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THE IMPACT OF PARENTHOOD ON MOTHERS' WORK VALUES: EVIDENCE FROM MONGOLIA

This study aims to investigate work values of mothers in Mongolia, specifically, focusing on how parenthood shapes their work-related desires and priorities. The research uses focus group discussions with 22 mothers aged 26 and above to highlight the dynamic nature of work values during this significant life transition. The findings reveal that more than half of the participants experienced shifts in their work values after having children, with many transitioning from intrinsic to extrinsic values due to increased financial demands, particularly in cases of divorce or limited household income. Mothers with stable financial situations or larger families prioritized childcare or entrepreneurship over traditional employment, while younger mothers or those with fewer children emphasized career advancement and autonomy. The study underscores the importance of flexible workplace policies and empathetic leadership in supporting working mothers and enabling them to achieve a sustainable work-life balance.

Keywords: work values, parenthood, work-life balance, intrinsic work values, extrinsic work values.

1. INTRODUCTION

The transition to parenthood is one of the most profound life events, exerting significant psychological, social, and physical influences on individuals. This transformative experience not only reshapes overall life values but also has the potential to alter work values. Work values, defined as the beliefs and attitudes individuals hold regarding the desirable work outcomes, are generally considered stable after entering the workforce, typically around the age of 22 (Jin, Rounds, 2012). However, studies suggest that while work values become more consistent with age, they remain susceptible to change during major life transitions such as marriage, parenthood, and career shifts (Blandin, Jones, Yang, 2023; De Fruyt, 2006)

Traditionally, becoming a mother has been linked to a significant decline in women's workforce participation, as balancing professional responsibilities with caregiving has historically posed substantial challenges (Berniell, Berniell, Mata, Edo, Marchionni, 2021). However, recent trends indicate that many mothers continue to engage in paid employment

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even after having children, particularly in countries like Mongolia. As a democratic nation, Mongolia actively promotes women's participation in the workforce, recognizing their critical role in contributing to household income. For instance, recent data from the National Statistics Office of Mongolia (2023) reveal that only 12% of unemployed individuals in the country are women who are pregnant or caring for children. Despite these advancements, there remains a noticeable lack of research exploring how childbearing influences mothers' work values, particularly in Mongolia's unique sociocultural context.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate Mongolian mothers' work values, focusing on how parenthood shapes their work-related desires and priorities. Understanding the diverse dimensions of work values – intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, social, and prestige-related – is essential for organizations aiming to optimize their human resource strategies. Aligning job roles, reward systems, and organizational cultures with these values can enhance employee satisfaction and engagement and significantly improve retention rates.

This study employs focus group interviews with 22 working mothers, each with up to five children to achieve a comprehensive understanding. The findings will provide valuable insights into the dynamic relationship between parenthood and work values, contributing to academic discourse and practical HR management strategies. By addressing the specific experiences of mothers in Mongolia, this study offers a nuanced perspective on how work values evolve in response to significant life transitions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Work Values

Work values are defined as the needs, desires, and outcomes that individuals seek from their employment, including factors such as pay, promotion, autonomy, and personal achievement (Lyons, Higgins, Duxbury, 2009). These values encompass both intrinsic motivations—such as self-actualization and self-esteem – and extrinsic motivations, like fulfilling financial needs. According to the studies, there are five distinct work values were identified.

- Intrinsic values refer to internal rewards gained from work, including personal growth, fulfillment, creativity, learning, and self-actualization. Employees driven by intrinsic values focus on the work itself and seek opportunities for meaningful engagement (Deci, Ryan, 1985).
- Extrinsic values focus on external rewards associated with work, including salary, benefits, job security, and working conditions. Individuals prioritizing extrinsic values often seek employment with organizations offering competitive compensation, career advancement opportunities, and stable work environments.
- Altruistic values reflect a commitment to helping others and contributing to the well-being of the community or society (Dose, 1997). These values are especially prominent in professions such as healthcare, education, and social services, where the primary motivation is service rather than material reward (Batson, 1991). Altruistic employees prioritize fairness, integrity, and justice in workplace decisions (Kish-Gephart et al., 2010).
- Social values emphasize the importance of relationships and interactions in the workplace (Durkheim, 1893). The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) identifies six essential employee social values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, the significance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (Banks, 2025).

- Status-related values pertain to the outward symbols of success, such as prestigious job titles and working for well-regarded companies. While status values are often considered extrinsic, they can overlap with intrinsic motivations when they align with personal goals and self-esteem. Employees who value status are likely to seek roles that offer visibility, recognition, and opportunities to enhance their professional reputation (Schwartz, 1992).

Work values are not static; they can evolve over time, influenced by various life events and personal experiences, as well as environmental influences (Kalleberg, Marsden, 2019). Studies investigating the stability and evolution of work values frequently utilize two complementary approaches: rank-order stability and mean-level change (De Fruyt, 2006). Rank-order stability focuses on the hierarchical nature of values. According to Schwartz (1992) and Rokeach (1973) values are prioritized based on their significance; thus, they may shift even into late adulthood. Conversely, mean-level change examines whether there is a general increase or decrease in specific work value dimensions over time.

Individual, cultural, and economic factors shape one's work values. For example, growing up in poverty often leads to stronger extrinsic work values later in life (Johnson, 2002; Johnson, Sage, Mortimer, 2012; Kohn, Schooler, 1969). Additionally, each life stage, age, gender, economic and financial situation, and cultural differences play crucial roles in forming one's work values. For instance: age is one of the crucial determinants for work value. According to Jin & Rounds (2012) formation of work value is considered particularly sensitive during youth and young adulthood, and stabilizes during late adolescence. Significantly, intrinsic work values rise during college (18–22) but decline afterward, while extrinsic values follow a U-shaped pattern, decreasing during college and increasing in early adulthood (22–26) – only extrinsic values gained importance by the mid-to-late twenties, as other values declined.

Gender is another significant determinant of work value. For instance, men generally have extrinsic work values; however, women place more importance on intrinsic values than men. Additionally, women with higher education levels tend to have intrinsic rather than extrinsic work values (Gahan, Abeysekera, 2009). According to a recent study (2024), women place greater importance on prestige and recognition, reflecting social changes related to gender equality and empowerment.

Marriage is a life event that significantly influences individuals' values. Particularly, married men tend to increase extrinsic motivation towards their work (Meng, Yang, 2023).

Work values are also shaped by cultural and socio-economic contexts (Elizur, Borg, Hunt, Beck, 1991; Hauff, Kirchner, 2015). People from different cultures often have distinct work values, influenced by their economic situation and cultural traditions. For example, Hauff and Kirchner (2015) identified four patterns of work values “moderate demanders,” “high demanders,” “post-modern demanders,” and “income and security demanders” – across different countries, demonstrating how economic and cultural contexts influence these values.

As for Mongolia, evolving socio-economic landscape, influenced by globalization and economic modernization, may gradually shift work values, blending enduring cultural traditions with the demands of a competitive market economy. Such a transition reflects the dual pressures of maintaining traditional communal values while adapting to modern economic realities, as seen in other rapidly developing nations (Inglehart, Baker, 2000). This dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity underscores the complexity of work values in transitional economies like Mongolia.

Parenthood influences on work values

Life transitions are a major factor influencing one's work values. Parenthood is one of the significant changes during one's lifetime, undeniably influencing one's work value. According to Lips (2009) mothers prioritize family over work, resulting in decreased commitment to their jobs and consequently lower earnings. Additionally, there is an understanding of the motherhood penalty, which refers to the disadvantages that mothers experience in the labor market, including reduced opportunities and lower wages compared to fathers and childless women. Research has found that mothers face significant wage penalties, often earning 5–10% less per child, while being perceived as less committed and competent in the workplace (Budig, England, 2001). Additionally, studies highlight that employers may discriminate against mothers during hiring and promotions, further exacerbating gender inequalities in the labor market (Correll, Benard, Paik, 2007).

Jin and Rounds (2012) state that extrinsic work values increase steadily after age 26. According to Johnson (2005) parenthood increases the emphasis on extrinsic work rewards, such as salary and job security. However, this trend does not apply to married women, for whom marriage appears to diminish the importance attached to such rewards, even when they are mothers. Jurgensen (1978) also states that differences in work values for women before and after marriage are relatively minor. However, there is a lack of studies on married women's work values, specifically after childbearing in recent years. Lips (2009) explained that mothers tend to prioritize family over work. Williams (2000) stated that when women were single, their work identity is often strongly linked to professional achievements. However, when they become mothers, their priority shifts into being a good parent, over their professional identity. This can lead to reevaluating career goals, work commitments, and personal values related to work.

H1: Women's work values change after childbearing

On the other side, single mothers demonstrate a heightened financial responsibility for their children (Youngblut, Brady, Brooten, Thomas, 2000). Notably, single mothers exhibit similar shifts in work values as fathers, traditionally viewed as primary economic providers. As for Mongolia, the number of single mothers significantly increased in the last 5 years, from 34 thousand to 55 thousand mothers (National statistics office of Mongolia, 2024). Therefore, in this study, we examine married and single mothers and see if there is a significant difference.

H2: Single mothers' work values tend to turn into extrinsic work values

Due to family responsibilities, mothers tend to prefer jobs with flexible working hours. For example, the birth of the first child leads to a substantial increase in informal employment among mothers, rising by 38% (Berniell, Berniell, Mata, Edo, Marchionni, 2021). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024), approximately 71% of mothers with children at home participate in the workforce. Additionally, mothers and women are more likely to work preferred hours and hold satisfying jobs in countries with extensive flexible work policies (Ruppner, Lee, Huffman, 2018). Research indicates that a higher level of work-life balance is associated with increased emotional well-being among working mothers (K.S, Talwar, 2024).

H3: Mothers prefer work-life balance

As Super (1995) noted, external changes in the labor market, social policy, and educational or promotional opportunities can influence people to redefine what is

important. Significantly, the financial situation regarding the work values or preferences of mothers and families with children must be highly considered.

Maslow's material need theory (1943) posits that unmet material needs drive individuals to prioritize material concerns. The economic situation is one of the significant determinants for one's work values (Johnson, Sage, Mortimer, 2012). For example, research indicates that individuals in economically disadvantaged regions prioritize extrinsic work values due to limited resources and the need for financial stability (Boehnke, Stromberg, Regmi, Chhokar, 2004). Similarly, Hofstede's cultural dimensions highlight how long-term economic conditions shape societal attitudes toward work, with more affluent societies favoring self-expression and autonomy. At the same time, economically constrained environments emphasize survival and stability (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, as a developing economy in Mongolia, there are many economic struggles, such as high inflation and low salaries. For instance: As of November 2024, Mongolia's annual inflation rate reached 8.1%, primarily fueled by rising costs of electricity, rent, and services (Mongol Bank, 2024). Inflation is anticipated to stay elevated through the first half of 2025 before gradually easing (National statistics office of Mongolia, 2023).

H4: Mothers' work values in Mongolia tend to change into extrinsic work values

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research methodology, focusing on focus group discussions (FGDs) to better understand the research topic. FGDs were chosen as the primary method because they allow for rich, detailed insights through interaction and dialogue among participants (Gibbs, 1997).

Participants were chosen based on specific criteria to ensure they could provide relevant insights into the research question. All participants were 26 or older, as it is assumed that work values are typically established by this age (Jin & Rounds, 2012). This age criterion ensured that participants had a certain level of career experience and clearer perspectives on their professional priorities.

By selecting participants whose families varied in size and focusing on a specific age range, the study aimed to explore not only the individual work values but also potential gaps or differences between the groups. This approach supported the goal of understanding how parenting responsibilities and family dynamics influence work values.

Sample Size and Grouping

A total of 22 participants were selected, each having one or five children. Fourteen participants were recruited through social media advertisements, while the remaining participants were friends and acquaintances of the researcher. The sample size and structure were designed to provide both breadth and depth, ensuring a wide range of experiences while enabling a focused exploration of key themes. Participants were grouped based on the number of children they have, allowing the researcher to examine whether differences in work values exist among these groups. To ensure effective group dynamics and meaningful insights, three separate FGDs were conducted:

- Group 1: Participants with three or more children.
- Group 2: Participants with two children.
- Group 3: Participants with one child.

Each group comprised 7–8 participants, which balanced capturing diverse perspectives with maintaining manageability for in-depth discussions. This grouping structure facilitated a comparative analysis of work values across different family sizes.

Pre-Discussion Preparation:

- The moderator collected demographic information from all participants before the discussion. This data was used to facilitate comparisons between participants.
- The moderator provided an overview of the theory underlying work values and the main problem under investigation. Participants were given time to reflect on their initial work values and any changes they might have experienced.

The focus group discussions were conducted in person to foster a warm and comfortable atmosphere, encouraging open dialogue and enabling the collection of more detailed information. The discussion was guided by semi-structured questions to explore the participants' experiences and perspectives. The discussions were structured around the following questions:

- *Question 1: Have you ever reflected on or been concerned about your work values? Are you familiar with the concept of work values? If yes, how would you define them?*
- *Question 2: How would you describe your work values before having children? What aspects of your career or professional life were most important to you then?*
- *Question 3: Do you think your work values have changed after having children? If yes, how have your work values shifted since becoming a parent? What priorities or aspects of work have become more or less significant?*
- *Question 4: What were the most significant factors contributing to these changes in your work values? How have your personal experiences, workplace policies, or family dynamics influenced your perspective on work?*

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

Group	Participants	Age	Number of children	Age (first pregnancy)	Age (last pregnancy)	Total child caring years	Marriage status
Group 1	Participant 1	38	4	26	35	5 years	Married
	Participant 2	39	5	26	33	8 years	Married
	Participant 3	29	3	24	27	4,5 years	Married
	Participant 4	36	4	26	31	4 years	Married
	Participant 5	30	3	24	25	3 years	Divorced
	Participant 6	37	3	29	33	5 years	Married
	Participant 7	36	4	23	35	8 years	Married
	Participant 8	35	3	28	33	4,5 years	Married
Group 2	Participant 9	29	2	25	26	2,5 years	Divorced
	Participant 10	35	2	28	31	3 years	Married
	Participant 11	29	2	22	25	5 years	Married
	Participant 12	27	2	24	-	2 years	Divorced
	Participant 13	30	2	25	26	3 years	Married
	Participant 14	38	2	20	23	2 years	Divorced
	Participant 15	26	2	24	25	2,5 years	Married

Table 1 (cont.). Demographic information of participants

Group	Participants	Age	Number of children	Age (first pregnancy)	Age (last pregnancy)	Total child caring years	Marriage status
Group 3	Participant 16	28	1	21	-	1 years	Married
	Participant 17	34	1	26	-	1,5 years	Married
	Participant 18	27	1	24	-	9 months	Single
	Participant 19	30	1	26	-	10 months	Married
	Participant 20	34	1	24	-	2 years	Divorced
	Participant 21	36	1	33	-	3 years	Married
	Participant 22	42	1	39	-	2 years	Married

Source: FGD result.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the FGDs were analyzed thematically, identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the discussions. The demographic information collected before the discussions was also used to contextualize and compare the findings.

This methodological approach enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the changes in work values among mothers with higher education and their influencing factors.

4. RESULTS

According to the result, the average age of group 1 participants was 35, while the average age of group 2 mothers was 26. The average age of group 3 participants was 32; hence, this group was the most experienced mothers. Figure 1 presents all participants' average age, experience and childcaring years.

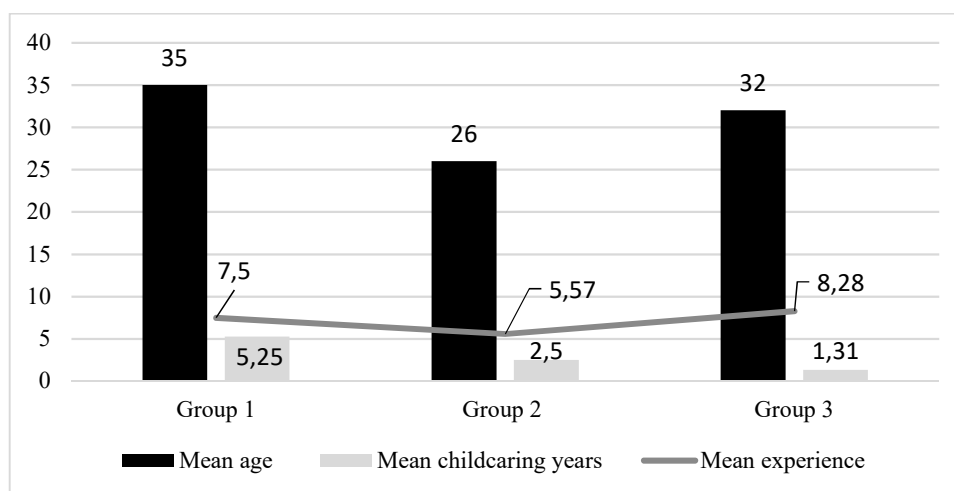


Figure 1. Average age, experience and chilcaring years of participants

Source: FGD result Sixteen out of twenty-two participants were married, while six mothers were single mothers. Figure 2 illustrates all participants' family status by percentage.

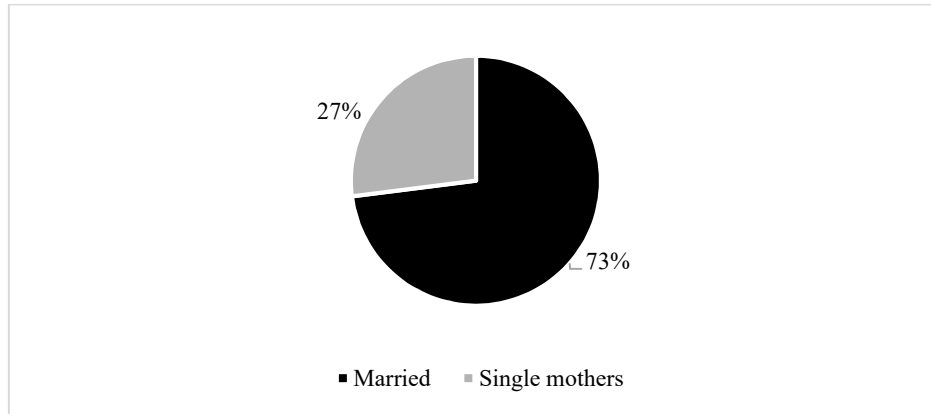


Figure 2. Participant's family status by percentage

Source: FDG result.

Question 1: Have you ever reflected on or been concerned about your work values? Are you familiar with the concept of work values? If yes, how would you define them?

Eight participants answered that they had never considered work values before this interview. The remaining participants had somehow considered why they worked and what their priorities were. However, most participants had never heard of the term “work values” before. Some participants explained that they had been thinking about it seriously after giving birth.

Question 2: How would you describe your work values before having children? What aspects of your career or professional life were most important to you then?

Fifteen out of twenty-two participants described their work values as intrinsic, four participants agreed that their work values were extrinsic. Two participants highlighted that their priority was status-related, while one participant described her values as altruistic. Majority of participants answered that they were aimed to develop themselves professionally, also described as the social dimension was crucial as well after their most prioritized values. Since work values have a nature that rank their needs and expectations towards work, in this interview, we investigate the most prioritized values over the rest of values.

Question 3: Do you think your work values have changed after having children? If yes, how have your work values shifted since becoming a parent? What priorities or aspects of work have become more or less significant?

Thirteen participants assume that their work values changed after childbearing, and the remaining participants describe that their work values are the same before having children. There is no clear indication that the number of children affects work value change. Group 1,2,3 participants have an equal number of participants that change their work values after childbearing.

Table 2. Shows participants' work-related information and work values

Groups	Participants	Industry	Job	Work experience	Working or not?	Initial work values	Work values after childbearing
Group 1	Participant 1	Mining	HSE	10 years	No	Extrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 2	F&B	Chef	12 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Social
	Participant 3	Trade	Accountant	3 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 4	F&B	Supervisor	5 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Intrinsic
	Participant 5	Transportation	Sales Manager	7 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 6	Healthcare	Doctor	8 years	No	Altruistic	Intrinsic
	Participant 7	Real estate	Broker Owner	6 years	Yes	Extrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 8	Retail	Designer	9 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Intrinsic
Group 2	Participant 9	Retail	Supervisor	5 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 10	IT	CEO	9 years	Yes	Status	Status
	Participant 11	Hospitality	Operation Manager	3 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 12	Retail	Chief Accountant	3 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 13	Hospitality	General Manager	6 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Status
	Participant 14	Trade	Foreign Trade Manager	11 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 15	Entertainment	Clerk	2 years	No	Intrinsic	Intrinsic
Group 3	Participant 16	Food and Beverage	Branch Manager	5 years	Yes	Status	Extrinsic
	Participant 17	Retail	CEO	11 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Status
	Participant 18	IT	IT Engineer	2 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Intrinsic
	Participant 19	Transportation	Logistic Manager	7 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 20	Retail	Sales Manager	10 years	Yes	Extrinsic	Extrinsic
	Participant 21	Real estate	HR Manager	9 years	No	Intrinsic	Intrinsic
	Participant 22	Construction	Head of Sales Department	14 years	Yes	Intrinsic	Status

Source: FGD result.

The importance of extrinsic rewards and social status gradually increases after becoming a mother. Most mothers consistently highlight that work-life balance is their top priority, particularly after becoming parents. They emphasize that family takes precedence over work after having children. Notably, mothers in Group 1 demonstrate a diminished desire to work under someone else's authority but exhibit a strong passion for starting their own businesses. In contrast, younger respondents, typically those with one or two children, maintain a keen interest in re-entering the workforce and continue striving for professional growth.

Mothers over the age of 30 want autonomy in their professional lives. This need stems from their life stage or the experience of motherhood, emphasizing the importance of having decision-making power and maintaining self-governance in their workplaces. This desire for autonomy reflects a broader need for professional respect and agency.

Question 4: What were the most significant factors contributing to these changes in your work values? How have your personal experiences, workplace policies, or family dynamics influenced your perspective on work?

Financial circumstances, work-life balance, and a lack of social interaction are the key factors influencing the shift in values among mothers. Many mothers feel behind professionally due to time spent at home, which motivates their desire to succeed in the workplace. Additionally, they wish to engage in more social activities to enhance their personal and professional connections,

However, many participants expressed concerns about adapting to a working mother's lifestyle. Mothers commonly fear that spending too much time at work might make their children feel neglected or ill. This concern is particularly pronounced in Mongolia, where harsh winters and high air pollution make illnesses more common, especially for young children.

As a result, mothers strongly prefer workplaces that empathize with their unique challenges. They value leaders who are willing to accommodate urgent family needs, such as allowing flexible arrangements to care for a sick child. This level of understanding is essential to achieving a sustainable work-life balance.

5. DISCUSSION

According to the result, thirteen participants describe that their work values change after having children; however, there is no clear difference between groups. Six participants stated that their work values did not change after having children. For them, staying home to care for their children felt like a temporary break from work rather than a shift in priorities. The majority of the participants described that their work values change after childbearing. Therefore, it can be assumed that Hypothesis 1 (Women's work values change after childbearing) partially supported.

Age is crucial in this study, as all participants were over 26 years old, at which individuals are generally considered mature and have established work values. However, no specific insights emerged regarding the influence of age on work values overall. That said, the majority of participants over the age of 30 shifted toward extrinsic work values. This finding aligns with the statement by Jin and Rounds (2012) which suggests that by the mid-to-late twenties, extrinsic values gain prominence as other values decline.

Marriage also plays a significant role in shaping work values. Hypothesis 2 posits that single mothers are more likely to adopt extrinsic work values due to financial burdens. The results support this hypothesis, as four out of six single mothers shifted toward extrinsic work values. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that Hypothesis 2 holds validity. For married mothers, seven participants reported a change in their work values after having children. Notably, two of these mothers shifted toward status-related work values, highlighting diversity in how motherhood influences work values among married women.

Hypothesis 4 posits that mothers in Mongolia place greater importance on extrinsic values than other work values. The results reveal that the work values of eight participants shifted to extrinsic values, while three participants' work values transitioned to status-related values. This suggests that financial circumstances gradually drive these shifts toward extrinsic values.

Notably, five participants stated that their work values became more extrinsic after having children – not by choice but due to their life circumstances. For instance, Participant 5 explained that raising three children incurs significant costs, and her husband's salary was

insufficient to meet their needs. Consequently, she felt compelled to prioritize earning more money, despite not previously focusing on financial rewards when choosing a job. Similarly, another participant shared that providing for her two children independently became challenging after her divorce. As a result, she had no choice but to prioritize financial stability and rewards in her career.

However, this may differ for families with stable financial incomes. Some participants with 3–5 children expressed a lack of interest in returning to work, primarily due to the time constraints associated with childcare responsibilities. Finding a workplace that accommodates their needs and priorities is often challenging. As a result, many of these participants preferred starting their own businesses. For example, Participant 6, a 37-year-old mother with three school-aged children, shared her perspective. She explained that her interest in returning to work significantly declined after having three children. Before becoming a mother, she prioritized helping others, but her primary focus shifted to caring for her children. She noted that working becomes less of a priority for families with stable financial situations, especially those with larger families. Raising three children requires substantial time and effort, and if parents choose not to take on these responsibilities themselves, hiring a nanny would incur costs equivalent to one person's salary. Additionally, she mentioned that once her children are old enough to care for themselves, she plans to work on building a family business.

Many participants expressed that they would be happy if there was an opportunity to work in a job that offered flexible work hours and sick leave. This concern is particularly pronounced in Mongolia, where harsh winters and high air pollution make illnesses more common, especially for young children. This supports Hypothesis 3, that posits mothers prefer work-life balance.

Most mothers also mentioned that they do not plan to have more children. Career-focused mothers, in particular, place greater importance on their professional lives than on expanding their families. For instance, one participant from Group 2 emphasized that she would not have more children, as having two was what she had planned. She desired to focus on advancing her career, believing her dedication to her profession would inspire her children. Surprisingly, Participant 1 shared a unique perspective. Having previously worked in the mining sector, she set her salary expectations very high compared to what most companies in Mongolia offer. As a result, she cannot consider working for companies that offer lower salaries, even if they provide other benefits such as a supportive social environment, flexible hours, or additional perks.

The result shows that the majority of the hypotheses were supported. Table 3 indicates hypotheses

Table 3. Hypotheses

	Hypotheses	Supported/Not Supported
H1	Women's work values change after childbearing	Partially supported
H2	Single mothers' work values tend to turn into extrinsic work values	Partially supported
H3	Mothers prefer work-life balance	Supported
H4	Mothers' work values in Mongolia tend to change into extrinsic work values	Partially supported

Source: Author's contribution.

Financial circumstances, work-life balance, and a lack of social interaction are the key factors influencing the shift in values among mothers. Many mothers feel behind professionally due to time spent at home, which motivates their desire to succeed in the workplace. As a result, mothers strongly prefer workplaces that empathize with their unique challenges. They value leaders who are willing to accommodate urgent family needs, such as allowing flexible arrangements to care for a sick child. This level of understanding is essential to achieving a sustainable work-life balance.

This study was conducted exclusively in Mongolia and is limited by the specific experiences of its participants. Additionally, a more comprehensive exploration of factors influencing work value changes is necessary to provide a deeper understanding. The study primarily focuses on how work values shift after childbirth and the impact of childcare-related responsibilities on mothers' work values. Future research could benefit from a broader participant base and consideration of additional variables to better capture the nuances of work value changes in diverse contexts.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study highlights significant shifts in work values among mothers in Mongolia after having children. The results show that more than half of the participants experienced changes in their work values following childbirth. Notably, many participants shifted toward extrinsic work values, a change often attributed to the increased financial demands of raising children, particularly in divorce cases or limited family income.

However, these work value changes were not uniform across participants. Mothers with stable financial situations or larger families often preferred to focus on childcare or pursue entrepreneurial ventures instead of returning to traditional employment. In contrast, younger mothers or those with fewer children demonstrated a stronger desire to maintain or advance their professional careers, emphasizing their focus on career growth and autonomy.

The study also underscores the importance of flexible workplace policies that address working mothers' unique challenges. Empathetic leadership and adaptable work arrangements are essential for helping mothers achieve a sustainable work-life balance.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that while motherhood significantly influences work values, these changes are nuanced and shaped by individual life circumstances, financial stability, and personal priorities. For mothers in Mongolia, extrinsic values, work-life balance, and autonomy emerge as central themes in navigating their professional and family lives.

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