

TRADEOFFS: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN WHAT MATTERS MOST IN WORK, FAMILY, AND LIFE

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Background

- One widely emphasized goal in modern society is the attainment of gender parity in vocational outcomes such as occupational prestige and job earnings.
- However, men and women differ on a number of dimensions that predict occupational prestige and salary, including their work values^{1, 2, 3}, life values⁴, vocational interests⁵, attitudes toward child rearing and caregiving⁶, and personality traits such as status striving and risk taking⁷. Indeed, some of these differences have been documented across cultures⁵ and some have been revealed among men and women educated in environments that promote gender egalitarianism^{8, 9}.
- No study has explored the links among all these dimensions in one sample. In addition, existing measures of men's and women's work values are limited in that participants are not forced to acknowledge tradeoffs, such as that having power at work and having friends at work are often at odds, as are valuing close relationships (benevolence) and valuing achievement.
- In the current study, we aim to modify existing measures of work values to address that limitation and to assess how individual differences in work values, life values, vocational interests, and plans for work-and-family are interrelated. We expect that although within-sex variability will be greater than between-sex differences, we will find sex differences across multiple dimensions.

Research Plan

- Our plan is to launch data collection in the fall 2014 semester with a representative sample of young college students. Our measure of work values includes over 30 elements that most people would find at least moderately important; yet, no job can offer everything. We seek feedback on designing a response format that forces participants to make tradeoffs as they evaluate the importance of each element.



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