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Job satisfaction and reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities among working women with children of up to 14 years of age in Poland

Introduction

Job satisfaction is a key factor not only for management-related studies, but also for the practical functioning of enterprises and people's general satisfaction with life. Research shows that numerous employers pay considerable attention to the satisfaction of their employees, assuming that its increase will contribute to improving work effectiveness. Although the correlation between job satisfaction and employee effectiveness is not clear [Springer 2010], job satisfaction is listed among key employee motivation tools.

The goal of this paper is to assess the impact of selected characteristics related to reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities on job satisfaction among working women with children of up to 14 years of age in Poland, using the multivariate general linear model (GLM).

The point of departure for this analysis is the definition of job satisfaction. Locke defines it as a result of perceiving one's job as one that enables the achievement of significant values and goals, provided that such values correspond to one's needs or facilitate the satisfaction of basic human needs [Locke 1976 qtd in: Springer 2010]. The definition implies that employees appreciate characteristics that are important to them and result from their inner needs. Spector, by contrast, does not emphasise the significance of one's needs for job satisfaction, but rather indicates the key role of cognitive processes in the formation of job satisfaction [Spector 1997]. Job satisfaction is understood in the same way by Nair, who argues that it reflects also the assessment and perception of the value of one's work [Nair 2007]. The most useful definition of job satisfaction for the purposes of this

analysis is provided by Gross [2003]: “a level of positive or negative well-being resulting from tasks performed under specific physical and social conditions”.

Numerous studies have been published on factors determining job satisfaction. One of the most popular and oldest approaches is Herzberg's two-factor theory [Herzberg 1956], which distinguishes two groups of job satisfaction determinants. One is formed by so-called job hygiene factors, including the salary, job security, job position, type of corporate hierarchy, interpersonal relations and individual factors. The other one contains so-called motivators, such as, *inter alia*, recognition, bonuses for good work, promotion and self-development opportunities, as well as individual successes and achievements. Another approach derived from Herzberg's theory is Hackman's et al concept [Hackman et al. 1975]. Their studies focus on aspects related to the job itself and job position characteristics, in particular the use of various skills in the performance of tasks, performance of tasks contributing to the success of a major project, significance of tasks performed for the functioning of an enterprise, high level of autonomy in the performance of tasks, and quality of feedback.

From the point of view of this analysis, the most useful classification of factors influencing job satisfaction was proposed by Gross [2003], who classified them into three categories:

- organisational factors (working conditions and work organisation, including working time, pay, promotion prospects, safety at work, and the company's functioning and development policy);
- personal factors (age, gender, cognitive skills, health condition, professional experience, and personality traits);

- social factors (organisational climate, respect at work, relations with supervisors, and relations with clients and colleagues).

Taking into account the goal of analysis and the availability of data being as they are, the focus of the present study is to examine the impact of personal factors (related to one's family situation and socio-demographic status) and organisational ones that may determine the possibilities of combining professional work with family responsibilities.

The analysis has been limited to women with children of up to 14 years of age, a group that is most at risk of facing difficulties with combining family and professional duties. The sample has been limited to mothers with small children also to verify the unclear results of research on the impact of having a small child on job satisfaction [Katzell 1979, Pleck 1985, Lorence 1987, Hanson and Sloan 1992].

Considering the specificity of the sample, formed by working women with at least one child of up to 14 years of age, the range of variables that may possibly determine job satisfaction has been extended by: characteristics describing the household composition, with particular attention to the number and age of children, as well as variables that allow to capture the conflict between one's professional work and family duties understood as a source of stress and tension (including time-related tensions), resulting from the demands of professional and family responsibilities that are difficult to reconcile [Greenhaus and Beutell 1985 qtd. in Carlson et al. 2000].

The sample has been limited to women also due to the fact that previous research on the level of job satisfaction and factors influencing job satisfaction has revealed that the impact of individual factors may vary depending on gender. The results of research on the influence of gender on job satisfaction are unclear. Some scholars argue that the sphere of work (in particular employment) is more important for men than for women. It is among men that closer links between job satisfaction and work-family conflict can be observed [Parasuraman et al. 1992, McElwain et al. 2005; Zalewska 2009]. Similarly, results regarding the significance of various job elements for job satisfaction among women and men are unclear. Czarnota-Bojarska and co-authors [Czarnota-Bojarska et al. 2004] indicate that while so-called hygiene factors related to the job context are more important for women than for men, motivators connected with the job itself, that is development opportunities, are valued more by men. Such correlations, however, have not been noted in the

group of employees with the least seniority; they do not show gender-related differences in the criticality of job aspects. The authors conclude that young women and men have similar aspirations; promotion and development opportunities at work, as well as social relations and life outside work are equally important both for women and men. By contrast, survey results obtained by De Vaus and McAlister [1991 qtd. in Schultz et al. 2002¹], as well as research conducted in the USA [Spector 1997], and results obtained by Sous-Poz et al. [2000], do not reveal any considerable differences between women and men (despite unequal treatment) in respect of job satisfaction. The said research draws on the traditional understanding of the role of gender, whereby work fulfills a less important and more instrumental (social or financial) function for women than for men [Spector 1997].² The study of Jaros and Zalewska [2008]³ suggests that men, in comparison with women, derive greater satisfaction from their work both in general terms and in respect of specific job elements, as well as more frequently experience positive emotions and less frequently experience negative emotions in connection with their job. Considering the unclear impact of gender on job satisfaction and the fact that the phenomenon is examined in the context of reconciling family and professional responsibilities, for which gender is of key importance, it would not be justified to build a common model for men and women.

Research concept

Taking into consideration the two streams of analysis briefly discussed above, the one focused on job satisfaction and the other one centred around the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities, we propose a concept that combines them and may provide a basis for answering the following research question:

What factors do determine job satisfaction in the context of reconciling family and professional responsibilities by working women who take care of at least one child of up to 14 years in Poland?

Job satisfaction in the context of reconciling family and professional responsibilities should be examined at the conceptual level related to the influence of public policy on the character of correlations between job satisfaction and reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities. The impact of public policy shaping job satisfaction and possibilities of

combining family and professional responsibilities is internalised on three levels:

- 1) macro – the state level (legal regulations or actions of public institutions);
- 2) mezzo – the level of employers (employers' practices, which, although determined to a large extent by legal regulations and actions of public institutions, cover also solutions shaped at the level of employers);
- 3) micro – the level of individual employees, who perform specific behaviours in the context of their job and reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities.

The distinguished levels of influence of public policy may be matched with the determinants of job satisfaction examined in the context of reconciling family and professional responsibilities. They have been divided with reference to Gross [2003] as follows:

- organisational determinants – directly related to the workplace and shaped both on the macro level (by legal regulations and actions of public institutions) and on the mezzo level connected with the practices of enterprises;
- personal determinants – directly related to the socio-demographic situation of an employee, including his or her family situation as determined by the presence of a partner and children at a particular age, including their number. Although the foregoing characteristics may be shaped to a certain extent at the macro and mezzo level, they result mainly from decisions taken at the level of an individual, hence they refer to the micro level;

- personal and organisational determinants – related directly to interaction between family and professional commitments. These issues concern all the three levels of conceptual analysis: micro, mezzo and macro.

An overview of the research concept described above is presented in the figure 1.

Data and methodology

In order to verify the aforementioned concept and, in particular, to attempt to answer the research question, data collected during the second round of the Gender and Generation Survey (GGS), conducted in the fourth quarter of 2014 and the first quarter of 2015 among 13,896 respondents aged 18 to 79 years, will be used. For the purposes of the present study, however, the sample has been limited to working mothers with at least one child of up to 14 years of age in their household. The analytical sample has been constituted by 966 women.

The level of satisfaction with one's workplace (a dependent variable) has been measured on a scale from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). The distribution of satisfaction with one's workplace for mothers with children of up to 14 years and working women as a whole (as a comparative category) is presented in the figure 2.

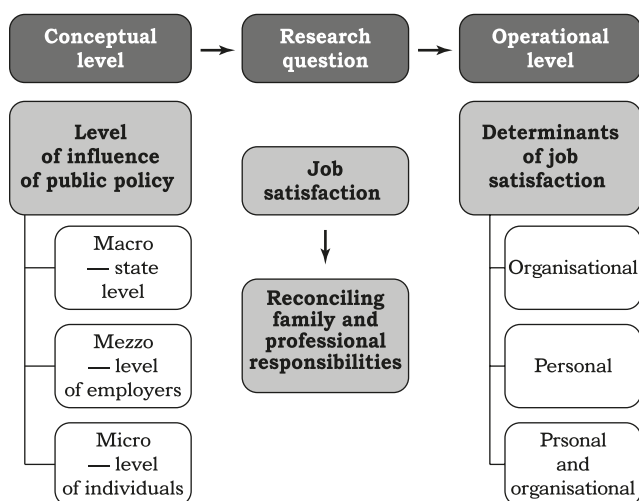
As the above chart shows, the distribution of satisfaction with one's workplace is very similar for both groups, and the existing differences are not significant. The quoted figures indicate a rather high level of job satisfaction. The mode value both for mothers and for working women as a whole is 8 (24%). The average level of satisfaction, both for women as a whole and for mothers with children of up to 14 years of age, is about 7.3 (with a standard deviation of about 2.1). Job satisfaction for both populations is relatively highly left-skewed, which indicates a large share of women showing a high level of job satisfaction in both groups of respondents.

The next step was to operationalise independent variables. In accordance with the proposed research concept, the model provides for the following variables.

Organisational – regarding the characteristics of the respondent's workplace:

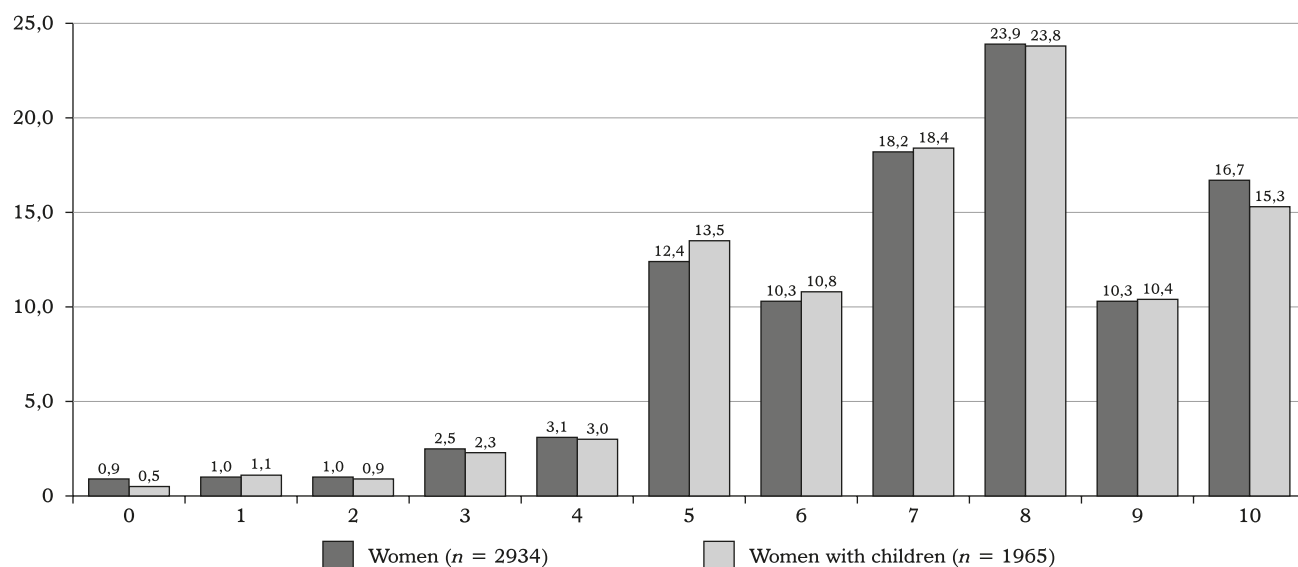
- weekly working time (in hours),
- weekly working time squared (in hours²)⁴;
- satisfaction with job security and stability (evaluated on a scale from 0 – completely dissatisfied – to 10 – fully satisfied);

Figure 1. Proposed research concept



Source: Own work.

Figure 2. The distribution of job satisfaction (as declared by the respondents) for working women and for mothers with children of up to 14 years of age (in %)



Source: own calculations based on the results of the 2nd wave of the Gender and Generation Survey (GGS).

- supervision over others' work (yes or no);
 - possibility to adjust working time to one's needs (yes or no);
 - type of work (employee in the public, employee in the private sector),
 - place of work (in various places outside home, usually at home, or partly at home or partly outside home, in one place outside home);
 - gender parity in employment (mostly women, mostly men, balanced);
 - additional company benefits:
 - education opportunities (yes or no);
 - extra medical care or health insurance (yes or no);
 - accommodation (yes or no);
 - child care (yes or no);
 - type of contract (fixed term contract, permanent contract, other).
- Personal:**
- socio-demographic:
 - age of the respondent (up to 34 years of age, 35-44 years of age, 45 and more years of age);
 - level of education (higher, secondary, vocational and lower);
 - classification of the place of residence (village, town),
 - subjective assessment of one's health condition (good or very good, worse than good);
 - regarding the family situation of the respondent:
 - living with a partner (living with a partner, living without a partner, or no partner);
 - number of children in the household;
 - presence of children of up to 6 years of age in the household (yes or no).
- Personal and organisational** – regarding a conflict between professional work and family duties:
- variables describing the spillover from work to family:
 - how many times during the 3 months preceding the interview the respondent came home from work too tired to do the chores that needed to be done;
 - how many times during the 3 months preceding the interview the respondent found it difficult to fulfill her family responsibilities because of the amount of time spent on her job.
 - variables describing the spillover from family to work:
 - how many times during the 3 months preceding the interview the respondent arrived at work too tired to function well because of household work that needed to be done;
 - how many times during the 3 months preceding the interview the respondent found it difficult to concentrate at work because of her family responsibilities.

One significant limitation of the analysis is a lack of a variable regarding work income, which is a strong determinant of job satisfaction, among organisational variables (e.g. [Zalewska 2009], [Budrowska et al. 2003], [Unger 2002], [Kalinowska-Nawrotek 2005], [Kwak i Pascall 2005], [Schultz i Schultz 2002], [Siemieńska, 1997], [Barnett and Bradley 2007]). Although the questionnaire used in the GGS includes information about the respondents' incomes, the variable has not been incorporated into the model in view of the fact that it covers total income from both wage and non-wage sources and that the percentage of refusals to answer the question has been high (ca. 50%).

It should be also emphasised that the analysis focuses solely on aspects related to those workplace characteristics that are significant for combining family and professional responsibilities in the context of the respondent's family situation. The analysis is thus area-related. The model does not provide for a number of other variables connected with the work environment such as, for instance, the job position [Błaszczuk et al. 2006], work intensity [Burchell et al. 2002], autonomy at work [Herzberg et al. 1959], management system in the workplace [Katz 1978], relations with colleagues and supervisors (including the need of power and recognition [Springer 2010]), job content [Schultz et al. 2002, Warr 1999, Jaros and Zalewska 2008], as well as promotion and development opportunities.

Considering that the dependent variable, namely job satisfaction, is divided into 11 categories, it is treated as a quasi-continuous variable, a fact that makes it possible to apply the multivariate general linear model (GLM). The GLM procedure allows for analysing regression and variance for one dependent variable against any number of factors and/or variables. The model may use both quantitative and qualitative predictors. Owing to the scope and nature of the adopted variables, it is also important that the procedure is resistant to deviations from the normal distribution of population covered by the analyses.

Analysis results

Given below are the results of modelling regarding the level of job satisfaction for the second round of the the Gender and Generation Survey for working women with children of up to 14 years of age.

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The estimated model has revealed a considerable impact of the assessment of one's health condition on job satisfaction. Women who consider their health condition to be good are more satisfied with their job. The result indicating a positive correlation between one's health condition and job satisfaction, in line with the results of other surveys, for instance Poczowski [1996], Schultz and Schulz [2002], Daubas-Letourneux and Thébaud-Mony [2002], Benach et al. [2002], may undoubtedly arise from the fact that a good health condition may be a factor diminishing family-work tension.

As regards the impact of age on job satisfaction, the results of the analysis suggest that women in the younger age groups are less satisfied with their job than women of 45 and more years of age, yet the results are statistically significant solely for the group of 35-44-year-old women. Such results may be attributed to the fact that women between 35 and 44 years of age experience the most acute tension between family and work, a factor that may possibly reduce their job satisfaction. The obtained result corresponds to observations made as part of other surveys (e.g. [Clark et al 1996], [Zalewska 2009]).

As results from the presented model, another factor important for the level of job satisfaction is the mother's level of education. Women with higher education are more satisfied with their job than women with vocational education at most. The positive influence of education on job satisfaction in Poland is confirmed by, inter alia, the results of the Human Capital Balance Survey [Górniak 2016]⁵ and analysis conducted by Agnieszka Springer [2010]⁶. Differences in the level of job satisfaction depending on the level of one's education should be explained by the differing importance of individual work environment elements for specific groups classified according to education; employees with higher education appreciate promotion prospects, independence and development opportunities more than others do.

As regards the variables representing the respondent's family situation, living with a partner has proved rather insignificant for the level of job satisfaction. By the same token, the woman's job satisfaction is not influenced by the number of her children. What has proved significant is the presence of a small child in the household. Contrary to the results of most surveys conducted so far (e.g., [Lor-

Table 1. Women's job satisfaction – the results of estimating model parameters

Variable		Categories	Parameter value	Level of influence of public policy
ORGANISATIONAL VARIABLES	Weekly working time (in hours)		-0.001	MACRO, MEZZO
	Weekly working time (in hours) ²		0	
	Satisfaction with job security and stability		0.533***	
	Supervision over others' work	Yes	0.154	
		No	ref.	
	Possibility to adjust to one's needs	Yes	-0.008	
		No	ref.	
	Type of work	employee in the public sector	0.006	
		employee in the private sector	ref.	
	Place of work	in various places outside home	-0.018	
		usually at home, or partly at home or partly outside home	0.19	
		in one place outside home	ref.	
	Gender employment parity	mostly men	-0.005	
		mostly women	-0,006	
		balanced	ref.	
	Additional benefits – education	yes	0.214	
		no	ref.	
	Additional benefits – extra medical care/ health insurance	yes	-0.046	
no		ref.		
Additional benefits – accommodation	yes	0.244		
	no	ref.		
Additional benefits – child care	yes	0.17		
	no	ref.		
Type of contract	fixed-term contract	0.098		
	other	0.459		
	permanent contract	ref.		
PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL VARIABLES	Event experienced – I returned from work too tired to do the necessary chores	several times a month or more frequently	-0.384**	MICRO, MEZZO
		once or twice a month	-0.258	
		never	ref.	
	Event experienced – I found it difficult to fulfill my family duties due to time devoted to work	several times a month or more frequently	-0.141	
		once or twice a month	0.201	
		never	ref.	
	Event experienced – I came to work too tired to function properly because of my domestic chores	several times a month or more frequently	-0.149	
		once or twice a month	-0.052	
		never	ref.	
	Event experienced – I found it difficult to concentrate on work because of my family duties	several times a month or more frequently	-0.051	
		once or twice a month	-0.134	
		never	ref.	

cont. table 1

Variable		Categories	Parameter value	Level of influence of public policy
PERSONAL VARIABLES	Presence of children of up to 6 years of age in the household	no	-0,277*	MACRO, MICRO
		yes	ref.	
	Number of children in the household		0,025	
	Living with a partner	does not live with a partner or does not have a partner	-0.056	MICRO
		lives with a partner	ref.	
	Age	up to 34 years	-0.272	
		35-44 years	-0.408***	
		45+	ref.	
	Level of education	higher	0.321**	
		secondary	-0.097	
		vocational and lower	ref.	
	Classification of the place of residence	town	-0.131	
		village	ref.	
	Health condition	good or very good	0.287**	
neither good nor bad/bad or very bad		ref.		

$$R^2 = 0.418$$

Critical value for statistical significance: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

Source: own calculations based on the 2nd wave of Gender and Generations Survey for Poland (GGs-PL).

ence 1987], [Hanson and Sloan 1992]), it has been revealed that the presence of children of up to 6 years of age has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Workplace characteristics

As a rule, the workplace characteristics that may directly or indirectly shape the possibilities of combining family and professional responsibilities have proved to exert only a limited influence on the level of job satisfaction for women with children of up to 14 years of age.

Job satisfaction improves only with an increase in job security and stability. No significant effects have been noted, however, with respect to the impact of the weekly working time; it should be mentioned at this point that the possibility of a non-linear correlation between the weekly working time and job satisfaction has also been verified as statistically insignificant.

Conflict between professional work and family responsibilities

The estimated model has revealed that the necessity to perform work that is too tiring and hinders the fulfillment of domestic duties, when experienced

rather frequently, has a negative impact on job satisfaction. It is valuable to note, however, that the level of women's job satisfaction is not influenced by their excessive daily chores that hinder the performance of professional work.

The obtained results correspond to the findings of, inter alia, Frye and Breugh [2004], and Karimi [2008], whose surveys have revealed a negative impact of conflict between professional work and job satisfaction.

The significance of those workplace characteristics that allow for combining family and professional responsibilities and, thereby, diminish "family-work" conflict is indicated in literature, in particular in the context of women's professional work (e.g, [Kocot, Górecka, Kurowska 2013], [Kotowska et al. 2011], [Kotowska et al. 2007]), but decisively less frequently in the context of job satisfaction. This stream of research discusses also issues related to the impact of the family situation on the professional situation on the labour market for various groups of population, in particular women.

Summary

This article presents an analysis of job satisfaction for mothers with children of up to 14 years of age in the context of combining family and professional responsibilities. The level of job satisfaction is shaped by various factors as part of public policy, which influences the macro level (legal regulations and actions of public institutions), mezzo (practice of enterprises) and micro level (individual behaviour). Consequently, at the operational level, factors influencing job satisfaction of mothers in the context of reconciling family and professional responsibilities have been divided into organisational ones (related to the workplace), personal ones (related to the socio-demographic characteristics and family situation of individuals), and combined organisational and personal ones (related to the occurrence of a direct family-work conflict).

As far as personal factors are concerned, conclusions emerging from other studies have been generally confirmed. Age has proved a variable that differentiates the level of job satisfaction to a significant extent. Women of 34-44 years of age exhibit high levels of job satisfaction much less frequently than women of 45 and more years of age, a fact that may be correlated with the heavy workload at home and the most intense family-work conflict in this age group. The level of education of the surveyed has also proved of significance for job satisfaction; women with higher education are satisfied with their job more frequently than women with vocational education at most. Health has been revealed as another important factor of influence; women that consider their health condition to be good show higher levels of job satisfaction. Also, the presence of children of up to 6 years of age has proved to have a positive influence.

The impact of organisational factors related to the workplace characteristics that directly or indirectly determine the possibility of combining family and professional responsibilities is generally negligible. As regards the workplace characteristics, of most significance is job security and stability, which exerts a positive influence on satisfaction with work performed.

In addition, the influence of one of the personal and organisational factors has been revealed: the level of job satisfaction decreases when a woman is frequently too tired after work to perform necessary domestic chores.

It may be supposed, however, that, although organisational factors regarding the workplace charac-

teristics related to the possibilities of combining family and professional responsibilities have relatively little impact on job satisfaction, their significance is bound to increase in the face of demographic changes in Poland. It applies in particular to the problem of diminishing labour resources, which may result in the necessity to reformulate public policy so as to introduce solutions that make it easier to combine the roles of a caretaker (including a child caretaker) and an employee, and support the employment of people who have been professionally inactive due to the amount of their family duties. From this point of view, the influence of public policy becomes significant both on the macro, mezzo and micro level. On the one hand, it will be necessary to support the professional activity of people who are at a disadvantage on the labour market: women, older people and the disabled (mostly on the macro and the micro levels); it may require, in turn, a change of the work environment so as to take into account the possibilities of these groups of employees, including their family commitments and involvement in caring activities (the mezzo level). The results of the analysis conducted as part of this survey indicate possible correlations between the workplace characteristics shaping the possibilities of combining work with family duties, family situation and job satisfaction, the importance of which will increase in the future. Interrelations between these three elements will constitute important elements of employment and family policy.

¹ The survey covered a group of more than six thousand employees from nine countries of Western Europe.

² At the same time, considering the more prominent role of work for men than for women, it is hypothesised that work environment has a greater influence on one's general functioning and job satisfaction, and is related to other variables in the case of men than in the case of women [Spector 1997].

³ Based on a representative sample from all over Poland ($n = 2663$).

⁴ The variable was included in view of a possible nonlinear correlation with the dependent variable.

⁵ In the Human Capital Balance Survey, the level of job satisfaction was studied in the context of correspondence between work performed and one's education. A similar approach was adopted by A. Springer [2010].

⁶ Although, in the case of surveys conducted by A. Springer [2010], the influence of education was relatively small.

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