

Are Women Really Lacking Ambition? A Quantitative Study

Focusing on a Broader Perspective of Ambition.

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Abstract

Ambition is often defined in terms of status, power and promotion. To fully understand what ambition entails, this quantitative study focused on a broader perspective of ambition, taking negative (e.g., promotion, salary, power) and positive ambition (e.g., challenge, development, communal goals) into account. Potential gender differences in ambition, differences in ambition based on job status (full-time, part-time), and the influence of having young children on ambition were investigated. In order to measure both types of ambition, a questionnaire was developed by adopting statements from existing questionnaires. In this way, employees ($N = 553$) were able to rate their own level of ambition. While men scored higher on negative ambition compared to women, no gender difference was found on positive ambition. Furthermore, when considering both gender and job status, full-time working women and men scored higher on negative ambition than their part-time counterparts. Finally, the age of the youngest child did not have an effect on parents' score on negative ambition. Based on these results, future research should be aware of the multiple dimensions of ambition, reconsidering existing perspectives on what ambition entails.

Key words: negative ambition, positive ambition, full-time, part-time, gender, job status, age of the youngest child.

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Introduction

‘A lack of ambition’ is a commonly heard answer to the question why women experience slow career progression (e.g., Hakim, 2000; Van Vianen & Keizer, 1996). According to literature, part-time work (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995) and child-raising responsibilities (e.g., Durbin & Tomlinson, 2010; Keizer, 1997) are the two main reasons why women are seen as less ambitious than men. While a considerable amount of research has focused on these gender differences in ambition (e.g., Bleijenbergh, Gremmen, & Peters, 2016; Sools, Van Engen, & Baerveldt, 2007; Acker, 1977; Turner, 1964), the definition of ambition has yet to be agreed upon. In order to understand why women are seen as having ‘a lack of ambition’, it is important to have a clear understanding of what ambition exactly entails.

The aim of this study is to quantitatively measure women’s and men’s level of ambition, in order to investigate potential gender differences in their level of ambition. In previous research that has primarily focused on the investigation of ambition, only qualitative measurements (e.g., interviews) have been used (Bleijenbergh et al., 2016; Benschop, Van den Brink, Doorewaard, & Leenders, 2013; Sools et al., 2007). Quantitative measurements (e.g., questionnaires) are often used to interpret and compare results more easily (Schubert, Mühlstedt, & Bullinger, 2015), which is especially important when exploring differences in women’s and men’s level of ambition. To our knowledge¹, this study will be the first in the research field of ambition that utilizes a questionnaire in order to investigate gender differences in people’s level of ambition.

¹ The original project is conducted by three researchers (Rachel Verstraeten, Kim Cassar and me). However, we all had a different approach and therefore wrote about this topic individually.

As previously mentioned, the influence of part-time work and child-raising responsibilities could be of importance when explaining gender differences in ambition. Because part-time work is seen as an indicator of one's career motivation (Judge et al., 1995), this study will investigate the moderating role of job status (working part-time or full-time) to further understand potential gender differences in people's level of ambition. Moreover, having children, especially young children who need to be taken care of, is an important factor in explaining career motivation and achievement (Metz & Tharenou, 2001; Keizer, 1997). For this reason, the age of the youngest child could have an impact on a parent's level of ambition, and will therefore also be taken into account. This leads to the following research question: *Do women and men differ in their level of ambition, and is their level of ambition influenced by their job status (part-time or full-time work) and/or by the age of their youngest child?*

What is Ambition?

While ambition is a commonly mentioned concept in social science research (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012), there is no consensus regarding the definition. For many years, researchers have been defining ambition in different ways, taking into account different components, such as goals and aspirations (Hansson, Hogan, Johnson, & Schroeder, 1983), involvement and career intention (Van Vianen, 1999), and promotion and professional future (Elchardus & Smits, 2008). Other definitions refer to ambition in terms of an ongoing process: "an active pursuit of a particular station in society" (Turner, 1964, p. 271). The previously mentioned definitions show the existing conflicting opinions of what ambition entails, in which several researchers stated that ambition is located within the context of space- and time-specific cultural and social processes (e.g., Benschop et al., 2013; Sewell, Hauser, Springer, & Hauser, 2003). Other researchers disagree with this viewpoint, treating ambition as a trait (e.g., Metz, 2004; Cantor, 1990; Hansson et al., 1983), in which ambition is

predicted by individual differences such as extraversion or conscientiousness (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). These inconsistent definitions and interpretations of ambition show the lack of clarity when defining ambition. However, because perceiving ambition as a trait is often interpreted as an incomplete perspective (Benschop et al., 2013), in this study ambition will be considered as a space- and time-specific process, continuously influenced by social interaction.

Another important contribution to the field of ambition is the definition according to which there is a distinction between ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ ambition. Positive ambition refers to personal growth, learning and self-realization, and negative ambition to hierarchy, status, prestige and salary (Sools, et al., 2007). This distinction was also mentioned in another study, in which positive ambition was defined as helping each other towards collective goals and a desire to execute multiple responsibilities competently, while negative ambition referred to an individualistic craving for power, and self-interested behavior (Larimer, Hannagan, & Smith, 2007). Previous qualitative research showed that personal growth and maintaining meaningful relationships were the most prominent concerns in a woman’s life, while men were more concerned about career and personal achievement (Dyke & Murphy, 2006). These findings suggest that women’s concerns are more likely to correspond with the description of positive ambition, whereas men’s concerns are more likely to correspond with the description of negative ambition. This suggestion is in line with the findings of a meta-analysis on job attribute preferences, which showed that men were more interested in power, leadership, earnings, and promotion, whereas women preferred intrinsic job aspects, a good commute, and interpersonal relationships (Konrad, Ritchie, & Lieb, 2000). Taking the abovementioned into account, the distinction between negative and positive ambition seems most useful in order to find concrete and interpretable gender differences in people’s level of ambition, and will therefore be used as categorization in the questionnaire of this study.

Besides the previously discussed preferences of women and men, certain gender role beliefs could contribute to potential gender differences in negative and positive ambition. As described in the social role theory, communal and agentic attributes serve as key components to explain the beliefs about different gender roles (Eagly, 1987). Women are more strongly associated with communal attributes, describing a concern with the welfare of others, whereas men are characterized by agentic attributes, describing a confident, controlling and assertive tendency (Eagly & Karau, 2002), having a desire for goal attainment, and task completion (Spence & Buckner, 2000). Furthermore, men are associated with the provider role, acting as the primary earners of the family, while women are associated with the domestic role, involved in caregiving behaviors (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). Based on these gender role beliefs and the previously discussed preferences of women and men (Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Konrad et al., 2000), the following hypothesis is drafted: *Women will score higher on positive ambition compared to men, while men will score higher on negative ambition compared to women (H1).*

Ambition in Part-time and Full-time Workers

Working part-time is often associated with a lower career ambition (Pas, Peters, Eisinga, Doorewaard, & Lagro-Janssen, 2011; Hakim, 2000). A possible explanation for this association could be the lower job involvement of part-time workers compared to full-time workers, which was found in a study involving more than 400 employees (Martin & Hafer, 1995). This lower job involvement indicates that part-time workers are less interested in having a career (Sools et al., 2007; Thorsteinson, 2003; Hakim, 1998). Furthermore, the 'choice' to work part-time is perceived as having a lack of ambition and less work commitment (Hakim, 1996, 2000). However, other studies have shown that part-time workers were not necessarily less committed to their work than their full-time counterparts (Thorsteinson, 2003), nor showing a reduced level of career or work ambition (e.g.,

Tomlinson, 2006; Lane, 2004). An earlier finding even showed that part-time workers' performances were improved after switching from full-time to part-time work (MacDermid, Lee, Buck, & Williams, 2001). These contradictory results show the lack of clarity when interpreting part-time workers' career commitment, which is an indicator of their level of ambition.

In order to interpret and explain previously discussed findings concerning part-time and full-time workers, gender could play a substantial role. For example, based on the role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), women and men are more favorably evaluated when showing gender-role congruent behavior compared to gender-role incongruent behavior. This could explain why women are more easily associated with part-time work, and men more easily with full-time work (e.g., Benschop et al., 2013). Based on the latter, and the earlier described gender role beliefs, women often receive less appreciation and recognition for their achievements than men, which indicates the difficulty for women to be perceived as ambitious (Fels, 2008). For this reason, when discussing part-time and full-time working women's lack of ambition from this point onward, ambition will be interpreted as negative ambition².

An important factor in the development of women's career is the fact that their career ambition is not self-evident (Sools et al., 2007). For example, part-time working women are expected to articulate and prove their ambition in order to be recognized as career candidates (Benschop, 1996). However, instead of 'showing' their ambition, both part-time and full-time working women frequently seek to reflect attention from themselves after certain accomplishments, refusing to claim a central role in their own stories (Fels, 2004). A possible explanation for this behavior could be that women may be less interested in personal attention than men, which could be the result of the social pressure women, especially part-time

² Most of the discussed literature in the current paper is describing ambition in such a way that it could be interpreted as, and is most closely linked to, negative ambition. For this reason, it is difficult to take positive ambition in the upcoming hypotheses into account.

working women, experience to fulfill the more traditional “feminine” roles (Fels, 2004). This leads women to underestimate their own abilities, which eventually results in lower career-related expectations (Hackett & Betz, 1981) and an abandoning of their (negative) ambitions (Fels, 2004). However, a difference between part-time and full-time working women in their level of negative ambition has yet to be found.

While part-time working women have to show their ambition more explicitly, ambition is perceived as a necessary concept in part-time and full-time working men’s career development in which progressing in one’s career is seen as self-evident (Benschop, 2009; Sools et al., 2007; Fels, 2004). For this reason, there is no need for men to explicitly show their ambition (Benschop et al., 2013). Furthermore, it was found that part-time working men are both able to maintain their ambition and contribute at home (Benschop et al., 2013). Therefore, it is expected that part-time working men do not differ in their level of negative ambition compared to full-time working men.

While previous research has focused on gender (women and men) and job status (part-time and full-time work) concerning ambition (e.g., Benschop et al., 2013), the influence both factors have on people’s level of ambition and how they interact remains unclear. As explained in the last paragraph, no difference is expected in men’s level of negative ambition when taking job status into account. However, part-time working women are suggested to have less interest in their career than full-time working women (Sools et al., 2007; Hakim, 1998), whereby part-time working women are perceived as having a lack of ambition (Hakim, 1996, 2000). Based on this assumption, a lack of career interest could be associated with a lack of career ambition. Furthermore, part-time working women could be more “under pressure” to fulfill their social roles compared to full-time working women (Fels, 2004). Therefore, it is expected that part-time working women will indicate a lower level of negative ambition compared to full-time working women. This is presented in the second hypothesis:

Gender (male, female) and job status (part-time, full-time) will interact on the score of negative ambition, such that part-time working women will score significantly lower on negative ambition than full-time working women, whereas job status will not lead to a difference in men's score on negative ambition (H2).

The Impact of the Age of the Youngest Child on Parents' Negative Ambition

Child-raising responsibilities, which is one of the main reasons why women work part-time (Dillaway & Paré, 2008; Van Wel & Knijn, 2006; Vlasblom & Schippers, 2006; Hakim, 1999; Barker, 1993)³, make it especially difficult for part-time working women to explicitly demonstrate their ambitions (Benschop et al., 2013). This difficulty was mentioned by part-time female managers with children, who experienced that they were perceived as less ambitious and felt that they had to challenge this dominant belief (Sools et al., 2007). At the same time, they perceived their own ambition to be unrelated to their working hours. This experienced contradiction is called the 'double bind' (Sools et al., 2007). On the one hand, women have to be careful when showing their ambition, because explicitly showing their ambition could backfire, which could lead to a breach of women's 'gender rules' (Benschop et al., 2009). On the other hand, women should express their ambition and commitment more explicitly in order to not be viewed as mothers losing their sense of ambition after having switched to part-time work. For this reason, part-time working mothers experience difficulties to be perceived as ambitious.

Working mothers are especially confronted with the internal conflict of combining motherhood with a professional career when their children are young and need to be taken care of (Pas et al., 2011). This could be explained by the fact that mothers of pre-school aged children are not expected to work more than three days a week (Cloïn & Souren, 2011). Depending on the age of the youngest child, mothers can even prefer to not work at all in

³ Other reasons exist why women choose to work part-time. For this reason, part-time work has until this point been discussed generally. This section will consider part-time work only as a result of having children.

order to care for their child (Van Wel & Knijn, 2006; Merens, 2000). Moreover, mothers believe that it is necessary for young children to be taken care of by one of the parents (SCP, 2006, 2008). For this reason, women often become full-time mothers, putting their careers and ambitions temporarily aside, to be retrieved later (Stone, 2007). Based on this shift in women's priorities, the age of the youngest child is expected to have an influence on women's negative ambition.

Besides working mothers, more and more fathers have indicated to prefer shared responsibilities in caretaking (Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Cloin & Souren, 2011). However, Gatrell and Cooper (2008) stated that these fathers may still "face resistance from colleagues and employers who can neither understand nor accept the paternal desire to reduce working hours so as to improve work-life balance" (p. 77). The fear that this resistance will have negative career consequences is the main reason for fathers not wanting to reduce their work hours (Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2011; Sheridan, 2004). Thus, while fathers want to share responsibilities as a parent, they are expected to be the main provider for the family according to gender role prescriptions (Eagly et al., 2000). Moreover, while women reduced their work hours when becoming a parent, fathers even increased their work hours, despite expectations and negotiations made before the birth of the child that both parents should reduce work hours (Kluwer, 1998). Based on earlier explained gender stereotypes and fathers' fear of resistance in the workplace, it is expected that the age of the youngest child would not influence men's level of negative ambition. Based on the aforementioned, the following hypothesis is presented: *The age of the youngest child will be positively related to mothers' score on negative ambition, whereas fathers' score on negative ambition will be unaffected by their youngest child's age (H3).*

Present Study

When focusing on measuring ambition, existing questionnaires (e.g., Dijkers, Van Engen, & Vinkenburg, 2010; Elchardus & Smits, 2008) have never explicitly contained statements concerning negative and positive ambition. In order to test the aforementioned hypotheses, a questionnaire containing statements about negative and positive ambition had to be developed.

Method

Design and Participants

In order to analyze participants' level of ambition, a 2 (gender: male, female) x 2 (job status: part-time, full-time) between subjects design was used in this study. A total of 646 participants from a variety of Dutch organizations completed the questionnaire. Because the aim of this study was to investigate part-time and full-time employed participants' level of ambition, 93 participants were excluded from further analysis because they did not meet these requirements⁴. This resulted in a final sample of 553 participants, consisting of 302 women and 251 men. The majority of these participants worked full-time (65.1%) and had no children (51.0%). On average, the final sample of participants was 38.08 years old ($SD = 12.23$) and a total of 78.5% was highly educated (university or higher professional education).

Procedure

Participants were sent an e-mail with a link to the online questionnaire of this study. After opening the online questionnaire⁵, participants were presented with a short introduction in which they were familiarized with the content of the questionnaire (topic, number of statements, and estimated time duration). Participants who gave consent⁶ were presented with

⁴ These 93 deleted participants consisted of 68 entrepreneurs (most statements (e.g., promotion) were not relevant for them), 7 participants with a side job, 18 participants with no job, and 1 participant with missing values.

⁵ This study is conducted in The Netherlands and therefore the questionnaire was translated and completed in Dutch.

⁶ The consent form can be found in Appendix II.

43 statements to determine their level of ambition. After finishing all statements, participants had to complete a few demographic questions, which contained questions concerning gender, age, education, job status, and children⁷.

A potential risk when using an online questionnaire to collect data is the *common method bias* (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The common method bias refers to a bias in participants' answers, which is attributable to the measurement method rather than the actual measurement of constructs. In order to reduce the risk of this bias, a number of precautions were taken into account when designing the questionnaire. First of all, a total of eight categories, with statements of each category presented on different web pages in a random order, were used to measure ambition. In this way, the order of the statements of the criterion variables was counterbalanced (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Secondly, participants were guaranteed that their answers would be completely anonymous, and that no incorrect answers could be given. Finally, the items to measure ambition were carefully collected. Items were simple, specific and concise, were not double-barrelled, and did not involve vague or unfamiliar concepts, which is important to reduce method bias (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). In this way, it was attempted to reduce the common method bias to a minimum.

Predictors

One predictor in the current study is participants' job status. To differentiate between part-time and full-time work, participants who indicated to work 36 hours or more in a week were coded as working full-time (1), while participants working less than 36 hours were coded as working part-time (0) (Dijkers et al., 2010). Besides job status, gender was a predictor in the current study, in which participants had to indicate if they were male (1) or female (0).

⁷ The questionnaire contained more variables, but these were not taken into account in this particular paper.

Measures

Ambition. In order to measure negative and positive ambition as concise as possible, both negative and positive ambition were subdivided into four categories. These categories were based on the earlier mentioned definitions of both types of ambition. Thus, negative ambition consisted of salary, promotion, status (Sools et al., 2007), and power (Larimer et al., 2007), while positive ambition consisted of self-realization, challenge, development (Sools et al., 2007), and communal goals (Larimer et al., 2007). Because negative and positive ambition have never been measured in a quantitative manner, statements from different existing questionnaires, such as the Motivation at Work Scale (Gagné et al., 2010) and the Career Aspiration Scale (Gray & O'Brien, 2007), were used to compose the questionnaire.

Each category of negative and positive ambition contained four statements adopted from multiple questionnaires⁸. Most of these adopted statements had to be answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree). However, a few of these adopted statements had to be completed using a four- or a seven-point scale. Based on previous studies (Adelson & McCoach, 2010; Dawes, 2008), these scales were transformed into five-point scales in order to compare the statements within each category⁹. Example statements of the four categories of negative ambition are “I chose this job because it allows me to make a lot of money” (salary), “I hope to move up through any organization or business I work in” (promotion), “I want to achieve the highest possible level in my work” (status), and “I derive satisfaction from being able to influence others” (power). Example statements of the four categories of positive ambition are “I am appealed by situations allowing me to test my abilities” (challenge), “I try very hard to improve on my past performance at work” (development), “When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself” (communal goals), and “I chose this job because this job fits my personal

⁸ Only if all three researchers (Rachel Verstraeten, Kim Cassar and me) agreed, a statement was adopted.

⁹ For a more elaborate explanation concerning the validity and reliability of this transformation, see Adelson and McCoach (2010), and Dawes (2008).

values” (self-realization). An overview of all the statements measuring negative and positive ambition, and the original questionnaires where these statements were derived from, is presented in Appendix I.

Extra constructs. In order to check if the newly developed categories of ambition would measure what they were intended to measure, two constructs, one representing negative ambition and one representing positive ambition, were added to the questionnaire: the construct “power” from the Personality Research Form (PRF), and the construct “achievement” from the Personal Values Questionnaire (PVQ) (Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012). Because these constructs were adopted in their original format, the statements of these constructs had to be answered on a six-point scale. An example statement of the PRF is “I have little interest in leading others” (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). An example statement of the PVQ is “Personally producing work of high quality”. In the latter case, participants were asked to indicate to what extent it was important to them (1 = not important to me, 6 = extremely important to me).

Control variables. Besides statements concerning participants’ ambition, data was collected on participants’ age, educational level, number of job hours, organizational level, number of children, and age of the youngest child. The work-related questions were added in order to check if participants had a job (yes/no), and how many hours they worked at this job in a week. Participants had to answer the question concerning their organizational level on a seven-point scale, in which “1” represented the lowest function within the organization, and “7” the highest function (Van der Meij, Schaveling, & Van Vugt, 2016). Furthermore, participants were asked if they had children (yes/no), how many, and how old their youngest child was. An overview of the complete questionnaire is presented in Appendix II.

Results

Principal Component Analysis and Reliability Checks

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 32 ambition statements (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$) with oblique rotation (direct oblimin). The sample adequacy for the analysis was verified by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure, $KMO = .90$; all individual statements had KMO values greater than $.71$, which is well above the acceptable limit of $.5$ (Field, 2013). Furthermore, the correlations between the statements were checked and multicollinearity was not a cause for concern (all r 's $< .74$). Eight factors had eigenvalues greater than Kaiser's criterion of 1.0 and explained a total of 60.13 percent of the variance. For theoretical and statistical reasons, a criterion level of $.50$ was used for factor loadings to be taken into account¹⁰. As a result, three of the eight factors had less than three factor loadings and were therefore excluded from further analysis. The remaining five factors (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$) explained a total of 49.37 percent of the variance. In Table 1, an overview of these five factors and their factor loadings of the principal component analysis after rotation are presented¹¹. Based on the statements that cluster on the same factor, factor 1 represents promotion (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$), factor 2 represents salary (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$), factor 3 represents communal goals (Cronbach's $\alpha = .60$), factor 4 represents challenge and development (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$), and factor 5 represents power (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$). Thus, it seems that the statements of the construct "challenge" and the construct "development" cluster together.

In order to measure potential gender differences on both negative and positive ambition, the five factors (Table 1) were used to calculate participants' average score on negative and positive ambition. The scores on the statements of factor 1 (promotion), factor 2

¹⁰ Certain factors consisted of statements measuring both negative and positive ambition, instead of exclusively one of these two types of ambition. When using a criterion level of $.50$ for factor loadings, this problem no longer occurred and factors could be more easily interpreted.

¹¹ Ten statements had factor loadings below the criterion level of $.50$ on all factors. For this reason, Table 1 only consists of 22 statements representing the five factors.

(salary) and factor 5 (power) represent participants' average score on negative ambition, while the scores on the statements of factor 3 (communal goals) and factor 4 (challenge and development) represent participants' average score on positive ambition.

Table 1

Factor loadings of the five factors of the principal component analysis after rotation (N = 662)¹².

Statements	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
I have the ambition to reach a higher position	.75	-.08	.05	.02	.23
I hope to move up through any organization or business I work in	.70	-.08	.07	.11	.17
I want a job in which I can get promotion	.69	-.14	.02	.10	.05
I would like to fulfill a top position	.52	-.13	-.08	.11	.35
I do this job for the paycheck	-.17	-.75	-.04	-.02	-.05
I chose this job because it allows me to make a lot of money	-.01	-.72	-.03	.04	-.09
It is important to me to have an external incentive to strive for in order to do a good job	.17	-.70	.04	-.04	.01
External incentives such as bonuses and provisions are essential for how well I perform my job	.21	-.67	.07	-.08	-.06
My goal is to put my colleagues in a good mood at work	-.04	-.11	.76	-.07	.12
I pay a good deal of attention to the feelings of others at work	-.10	.17	.72	-.06	.02
At work, my goal is to develop real friendships with my colleagues	.13	-.05	.64	.00	-.29
When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself	.04	-.02	.54	.09	-.01
I am appealed by situations allowing me to test my abilities	-.12	.04	-.05	.79	.10
I like situations, in which I can find out how capable I am	-.18	-.12	-.02	.77	.03
I like to be challenged in my work	.08	.10	.06	.75	-.01
I prefer to work in situations that require a					

¹² All participants who completed the statements concerning ambition were taken into account in the principal component analysis. After these statements, a number of participants did not finish the questionnaire. For this reason, a different number of participants is indicated here in comparison with the method section.

high level of ability and talent	.06	.01	-.02	.74	.09
I am willing to select a challenging work assignment that I can learn a lot from	.10	.04	.05	.72	-.05
I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge	.21	.00	.06	.59	-.21
I strive to be “in command” when I am working in a group	.02	-.04	.04	.13	.68
I don’t like having to give people orders	.16	.01	-.14	-.07	.65
Attaining leadership status in my career is not that important to me	.37	-.03	-.01	-.01	.60
I derive satisfaction from being able to influence others.	-.11	-.13	.09	.28	.52

Note. Factor loadings over .50 appear in bold.

Besides the 32 statements concerning ambition, two constructs (PRF and PVQ) consisting of a total of eleven statements were added in order to check for possible validity issues. A correlation check showed that the power construct of the PRF (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .70$) was significantly related to the power construct measuring ambition, $r = .67$, 95% BCa CI [.62, .71], $p < .001$. The challenge construct of the PVQ (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$) also showed a significant correlation with the challenge construct measuring ambition, $r = .66$, 95% BCa CI [.60, .70], $p < .001$. These correlations might indicate content validity.

Correlations

In Table 2, all correlations between the variables are presented. All variables were significantly related to either negative or positive ambition (r 's = $> -.28 < .40$, $p < .01$), and these two types of ambition were also significantly related to each other ($r [553] = .33$, $p < .01$). Because job status and the age of the youngest child were both main variables in the current study, the only variables that could be included as control variables in further analyses were age, educational level and organizational level. These three control variables were all significantly related to at least one of the two types of ambition and were therefore initially included as control variables in the remaining analyses.

Table 2

Correlations between the variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender								
2. Age	.01							
3. Educational level	-.09*	-.32**						
4. Organizational level	-.11**	-.32**	-.08					
5. Job status	.45**	-.27**	.11*	-.09*				
6. Job hours	.47**	-.21**	.14**	-.18**	.78**			
7. Age of youngest child	-.08	.91**	-.17**	-.04	-.05	-.09		
8. Negative ambition	.29**	-.28**	.12**	-.06	.37**	.40**	-.25**	
9. Positive ambition	.08	-.11**	.11**	-.16**	.17**	.21**	-.01	.33**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Main Analyses

In order to investigate gender differences and differences based on job status in participants' score on negative ambition, an univariate ANOVA with negative ambition as dependent variable, gender and job status as the independent variables, and age, educational level and organizational level as covariates was executed. A significant main effect of gender on negative ambition was found ($F(1, 544) = 18.24, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$). Men scored higher on negative ambition ($M = 3.10, SD = 0.62$) than women ($M = 2.73, SD = 0.61$). Furthermore, a significant main effect of job status on negative ambition was found ($F(1, 544) = 13.01, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .02$). Full-time workers ($M = 3.07, SD = 0.63$) scored higher on negative ambition than part-time workers ($M = 2.58, SD = 0.53$). When investigating the interaction between gender and job status on participants' score of negative ambition, no significant interaction effect was found ($F(1, 544) = 0.61, p = .435, \eta_p^2 = .00$). Part-time working women ($M = 2.52, SD = 0.51$) scored lower on negative ambition than full-time working women ($M = 2.97, SD = 0.63$), which was also the case for men: part-time working men ($M = 2.87, SD = 0.58$) scored lower on negative ambition than full-time working men ($M = 3.13, SD = 0.62$).

Besides the main effects of gender and job status on negative ambition, the covariates age ($F(1, 544) = 28.86, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$) and organizational level ($F(1, 544) = 6.02, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .01$) were significantly related to participants' negative ambition. The covariate educational level was not significantly related to participants' negative ambition ($F(1, 544) = 0.57, p = .452, \eta_p^2 = .00$).

A second univariate ANOVA, with positive ambition as dependent variable, gender and job status as independent variables, and age, educational level and organizational level as covariates was executed to investigate differences between women's and men's, and part-time and full-time workers' score on positive ambition. No difference between women's and men's score on positive ambition was found ($F(1, 544) = 0.48, p = .491, \eta_p^2 = .00$). Women did not

score higher on positive ambition than men (Table 3). Furthermore, no effect of job status on the score of positive ambition was found, $F(1, 544) = 2.36, p = .125, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Full-time workers did not score higher on positive ambition than part-time workers (Table 3). As was the case with negative ambition, no interaction effect of gender and job status on participants' score of positive ambition was found ($F(1, 544) = 0.65, p = .421, \eta_p^2 = .00$).

Table 3

Participants' mean scores (standard deviations) of positive ambition divided by gender and job status.

Gender	Part-time work		Full-time work		Total	
	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD)	N	Mean (SD)
Women	163	3.82 (0.42)	138	3.99 (0.42)	301	3.90 (0.43)
Men	29	3.88 (0.38)	221	3.97 (0.41)	250	3.96 (0.40)
Total	192	3.83 (0.41)	359	3.98 (0.41)	551	3.93 (0.42)

Note. The 'N' is presented to show the distribution between part-time and full-time workers by gender.

While no differences were found of gender and job status on participants' score of positive ambition, the covariates age ($F(1, 544) = 6.22, p = .013, \eta_p^2 = .01$) and organizational level ($F(1, 544) = 15.97, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$) were significantly related to participants' score of positive ambition. The covariate educational level was not significantly related to participants' score of positive ambition ($F(1, 544) = 1.09, p = .297, \eta_p^2 = .00$).

The Age of the Youngest Child

In order to investigate the impact of having children on participants' score of negative ambition, especially the impact of the age of the youngest child, only parents were taken into account in the remaining analysis. A total of 265 participants indicated that they had at least one child. These 265 participants consisted of 142 mothers and 123 fathers, divided in part-

time (132 participants) and full-time working parents (133 participants). From these parents only 17 fathers indicated to work part-time and only 27 mothers indicated to work full-time.

In order to investigate the effects of the age of the youngest child, gender, and their interaction on negative ambition, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. Age, organizational level (1 = lowest level, 7 = highest level), and job status (0 = part-time, 1 = full-time) were included in the first step as control variables¹³. In the second step, gender (0 = female, 1 = male) and the age of the youngest child were included in order to investigate whether these main variables had an effect on negative ambition beyond differences caused by the control variables age, organizational level and job status. The third and final step consisted of the interaction between gender and the age of the youngest child. In this way, potential differences between mothers' and fathers' negative ambition could be explained by the age of the youngest child. Table 4 displays the standardized regression coefficients (β), the variance explained by each model in negative ambition (R^2), and their levels of significance.

The first model, with age, organizational level and job status as control variables, was a significantly better predictor of negative ambition than the null model ($R^2 = .23$, $F_{change} = 26.30$, $p < .001$). This effect was caused by all three variables: age ($\beta = -.25$, $p < .001$), organizational level ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .001$), and job status ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$). When adding gender and the age of the youngest child in the second step, the model was significantly improved relative to the first model ($R^2 = .25$, $F_{change} = 3.50$, $p = .032$). However, this improvement was only caused by gender ($\beta = .19$, $p = .012$), not by the age of the youngest child ($\beta = -.04$, $p = .775$). The interaction between gender and the age of the youngest child was added in the third and final step, but did not add to the model ($R^2 = .26$, $F_{change} = 1.18$, $p = .278$).

¹³ Educational level was not taken into account as a control variable, because it was not related to participants' level of negative ambition as found in the earlier conducted ANOVA.

Table 4

Results of regression analysis.

	Beta	R ²
Step 1		.23***
Age	-.25***	
Organizational level	-.21***	
Job status	.31***	
Step 2		.25*
Age	-.22	
Organizational level	-.20**	
Job status	.19*	
Gender	.19*	
Age youngest child	-.04	
Step 3		.26
Age	-.20	
Organizational level	-.19**	
Job status	.19*	
Gender	.11	
Age youngest child	.01	
Gender*Age youngest child	-.12	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

Results and Theoretical Implications

The main purpose of this study was to measure women's and men's level of ambition, in order to investigate potential gender differences in their level of ambition. When comparing women's and men's score on negative ambition, a clear difference was found on negative ambition: as expected, men scored higher on negative ambition than women. Thus, when ambition is considered as striving for status and power, obtaining promotion, and wanting a higher salary, men indicated to be more ambitious than women. This finding is in line with earlier discussed gender role beliefs (Eagly, 1987): men seem to be more agentic and goal-

oriented than women. Furthermore, in earlier studies it was suggested that women ‘lack ambition’ compared to men (e.g., Hakim, 2000; Van Vianen & Keizer, 1996). Because these researchers were referring to the aspects of negative ambition, the finding of our study seems to confirm their suggestions about the lack of (negative) ambition in women.

When considering positive ambition, no differences were found in the scores between women and men, leading to only a partial confirmation of the first hypothesis. This indicates that women and men score equally high on aspects concerning challenge in their work, developing one’s skills and abilities, and maintaining interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Because previous research has indicated that women prefer these latter intrinsic job aspects (Konrad et al., 2000), it was expected that women would score higher on this aspect of ambition than men. A possible explanation for this unexpected result concerning positive ambition could be that men are aware of the fact that a ‘successful career’ consists of more than salary and promotion, and therefore expand their conceptualizations of career success (Parker & Arthur, 2000). In this way, ‘psychological success’, such as personal accomplishments and meaningful relationships, plays an important role in judging career achievements (Hall & Mirvis, 1996). This could explain why men did not score lower on positive ambition than women.

Besides the gender difference in negative ambition, job status had an influence on participants’ level of negative ambition. Both part-time working women as part-time working men scored lower on negative ambition than their full-time counterparts. Explanations for this lower career ambition could be the reduced working hours of part-time workers (Pas et al., 2011), lower levels of work commitment and a lack of career orientation (Dick, 2015; Tomlinson, 2006), or just being less interested in having a career (e.g., Hakim, 1998; Lane, 2004; Benschop et al., 2013). While this effect of job status was expected for women, part-time working men did, unexpectedly, also score lower on negative ambition than full-time

working men. For this reason, no interaction effect of gender and job status on the score of negative ambition was found, which led to the rejection of the second hypothesis. As previously mentioned, ambition is often considered as self-evident for men (Fels, 2004), and therefore it was suggested that there is no need for men to explicitly show their ambition (Benschop et al., 2013). However, in other studies it was found that part-time working men were believed to be less agentic than full-time working men (e.g., Eagly & Steffen, 1986), and less interested in having a career compared to part-time working women (Vinkenburg, Van Engen, Coffeng, & Dijkers, 2012). The latter could possibly explain why part-time working men scored lower on negative ambition than full-time working men.

When taking the age of the youngest child into account, it appeared to have no influence on parents' score on negative ambition, leading to the rejection of the third hypothesis. What did have an influence on parents' score on negative ambition was their own age. Younger parents were more likely to be more ambitious than their older counterparts. Furthermore, organizational level had an influence on parents' negative ambition. Parents lower in the organizational hierarchy were more likely to have more negative ambition than parents with a higher function. However, the latter finding could be explained by the impact of parents' own age on the score of negative ambition. Parents who are younger in age are more likely to be lower in the organizational hierarchy and therefore score higher on negative ambition than older parents with a higher function. This higher score of young parents on negative ambition is in line with the idea that men who become fathers have to work even harder than before in order to provide for their family (Burnett et al., 2011; Gatrell & Cooper, 2008). In this way, men serve as the main provider of their families, which is in accordance with the gender role prescriptions of the social role theory (Eagly, 1987).

While fathers are expected to work full-time, mothers are often immediately associated with part-time work because they have to take care for their child(ren) (Eagly et al.,

2000). The latter was also found in the current study: only nineteen percent of the mothers indicated to work full-time. This low percentage of full-time working women confirms why managers immediately associate working mothers with part-time work, which is the reason why mothers are expected to lack career ambition (Herman, Lewis, & Humbert, 2013). However, in the current study, being a mother was not the reason why women lacked ambition. The main reason for a lower score on negative ambition was part-time work. For this reason, it should be noted that working mothers are in certain cases unfairly depicted as lacking ambition.

Limitations and Future Research

Because a questionnaire was used to measure ambition, one of the limitations of this study is its cross-sectional design. Ambition was measured at only one point in time, making it hard to conclude if participants' ambition was not subject to particular circumstances, despite having controlled for age, organizational level, educational level and job status. Furthermore, a potential problem of this type of research is the common method bias. While a number of precautions, which are presented in the method section, have been taken into account, controlling for this bias can never be guaranteed (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Because ambition was taken into account as a space- and time specific process in the current study, measuring ambition at multiple moments in time could be an option for future research in order to draw more generalizable conclusions.

Another limitation was the number of part-time working men in our sample. Only 29 men (5% of the total sample) indicated to work part-time, and therefore the previously discussed results should be interpreted with caution. In order to interpret the scores of ambition of part-time working men more generally, future research should specifically focus on the data collection of more part-time working men. Especially in the Netherlands, where

part-time work is a key characteristic of the labor market, collecting more data of part-time working men should be possible (e.g., Merens, Van den Brakel, Hartgers, & Hermans, 2011).

Besides these limitations, it should be noted that the quantitative measurement of this broader perspective of ambition was the first study in this particular field of research. When analyzing the conducted principal component analysis, ten statements were erased from further analysis due to their low or hardly interpretable factor loading(s). Especially statements concerning self-realization were difficult to categorize into one factor. On the contrary, other statements belonging to the same predetermined category loaded perfectly on the same factor, such as salary and communal goals. In this way, it became more clear that most of the predetermined categories of negative and positive ambition were indeed existent. This has led to a first indication of what negative and positive ambition entails. However, after conducting this study, there is still a number of questions that need to be answered. For example, are there other categories that were not taken into account in the current study that could play a substantial role in determining negative or positive ambition? How reliable and valid is this new scale of negative and positive ambition? Why is it suggested that one type of ambition is bad (negative) and the other one good (positive)? Future research should consider these type of questions when examining ambition.

Having controlled for age, educational level and organizational level when measuring one's score on ambition, it could be interesting in future research to take aspects as organizational tenure and sector type into account. For example, organizational tenure could have been positively related to ambition in such a way that employees with a longer organizational tenure are performing better than relatively new employees, which could in turn be positively related to ambition in terms of salary and promotion. This was examined by Ng and Feldman (2010), who found that organizational tenure was indeed positively related to job performance. Furthermore, positive ambition could be differently related to organizational

tenure than negative ambition, because newer employees want to develop their abilities as well as employees who have a longer tenure.

Besides organizational tenure, the sector type could have an impact on an employee's level of ambition. For example, accountants and bank directors could be more focused on aspects concerning negative ambition, such as getting promoted and earning money, while nurses and surgeons could be more focused on aspects concerning positive ambition, such as the challenge to improve the well-being of a patient. Future research should therefore take aspects such as organizational tenure and sector type into account in order to gain more insight into the difference between negative and positive ambition.

Practical Implications

The dichotomy of ambition into negative and positive ambition has been the main reason why ambition could be interpreted in a broader perspective compared to previous studies concerning ambition. While men scored higher on negative ambition than women, no differences were found between women's and men's score on positive ambition. For this reason, managers should acknowledge the fact that ambition is more than salary, status and power, and should therefore not assume that women automatically lack ambition. This dichotomy of ambition was also described by Bleijenbergh et al. (2016), who made a distinction between "striving for a management position" (ambition in the narrow sense) and "wanting to do one's work well" (ambition in the broad sense). Therefore, if managers should be more aware of this broader perspective of ambition, their search for "ambitious employees" would be a lot more broad.

Besides the fact that "ambitious" should be considered differently than it has been done before, it could also indicate a starting point against former stereotypes. For example, in previous research it was found that supervisors are less willing to assign challenging tasks to women compared to men (De Pater, Van Vianen, & Bechtoldt, 2010), because of the

stereotypical reasoning that women are not seen as ambitious (Benschop et al., 2013). In this way, men will still be considered as risk-tolerant, while women remain their stereotype as risk-avoidant (Karakowsky & Elangovan, 2001). Based on the results concerning positive ambition, which include challenge and development, it should be clear that women in general are not less ambitious to accept a challenging work task. Based on the findings of the current study, an advice to managers would be to consider their own attitude and behavioral response to women, and especially women who became mothers. What are your considerations when hiring or firing a women or a mother and why are you perceiving her as less ambitious?

Conclusion

In order to provide a clear answer to the research question if women and men differ in their level of ambition, and if their level of ambition is influenced by their job status and/or by the age of the youngest child, it should be mentioned that two types of ambition were measured in the current study. When considering negative ambition, women and men do indeed differ in their level of ambition: men scored higher on this type of ambition than women. However, when taking positive ambition into account, no gender differences were found in the scores on this type of ambition. The same applies to the influence of job status on level of ambition: job status had an influence on the scores of negative ambition, while no differences were found on positive ambition. Full-time workers scored higher on negative ambition than part-time workers. A last aspect that was taken into account was the age of the youngest child, but this did not have an influence on parents' score on ambition. Based on these results, this study should be considered as a starting point for future research to critically examine the broader perspective of the concept ambition in order to get rid of the often unfair stereotypes concerning women's and mothers' lack of ambition.

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Appendices

Appendix I

In this Appendix, an overview of all the statements measuring negative and positive ambition, and the original questionnaires where these statements were derived from, is provided.

	Items	Reference
<u>Positive ambition</u>		
<i>Challenge</i>	- I am appealed by situations allowing me to test my abilities	Revised Achievement Motives Scale (Lang & Fries, 2006)
	- I like to be challenged in my work	Career Ambition (Dikkers et al., 2010)
	- I like situations, in which I can find out how capable I am	Revised Achievement Motives Scale (Lang & Fries, 2006)
	- I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent	Work Motivation and Work Effort (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013)
<i>Development</i>	- I try very hard to improve on my past performance at work	Manifest Needs Questionnaire (Steers & Braunstein, 1976)
	- I do not often think about my personal development in this line of work/career field (R)	Career Commitment Scale (Carson & Bedeian, 1994)
	- I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge	Work Motivation and Work Effort (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013)
	- I am willing to select a challenging work assignment that I can learn a lot from	Work Motivation and Work Effort (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013)
<i>Communal goals</i>	- When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself	Manifest Needs Questionnaire (Steers & Braunstein, 1976)
	- I pay a good deal of attention to the feelings of others at work	Manifest Needs Questionnaire (Steers & Braunstein, 1976)
	- At work, my goal is to develop real friendships with my colleagues.	Interpersonal Goal Inventory for children (Ojanen et al., 2005)
	- My goal is to put my colleagues in a good mood at work.	Interpersonal Goal Inventory for children (Ojanen et al., 2005)
<i>Self-realization</i>	- I chose this job because it allows me to reach my life goals	Motivation at Work Scale (Gagné et al., 2010)
	- I chose this job because this job fits my personal values	Motivation at Work Scale (Gagné et al., 2010)
	- I would be satisfied just doing my job in a career I am interested in	Career Aspiration Scale (Gray & O'Brien, 2007)

	- A career is important for my self-actualization	Career Ambition (Dikkers et al., 2010)
<u>Negative ambition</u>		
<i>Salary</i>	- I chose this job because it allows me to make a lot of money	Motivation at Work Scale (Gagné et al., 2010)
	- I do this job for the paycheck	Motivation at Work Scale (Gagné et al., 2010)
	- It is important to me to have an external incentive to strive for in order to do a good job	Work Motivation and Work Effort (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013)
	- External incentives such as bonuses and provisions are essential for how well I perform my job	Work Motivation and Work Effort (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013)
<i>Promotion</i>	- I want a job in which I can get promotion	Ambitious Career (Elchardus & Smits, 2008)
	- I hope to move up through any organization or business I work in	Career Aspiration Scale (Gray & O'Brien, 2007)
	- It is important to me to get promotions so I can get ahead	Teenage Ambition value (Ashby & Schoon, 2010)
	- I have the ambition to reach a higher position	Career Ambition (Dikkers et al., 2010)
<i>Status</i>	- I want to achieve the highest possible level in my work	Career Ambition (Dikkers et al., 2010)
	- I hope to become a leader in my career field	Career Aspiration Scale (Gray & O'Brien, 2007)
	- Attaining leadership status in my career is not that important to me (R)	Career Aspiration Scale (Gray & O'Brien, 2007)
	- I would like to fulfill a top position	Career Ambition (Dikkers et al., 2010)
<i>Power</i>	- I strive to gain more control over the events around me at work	Manifest Needs Questionnaire (Steers & Braunstein, 1976)
	- I strive to be "in command" when I am working in a group	Manifest Needs Questionnaire (Steers & Braunstein, 1976)
	- I derive satisfaction from being able to influence others	Power Motivation (Schuh et al., 2014)
	- I don't like having to give people orders (R)	Power Motivation (Schuh et al., 2014)

Appendix II

In this Appendix, an overview of the questionnaire is provided¹⁴. The questionnaire starts with a short introduction in which participants receive information what to expect. This introduction includes a consent form which provides participants with information about their

¹⁴ In this Appendix, horizontal lines indicate a page break in the original, online questionnaire.

privacy. Hereafter, the participants are asked to answer the statements about negative and positive ambition, before completing some questions concerning their demographics. In the end, participants are thanked for their participation.

Dear Participant,

First of all, we (Dion Bot, Kim Cassar and Rachel Verstraeten) would like to thank you for your participation in this study. In order to graduate (Master Social Psychology at University of Tilburg), we are investigating the importance people attach to different aspects and characteristics of work.

In this study, we ask you to complete a questionnaire which consists of 43 statements concerning your perception of different aspects of work. After these statements a few demographic questions follow, after which you have completed the questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire will take you approximately 8 minutes.

Thanks again for taking part in this study.

Kind Regards,

Dion Bot, Kim Cassar and Rachel Verstraeten

Before starting the questionnaire, it is important that you have read and agree on the information below:

- I give permission for the statistical analyses of my anonymous answers.
- I understand that my anonymous answers will only be used for research purposes and that nobody other than the experimenters will have access to them.
- I understand that the collected data will be stored for a maximum of ten years in a data base of the University of Tilburg.
- I understand that all information will be processed anonymously.
- I am aware of the fact that I can end my participation at any moment without this having any consequences.

- I hereby declare that I have read the above information and agree on it.
 - I do not agree with the above conditions.
-

Consider whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers, it is just about your perception.

External incentives such as bonuses and provisions are essential for how well I perform my job.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I want a job in which I can get promotion.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I want to achieve the highest possible level in my work.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I strive to gain more control over the events around me at work.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I am appealed by situations allowing me to test my abilities.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I try very hard to improve on my past performance at work.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I chose this job because it allows me to reach my life goals.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Consider whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers, it is just about your perception.

I do this job for the paycheck.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I hope to move up through any organization or business I work in.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I hope to become a leader in my career field.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I strive to be “in command” when I am working in a group.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I like to be challenged in my work.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I do **not** often think about my personal development in this line of work/career field (R)¹⁵.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I pay a good deal of attention to the feelings of others at work.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I chose this job because this job fits my personal values.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Consider whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers, it is just about your perception.

¹⁵ An ‘R’ between brackets means that the statements should be reverse coded.

It is important to me to have an external incentive (such as a potential bonus) to strive for in order to do a good job.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I have requested to be considered for promotions.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Attaining leadership status in my career is **not** that important to me (R).

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I derive satisfaction from being able to influence others.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I like situations, in which I can find out how capable I am.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

At work, my goal is to develop real friendships with my colleagues.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I would be satisfied just doing my job in a career I am interested in.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Consider whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers, it is just about your perception.

I chose this job because it allows me to make a lot of money.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I have the ambition to reach a higher position.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I would like to fulfill a top position.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I do **not** like having to give people orders (R).

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

I am willing to select a challenging work assignment that I can learn a lot from.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

My goal is to put my colleagues in a good mood at work.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

A career is important for my self-actualization.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Consider whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers, it is just about your perception.

I would like to be an executive with power over others.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly agree

I have little interest in leading others.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly agree

I feel confident when directing the activities of others.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly agree

I try to control others rather than permit them to control me.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly agree

In the following statements, you have to indicate to what extent it is important to you. Keep in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers, it is just about your perception.

Maintaining high standards for the quality of my work.

Not at all important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very important to me

Personally producing work of high quality.

Not at all important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very important to me

Projects that challenge me to the limits of my ability.

Not at all important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very important to me

Continuously engage in new, exciting, and challenging goals and projects.

Not at all important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very important to me

Opportunities to take on more difficult and challenging goals and responsibilities.

Not at all important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very important to me

Personally doing things better than they have been done before.

Not at all important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very important to me

Opportunities to create new things

Not at all important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very important to me

Thank you for answering the statements. The questionnaire now continues with a number of demographic questions.

What is your gender?

male female

What is your age (in years)?

.....

What is your highest level of education?

- Primary school
- Secondary school – VMBO
- Secondary school – HAVO/VWO
- MBO
- HBO
- Bachelor (WO)
- Master (WO)
- Other, namely

Do you have a job?

- Yes
- No¹⁶

How would you characterize your job? In case you have multiple jobs, choose the answer that provides the bulk of your income.

- Full-time job
- Part-time job
- Side job (for example: besides being a student, you work to earn some money)¹⁷
- Other, namely.....

How many hours a week do you work at this job?

.....

Do you work as an employee, are you entrepreneur, freelancer or...?

- I work as an employee
- I am an entrepreneur

¹⁶ When answering “No”, participants were directed to the end of the questionnaire.

¹⁷ When answering “Side job”, participants were directed to the end of the questionnaire.

- I am a freelancer
- Other, namely.....

Suppose your organization consists of 7 scales (“Scale 7” represents the highest function within your company). Which scale best represents your situation?

- Scale 7 Highest function
- Scale 6
- Scale 5
- Scale 4
- Scale 3
- Scale 2
- Scale 1 Lowest function

Below are some flexible work models¹⁸:

Do you use one or more of these flexible work models? (Multiple answers possible)

- Flexible working hours
- Flexible working week
- Work at home / work in places other than the workplace
- Part-time
- Job sharing
- Other, namely.....
- No, I do not use flexible work models¹⁹

What is the reason you are using this / these work model(s)?

.....

.....

.....

Do you have children?

- Yes

¹⁸ This question was the main topic of one of my colleagues, and is not taken into account in the current paper.

¹⁹ When answering “No”, participants were directed to the next page.

No²⁰

How many children do you have?

.....

How old is your **youngest** child (in years)?

.....

You have now come to the end of the questionnaire.

The purpose of this study is to compare different types of ambition between men and women. In addition, the purpose was to investigate whether different flexible work models and the age of the youngest child would affect these different types of ambition.

If you have any questions, please contact one of the following persons at any time.

Thank you for your participation!

Kim Cassar

Dion Bot

Rachel Verstraeten

Below is space for any comments and / or remarks.

²⁰ When answering "No", participants were directed to the next page.