead of career leads to social rejection”; the majority of answers 33.1% indicated “neutral” to this statement. The final statement in the questionnaire states that “women who choose work-life balance contribute to a barrier to career advancement” Figure 17 below, the majority of responses 32.2% had a “neutral” view on this, however, 40.7% combining “agreed” and “strongly agreed” with the statement. In the figure below, we can see that excluding the neutral responses, slightly more males combined “strongly disagree” and “disagree”, while more females combined “agree” and “strongly agree” that “women who choose work-life balance contribute to a barrier to career advancement.

Figure 17: “Women who choose work-life balance contribute to a barrier to career advancement”



The third open-ended question in the questionnaire was “how would you summarise your career success to date?” The majority of responses 55% to this question reported dissatisfaction with their career to date, responses included “suspended while having a family, disappointing, limited, lack of permanent contracts, lacking, not as good as it should be because of male comfort with other males and discomfort with women, more women should be employed at senior levels, qualified but underemployed, underpaid and personal development should be put in place”. The remaining 45% of respondents remarked positively on their career success to date.

The fourth open-ended question in the questionnaire was “What could your employer do to support you in your career development?” The majority of responses 91% suggested a number of areas for improvement in supporting their career development while the remaining 9% were happy with the support their employer was giving them.

The final open-ended question in the questionnaire was “any other comments?” The majority of responses to this question were no further comments. The respondents that did offer insights are listed in the next section.

5.6 Summary of findings

Quantitative Analysis Summary

- 119 participants
- Majority of participants were married/cohabiting, female, aged 35-44, with children, in full time employment and with Bachelor’s degree
- Majority of participants feel they have a good work life balance and that individuals do require help to balance work-life balance
- A large number of participants believe that family obligations affect their ability to study
- The majority of the answers confirm that females are unable to exploit their full potential due to family roles
- More answers outlined that the participants did get time to spend to themselves each week and that family outings were weekly
- The respondents felt that their organisations were not favourable to nursing mothers
- More individuals confirmed that maternity leave policy was favourable and that they can take leave for family purposes easily
- The majority of participants believe that females resist working late due to family obligations
- More people report to have remote work access and working from home
- More answers indicated that individuals disagree that females are perceived as the care-givers which make it difficult to advance their career
- Most of the respondents feel that putting family ahead of family leads to social rejection
- People indicated that there personal values aligned with the organisation
- Most of the respondents feel that putting career ahead of family leads to social rejection

- More answers indicated that people have career opportunities, are satisfied in their workplace where there are career strategies, succession planning and development plans
- Most people reported to have no opportunity for job rotation and to learn
- Majority of participants confirmed that they were recognised for their contribution and were satisfied with their level responsibility
- Majority of respondents indicated they disagreed that work-life balance was a gender specific issue and confirmed that gender balance initiatives are in their organisation
- Many disagreed that there are unique characteristics that influence female advancement
- More respondents felt that parenthood remains more difficult for women
- Majority of participants are of the view that a good work life balance is important to wellbeing and psychological health
- The majority of respondents “strongly disagreed” that “Work-life balance is a gender specific issue”, more males “strongly disagreed” and more females “agreed” with the statement
- More participants agreed that women who choose work-life balance contribute to a barrier of career advancement
- The majority of respondents “strongly disagreed” that women who choose work-life balance contribute to a barrier to career advancement” slightly more males disagreed while more females agreed with the statement.

Qualitative Analysis Summary

The respondents highlighted many areas for improvements in their organisations;

- Better management of work demands
- No email/text policy out of hours
- Parents network
- Provide longer contracts
- Provide pensions
- Facilitate more social activities.

- Promote family friendly initiatives
- Provide skills development and appraisals
- Review technical structures
- Recruit more to include cover, job share and promote job rotation
- Be understanding, recognise work, listen and value employees
- Four day working week should be more accepted, reduce the working week
- More support for childcare facilities
- Managers fear absenteeism from mothers
- Women with no kids get additional pressure
- Paid and shared maternity, paternity, sick and study leave, increase annual leave
- Provide better compensation and benefit packages
- Promote career development plans that include maternity leave considerations
- Provide courses, training, mentoring and coaching, succession planning, opportunities, attending conferences
- Provide work life flexibility, working from home
- Encourage involvement in decision making and open discussion
- Some industries are still “a boys club”
- Depends on the job you are in and the industry is relevant
- Gender imbalances, enact gender quotas, encourage female growth
- Women are seen as the primary caregivers to children, men aren’t expected to put family first
- “Equal parental leave is a must to challenge gender issues and the glass ceiling”
- “Women feel guilty about extra time needed to advance career at the detriment of their children”
- More women needed in politics
- One comment made was that their employer is noted for pro-women policy and a significant number of women were in managerial/executive roles with great support with a dedicated room for breast-feeding.

6. Discussion

The aim of this research is whether women who choose having a good work-family balance contribute to the glass ceiling. The research was to test if females who have a good work-life balance have an effect on the barrier to their own career advancement. In the current study, primary findings concluded that there is both a positive and a negative relationship between work-life balance and career advancement.

The first correlation test indicated that a positive association exists between the measurement of the respondents work-life balance and the measurement of their career success to date. The higher the work-life balance scored on the scale, the higher the career success scored too. The hypothesis is rejected in this instance as women who measured with a good work-life balance generally have a good career and therefore, do not contribute to the glass ceiling.

The second correlation test indicated the contrary that there was a negative association between the measurement of the respondents who had a good work-life balance and the measurement of their career success to date. The measurement of a good work-life balance for an individual was associated with a low level of career success to date. This suggests that women who have a good work-life balance contribute to a barrier of career advancement. The hypothesis is accepted in this instance.

A finding from the current study indicated that the majority of the respondents who were women were looking for better compensation and pay. One of the respondents also answered that more women should be in politics. According to literature and legislation it is well documented that women are paid lower than men with the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill expected to become law in autumn 2019. Ireland is behind Europe, in relation to gender pay gap reporting (CIPD, 2019) while Iceland was rated as the most gender equal country in the world (World Economic Forum, 2017). Iceland has become the first country in the world to enforce equal pay, within four years from January 2018; organisations must adhere to equal wages for work of equal value or will face daily fines. Ireland ranked eighth in 2017 in relation

to gender pay, according to (World Economic Forum, 2017). Ireland is lagging in legislation on gender pay and reporting and, it is also lagging behind in shared maternity and paternity legislation. Women currently have maternity leave entitlements of 26 weeks while fathers only have 2 weeks of paternity leave entitlements, biased towards women and with no option for the shared leave entitlements that we see effective in Norway and also Iceland (Seierstad and Kirton, 2015). Legislation is required to support women in the work place and ensure they return to work after having children. Perhaps if more women were in politics these issues might be addressed earlier and be put top of the agenda.

A finding from the current study indicated that the majority of respondents who have good work-life balance have career opportunities, are satisfied in their workplace where there are career strategies, succession planning and development plans.

This is contrary to what the literature demonstrates, Seierstad and Kirton (2015) outlined that women take the primary responsibility for home and family, in addition to their careers and are underrepresented in high-level positions. An individual has a subjective reflection of their own career path which must include awareness and taking ownership of career progress. The current study does not include to what level the individuals reached in their career, perhaps the respondents have career opportunities but may not want to climb the career ladder. Newer research is suggesting women have self-imposed barriers to their leadership advancement (Boone et al., 2013). From the global industry leaders in the study from Nashberger and Finstad Milion (2017), men and women hold essentially the same views on work-life balance, both genders emphasised self-imposed barriers. In the same study 60% of women acknowledged the existence of the glass ceiling in their organisations, one male in the study labelled his own career as a female career and his life choice because he took one-year parental leave and juggled work-life balance. The gender bias from the male indicates how society views women and their careers when looking after family.

In the survey statement “women who choose work-life balance contribute to a barrier to career advancement” overall the majority of responses agreed with the statement, however, when broken down by gender, slightly more males disagreed, while more females agreed with the statement. Ezzedeen et al., (2015) confirmed, the perception of the glass ceiling of 69 Canadian undergraduate women in business, indicated that work-family decisions are obstacles to their career advancement. According to research with the retirement of the baby boomers, more women will progress their careers in to leadership roles (Steele Flippin, 2017). More respondents both males and females felt that parenthood remains more difficult for women. There is little evidence to confirm that men are trying to change the norms surrounding this. Society overall is biased towards women, as women are seen as the primary care giver to children according to the literature and the findings. In the not so distant future we will have the introduction of artificial intelligence algorithms and gender champions during recruitment to offset the gender imbalance (Bots et al., 2018).

Another finding from the current study indicated gender bias from both males and females. In the statement “work-life balance is a gender specific issue”, more males “strongly disagreed” than females and more females “agreed” with this statement than males. There are barriers for women advancing in their careers; these are concerned with gender bias and family-planning departures (Steele Flippin, 2017). The female participants are of the view that women suffer more with work-life balance while males are of the view that women do not suffer more. The subjective views from the males and female respondents are the social reality that has made their perceptions and consequent actions (Saunders et al., 2016). Ireland’s National Women’s Strategy 2017-2020 is reported where all women will enjoy equality with men, however, in reality, a three year strategy plan will not change the views of a society. The survey responses could well be a reflection of the current feministic and metoo# movements where women are feeling empowered to highlight the inequality from which they suffer, and men are fed up with everything saying that women suffer, and feel their own issues are neglected as a result. Society splits its members in to two gender roles from birth, as

was done in the current study, known as gender binary, male and female, we now see a movement towards non binary gender where younger generations do not want to be associated with either male or female identity, perhaps this is as a result of past and present discriminations and bias towards each identity.

6.1 Limitations of the study

There are a number of limitations in the current study. People are generally busy with family, working and socialising and it was difficult to request participants to take time away from these parts of their lives to take the time to participate in the survey research in a specific time period. While the responses are still coming in, it was important to take the numbers at a certain time due to time constraints. The number of requests for participation greatly outweighed the number of respondents and is lacking in numbers by comparison. According to Saunders et al., (2016) a perfect representative sample is one that represents the target population. To reflect the general population, a much broader sampling of men and women is required to improve the research.

Another limitation of the study found that men were significantly less in numbers than women. The majority of the respondents 65% were female workers. For the purpose of this study convenience sampling and snowball sampling occurred (Saunders et al, 2016) which may have resulted in a larger number of women participants. A larger number of male respondents would allow us to better compare work-life balance and career advancement by males and females.

A further limitation of the research out of the four scales tested and used Career Advancement Scale 1 taken from Ugwu et al (2018) resulted in not being reliable in this study. This reliability test indicates how free it is from random error. With the removal of Q24 on the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha greatly increased to .517, however, it still did not reach reliability.

Acceptable reliability is .7 and above (Pallant, 2016). It means for the current study this career advancement scale 1 is not reliable to use in our analysis.

The questions are not of good quality of this measurement procedure used to collect data. Career Advancement Scale 2 was created for this study and has tested reliable for the analysis.

A finding from the research indicated that an individual's organisation was more pro-women policy that a significant number of women were in managerial/executive roles with great support and a dedicated mothering room for breast-feeding. A limitation of the current study was that we did not see what organisations were promoting work-life balance initiatives and which ones were lagging in them. This suggests that this organisation promotes good work-life balance and encourages female growth and career advancement for women.

The current study did not define the career levels that the individuals were at, a presumption was made that women wanted to progress to higher level roles and statements were generalised but perhaps the positive result of good-work life balance with good career success may be as a result of the respondents being satisfied at a lower level, not wanting to progress the hierarchical career path. The glass ceiling concept has not been tested and is based on a presumed mass of ambitious women looking to advance their careers which may in fact disappear over time (Ezzedeen et al., 2015).

The current research does not reflect a specific industry or occupation. A finding from the study indicated that one individual had changed industry, by changing his career to become a teacher his work-life balance greatly improved. Another respondent referred to the industry that they worked in as a "boys club", a respondent outlined that the construction industry was more male orientated and another female indicated that she worked in a more male dominated industry. Certain industries are perhaps more prone to gender imbalances.

Furthermore, the current research does not take in to account geographical location. As already discussed, Ireland is lagging behind Europe with gender pay and reporting, shared entitlements and working conditions. There are

many countries around the world paving the way forward, research from Castellano and Rocca (2014) in the study of women in the labour market, gender pay gaps, segregation, discrimination and human capital characteristics confirmed in 26 European countries, female working conditions in the labour market are best in the Scandinavian countries. China with its one child policy is the country with the lowest level of occupational segregation in the world, with Sweden reported as having the highest level of occupational segregation among industrial countries and the largest glass ceiling (Hakim, 2016).

Future research based on my findings could include a study that includes a larger number of participants with a sample more representative of the general population, if taking in to account gender bias a larger number of male participants is certainly required. For future research it is suggested that the tested scales include a larger number of questions on them which might decrease the chances of a low reliability score. A comparative study with an experimental design and a random assignment of participants between two similar organisations in the same industry, in the same geographical area might identify if there is a cause and effect relationship between work-life balance and career success, to include a measurement in relation to hierarchical career levels.

6.2 Strengths of the study

Through the online survey in a short space of time a large amount of qualitative and quantitative results were able to be obtained from the 119 participants and a large amount of analysis was completed in this regard. The advantages of the self-completion questionnaire were that it was quicker to administer, there are no interviewer effects or influences, no interviewer variability and it is more convenient for the participants (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

In the current study a large amount of testing was completed, during testing for normality of distribution, there was sufficient evidence to suggest that the particular samples in WLB Scale 1, WLB Scale 2 and CA Scale 1 do deviate from normality. The evidence confirmed for CA Scale 2 that this particular

sample does not deviate from normality. There was evidence to suggest that there was no difference between the median values of the males and females in WLB Scale 1, WLB Scale 2 and CA Scale 1. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that these two samples in CA Scale 2 have been drawn from populations with similar means.

The Career Advancement Scale 2 that was created for this study had a strong reliability score. The Cronbach's Alpha scale achieves a reliability result of .877, in comparison to the other already tested scales in this study; this was the highest score tested in reliability, .7 and above accepted for reliability (Saunders et al., 2016). Work-life Balance Scale 1 tested .829 and Work-life Balance Scale 2 tested .782 both high scores for reliability, therefore, meaning that the reliability results of the study are repeatable (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

6.3 Conclusion

The majority of respondents who participated in the study were females aged 35-44 with children. After the opinion statements were scaled and analysed, the four scales were tested for normality of distribution and the results of testing correlations indicated that there was a both a positive and the opposite a negative relationship between a good work-life balance and career success. A number of other opinion statements were analysed and broken down by gender, the answers highlighted an underlying tone of gender bias from both males and females in their views and perceptions of women's work-life balance and careers. After the open ended questions were reviewed, respondents indicated many areas for improvement for their organisations in relation to the work-life balance initiatives and for individual's career growth.

In conclusion, there is evidence to support both sides of the argument that women who choose good work-life balance contribute to the barrier to career advancement and that women who choose good work-like balance have greater career prospects. There are many ways for organisations to improve their work-life balance initiatives and facilitate career progression. In addition a higher number of male participants are required in this study,

further research more specified is required on the testing of correlations between work-life balance and career progress, and perhaps further research on gender bias could also highlight gender perceptions in society today. The findings from this study are important because they highlight the issue of gender bias which is unfortunately still present in society. The findings are significant because despite the national strategy and worldwide legislation the perceptions and views of society have not changed. Policies need to be created to address the shared leave entitlement, subsidized childcare facilities, for more organisations to encourage pro-women policy and the gender imbalances in society.

6.4 Personal Learning Statement

In completing this course over the last couple of years, I have learned a great deal from lecturers and colleagues. With the final part this year of the submission of the dissertation, I have encountered many obstacles and learning curves; one was with the learning of a new software application SPSS Statistics. Through the easily accessible and understandable videos, books and lectures I was easily able to overcome this.

My time management skills have become an area for improvement for me, it was difficult this year to work full time and go on maternity leave while completing the research paper. Planning my time better and planning well in advance is another learning point for me. These areas of work-life balance and career progress discussed in this dissertation are of personal interest to me.

I am grateful to family, friends, work colleagues and lecturers for their understanding and patience over the last two years, without them the course would not be completed. The last two years have been both challenging and rewarding. I feel a proud sense of achievement and I appreciate how much I have learned academically and grown personally. I really appreciate all the help, support and guidance from my supervisor Dr. Hargreaves.

7. Conclusion

This study has raised questions around the relationship between work-life balance and career advancement. The current study has produced evidence to confirm that there is a positive association between good work-life balance and good career prospects, and evidence to support the contrary, that there is a negative association between good work-life balance and career advancement, the latter supporting the argument that women who choose good work-life balance contribute to the glass ceiling, a barrier to career advancement.

According to our findings and the literature, more women than men are still taking on the primary responsibility of care-giver to their children while often maintaining full time employment (Seierstad and Kirton, 2015). While organisational policies exist pertaining to work-life balance and flexible working exists, more work is needed to result in practice level changes that positively improve work and working lives. Generally women will find themselves in work positions where their family care roles will limit their career advancement opportunities in ways which do not impact on men (Steele Flippin, 2017).

According to our findings and the literature, compensation (O'Callaghan and Jackson, 2016) and leave entitlements (Seierstad and Kirton, 2015) are important issues that need to be addressed in society and organisations. Based on our findings the participants who reported a good work-life balance were satisfied with their career success to date, contrary to the literature from Ezzedeen et al., (2015) where work-family choices are obstacles to career advancement.

We know that a greater representation of women in decision-making/ leadership positions facilitates progress towards a more gender balance in organisations (Bot et al, 2018). Gender stereotypes and male dominated career areas, have a number of implications for organisational policy (IBEC, 2019). Organisations need to facilitate gender-balanced leadership to stay

aligned to the changing world of work (Bot et al, 2018). The results of the study may be used to gain a better understanding of the relationship between work-life balance and career success and what actions are required to improve policy in organisations.

The HR landscape in Ireland remains as dynamic as ever, with new challenges emerging all the time. The research shows countries are falling behind when it comes to promoting partnerships for fathers and mothers to better share work life balance responsibilities (Adema et al, 2017) and that women are underrepresented leadership positions (Seierstad and Kirton, 2015). We can see from literature and legislation that there are a large number of governments, bodies and organisations promoting work life balance and indeed gender equality (Ovseiko et al., 2017). Gender quotas are now being introduced to deal with the issue (IBEC, 2019), however, they are an area for debate and their usefulness has not yet been studied. The gender bias based on the literature from Steele Flippin (2017) and discovered in our findings from both males and females raised concerns in relation to the views and perceptions of society.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Recommendations for employees and organisations

Work-life balance is an important issue in today's society. It begins with the individual taking control of their own work-life balance where possible, by empowering oneself and choosing organisations that promote work-life balance, which will also lead to improved well-being.

Based on the current findings there are a number of practical and actionable improvements organisations can make to current practices. Organisations should review all internal work-life balance policy, for example, introduce career breaks to support men or women with family obligations and look at subsidised childcare facilities as employees would likely stay in work longer and be more productive. In addition, organisations should create a shared leave entitlements policy for spouses working in the same workplace. For organisations promoting effective pro-women policy mothering rooms may be an effective change. In this 24/7 technological society, organisations should provide a flexible working environment to male and female employees to enable them manage family responsibilities and career roles.

A practical recommendation for organisations is to ensure there is a standardised compensation and benefits package, subject to annual increases and for the frequent examination of its effectiveness. It is also recommended that organisations get ahead and commence gender pay reporting, in advance of the legislation being introduced.

The use of artificial intelligence algorithms during recruitment would improve gender imbalance right from the beginning. Organisations should introduce policy, in relation gender diversity programmes and gender quotas.

A further practical recommendation may include the development and implementation of leadership succession plans to include coaching and mentoring programmes that may enhance more gender diversity at the top and may break the glass ceiling for women.

8.2 Recommendations overall

The current research may have been undertaken more effectively by a number of ways, a larger number of randomised participants, and a sample more representative of the general population could have been taken. In consideration of the findings of gender bias, a larger number of male participants are required. The tested scales should include a larger number of questions on them which might decrease the chances of a low reliability score. A future research suggestion might include a comparative study with an experimental design and a random assignment of participants, to include a measurement in relation to hierarchical career levels between two similar organisations in the same industry, in the same geographical area. This might identify if there is a cause and effect relationship between work-life balance and career success.

8.3 Costing Analysis

The research has identified many areas for recommendation, depending on the organisation, perhaps the recruitment of a new HR Manager/ Business Partner might take on a monthly action plan to review, develop and implement all policy and update the company handbook, this may incur a financial cost of an extra salary in the organisation. Online suggestion boxes, reviewed weekly by the HR Department, should be available for employees to put forward details of any issues they may be having, monthly communication meetings might be organised to address these issues, for all to attend, so as to confirm what needs to be addressed in terms of policy and issues occurring. Organisations should introduce a Graduate Programme whereby, recent graduates employed in the organisation would meet monthly to learn and grow and perhaps might take on research projects/ controlled experiments in their positions, in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between work-life balance and career success. The financial cost of this would be embedded in their graduate salaries and therefore not too costly on the organisation. A subsidized childcare facility dependent on factors such as location and premises may be a substantial cost to the organisation, therefore, the recruitment of a project manager to prepare a

costing analysis would be required for this recommendation. Furthermore, dependent on the organisation the numbers of employees on the headcount and the premises available, if there is space/ or an available room in the building, a number of comfortable chairs, cushions, bottle heating equipment, toilet and baby changing facilities nearby, would be required for a mothering room. The compensation and benefits team might undertake some projects to facilitate gender pay gap reporting, standardising pay rates and introduce annual pay rate increases. Monthly meet ups on the progress of these projects would be beneficial to the organisation. Internal or external succession planning, coaching and mentoring programmes might be an option for an organisation depending on what's available in the budget and the numbers to attend. Enterprise Ireland (EI) offer a wide variety of grants, one which includes a Mentor Grant whereby EI provides grant support to qualifying companies towards the cost of a mentor for up to ten sessions (to a total of €1750), paid directly to the mentor by EI. As most of these recommendations are intangible, it is difficult to calculate a return on investment on them.

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Information Sheet

Topic of research: Women who choose Work-life Balance contribute to the Glass Ceiling.

My name is Labhaoise O'Dea and I am currently completing a Dissertation as part of my Masters in Human Resources, under the supervision of Dr. April Hargreaves, at the National College of Ireland.

You are invited to complete a short survey anonymously. Before you decide to participate, please take time to read the following information carefully and ask questions if anything is unclear or if you require any further information.

The area of study I am undertaking is on Work-life balance and its relationship on career advancement in the working environment. These areas interest me a great deal as we are in an era where work life balance is becoming more and more important. Work-life balance is a challenging area for Human Resource Management in today's 24/7 society. I decided to concentrate solely on women in the workplace, as traditional times have changed for women, balancing their careers and families.

Taking part in this research will involve answering a questionnaire that includes 45 questions/statements/ personal opinions. If you agree to participate in the survey, please indicate on the consent form on the next page. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes, all data will be secured safely, anonymized and is confidential to the research study. All information gathered from this survey will be used for research purposes only.

I would be most grateful if you could take time to complete the survey to assist me in my research study. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for taking the time. Labhaoise O'Dea

Appendix 2: Consent Form

- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
 - I understand that participation involves answering questions anonymously as part of the survey.
 - I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
 - I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
 - I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
 - I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
 - I understand that I am free to contact Labhaoise O'Dea to seek further clarification and information.
- ☐ I understand all of the above and I consent to participate in the research.

Appendix 3: Survey

Section 1: Demographic Questions

1. Marital status:

Single: ☐ Married/Cohabiting: ☐ Separated/Divorced: ☐
Widowed: ☐

2. Gender:

Male: ☐ Female: ☐

3. Age:

18-24: ☐ 25-34: ☐ 35-44: ☐ 45-54: ☐ 55+ ☐

**4. I have dependents (children or parents who need looking after etc.)
living at home to be cared for.**

Children: ☐ Parents: ☐ No dependents: ☐

**5. Primary responsibility for these dependents (children or parents) at
home is me.**

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

6. What is your employment status?

Full-time: ☐ Part-time: ☐ Fixed term: ☐

7. What is your education level?

Leaving Cert: ☐ Diploma: ☐ Bachelors: ☐ Masters: ☐ Doctoral: ☐

Section 2: Work Life Balance Measures

When I reflect over my work and non-work activities (your regular activities outside of work such as family, friends, sports, study etc.) over the past three months, I conclude that:

Items *1. Strongly Disagree* *2. Disagree* *3. Neutral* *4. Agree* *5. Strongly Agree*

Part A.

8. I currently have a good balance between the time I spend at work and the time I have for available for non-work activities.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

9. I find it easy balancing my work and non-work activities.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

10. I consider myself not stressed when it comes to my work demands and non-work activities.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

11. Overall, I believe that my work and non-work activities are important to an individual's well-being.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

Part B.

12. Most times, family obligations affect women professional's ability to study.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

13. Putting career ahead of family affairs leads to social rejection.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

14. Female workers are unable to exploit their full potentials due to family roles.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

15. The work environment is not favorable to nursing mothers.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

Part C.

16. I do not require help to balance work life with family life.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

17. I get time to spend to myself each week.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

18. I go on family outings.

Daily: ☐ Weekly: ☐ Monthly: ☐ Bimonthly ☐ Never: ☐

19. There are negative effects of poor work life balance.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

20. Poor work life balance can affect your psychological health.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

21. Work life balance is a gender specific issue.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

22. How would you summarise your work life balance?

23. What could your employer do to improve work life balance?

Section 3: Career Advancement Measure Questions

Items 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5.
Strongly Agree

Part A.

24. My firm provides opportunity for job rotation which affords me the chance to learn.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

25. In my organisation, females resist working beyond office hours due to family responsibilities.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

26. In my work place, women avoid job transfer due to their marital status.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

27. In my work place, females are perceived as care-givers which makes it difficult to advance their career.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

Part B.

28. There are favourable maternity leave policies in my organisation.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

29. I have remote work access and can partly work from home.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

30. I can take leave for family purposes easily.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

31. I have career opportunities at work.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

32. I am satisfied with my present career achievement.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

33. I am recognized for my contribution in my organisation.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

34. My organisation promotes career strategies/ development plans for career advancement.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

35. I am satisfied with the level of responsibility I have in my organisation.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

36. My organisation promotes succession planning for job positions.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

37. My personal values and priorities align with my organisation.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

Part C.

38. There are gender balance initiatives in my organisation.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

39. There are unique characteristics that influence female advancement in my organisation.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

40. Parenthood remains more difficult for women than men.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

41. Putting family ahead of career leads to social rejection.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

42. Women who choose work-life balance contribute to a barrier to career advancement.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

43. How would you summarise your career success to date?

44. What could your employer do to support you in your career development?

45. Any other comments?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.