



## PhD DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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**PhD dissertation title:** *The statistical assessment of work-life relationship in the case of women entrepreneurs*

Based on the current state of knowledge in the field work-life relationship and in the field of female entrepreneurship and using measurement and modelling tools of work-life relationship, the main question that research attempts to answer is: *to what extent work-life balance of women is achievable through entrepreneurship?*.

*The aim of the research* is to statistically assess work-life relationship in the case of women entrepreneurs by identifying and modelling the factors that influence work-life balance in the particular case of this category.

Factual material used in the dissertation comes from a survey on a sample of 50 female entrepreneurs from the North-East Region of Romania. Statistical processing has been conducted using statistical software SPSS and Excel.

The paper is divided into four chapters, an introduction, conclusions, bibliography and appendices.

Chapter I presents the conceptual elements referring to work-life relationship in the case of women entrepreneurs and is organized into three subchapters as follows.

The first subchapter is dedicated to defining the concept of entrepreneur, focusing on the issue of female entrepreneur: the profile of women entrepreneurs, the characteristics of women-owned business, and aspects on women's entrepreneurial behaviour.

The second subchapter deals with the issue of work-life relationship and presents a range of terms applicable to this relationship, as well as concepts and theories concerning the relation between work and life.



The third chapter tries to capture the particularities of work-life relationship for female entrepreneurs, highlighting their entrepreneurial motivations, the barriers they face and the work-family dilemma.

The second chapter addresses a number of methods of analysing work-life relationship in the case of women entrepreneurs. This chapter presents the indicators of women entrepreneurs' work-life relationship, some methodological elements of analysis of work-life relationship (the steps of building an econometric model; outcome variables, predictor variables of work-life relationship, moderator variables of work-life relationship, models of analysis with predictor and moderator variables), methods of identifying the entrepreneur profile and characterizing the entrepreneurial behaviour, methods of identifying potential factors that influence work-life relationship (correlation analysis, correspondence analysis), methods of analysis of entrepreneurs behaviour with regard to work-life relationship (regression analysis) and sources of data on work-life relationship.

The third chapter presents a study for the statistical analysis of work-life relationship in the case of women entrepreneurs from the North-East of Romania and focuses on the following issues: presentation of the purpose of research, questionnaire and survey sample and methods applied; to identify socio-demographic coordinates of women entrepreneurs from the North-East Region; to describe of women's entrepreneurial behaviour in this region; to analyse the opinions of women entrepreneurs in the North-East Region regarding work-life relationship and to identify possible predictors of work-life balance for women entrepreneurs.

The last chapter proposes building a statistical model of women intention to approach an entrepreneurial activity from the necessity to balance work and life, for the particular case of female entrepreneurs from the North-East Region. Estimated intention is achieved by a linear multiple regression model of the cognitive determinants specified in the *Theory of Planned Behavior* [Ajzen, 1991], wherein the *intention to conduct an entrepreneurial activity in the need to balance work and life* is treated as dependent variable, whereas the three cognitive determinants – *the attitude, the subjective norm* and *perceived behavioural control* – as independent variables.



The results of the research confirm some aspects identified in literature about women entrepreneurs profile (marital status and average age for starting the business, source of business financing, chosen field of activity, business size, and the main support groups they rely on) and about their work-life relationship (high degree of assuming of domestic and childcare responsibilities and the occurrence of conflict situations between work demands and private life demands).

Research also reveals that, despite some common features, women entrepreneurs are not a homogeneous group, but a diverse and complex one, with different backgrounds, circumstances and visions.

Regarding the work-life balance, it differs from one person to another, being influenced by each person's system of values and aspirations, as well as by attitudes that individuals have toward their life (family, leisure, hobbies etc.) and towards work and work results.

Particularly for entrepreneurs, there are additional factors that intervene in the relationship between work and life: they need a higher working time than that of employees, bear the responsibility of those they employed, but also experience positive effects such as independence, autonomy, and flexibility.

In the specific case of women entrepreneurs, an important aspect of work-life relationship is the work-family conflict, more pronounced than for men entrepreneurs, because of the roles assumed by most of women that are deeply rooted in social consciousness, i.e. assuming major responsibilities on childcare and housework.

Although there could not be identified a statistically significant relationship between the number of children in entrepreneur's care and her work-life balance, a higher concentration of scores of 8, 9 and 10 could be noted among women entrepreneurs with no children or having only one child in their care.

Regarding the factors of social and psychological nature, high levels of work-life balance tend to be associated with answers indicating absence or low occurrence of conflict situations between work demands and home responsibilities requests.



The results show that it is not so much the amount of household duties and care putting a pressure on women entrepreneurs that produces disequilibrium of their work-life balance but the conflicts perceived by them between the demands of the two dimensions of their lives (professional and personal life).

Modelling women entrepreneurs intention to conduct entrepreneurial activities in the need to balance work and life based on the *Theory of Planned Behavior* show that, for the considered sample, the influences of norm and attitude are not statistically significant, the only beliefs affecting the studied behaviour being related to perceived behavioural control. It follows that, when taking into account initiation and conduct of business activities in the need to balance work and life, women in the North-East of Romania are less influenced by the advantages or disadvantages associated with entrepreneurship and people or groups that could approve or disapprove them and more strongly influenced by events that could facilitate or hinder entrepreneurial activities.

The simulation of a new model, considering the behavioural, normative and control beliefs in their non-aggregated form as independent variables, results in a larger share of the explained variation in the dependent variable and indicate that women entrepreneurs intention to conduct entrepreneurial activities in the need to balance work and life is positive affected by *Possibility of spending more time with family and/or friends*, *Risk of making mistakes*, *Financiers*, and *Existence of entrepreneurial models in the social circle* and negative affected by *Need for employing highly skilled human resources* and *Customers*.

Results of the statistical evaluation of work-life relationship developed in the doctoral thesis are relevant for policy makers in the North-East Region of Romania and researchers wishing to conduct entrepreneurship, gender or work-life balance studies and can be sources of inspiration in identifying the most appropriate levers to be operated within the initiatives aiming to support and stimulate business owned and operated by women.

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