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Combining Multiple Roles among High Position Women in Israel, as Seen by the Woman, Her Husband and a Child

By Bosmat Shallom-Tuchin¹

Abstract

The study examines the perceptions of the women and their family members regarding the factors enabling them to achieve high positions in the workplace. It also seeks to understand the influences the women's career has on her children and family life. The conceptual basis of the research is the work-family role conflict theory and role enhancement perspective. In addition, the study compares the Israeli women strategies for balancing work and private life as they relate to the family structure to the cultures in the countries around the globe. Twenty-two life-story interviews were conducted with high positioned Israeli women, some of their husbands and children by means of qualitative-phenomenological method. It was found that the women's personal characteristics were of crucial importance for their successful coping with multiple roles. The family support and especially that of the husband was important. In addition, simultaneous growth of career and family created marital happiness and a sense of fulfillment. Regarding children's perceptions, it seems that they differentiated between physical caretaking, given by other agents, and education and emotional connection given by the parents. However, there still existed the role conflict which found expression in the mother's guilt, the daughter's feeling of deprivation and the daughter's conflict regarding the choice of a profession. The findings suggest that family and work perceived as inseparable by the participants created the work-family dynamic balance. Overall it can be concluded that the benefits women and their families gained from combining multiple roles outweigh their negative effects.

Keywords: high-positioned women; work and family; effects on children; family perspectives, life-story interviews, international women studies.

Introduction

Surveys regarding women in high positional roles still show that there are few women holding high positions in the world in general and in Israel in particular. (e.g Grant Thornton, 2009, D&B, 2008). These results are not surprising considering the existence of the "Glass ceiling" phenomenon. Examples of the glass ceiling in the 21 century can still be seen by new research from Grant Thornton International (2009). They reveal that women still hold less than a quarter of senior management positions in privately held business globally, the same as in 2007. Similarly, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) conducted a survey in 2005/6, which showed that less than a quarter (24%) of full professors was women (West and Curtis, 2006). According to a survey conducted by Dun & Bradstreet (2008) in 2007 on the largest and most influential companies in Israel, only 2.2% of the chairpersons in these companies were women. However, there is slow change for the better: In 2007, 8.4% of all the CEO's were women, compared with 6.6% the year before (D&B, 2008). Despite this, there is a

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growing group of women who achieved high positioned roles and simultaneously built a family and raised children. How did they manage to cope with multiple roles? Their career success being obvious, are they equally successful in their family life? How did their career affect their children and family life?

The conceptual framework of the current study evolved from Role Theory, specifically, the Conflict and Enhancement hypotheses. The Conflict Hypothesis or Scarcity Approach viewed energies of individuals as finite and role demands as infinite (Coser, 1974, Goode, 1960, Marks, 1977). Role conflict, then, became an inevitable, normal, and expected consequence of multiple roles. In contrast, the Role Enhancement hypothesis, restated most recently as the expansionist theory (Barnett & Hyde, 2001) emphasized the potential benefits of multiple roles. The hypothesis believes that human energy is a potentially expandable resource. By engaging in multiple roles, one has the opportunity to increase one's energy supply. The benefits of multiple-role engagement are reflected in positive mental health, physical health, and relationship health. Multiple roles provide multiple sources of social support, skills that transfer from one role to another and an increased sense of meaning, personal worth and purpose (Barnett & Hyde, 2001, see also Sieber, 1974, Thoits, 1983). An alternative explanation of the conflict and enrichment assumptions was presented by Tiedje, Wortman, Downey Emmons, and Biernat, Lang (1990). They compared the role perception continuum model that proposes that perceptions of enhancement and conflict are best represented on a continuum anchored by conflict and enhancement, to the assumption that these perceptions are mutually exclusive. Support for this claim can be found in Grzywacz & Marks (2000). They believed that women and men perceive that the benefit they get from combining work and family justifies the work-family conflict. Which of these theories is more suitable for women in the twenty first century depends on whether a woman derives more enhancements or conflict from her multiple roles.

Many factors can influence the success of women in multiple roles. Among these there are the women characters and perceptions. In a study conducted in India, it was clear that the women had succeeded in their careers because of their ability to harness their strengths, their individual drive and desire to grow (Nath, 2000). In China it was found that women managers in information technology sector are high achievers with a high level of ambition (Aaltion & Huang, 2007). In the USA, Buzzanell, Meisenbach, Remke & Bowers (2005) found that the participants in their study reframed the good mother image into a good working mother role that fits their lifestyles and interests.

Another factor is a family support demonstrated in many studies conducted around the world: China (Aaltion & Huang, 2007), Singapore (Kim and Ling, 2001), Bangladesh (Alam, 2001), India (Nath, 2000), etc.. For Indian women managers the father was a primary source of career encouragement, as well as the mother and siblings who played a part. Or the family had a significant negative influence when it was not supportive. In addition, the family and the extended family provided support in child care in Bangladesh and India (Alam, et al, 2011, Nath, 2000). Another crucial factor is a spousal support and encouragement in continued success in the corporate world (Nath, 2000). The spouse can contribute to his mate's effective stock of human capital in many ways. Spousal help is of an indirect nature if the spouse enables the person to spend more time at work. (Moore, 1962, Mincor, 1982, Becker, 1965). Spouses can also provide direct assistance such as entertainment of colleagues and clients, clerical help, and access to information through personal contacts and other means (Gerber 1983, Lorber, 1984). Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1994) suggested four categories of tangible and emotional support: informational (information, advice, suggestions), instrumental (aid in time, money or other forms

of help), emotional (provision of esteem, affection and trust) or appraisal (feedback and affirmation). In a study conducted on women entrepreneurs in Singapore it was found that spousal support is mostly mental and emotional, but also accompanied by childcare and housework (Kim & Ling, 2011). In the studies conducted in the UK, Nabi (2001) and the USA, Parasuraman, et. al., (1992) found that social support was more positively related to subjective career success for women than for men and played a more important role in the family satisfaction for women than for men. For most Indian women (Nath, 2000) the husband's support and encouragement were critical in their continued success in the corporate world. The Chinese women coped with the family-work conflict by sharing the family responsibilities with their husbands (Aalton & Huang, 2007). By contrast, many respondents from the Hong Kong study either tried to get more support from their husbands or discussed work-family problems with them, but nevertheless they appear to get little support from them. The same results were found in the research on Bangladesh urban (Dhaka) women. It was concluded that the women managers appear to get little or no support from their husbands (Alam, et al, 2011). Another factor influencing career success of women that is found in literature around the world was paid help. Like most of the households in Hong Kong and China, the interviewer's family employed a domestic help to fill the roles of a nanny, a cleaning lady, a cook and a shopper (Aalton & Huang, 2007, Lo et al, 2003). Most of the Indian women managers, the women entrepreneurs in Singapore and the women managers in Bangladesh had paid help at home to take care of the domestic chores (Alam, et al, 2011, Kim & Ling, 2001, Nath, 2000). Another help that was found in the studies conducted in China and Hong Kong was a hired tutor for a child's homework. The need for tutoring for the schoolchildren corresponds to China and Hong Kong school system, where students need adult help to complete their school assignments (Aalton & Huang, 2007, Lo, et al, 2003).

The increasing entrance of women into the workplace during the past decades has great impact on family structure, dynamics and the social and psychological development of individual family members. Therefore there has been great public and academic interest in effects of maternal employment on children's development. The outcomes indicate general consensus that a mother's work status *per se* has no predictable effects on her children's development (Barnett & Hayde, 2001, Harvey, 1999, Hayes, Palmer & Zaslow, 1990 Kamerman & Hayes, 1982). Substantial literature compares children of employed and non-employed mothers shows that a variety of specific factors interact with mother's employment in determining outcomes, such as experiences of work, work satisfaction and the way she feels about it (Bloom-Feshbach, Bloom Feshbach & Heller, 1982, Hoffman, 1987, McEwen & Barling, 1991, Zigler & Frank, 1988).

Even though many studies have been conducted on the family-work phenomenon, only few focused on the family members (e.g. Gerson, 1993) and none investigated the family narrative as a whole. This issue was barely, if at all, studied in different countries around the globe. The purpose of this research is to fill in the gap in the literature by examining the perceptions of married women with children and their family members regarding the factors enabling them to achieve high positions in the workplace. It also sought to understand the effects of the woman's career on her family members and the meaning of being a husband or a child of these women.

The current approach suggests that the work-family conflict can be better dealt with if an employed individual is treated not as an autonomous agent, but as a part of a family system. Such a system approach can improve our understanding of the work-family interface and its

effects on family life (Barnett and Garies, 2006). These suggestions indicate the need for the current research.

Method

Participants

Twenty-two in-depth interviews that included life stories were conducted. Nine high-ranked full time working women, married with at least one adult child over 19 years old participated in the study. The women were selected from three broadly defined occupational fields: heads of colleges, business women and Knesset (parliament) members. Some of them were on the list of "50 Influential Women in Israel for the Year 200X," ranked by the leading Israeli newspaper *Globes*. The reason for choosing these women was their high positioned roles which indicate their professional success. The fact that they are married (never divorced) with at least one child over 18 was an indicator of their ability to maintain spousal intimacy and motherhood. The ages of women ranged from 45 to 55 at the time of the interview. The ages of the five husbands ranged from 54 to 59. They all became top-level professionals in their fields: 2 were CEOs of big Israeli companies, now self-employed; another was a chairman of several companies, one had a high position in one of the biggest companies and one owned a company. Five daughters and three sons of high positioned mothers were interviewed. At the time of the interviews their ages ranged from 22 to 38.

Procedure

The women were recruited during 2006-2008. They were approached via e-mail or in-person at professional conferences. Each woman's interview was followed by a separate interview with at least one family member. In some families only the husband or the child was interviewed and not both. The places of the interviews were chosen by the participants. The time of the interviews ranged between one and one and half hour. The interviews were conducted in Hebrew.

The research tools

Three research tools were used: an interview and Interview Guide, the research diary and the human as an instrument.

Each interview was conducted in three stages, as suggested by Rosenthal (2003). In the first and most important stage, the participant was asked to tell her life story. A husband and a child were asked to tell their life story as a husband or a child of a high positioned woman. Only during the second phase of the interview that narrative-generating questions were posed in order to encourage participants to talk about phases in their life or particular situations. The questions elicited additional information already mentioned in the interview: "Could you tell me in more detail about ...?". Only in the third phase of the interview the Interview Guide was used. It posed external narrative questions regarding topics of interest that had not been mentioned.

Narrative analysis

The data processing in the current research was divided into several stages, as suggested by Tutty et.al (1996) and with the transparency suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994) and presented in Shkedi (2003). Some of the grounded theory techniques (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994) were used.

Results

The women: *“There is an inner drive that motivates you to move forward” (Rachel)*

In an answer to the question: “How did you achieve the things you did?” The women mention qualities such as motivation, initiative and strength and the courage to act and to change; it seems that the women possess these characteristics from an early age. These ambitions and characteristics lead to a strong will to have a career. These qualities are typical for this kind of women. These women are responsible for their own life, practical and creative and take an active life position.

Other characteristics such as: “crazy mother, very worried and concerned”, “full of anxiety for their future” were used to describe the women as mothers. These characteristics are female stereotypical characteristics. Having both groups of characteristics indicates “androgyny personality”. The term ‘androgyny’ describes behavior without sexual stereotypes. It constitutes a balance between male characteristics that express performance ability and female characteristics, which express emotional ability (Pines, 1998). According to Bem (1974), androgenic people are able to stick to their opinion during an argument and at the same time to respond with warmth and sensitivity. Therefore, one can say that these women have different characteristics for each of their roles, as one of the interviewees said: “Here I am like a stone, like a rock .At home I am soft” (Dina). But they also possess characteristics common to both roles - at work and at home, such as “good relationships, the need to listen, to encourage and give personal example, to accept other people and be happy with their success” (Irit). In summary, one can say that these women have different characteristics for different roles and situations as well as a combination of common characteristics for their multiple roles. These attitudes coincide with Chinese participants’ statements about the managerial style; almost all of them agreed that androgynous management was the ideal style (Aaltion & Huang, 2007).

The women’s coping strategies: *“My recipe is to start everything early” (Irit)*

The women’s and the men’s qualities were combined in the early period of their lives; they got married and started a family very early and simultaneously the women started their careers. It seems that the early start has a positive effect on their world. Irit summarizes it in the following way: “My recipe is to start everything early, even to get up early in the morning. When I got married, I hadn’t turned 19 yet. It is not that I planned it, but when I look back, my rule is not to postpone anything, even if it creates a break in the middle. I started the university a year before my school friends. The family grows up simultaneously with the work. My daughter is a friend of mine and I already have 4 grandchildren.” Simultaneous development of career and family of the participants contradicts earlier studies. Pines, (1989) described two women managers who postponed the birth of their children in order to develop their career. Blair-Loy (2003) described a group of women who decided to have babies and keep on working. These women had children after they had gained a professional name and achieved high ranks, at a relatively mature age of over thirty. In addition, Schwartz (1989) showed that only 35% of

women executives have children by the age of 40. Goldin (2004) showed that among the 1980 to 1990 college graduates who stated that their goal is a career and family, only 21 to 28 percent realized that goal by the age of 40. These differences between earlier studies to the findings of this research can be considered under cultural differences. Israeli society is family-oriented and strongly pronatalist at both institutional and normative/individual levels. (Portugese, 1998) Therefore it is not surprising that Israeli women simultaneously build a career and raised a family. In addition, an empirical study in Israel shows that a majority of married women and mothers perceive both family and work in the labor market as highly important and combine them in practice. Their occupational aspirations and achievements are, nevertheless, limited by strong traditional norms of familism (Toren, 2003). The findings in the research conducted in India correlate with the Israeli results: "The later in your career you have children, the harder the choice between home and family... better to have children earlier in your career... try and find a way to do things earlier in life" (Nath, 2000)

Support: *"I recruited the entire world to help me" (Dina)*

The women received various kinds of help and support: paid help, support from parents and especially a support from the husband and understanding from the children. Dina described the help she recruited when she started her own company: "my spouse, our parents from both sides and of courses the paid help: housemaids, nannies, babysitters." The women facilitated their daily life by using whatever services money could buy, including prepared food. The first ones to support the women were her parents and especially her mother "My mother always stood by me when I needed her" (Na'ama), "I always say that behind every men stands a woman, and behind every successful woman stands her mother. She helped me to deal with difficulties: if I had a sick child, she would take a day off work, so I could stay at mine" (Tamar). In most cases (except one), when the children were young, the parents helped very much. Their help was active, such as taking them from the kindergarten, spending the day with them, or staying with them when the parents were busy. When children got older they sometimes turned to grandparents when the mother was not available: "Grandmother is a much better friend of mine. Many times, I would call my mother and she would ask: 'Is it urgent?' It was usually not. So I called my grandmother instead". (Maya).

The husband's support: *"There is no way to succeed without the right partner" (Sara)*

The husband's support was a major theme in the interviews with women who considered it to be the major factor in their success. Four layers of husband's support have been found. They are hierarchical and each layer is based on the previous ones: Passive support (helping by not interfering), Equal participation, Relieving the guilt and Active support. The first layer of help, the Passive support, is provided by the husband who is not afraid of his wife's success. Leah, Tamar's daughter, said: "My dad ... He supported her by not interfering." The second layer of help is represented by the husband who shares the house chores and child rearing with his wife, he is an Equal Participant: "There is no way to succeed without the right partner. He always said: 'You go, I will take care of the children, I will warm the food, I will do...'" (Sara). "He does all the shopping, most of the laundry and starts the dishwasher." (Shira). Regarding child caring, Shira said: "He would take her to the kindergarten and back, so the kindergarten teachers knew only him. He was the active nursery school parent: he built things there. The third and the fourth layers deal with emotions. The third one is "Relieving the Guilt and Pangs of Conscience" husband. Rachel expressed her frustration and her husbands' attitude: "I was always in a

struggle with the entire world including my work. I didn't feel that I was doing my job well enough, and it was clear that I stressed out all the people around me. The frustration was so big and I was so angry about myself that it came out at home." "If not for my husband, I would give it up because it was really not easy and the guilt feeling was horrible. But he said: 'there is no problem, it's all in your head, they are not suffering, and we can go abroad and nothing will happen'. He also took a lot of responsibilities and continues till today - he is really a good partner." Clearly, Rachel, like other participants, linked their husbands' assistance to quieting their guilt. Three of the husbands were described by their wives as guilt restrainers. Other husbands played this role indirectly by helping. The fourth and the highest layer is the Active support that includes full partnership, joint thinking and decision-making, sharing of concerns and aspirations. "He really supports me at the crossroads. He was always there, always knew what was important, very encouraging. He knows how to put things in perspective. All the important decisions are taken together" (Shira). Ya'ir, one of the husbands represents the support included in all the four layers: "Behind every successful woman there is a man (laughs), the famous saying is the other way round, but it is true: a woman can't succeed in her career if there is no one to support her at home. I didn't have a problem that she would focus, develop and succeed in her work. I contributed the maximum I could, and, if needed, I would have given more... Not only that I contributed, I also encouraged her to have a career."

Children's support: *"The children helped me all the time" (Smadar)*

The next sources of help and support were the children: "With time they managed to appreciate that their mother is in business, successful, and not at home. They never complained" (Sara). "When my third son was little, his big brothers helped a lot and with the little one (the fourth child) of course they did... They understood that mother was very active and always busy" (Na'ama). "It's true that children helped me all the time" (Smadar). "I don't have to do house chores, my children do. They also cook, and they know that if they do not do shopping, there will be no food at home. I always say that one needs a lot of luck with the children. We were blessed..." (Ayala). This perception of their role as assistants in the mother's career was found in the study of women entrepreneurs in Singapore: the children help with household chores. Moreover, the number of children is negatively associated with job-homemaking conflict. These findings could be due to the fact that when there are more children, more help is available for doing household chores (Kim & Ling, 2001). The children also emphasized their help. Amir gave an elaborate answer: Leah added: "My father and grandmother played a big part...we also helped her. One thing that does not get enough attention is that children enable you to make your career. Not in an active way, but in the essence. Overall, we were good, we didn't give much trouble. There was no need to come often in the middle of the day to pick us up from school or to handle violence in the family. (Leah). The mothers and the children described their perceptions of children's help. By never complaining about her absence and by helping their siblings, they actually offered her indirect help, and by helping her to write letters they offered direct help. According to the literature, the help of the spouse was found to be a major element in the woman's success in combining work and family. However, the literature does not provide data on the perception of the children of a working mother who see themselves as an important element in the success of her career.

Effects on young children- Part 1

Physical versus emotional caretaking: *“In the daily life it was the nanny, but the person I became is only due to my parents” (Daniella)*

This theme will present the children's point of view regarding their childhood. Since one of the research purposes was to understand how the limited presence of the mothers in the lives of the children influenced the development of their personalities, if they suffered from the lack of her attention and to what extent the mother was substituted for by other caretakers in the eyes of the children.

In answer to the direct question “Who raised you?”, the children of the business women answered that they were raised by nannies, grandparents and/or were “*latch key kids*”. The children of the Knesset member and the heads of academic institutions were raised by one of their parents. Two of the children in the sample were raised by their mothers. Other children in the sampling were raised by nannies and with the help of grandparents. Daniella differentiated between the daily care and the “real impact”: “In the daily life, in the routine, it was a nanny, but the person I became is only due to my parents. I don't remember them giving me lunch, but my personality was formed only by them.” Maya expressed the same feeling: “It is mom and dad, and we, the children, raised each other. I can't say the nannies raised me. They were always there, but I don't feel they educated me.” From these examples, which are similar to the answers of the other interviewees, it can be seen that most of the children differentiated between physical or, as they call it, “technical raising” and emotional upbringing, or, in their words: “educational raising”. As Dan explained: “The mother is not measured by lunch or dinner, these things are insignificant. I think her role is expressed through education, conversations, teaching, explanations, even in the behavior of every day life.” Zigler & Frank (1988) found in general that when mothers work by choice and child care is satisfactory, family stress is not too great and their children are as well-adjusted as those with mothers at home. The interviews with the adult children of the high positioned women seem to prove this point. On the other hand, in the study conducted in Bangladesh, it was found that when the children were looked after by the maid (rather than by their grandparents), physical torture (children were threatened not to say anything negative to their mothers), and/or insufficient caretaking could occur (Alam, 2011).

Quality time is not enough for daughters: *“I got less time, and the time I did get was quality time” (Leah)*

The mothers' multiple roles obviously affected the children's lives. However, it seems that they affected the daughters and sons differently. When children start to develop gender identity, their perspectives and needs regarding their mother's absence becomes very different. It seems that the sons adapted more easily and even enjoyed their freedom compared to the daughters who were more sensitive to their mother's absence: Yaniv (23) described his childhood: “I was a “latch key kid”. From the third grade I used to warm my food in the microwave by myself. I didn't have a problem with that and I can't say it bothered me. I remember I liked the independence and freedom, no one was bugging me with doing my homework.” On the other hand, the daughters seem to have ambivalent feelings: in their childhood, they needed the mother and felt her absence; as adults, they understood the need of the mother to work in order to provide for the family and to achieve self-actualization. Therefore, unlike Yaniv and Amir, Rina (22) said: “It's obvious that when you are a child, you want your mom around.” Adult daughters still feel the mother's absence. Rina expressed the endless debate

that is running through her head: “When you are a child, you want your mother to be with you, and she was. But sometimes she is not there, and you get used to it. It also influences your character, and when you grow up you still need your mother around. I still do. But she needs to work, so sometimes she is not available.” Leah also talked about it: when asked what she lost from being a child of a high positioned woman, Leah answered very clearly: “Her. I lost warmth and time. I got less time, and the time that I did get was with a purpose, instead of just sitting in front of the television and being near her.” Maya (22) said: “I always wanted my mother more... I feel that I am still learning to know her. Grandmother is a much better friend of mine. Many times, I would call my mother and she would ask: “Is it urgent?” It was usually not, but later it became irrelevant, because I just wanted to share something with her. So I called my grandmother instead. Yes, there is no doubt that I wanted more, but that was what it was.” Her mother is well aware of it, and gives exactly the same example: “I have a cell phone only for the children and I always answer. She would call me and I would ask: “Is it urgent?” because I am in the middle of a meeting, and she would say: It is not, but later it won’t be relevant.” (Ayala).

The feeling of the lack of attention and the need for more time with mother that were pronounced in the daughters’ narratives, were not heard in the stories of the sons or of the mothers’ accounts of their sons. The sons seemed to adjust better than the daughters to the mother being at work and needed her less to be replaced by a nanny or a grandmother. This might be explained by the differences in gender identity. In interviews with women managers in Bangladesh, mothers said that during adolescence girls expected more attachment to their mother, but overall children (both boys and girls) wanted to spend more time with them. In addition, to balance work and family was especially difficult when the children were sick. (Alam et al, 2011)

Due to Chodorow (1974), the fact that the males and females experience social environment differently as they grow up accounts for the development of basic sex differences in personality. Feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does. In addition, “it seems likely that from their children’s earliest childhood, mothers and women tend to identify more with daughters and help them to differentiate less, so that processes of separation and individuation are made more difficult for girls. In the light of Chodorow (1974), it could be that the mothers raised the daughters to be more dependent on them and more sensitive to their absence. The daughters’ conflicting voices will be presented again when they talk about their future professions.

Authoritative relationships, delegation of responsibilities and independence of children:

“There are lines of authority between parents and children. It’s clear.” (Leah)

In this section it is suggested that the help children provided to their mothers and the independence so commonly mentioned during the interviews are an expression of authoritative parenting and delegation of responsibilities to the children. Authoritative parents are both demanding and responsive. “They monitor and impart clear standards for their children’s conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible and self-regulated, as well as cooperative” (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). Yaniv described his parents’ role in his childhood:

“They always called; they always knew when we had exams or when there was a need to push me. They always knew what was going on with me, helped in studies and knew who my friends were.”

Another manifestation of authoritative parenting is granting children independence. Maya said:

“It’s independence; we raised each other (siblings). When we were young, we looked after each other. When the eldest started to drive, he picked up the younger kids. Children were responsible for shopping.” She referred to her time abroad: “You grow up as an independent person. For example, when I went to live abroad, I had no problem living on my own. I could manage with going to the supermarket or opening a bank account.” In the Hong Kong study it was found that some respondents tried to require from their children to be more independent (Lo, et al, 2003).

Authoritative relationships can lead to delegation of responsibility. The children’s support which contributed to the mother’s success was made possible by delegating to them responsibility for themselves and their siblings. Examples of such delegation can be seen in Ayala’s account of her children’s duty to shop for the family and can be supplemented by the quotes from her daughter: “There were years when I used to make sandwiches for my little brothers” (Maya).

A similar example is given by Daniella (26): “I used to take my brother to the Scouts... I always felt that I raised him.”

It seems that the parents’ absence and the authoritative parenting style made the children take more responsibility for themselves and for their younger siblings, which strengthened the relationship between them. The children’s support, mentioned by the mothers as a factor in their success, derived from the delegation of responsibility to the children.

The husbands

The husbands’ qualities: *“It takes a lot of flexibility, self-confidence and strength of the spouse” (Amos)*

The women talked at length about their husbands’ qualities and behavior of cooperation as contributing to their success:

“I have a very ambitious husband, he is very energetic, he never gets tired, and it is very motivating... very dedicated father, always giving and never egotistic” (Ayala).

The husbands talked mainly about the qualities needed from both spouses in order to maintain a home and a family:

“you need a lot of patience, restraint, tolerance, readiness to compromise and willingness to take chances....It takes a lot of flexibility, self-confidence and strength of a spouse, real partnership. Partners should do everything together:

make decisions together and everything that follows from that” (Amos). “It’s possible when the two spouses are not egoistic and when you have full trust in each other, and love” (Hayim).

Noam and Benny focused on the couple’s need to be strong, give full support and trust each other in order to resist social pressure:

“You have to close your ears and ignore the environment mocking the wife’s work, such as her business trips with a male companion, and you shouldn’t start thinking all kinds of thoughts” (Noam).

Benny continues:

“I think I didn’t feel threatened, I felt I had my own career. When a man feels unsuccessful, maybe it is hard for him to accept the fact that his wife is a career woman. For me it was not hard; on the contrary, I felt that I had my own career and she had hers, and I was proud that she succeeded.”

Self-confidence of the spouse is expressed through the ability to feel proud of the achievements of the partner.

“When she was appointed the CEO, I was very proud.”

Each husband mentions different qualities, but they all said that they favored their wife’s career and the need to trust each other. The husband’s trust in his wife is well explained by Rabin (1996): They are not worried about giving too much or getting too little, not afraid of being exploited or used in any way. This provides them with a secure base to give freely, being confident that individual interests eventually will be considered equally.

Husbands as caretakers: *“We shared half and half, because she didn’t work less than me” (Ben)*

During the interviews, the impact of two highly demanding careers on children came up in the theme that dealt with the role of a husband of a high positioned woman in child rearing. There were two major issues: the first regarded the need of the children to spend time with their parents and the second the husband’s actual part in raising the children:

“I have to admit that, although we both have careers, Tamar took care of the children more than me. Although I don’t feel comfortable to admit it, this is the truth. As I said before, when I look back, I would do things differently. I think I threw on her more responsibility than I took on myself... For parent meetings in the kindergarten they never invited me, but I didn’t initiate.” (Amos).

Amos was satisfied with his relationship with his wife, but not with his lack of interest in raising children specifically and inequality in sharing the workload. It seems that Amos, like other men in dual-earner marriages, was an uninvolved father who took little responsibility for child rearing. These men defined their parental commitments in terms of breadwinning, despite being

married to career women (Gerson, 1993). The importance of planning and thinking how to raise children, when both parents work long hours, was emphasized by Amos. He also believed that it was good for the children to be exposed to their parents' work, friends and networking Benny was also an uninvolved father:

"I don't think I was the father who had the time to sit with his children in the early years, but I always felt that if I had the time, they wouldn't really need me."

But he did not think that his wife's work hurt the children:

"I didn't mind that she was not at home, that she did not raise the children for two reasons. First, I don't think that if a woman stays with children they feel better. I think many women feel guilt because they think that if they work, their children are neglected. I don't think it's true; you can be with them in the afternoon or in the evening, they will be just fine. I didn't see that children whose mothers stay at home become more successful than children of working parents. I also think that it is important for women to develop. It's important not to be a homebody. I know couples in which the women don't work and wander around in malls."

Unlike Amos and Benny, Noam, Hayim and Ben took more active parts in child rearing and saw it as a privilege rather than a burden:

"I gave them a bath every night when they were little. It is fun, it is unbelievable pleasure...I took them to the kindergarten, it is sheer pleasure, such joy!" (Noam).

Ben spoke about taking an equal part in child raising:

"First of all, we shared half and half, because she didn't work less than me. To change their diapers (and in those days we had to wash them) to take them to school, to sit with them over their homework - we shared it equally, except for breastfeeding. I would wake up in the middle of the night, just like her. We shared everything. If I worked hard and was tired, she would do more, and the other way round. Maybe as a father of boys I did more things that men do, and my wife would read to them or watch TV with them, but we contributed together, equally."

His wife confirmed:

"He would say, "You go, I will take care of the children, I will heat the food, I will do..." (Sara).

Hayim also raised the children together with his wife:

"When I worked full-time, she was at home; when she wanted to study, she went to evening classes after I came home from work.": "I think that if you have children, you should raise them yourself; it's not a good idea to throw them on someone else."

The decision to have the fourth child was made after Hayim promised he would raise it. For this reason he quit his work as a CEO and started to work at home. The couple could allow themselves to do without a nanny because they both had flexible working hours and got help from grandparents – something more feasible for a politician than for a business woman.

Gender differences in men's perceptions of child rearing were found by Hochschild (1989) and Gerson (1993), who studied "involved fathers," defined as men who emphasize sharing and flexibility in parenting and domestic tasks. Hayim had a much fuller, more elaborate notion of what a father was. He spoke about fathering as much as mothers spoke about mothering. In addition, Hayim and Noam emphasized their joy of spending time with their children. They didn't feel that their wives should do for their children more than they did. They believed in equality in child rearing. This was what Amos and Hayim called "*real partnership*" - making decisions together and with full confidence in each other. Gerson (1993) wrote about involved fathers: "Just as they refuse to accept a rigid division between breadwinning and caretaking, they also reject rigid division in parenting. They do not distinguish between "mothering" and "fathering". The equality with the wife was expressed in their stories of shared parenting and their recognition of the fact that a woman has the right to build her own career just as they do.

The Family

Lack of boundaries between home and work: "*Dina doesn't have boundaries*" (Noam)

From the interviews with the husbands it was obvious that they were deeply involved in the careers of their wives. Similar attitude could be traced through the interviews with the children of high positioned women. This involvement in the professional life of the wife and mother can be considered as a manifestation of the family support contributing to the success of her career. It is therefore important to understand the reasons for the family participation and devotion.

From the stories about the women's attitude towards her work it became apparent that the women brought their work home, but not in the sense of working at home (although some of them did), but mostly through sharing. The women did not separate their work from home but naturally brought together their two worlds – their work and their family life. Their sharing made the whole family partners in their careers. Maya spoke about her parents' office:

"The secretaries in the office were really good friends of ours. Dona and Rachel were really part of the family, they were involved in our lives. Dona knew everything about me, like my medical files or the pictures I drew. I was amazed that a mailing I sent to my mom from abroad was also filed."

The parents shared their family lives in the office with the secretaries who became part of the family.

Although Yaniv described his parents' ability to separate work and family, he also said that they shared at home the events of their day at the office:

“I feel that when they come home they do this switch and they are home...They both have their worlds, but they have a lot, a lot, a lot to tell each other because they are involved in each other's lives, in business or anything else.”

At times Yaniv was present at these conversations, so he also knew what was going on at their work. Ayala explained how her children were involved in her work and success:

“They are very proud of my success, they are very involved: they read everything that is written in the press about me, they hear things from us, and everything is open at home.”

In contrast to Sara, Rachel admitted she was in a constant battle with herself trying to distinguish between her career and family roles. She described two periods in her life:

“The first period was creating the family and working in a company. These years were the endless struggle. I almost had to hide the fact that I had a family, children, home, hobbies...my private life that was very important to me. I never thought of myself as a career woman. In my eyes I was a mother and a wife first of all. But when I was at work, my children were in the margin. It was horrible to get a phone call from a child while people were sitting in my office at a meeting, or to leave early and say sorry, there is a child waiting for me to pick him up. It wasn't legitimate, or it wasn't legitimate in my eyes. I was struggling with the whole world and felt guilt towards my work. I didn't think I was good at my work and I pressured everyone around me. When I came home, the frustration was so big and I was so angry with myself that it would come out at home. I really feel I did a very big injustice to my children. Today I know that I paid and I also think that they paid the price of the boundaries I tried to create between my work and family. The only reason that I may want to turn the clock back is to live this period with the insights that I have today.” (Rachel)

When she stopped separating the two spheres of her life, Rachel resolved the inner conflict and initiated the idea of flexible work-family boundaries in her company:

“Now in my organization an employee can come to work with his child or travel with him and it's fine. Today the boundaries are very flexible. Now I take care of my parents who are getting older and I have no problem canceling an important meeting. I apologize that I have to go to something that is connected to my son or something else and it's fine.”

Rachel's story demonstrates that the need to keep the boundaries between work and family can be counterproductive, while combining of the roles facilitates life. It is also true that the times have changed and now it is more legitimate for a career person to have a family.

Lack of boundaries, sharing and combining work and family life by the women made the husbands share their professional life with them as well. The husbands emphasized the wife's contribution and support in the development of their own careers:

“I think we both had a part in the advancement of each other’s careers. I mean, first of all, that we agreed to encourage one another... This is the basic condition, not sufficient but necessary: when she wanted to study, I helped her, when I did - she helped me.” (Amos).

Ayala, who shared the office with her husband, gave another example: her husband was afraid to go into a new field of work and she kept on saying that they would learn:

“Nobody is born a genius; if you learn, you can make it.”

Marital happiness and Life satisfaction: *I was concerned with developing the spousal relationship and I can say that I am happy” (Dina)*

The women and their husbands tended to feel content with the choices they made and with their lives in general. At the end of her life story Dina said:

“...I was concerned with developing the spousal relationship and I can say that I am happy. We are married almost 25 years and we have a good relationship.”

Ben also mentioned a good relationship with his wife:

“We have a relationship, I don’t know whether to call it love: it is respect, consideration, understanding, care and everything. We also give space to each other. I go out twice a week with my friends, we talk and laugh, although I talk with my wife about everything. We don’t have secrets from each other. Now, after our children have left home, we live for each other and we are happy to be together... I am very content with our life -, we have succeeded.”

In general, the participants described their spousal relationship as very good, based on friendship, flexibility and tolerance. These findings contradict the studies on professional women done in Hong Kong: many of them are exhausted and feel guilt from the demands of their multiple roles (mother, daughter and professional) (Lo, et al, 2003).

Relationships in the family: “The relationships in the family are wonderful” (Dina)

The interview guide did not contain direct questions about the relationships in the family, but the children were asked to say something, whatever they wanted, about their mothers. During the interview they talked about mother as a family person: “She is devoted to children; everything she does is for us. All this work, it’s not for herself, it is for us, so that she could give us whatever we wanted. She couldn’t stand it if someone would hurt us...” (Maya). “For my mother the family and homemaking is very important. There was no situation when we would come home and there was no lunch. Every evening she would check my homework with me. We would always go on vacation together. She was always very sensitive to me - she always knew what was happening. Even if I wanted to hide something from her, in a few days she would come and ask what was going on.” (Daniella).

The image of the mother emerging from the interviews with children contradicts the existing stereotype of a career-oriented woman as giving less value to her family at the expense

of her work. There always exists the internal conflict of a woman who has to divide herself between both spheres and possibly has to sacrifice her relations with the family in order to promote her career. However, in the present research the working mother was described by her children as a very warm person, taking active part in their life and a good homemaker. It was obvious from their reports that family and children were extremely important for her, that she did everything possible for her family, and that whatever she did was for them.

In addition, children's descriptions matched the women's and their husbands' narratives regarding family relationships:

“Home was always important to my wife” (Ben). “I have family, children and home that I love very much and they have always been very important to me. I first see myself as a mother and a family woman.” (Rachel).

Effect on children- Part 2

Ambitions and wishes as an adult regarding family and spouse relationships: *“Their relationship is amazing... I wish I would have this kind of relationship”* (Amir)

As followed from the interviews, children perceived their parents as role models in many ways, especially as spouses and family persons. In general, children seemed to look at their parents' relationship as a positive example for their own relationships:

“I adore my parents; they are very special people with open minds. They have careers but they are not workaholics, they are able to put their work aside when they are with me and my brother. They also have an amazing relationship and very rich social life.” (Yaniv, 22).

The daughters' choices regarding profession: *“For many years I wanted to be like my mom...”* (Daniella)

In the interviews children shared thoughts regarding profession and career. Daughters expressed ambivalent feelings regarding their mother as a role model for career planning. On the one hand, they wished to be like their mothers: to have a successful career, to enjoy high social status, respect and financial independence their mothers achieved. On the other hand, they were aware of the mother's guilt and the price she and her children had to pay for her absence from home. So they wished to be different. First, they compared themselves to the mother, they examined their ability to do what she did, and then they considered if they actually wanted to do it:

Leah brought up the question:

“She is a very successful role model and it also hard to be like her... Your mother- do you want to be like her?”

Daniella said:

“For many years I wanted to be like my mom. I also went to New York, I wanted to learn communication like her, and then we both worked in similar areas. But my image of my mom is of a super woman and it’s not my image of myself.”

Daniella’s description is supported by her father’s impression about her:

“I think she learns from her parents, I think she would really want to identify with her mother’s success.”(Benny).

Daniella did not seem to be sure about what she would like to be:

“I don’t know yet... and whatever I choose, I will make mistakes.”

There was a constant debate in Daniella’s mind about whether she should aspire to be like her mother or develop herself and her life differently. The daughters would not help comparing themselves to their mother and their success: it seems they felt threatened by her success and were afraid they would not meet their own and their mother’s expectations. They were also not sure if they wanted to be like her.

The family narratives

As only 5 full families were interviewed, this is insufficient for making generalizations; there seem to be different patterns of attitudes between the families with sons and the ones with daughters. There seems to be less conflict in the narratives of the sons, while the daughters disclosed the inner conflict. That could be explained by the fact that in the families with daughters the fathers were less involved in child rearing and house chores than in the families with the sons.

In each family narrative one typical characteristic emerged as a dominant theme that ran through the interview with each member. In this paper only one example is discussed.

The family atmosphere: “I believe they will absorb the home atmosphere” (Ben)

“The atmosphere family” included Sara, her husband Ben and their two sons - Amir, who was interviewed, and his younger brother. The factors that influenced the life of the family were the facts that Ben was self-employed and didn’t have a steady income; therefore Sara had to work to provide for the family. All the family was recruited to help her build the career.

Both spouses told the story of Sara’s first job interview, when she was a relatively new immigrant and did not know Hebrew well enough, but bravely completed the first task the employer offered her with mistakes in every word. And she got the job. Both spouses told this story in detail and without significant discrepancies, which proves that they perceived it as a significant event in the beginning of her career.

Another constitutive event was Sara’s promotion for the position of a manager, which took place after a long study course and a difficult test. Both she and her son mentioned this event in their interviews. The fact that at his young age the son was able to understand the significance of the event means that parents communicated to children the importance of their career and children accepted it as a given.

In addition, all the family members agreed on what was good for the children. They adopted the father's perception regarding child raising: development and upbringing of children is influenced by the atmosphere at home:

"I claim regarding child rearing that the most important thing is not whether the father or the mother spends all the time with them, but the quality of the relationship they see at home. When we got married, we had a mortgage and we worked from morning till night. We didn't have much time to raise children, and Sara always felt guilty that she didn't have time for them. I told her that it is good if you have more time to devote to the children, but it is much more important what we transmit to them, and how, what they see in the family, our relationship, and how we spend this short time."

Sara spoke about it as well:

"I always had pangs of conscience, so I told Ben, listen, I don't know what will become of these children, because we are really not with them. He said, I believe they will absorb the home atmosphere."

Amir shares this way of thinking:

"When we grew up, we didn't see them much, but during the time that we did we saw how they act together. My father always said that it is the atmosphere in the house, the quality of time, not its quantity."

In this family narrative the atmosphere of support created by the family members was the crucial factor in the success of the mother's career.

Discussion

The main narrative- A family career

The interviews material seems to suggest that the women achieve their high position due to what might be called "The family-career dynamic balance". The success of their career was made possible through the combination of their own efforts and the efforts of their families.

First, of crucial importance are the women's personal characteristics, such as ambition, perseverance and bravery, described by the women themselves and by their family members; without these qualities neither support nor money would ensure multiple-role success. However, these qualities are a necessary but not sufficient condition for the women to succeed. Another important characteristic of the high-positioned woman is the authoritative parenting style and her ability to delegate responsibility to her children. These skills developed children's independence and self-reliance. Delegation of responsibilities may be the same ability that helps her manage her employees. Delegation reduces her housework load and therefore reduces her role conflict. As the findings indicate, when the woman is not able to transfer authority, it leads to a role conflict.

All but one husbands played a crucial role in the wife's efforts to cope with her multiple roles. He is not threatened by his wife's success and is open to let her develop professionally. This type of husband was termed a Passive supporter. The husband, who shares the house chores and child rearing with his wife, was termed Equal Participant. The husband who is capable of reducing her guilt and pangs of conscience regarding the scarce time she is able to spend with her children was termed Relieving the Guilt husband. Personal characteristics of a husband, such as self-confidence, familial attitude and active support in her decisions regarding her career make him a full partner of his wife or an Active Supporter. These four types of husbands correspond four layers of support suggested in this research.

Even though not all husbands were equally involved with the family, the division of labor provided them with the opportunity to take active part in the home and family life, which generated marital and parental satisfaction. The husband's egalitarian views of his and his wife's careers influenced the equal division of child rearing duties and thus enhanced the woman's ability to have a career.

In the families in which the woman received less assistance, be it from her husband, grandparents or hired help, she experienced more guilt feeling and work-family conflict, which eventually had negative effect on the children and reduced the feeling of satisfaction.

Another theme discussed in this paper is the simultaneous growth of career and family. In contrast to studies conducted in the USA and Europe (e.g. Blair-Loy, 2003), where women tend to first develop a career and then start a family, the Israeli participants married very young and developed their careers and families simultaneously. Children of young parents became part of the parental success, they learned to give and compromise and they learned to live up to the high standards their parents set for them.

This simultaneous growth of family and career, in addition to the personal qualities of the spouses, created marital happiness and a sense of fulfillment. Love, support and understanding became the family narrative. Children perceived this relationship as a model and wanted to adopt it. The good relationships and atmosphere created the family narrative; which lead the family perceptions regarding quality of life.

Mutual support at home, equal participation of parents in raising children and simultaneous building of their careers became major educating factors in these families. Children described love and appreciation for their parents; they were proud of their success and felt they could consult with them. The parents became educators, advisors and role models for their children, who perceived them as one unit.

Another important finding was the fact that children differentiated between physical caretaking and education. They didn't perceive the caretaker, who made lunch or played with them, as a central educating figure. Although, in most of the families, the parents did not spend much time with the children, they were important authority figures and role models. Emotionally, they were very meaningful and were perceived with adoration. It seems that the parents found a way to show their children that they and the family unit were very important to them.

In addition, children appreciated their parents' relationship, and, in general, expressed the hope that they would have similar relationships with their spouses. The sons wanted to have a wife who would have her own professional career. The daughters expected their future husbands to take an active part at home and support their ambitions. Studies regarding effects on children and children's perceptions are still lacking around the world: only few dealt with this issue (e.g. Alam, et al, 2011).

Good spousal relationship, the feelings of contentment and happiness, coincide with the phase in Maslow's (1946) hierarchy of needs which precedes the phase of self-actualization. Love, support and understanding become the ground on which a woman can grow as a human being and a professional.

The high positioned women in this study did not seem to separate their home and their work, which they perceived as a natural course of things. The attempts to separate in some cases resulted in ineffective performance both at work and at home. Thus, it can be said that their work-family conflict has been resolved not by separation, but by dynamic balance of work and family.

The findings of this research provide evidence both for enrichment theories (e.g. Marks, 1977, Barnett, 2001) and conflict theories (e.g. Coser, 1974, Goode, 1960), and therefore support Tiedje, et.al' (1990) continuum model stating that women can feel both enriched and conflicted about their multiple roles. Enrichment theory is appropriate here because multiple roles are seen as beneficial in the studied cases. Moreover, it can be argued that work and family for the participants of this research are more than just combined, they are in the process of diffusion, that is, they penetrate one another. Thus, the study of high-positioned women reveals that work-family integration is a factor in these women's self-fulfillment and is beneficial for the families that combine their resources for mutual success. But it also leads to conflicts, as described below.

Other voices

Even though the work-family diffusion was viewed favorably by the family members there still existed role conflict which found expression in the mother's guilt, the daughter's feeling of deprivation and the daughter's conflict regarding the choice of a profession. Only one case was an exception.

The difference between sons and daughters first arose regarding adjustment to the life circumstances, especially in their childhood. The important finding was that the sons seemed to adapt to the absence of the mother more easily than the daughters. The sons took advantage of the lack of parental control, enjoyed their independence and responsibility more than the daughters. By contrast, the daughters seemed to be more sensitive to the absence of the mothers. Even as adults, they still felt the vacuum left by her absence. Nevertheless, they also learned to be self-reliant, cooperate with siblings and cope with problems.

In addition, the daughters' doubts regarding their career choices were caused by the fear of the need to combine work and family, associated with guilt and the cost their children might pay, similar to the way they did in their childhood.

The differences found between daughters and sons might be explained by the theory of identity roles (e.g. Chodorow, 1974). The theory suggests that the girls' identity derives from the mother's role as a home maker and the boys adopt their father's role as a financial provider. However, in this study the parents did not have traditional gender roles, so the difference that has been found between daughters and sons must be explained in other ways: the first possible explanation is that nannies and housekeepers in their childhood were all women in traditional roles. The second possibility is that the need of the daughter for more time and attention from the mother is an internal evolutionary difference between the genders.

Moreover, it can be suggested that the daughters adopted their mother's guilt feelings. The daughter, who identified with the mother, absorbed her conflict and internalized her guilt. This guilt created a vicious circle which reinforced itself; thus, her guilt feelings became

internalized. In contrast to the daughter, the son identified with the father, who communicates that this is the way it should be and the son internalized it as a norm.

Finally, it seems that the father's ability to replace the mother was limited with regards to his daughters. Only the mother can provide a female role model, which can not be substituted.

Conclusion

Findings from the current research indicate that work–family balance is a significant issue affecting the life of high positioned women in Israel. It was found that in order for the women to succeed in playing multiple roles they need to have active personality. In addition, developing the career and the family simultaneously created family understanding and support, especially on the part of the husbands who played a crucial role in relieving the mother's guilt regarding lack of time with the children. Children also had important active and passive roles in their mother's career success. It was also found that the children distinguished between physical and emotional caretaking and felt that their parents were responsible for their education. They saw their parents as a role model for spousal relationship. Another new finding was the differences between daughters and sons regarding time spending with their mothers. Daughters felt that they did not have enough time with their mothers. As adults, they were uncertain about their future professions. In addition, it was found that husbands had unique characteristics which enabled them to play a role in child raising. Finally, the lack of boundaries between home and work created the Family-Career dynamic balance. The family-career dynamic balance was a common narrative that emerged from the stories told by high-positioned women and their families. It was a process of combining two spheres of life and reaching a reasonable compromise. Women with specific leadership qualities and professional ambitions were able to combine their work and family roles under the conditions of support from and delegation to all family members - spouse, children and grandparents. This kind of women would not be satisfied with the role of a home-maker; they needed self-fulfillment in the social sphere as well. Combining private and social spheres contains potential conflict. These women viewed this conflict as inevitable and normal; they developed strategies and recruited resources available to them and to their families in order to cope. The most important lesson we can learn from their stories is that benefits they and their families gained from combining multiple roles by far outweigh its negative effects. Learning to cope with multiple roles through concessions instead of sacrifice seemed to be a productive strategy.

Resemblances and differences between the coping strategies and perspectives of the high positioned Israeli women regarding work-family balance/conflict and their counterparts in other countries were brought to light. Studies of the women in the world literature provided exceedingly useful background for understanding women and work issues in Israel. They enabled to expose the ways women have been coping with work-family conflict/balance. For example, the Israeli participants had the support of the family and especially of the spouse, similar to the countries like the UK, the USA, India, China and Singapore. However, although women managers, professionals and entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, Hong Kong and partly in India seem to have major domestic help and a tutor for children, they still suffer from the lack of family and especially of the husband's help and support (Alam, et al, 2011, Lo et al, 2003, Nath, 2000). In addition, they need to be supportive of their parents and parents-in-law and are responsible for the children education. This chores lead to exhaustion and feeling of guilt (Lo, 2003) which contrast the overall positive feelings that were found in Israeli women. The current

research emphasizes that balancing or coping with the conflict of work-family is the issue women around the globe face. The way they perceive it and feel about their multiple roles derives from their personality, cultural attitude, familial perspectives and support they get from their families.

Implications

The view of the work-family relationship from the perspectives of three family members has not been found in the literature. This approach contributes to a deeper and more comprehensive representation of the family-work relationships and provides triangulation that strengthens the reliability of the findings.

The qualitative-phenomenological method used allowed multi-layered and detailed description of the phenomenon. In addition, the findings shed new light on the contribution of a spouse to his/her partner's career progress as well as the hierarchy of the support layers which measure the extent of support. Moreover, it focused on the benefits both spouses gain as a result of mutual assistance in the process of each partner's professional and personal growth.

The findings demonstrate practical strategies for women and families in which both spouses intend to simultaneously develop ambitious careers and raise children. In addition, awareness of the differences between sons and daughters regarding the time they need to spend with the mother might help the parents to alleviate the stress their children have to cope with.

There is little research in the world literature concerning family perspective regarding work-family balance/conflict which makes it difficult to compare the issue across countries and cultures and requires more research in this area.

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