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PARENTAL AND INDIVIDUAL CORRELATES OF WORK ETHIC  
IN YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALBANIA

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A Dissertation  
Presented to the  
Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
International Studies for Family and Community

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by  
Eljona Elmazi  
August 2023

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the work ethic strength, dimensions, and correlates in young people in Albania. The review of the available research concluded that, regardless of the attention that youth-related topics have received in the last decade, there was a considerable gap in the understanding of the state and correlates of the work ethic in this group. Using the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile – Short Form, the work ethic strength and dimensions were explored in an Albanian sample of (N = 501) 18 to 24 years old, otherwise known as Generation Z. Data were collected via an instrument, published, and disseminated online through social media ads. The profile of participants was mainly urban and highly educated. The study found that work ethic of this sample of young Albanians was strong. Using as a conceptual framework the Bronfenbrenner's systems theory, the association of microsystem correlates with work ethic was explored. Parental work ethic and support, the presence of a role model in the young person's life, living in the rural areas and having completed secondary education, were significantly associated with the strength of youth work ethic. This study provides originality and value in filling in the gaps of knowledge around youth work ethic in Albania. It provides information on the relationship of work ethic with other factors and attempts to offer a predictive model of work ethic. The findings have theoretical and practical implications around programs addressing parental influence in young people, educational, human resources and management practices accommodating young people in the education system and the job market. The study discusses these implications as well as the limitations and future research directions of interest for the topic.

## DEDICATION

To my husband, Sokol, my strongest ally along the journey of doctoral studies and  
dissertation work and to my lovely daughters.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It was a privilege to complete this work under the supervision of an excellent team of professors. I immensely thank Professor Mark Small, the chair of the dissertation committee and the committee members Bonnie Holaday, Matthew D. Hudson-Flege and Natallia Sianko. I am thankful to every professor, mentor and staff member at Clemson University who has stood by me and supported me to advance in the studies over the years. I thank Sonila Cela and Data Centrum for the data collection and Amarilda Ruci for the translation of the questionnaire.

I want to thank the family members and friends, mentors, colleagues and peers at the International Studies for Family and Community Program, who have encouraged, helped, and served as an example in all the ways they could.

I want to thank every young person I have met and have been inspired by in my life and acknowledge the tremendous force, potential and talents that they have to offer to this country and the world.

Last, but not the least, while this work was what I did, it was God who accomplished it. I am thankful for his grace.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Youth in Albania has gained the center of the attention of the government, donor agencies, civil society, and private sector in the last decade. For the first time, the country has a National Strategy for Youth (2022-2029), which emphasizes creating jobs, quality employment opportunities, and life-long-learning opportunities for youth (State Minister for Youth and Children, 2022). In January 2022, the official figure of young people from 20 to 29 years of age in Albania was 432,155 (Institute of Statistics of Albania [INSTAT], 2023). In the meantime, the proportion of youth (15-29 years old) who are unemployed is 21.5% (INSTAT, 2023). While the common narrative is that young people in Albania today differ from previous generations in terms of attitudes towards work, these attitudes have only tangentially been researched until now. However, in other countries, work values and work ethic of young people have been researched over decades. The topic has been of interest to psychology, sociology, business, economics, and counseling. Researchers have used the terms “work values”, “work ethics”, “work orientations”, “work attitudes”, “work goals” often with slight differences in meaning (see Sparrow et al., 2010).

Acknowledging the gaps, the study examined the nature, strength, and dimensions of work ethic as well as the parental and individual correlates of work ethic among Generation Z (GenZ) in Albania. Work ethic is defined as “the set of beliefs and attitudes reflecting the fundamental value of work” (Meriac et al., 2010, p. 316). It was introduced as “protestant work ethic” concept by Max Weber in the early 1900s. While Weber himself looked at the religious valuation of hard work as the key for establishment of the

modern economic order (Weber, 2016), he also stressed that values soon became the underlying principles of the capitalist economic order, thus blurring the religious roots of the concept. There is an agreement that work ethic, although originally conceptualized with a religious label, was adjusted into benchmark for work ethics in general (Modrack, 2008).

Since the late 1960s, an increase was noted in the psychological studies on the protestant work ethic and it was found that it overlaps with several well-established psychological variables, themselves interrelated. Furnham outlined two decades of intensive psychological work on work ethic as an important individual difference variable related to human motivation and a moderately useful predictor of behavior, values, job satisfaction and more (Furnham, 1990).

Over the years, several work ethic measures have been suggested (for a thorough list see Furnham, 1990; Modrack, 2008). Different self-reporting tools were developed, and different authors have identified different dimensions of work ethic. A popular scale, the “Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile” (MWEP), was developed by Miller et al. (2002) in reaction to serious flaws in the previous measures. It addressed the unidimensional definition of the construct, factored in cultural differences, looked at the concept’s entirety and even addressed gender biases in the previous scales. According to Miller et al. (2002), work ethic is composed of seven sub-components: (a) centrality of work, a belief that work is important in its own right, (b) self-reliance, representing a drive toward independence in task accomplishment, (c) hard work, the belief that an increased level of effort is the key to effective task accomplishment, (d) leisure, a value on downtime/non-work activities, (e) morality/ethics, a proclivity to engage in just/moral

behavior, (f) delay of gratification, the capacity to postpone rewards until a later date, and (g) wasted time, a value regarding the productive use of time. These seven dimensions according to the authors are also moderately correlated.

Since its publication in 2002, the MWEP became a widely used measure of work ethic in dozens of published studies in a variety of research areas. However, its length was an issue, which encouraged Meriac and his colleagues to develop a short form of this scale in 2013, the MWEP-SF. Although the MWEP-SF contains fewer items than the full version, according to the authors, it maintains equivalent relationships with variables in the work ethic nomological network compared with the full version. The MWEP-SF was chosen as the instrument to measure work ethic in this study, because while shorter, it was expected to retain the psychometric properties and to fit with the method of data collection intended in the study.

While ‘work ethic’ is found to be universal, considering that the participants of this study are Albanian youth, its translation and operationalization into Albanian language was adjusted to the cultural and linguistic context. When addressing the Albanian audience, ‘work-related attitudes’ were used instead of ‘work ethic’.

### **An attempt to profile GenZ of Albania**

GenZ is born between the late 90s and early 2000s (Dimock, 2019). In Albania, GenZ is the first to be born after the historical shift from the totalitarian regime to an open market economy and pluralism. They were too young also - or not even born - to experience the significant 1997 and 1998 political and social unrests in the country. The privatization of the previously state-owned industries, land reform and the open market economy have affected how labor and commitment to labor looks like for people in

Albania. While GenZ in Albania was born in a time of economic growth, this growth has slowed and the country is still one of the poorest in Europe, due to a large informal economy and a weak energy and transportation infrastructure (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2021). GenZ was born when the internet of things and innovative communication technologies expanded and changed the human social interconnectedness in the world.

In addition to belonging to a specific generation born in a certain time, the GenZs are also young at the time of this study. They are at a time in their lives where important decisions need to be made, in terms of adjusting to the transition from school to work, from dependency on the family of origin to the independence of creating your own family and long-term relationships. In this time, responsibility, decision-making and financial independence are important to achieve. It is for this reason that work becomes a key part of life, where work attitudes and work ethic play an important and positive role.

### **Positive effects of work ethic in young people**

Several positive effects of work ethic have been found in research. Work ethic is established early in life (Furnham, 1990), operates as a personality construct (Merrens & Garrett, 1975) and remains stable over time (ter Bogt et al., 2005). It is established that work ethic is universal and has positive outcomes, including in more satisfaction in work and life in general (Blood, 1969; Fakunmoju, 2018). Work ethic has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on success in personal, work, academic or societal settings (Elchardus & Smits, 2008; Furnham, 1990 citing Cohen, 1985; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Hill & Petty, 1995; Hirschi, 2010; Hitlin, 2006; Jin & Rounds 2012; Lechner et al., 2018; Manuti et al., 2018; Meriac, 2012; Meriac, 2015; Meyer et al., 1998; Miller et al.,

2002; Rau & Durand, 2000; Ros et al., 1999). Studies have also demonstrated the effects of work ethic on the social and economic context of the person's life (Bozkurt & Yesilada, 2017; de Voogt & Lang, 2017; Furnham et al., 1993; Kaasa, 2011; Papavasileiou & Lyons, 2015; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

From another angle, strong work ethic was found to be related to good quality of life, high sense of coherence and good subjective health among Swedish adolescents (Axelsson et al., 2005), positive psychosocial adjustment, stronger school bonding and fewer risky behavior problems and depressive symptoms of African American youth (Lee et al., 2016). From a positive youth development perspective, a developmental strength such as work ethic may not only facilitate positive outcomes but also protect youth from developing problem behaviors (Benson et al., 2007; Lerner et al., 2005). These benefits provide key arguments for the need to explore the work ethic in Albania's young people, but they are not the only arguments.

### **Why studying work ethic in Albania's GenZ**

GenZ constitutes the immediate workforce, for all sectors, especially those in information technology, energy, tourism, and agriculture, which are a priority for the country's development. Increased demands of job market for the youth workforce with both technical and soft competences, as well as high rates of unemployment make the topic of work ethic quite relevant and timely. There is a consensus among researchers and policymakers that enhancing economic self-sufficiency and motivation for entrepreneurship are the most effective solutions for the problem of rising youth unemployment (Cemalcilar et al., 2018). In designing solutions to unemployment, young people's attitudes towards work or their work ethic should be explored. It is highly

possible that Albania is missing the opportunity to progress at a more rapid rate through its youth's work ethic, talents, and capabilities. Another argument why this study is needed is that during recruitment, the employers place more emphasis on dependability, interpersonal skills, initiative taking and work-related values than on technical skills (Leenders et al., 2017). This was also found by a survey developed by the World Bank and administered to 600 registered firms in Albania in 2017 to assess the nature of skills demanded by employers. Employers valued conscientiousness or the skill of being reliable on getting things done and working under pressure (World Bank, 2018).

In a macro level, work ethic is important to the country's development and studies in different parts of the world have established a link between the two. Using a cross-national perspective, studies found that work ethic, values and commitment were stronger in countries that are not industrialized or that are developing (Bozkurt & Yesilada, 2017; de Voogt & Lang, 2017; Furnham et al., 1993; Furnham et al., 1994). In the meantime, migration trends among young people in Albania are increasing rapidly. Albania loses about €559 million annually due to emigration. This means that every person who is capable of working, and leaves Albania takes on average around €14,900 of potential annual GDP with them (Westminster Foundation for Democracy [WDF] & Institute for Development and Innovation [IDI], 2019). A national-level survey from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) with 1,200 14-29 year olds in Albania, found that more than 40% of the young people had a strong desire to move abroad, and most of them would never return, with another 20% having a moderate desire to leave. More than half of those who desired to leave (56%) stated that the main reason was to look for a better standard of living. Another 18% stated they would like better employment possibilities. Of the young people



inclined to emigrate, 54% admitted struggles in finding employment after concluding their cycle of studies. Among the factors which were important for choosing a job, 86% of young people identified the salary, 76.5% a sense of accomplishment, 76.5% a sense of fulfilment, 71% the opportunity to contribute to society and 74% free time. Being poor, unemployed, and affected by corruption were the three main concerns with more than half of the respondents reporting being very fearful of these scenarios (FES, 2019). The young people intentional on leaving were determined to be excellent contributors to society in their host countries. This included: learning the language, displaying their best citizen's behavior and a solid work performance, sharing knowledge, and even accepting jobs that others do not like so much (FES, 2019).

The above arguments support the idea that understanding the work ethic of young people is important. The findings would be relevant to policymakers, youth-focused organizations, donor agencies, economic, social and education scholars, and human resources divisions of any sector of society to build useful programs and policies. It is for this reason that the topic becomes the problem that this study intends to address.

### **Problem statement**

This study explores work ethic, its dimensions as well as its correlates, in the GenZ of Albania. Based on the results of the literature search, this would be the first study conducted in Albania dedicated to this topic. By exploring the work ethic of GenZ in Albania, the study intends to fill in the gap of evidence and to facilitate understanding of the relationship of work ethic with selected parental and individual factors. The interest is not in establishing causation, but rather in exploring the status of work ethic, its dimensions, and the correlates, therefore a quantitative, cross-sectional research study

was carried out in a sample of young people in Albania who were recruited via the social media *ads* and completed an online questionnaire. Exploration of work ethic correlates was done using as a ground the microsystem-related factors in the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

### **A conceptual framework based on the Ecological Systems Theory**

The Ecological Systems Theory argues that characteristics of people interact with those of their environments, past and present and the effects happen in the actual interaction. Through this theory, Bronfenbrenner posed that the individual develops in an ecological environment, which is conceived of a set of nested structures. The theory studied the accommodation between the growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings where the person develops. The innermost setting of the ecology is the immediate setting such as the home, school, or other setting, referred to as microsystem. A microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in each setting with physical and material characteristics. A setting is a place where people can readily engage in face-to-face interaction. The factors of activity, role, and interpersonal relation constitute the elements, or building blocks, of the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, p. 22). The family is one of the most important elements of the microsystem of the growing individual.

The next level of the environment is where the interaction of these settings happens: the mesosystem. It comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighborhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work,

and social life) (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, p. 25). The third level is affected by events occurring in settings where the person is not even present, related to how settings interact with each other in different societies or cultures and is referred to as exosystem. An exosystem refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, p. 25). The overarching system is the macrosystem, where the interconnection of systems and the patterns of organization of culture and society take place (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, p. 3, 7, 8).

The correlates of interest to this study fall largely on the most immediate settings of the young person's life, the microsystem, in particular the factors related to parental values.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter described how work ethic plays a role in people's lives and why work ethic in young people in Albania and its correlates are particularly important to explore. For a country of less than 2.8 million, creating a competitive economic advantage requires hard work and a strong work ethic. Understanding the profile of work ethic and its correlates would provide the basis to design programs to promote work ethic among young Albanians. The following chapter reviews the available literature on the topic.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter outlines the key research findings and knowledge gaps around the topic of work ethic correlates in young people. Previous research studies have examined work ethic either as the independent or the outcome variable. In studies where factors in the outer layers of the ecological systems (namely the macrosystem) were the focus of research, work ethic was studied as an independent variable. This category of research will be briefly presented, as it provides a useful context in understanding work ethic's contribution. The chapter will follow with a presentation of the research around the associations of microsystem factors with work ethic as the dependent variable, which are also the basis for building the hypotheses of this study. The chapter concludes with existing research material around work values in young people in Albania. The literature gaps were identified, based on which recommendations for addressing these gaps were formulated.

#### **Macrosystem factors related to work ethic**

From the ecological systems theory perspective, the factors at the exosystem and macrosystem level that are related to work ethic are the country's wealth and differences across generations. Researchers have investigated work ethic in young people in different countries (Elchardus & Smits, 2008; Kwong, 2016), while others the differences among generations (Jobe, 2014; Meriac et al., 2010; Zabel et al., 2016; Zúñiga et al., 2019). As elaborated in the 'Introduction' chapter, the link between the work ethic of young people and the country's wealth is largely established by previous research (Bozkurt & Yesilada, 2017; Furnham et al., 1994; Furnham et al., 1993; de Voogt & Lang, 2017).

Research on generational differences has shown contradictory results. In some studies, age differences were found to predict work ethic scores (Meriac et al. 2010; Zúñiga et al., 2019). Jobe (2014) found significant differences between generations in the dimensions that constitute work ethic. Young people possessed good work ethic and believed that their hard work can lead to success in their work or careers (Kwong, 2016). Zúñiga et al. (2019) found that GenZ, also a target of this study, showed a greater commitment to work and delay of gratification than previous generations, while former generations showed higher scores of centrality of work and wasted time dimensions, compared to younger generations. Neulinger et al. (cited in Furnham, 1990) found that young people had a greater affinity for leisure than older people. In other studies, however, such as the one from Zabel et al. (2016) no effect of generational cohort was found on work ethic endorsement. The young people in the Elchardus and Smits (2008) study adhered to a rather traditional work ethic, emphasizing work as a duty, linking shame to living off welfare, viewing work as a condition to enjoy leisure and as a condition for achievement. There was a difference of opinions between age groups however: people up to 29 years of age were noticeably less likely than those above 29 years of age to rate work highly important in life (Ingleheart et al., 2014). Thus, there are no conclusive results around generational differences in work ethic.

The correlating factors of interest to this study belong to the microsystem level of the Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, specifically those family-related such as parent work values, parental support, and to the factors related to the individual such as gender, income status and work experience. The following sections of the literature review will present the available research around these factors.

### **Microsystem factors correlation with work ethic in young people**

This study is trying to understand if work ethic in young people correlates with family factors. Based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressively complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favor of the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, p. 60). Often, the person is the parent or the caretaker in the young person's life. Parents are therefore key players in the microsystem of the individual.

The change happens at the interaction or behavior level. Bronfenbrenner stated that the main source for the direct effects of the immediate environment on psychological growth of the individual are the molar activities, defined as the ongoing behavior possessing a momentum of its own and perceived as having meaning or intent by the participants in the setting as a molar activity. The development of the child is a function of the scope, variety and complexity of these molar activities engaged in by others that become part of the child's psychological field either by involving her in joint participation or by attracting her attention (Bronfenbrenner, 2009).

Other theories, especially attachment theory also consider how the relationship between the parent and child contributes to an individual's psychological and psychosocial functioning (Mattanah et al., 2011), and how it affects the career development of adolescents and their work values (Young & Friesen, 1992; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Studies have built on a developmental-contextual model of career development (Vondracek et al., 1986), have found that work ethic develops within a

family context and that the family of origin had an influence on people's career (Lee et al., 2016; Schultheiss, 2007). Blustein (2011) provided a theoretical framework to understand how work is embedded in family contexts. The author suggested that experiences with early and contemporary relationships become internalized, and that these internalizations subsequently influence people's reactions to interpersonal interactions and other life challenges, for instance the formation of an identity and establishing a career. Indeed, research on attachment theory has demonstrated that a secure attachment to one's parents is accompanied by exploring new situations and anxiety-provoking activities also in the world of work (Blustein, 2011; Hazan & Shaver, 1990). At first, children develop moral beliefs and attitudes in interaction with their parents. A positive emotional bond with their parents allows children to learn about their parents' values (Stephens, 2009) and contributes to the development of a morally caring attitude (Stilwell et al., 1997). In a secure environment, children can test their limits and this in turn allows the transference of parental values and expectations (Stephens, 2009). The parental factors emerging from the literature review were parent work values and parent support.

### **Parental factors correlated with work ethic**

#### *Parent work values and young person's work ethic*

The existing research is not conclusive on whether the parent's work values correlate with the young person's work values. Ter Bogt et al. (2005) concluded that work ethic is transmitted from parents to their children as part of a broader domain of cultural conservative attitudes. Parents remained important as shapers and finetuners of ideas of their children according to these authors (ter Bogt et al., 2005). The influence of

fathers versus mothers has also been researched. In a British study, Furnham (1987) (as cited in Furnham, 1990) reported a positive correlation between mothers' but not fathers' and their children's work ethics. On the contrary, Roest et al. (2010) found in a study in Netherlands that it was fathers but not mothers who transmitted their work values to the next generations. Lee et al. (2016) examined the links between the self-reported work ethics of mothers, fathers, and adolescent-aged siblings in African American families. The association between fathers' and older siblings' work ethics was stronger than that between mothers' and older siblings' (Lee et al., 2016). Degner and Dalege (2013) found no gender effect: children were no more similar to their mothers than fathers, nor there was any difference between boys or girls in their similarity to their parents. Similarly, Sümer et al. (2019), in a comparative study with 6,056 young individuals and their parents from the Czech Republic, Spain, and Turkey analyzed the degree of work value similarity between parents and young adults. It resulted that none of the dyadic correlations differed significantly, suggesting a similar transmission pattern of work values to children from both parents. Cemalcilar et al. (2018) also found that both maternal and paternal work values had positive and significant association with child work values.

#### *Parent support and young person's work ethic*

In this study, parent support will be viewed in terms of the positive relationship with the parents. Support from both parents has been found to relate to the attitude that work is important for a good life, an attitude that can be assumed to increase the chances of entering working life (Axelsson et al., 2005). In a study with 606 Swedish upper secondary school students, parental support was related to general work attitudes, but not



work ethic (Axelsson et al., 2005). In another study, men who had a more positive relationship with their mother and father had a stronger work ethic than men with a less positive relationship with their mother and father. Findings suggested that parents influence work values differently and that the relationship with the father is more central to the development of children's work values than the relationship with the mother (Leenders et al., 2017). In a metaanalysis of 30 studies, it was found that supportive parenting (perceived positivity of parenting) had a positive association with child work values. Individuals who had closer relations with their parents and whose parents were more involved and interested in their upbringing reported having stronger work values. In terms of parenting practices, perceived positivity of maternal parenting had positive and significant association with child work values. Warm, authoritative, and responsive parenting marked with unconditional acceptance and supportive of autonomy granting are the essential components of intergenerational positive work value transmission (Cemalcilar et al., 2018). The body of literature presented in this section provided evidence that family factors such as parent work values and parent support correlate with the work ethic of young people. The next section will explore the link of individual factors with work ethic.

### **Individual factors correlated with work ethic**

Individual factors of interest to this study are the education level, income status, work experience and gender of the young person.

#### *Education and income status correlation with work ethic*

Work ethic was found to be related to lower-middle social and economic conditions (Furnham, 1990). The research in this area was carried out mainly in

longitudinal designs, targeting U.S. or European samples of young people and focusing on the relationship between social and economic status (SES) and work values (Lechner et al., 2018; Mortimer et al., 1996; ter Bogt et al., 2005). Strong work ethic among adolescents was found to be more prevalent in circles with a lower social economic status and lower educational levels of both the parents and their children in the Dutch study (ter Bogt et al., 2005).

#### *Work experience and work ethic*

Various studies have argued that having work experience is one of the factors associated with the formation of work values in early adulthood (Axelsson et al., 2005; Mortimer et al., 1996; Tucker & Loughlin, 2006). In a study with students from Hong Kong universities who had part-time work experience at the time of the study, the authors looked at part-time work satisfaction and work values. Part-time workers reported higher motivation to do good work, which in turn was positively correlated with job satisfaction (Cheung & Tang, 2012). In a four-year longitudinal study with 930 adolescents, authors did not find that work status itself, or the intensity of adolescent work, had consistent effects on work value formation. But there was substantial grounding for the conclusion that the quality of adolescents' jobs, particularly the challenges and demands that enable the development of skills, influenced work values. The authors concluded that the effects of work on adult psychological functioning, that the conditions of work are what matter, can be generalized to adolescents (Mortimer et al., 1996). This study will not focus on the quality of the work experience, which could be a topic for another research study.

The way young people perceive work values can be affected by unemployment experiences as well. A qualitative study with Finish 20–29-year-olds showed that the

internal conversation of young unemployed adults around their work values constituted of five significant concerns: (1) self-realization and the opportunity to contribute to society, (2) sufficient income to live independently, (3) social expectations, (4) challenges of finding employment, and (5) unsustainability of the employment system. The authors argued that an unemployed youth wants to recognize what would be her 'calling' and her possible contribution to the common good. At the same time, she is aware of the realities of the job market, which makes it challenging or even impossible to find a job that is both meaningful and offers a decent income. She also faces social pressure to support herself financially. These concerns illustrate the interplay between subjective and objective reality that influences the work values of young adults (Hirvilammi et al., 2019).

#### *Gender and work ethic*

There seems to be a common finding from most research studies that women show a higher work ethic than men (Axelsson et al., 2005; Furnham & Muhiudeen, 1984; Harðardóttir et al., 2019). However, not all research supports this finding. A study of 477 Turkish and American university students revealed that there were no gender differences in the work ethic, whereas in the U.S. sample, men reported greater work ethic scores than did women (Aygün et al., 2008). There are however gender differences in the type of work values endorsed (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Hirschi, 2010; Mortimer et al., 1996).

#### *GPA and work ethic*

Meriac (2012) explored the relevance of work ethic for academic performance in a sample of 221 undergraduates at a large Midwestern US university (mean age was

21.61 years; SD=6.0) using the full 65-item scale of MWEP (Miller et al., 2002), that measures the seven dimensions of the work ethic construct. He hypothesized that hard work will be positively related to college GPA, but it was negatively related. In another study with 440 psychology and business students at a large public university in the midwestern United States Meriac (2015) hypothesized that wasted time and hard work would be positively related to GPA, however they were not. Work ethic was measured again using the 65-item MWEP.

This section provided an overview of research studies that have explored the family-related and individual factors that correlate with the work ethic in a young individual. All the research studies in this section were carried out in countries with a strong economy. The next section will present the existing research regarding work ethic and work values among young people in Albania.

### **Work values in young people in Albania**

At the time of completion of this dissertation study, only two studies including Albanian samples were found relevant to some degree to be included in the literature review. One of them was the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2014) and the other, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) study (2019). This section will present a summary of the key findings from these studies.

Based on the results in the World Values Survey wave 2017-2020, among the Albanian young people sample (n=354; up to 29 years old), 34.6% agreed and 25.6% strongly agreed with the statement ‘Work is a duty towards society’. Even though the majority agreed, fewer young respondents (up to 29 years of age) as compared to respondents above age 29 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Work should

always come first even if it means less spare time' (Inglehart et al., 2014) pointing at a generational difference, similar to the findings from Zúñiga et al. (2019) (Table 1, Appendix C).

The 2019 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) study helps depict a profile of the young Albanians, which is important in informing the context of this study. The study found that youth highly valued healthy eating, being faithful to friends, partners, and employers, having a successful career and taking responsibility. They generally engaged in activities such as spending time with family, listening to music, going out with friends, watching movies, doing nothing/relaxing, or hanging out in cafes and bars. From this profile, one can infer that young people in Albania endorse leisure, similar to the findings of Neulinger et al. (cited in Furnham, 1990). It would be of interest to this research to investigate whether being supported by parents financially would have any effect on the work ethic of the young person.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter presented available knowledge related to work ethic correlates in young people. Work ethic and work values have been a topic of research interest for decades in developed countries. While research has not established with full certainty significant associations between work ethic and parental or individual factors, it has created a body of evidence that is useful to social sciences. In Albania, there is an absence of research on this topic: the few studies exploring work values among young people are descriptive and tangential. Through this study, it will be the first time exploring to what degree the young people in Albania endorse work ethic, particularly whether parental and individual factors correlate with the strength of work ethic.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

This chapter provides information about the research design of this study, including participant selection and sampling procedures, measures, and the data analysis strategy for testing the hypotheses.

#### **Research question and hypotheses**

The following research questions and hypotheses were generated:

Research question 1: What is the state of work ethic of GenZ in Albania?

Research question 2: What dimensions of work ethic (centrality of work, morality/ethics, self-reliance, hard work, leisure, delay of gratification and wasted time) does Albania GenZ view especially favorably?

Research question 3: Are parental factors statistically significant predictors of work ethic and work ethic dimensions in GenZ in Albania?

H3a: Parental factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic among GenZ.

H3b: Parental factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic dimensions among GenZ.

Research question 4: Do parental factors predict work ethic in a similar way among female and male participants?

H4a: There will be gender differences in how parental factors predict work ethic.

Research question 5: Are individual factors statistically significant predictors of work ethic and work ethic dimensions of GenZ in Albania?

H5a: Individual factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic among GenZ.

H5b: Individual factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic dimensions among GenZ.

### **Study design**

This non-experimental, quantitative study used a cross-sectional design to explore associations between work ethic and other factors among young people in Albania. The choice of this design fits with the overarching research goal: examination of factors that are associated with work ethic in a representative sample of young Albanians. Given that scholarship on the topic of work ethic is nascent in Albania, this study can be used as a ground for further research in the area.

### **Population and sample selection**

The population of interest were young people between 18 and 24 years old, living in Albania, who were users of the social media platforms. Inclusion criteria were as follows: a) being between 18 and 24 years of age; b) living in Albania; c) having Albanian citizenship and d) using social media platforms (Instagram or Facebook).

A sample size of 500 was sought for this study, with a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error of 4.4%. The sample constitutes 0.2% of the total estimated population of 220,000 young people aged 18-24 years in Albania. The research design has a good external validity in generalizing the results. A sample size of 500 generally provides an adequate statistical power, which increases the likelihood of detecting true effects or relationships within the data and of detecting smaller, effects or differences, which enhances the reliability and robustness of the findings. Such a sample size ensures

that the estimates and inferential statistics are expected to have a smaller margin of error compared to smaller sample sizes. It also increases the precision for more accurate generalizations to the population. This sample size also allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the population and the factors of interest. It allows for more robust subgroup analyses.

Following the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, young people were recruited to participate according to specific procedures as explained in the following section.

### **Procedures**

Data were collected in Albania from May 05 to May 11, 2023. Participation in this study was virtual. Online surveys have been found to have several advantages: they are more convenient and efficient than face-to-face interviews, allow easier and quicker access to participants, and fast exporting of data (Selm & Jankowski, 2006; Weigold et al., 2013). These types of surveys also allow convenience and comfort for the participant in filling out the questionnaire.

Survey participants were recruited using social media *ads*, which were generated via a campaign from a temporary social media advertisement page created for purposes of this research project by the research company, Data Centrum. The online questionnaire was first scripted in a cloud-based platform for creating and distributing web-based surveys. The link of the questionnaire was disseminated via these *ads* and shared in the two key social media platforms used by young people in Albania: Instagram and Facebook. Young people in Albania spend almost four hours online each day (FES, 2019). Therefore, a survey promoted via *ads* in their preferred social media had high



chances of reaching the young person and followed by successful survey completions. The social media platforms use algorithms to identify the audience of interest according to the filtering/inclusive criteria that the researcher provided and promoted the survey *ad* to the interested audience. The questionnaires' target was achieved in 6 days.

It was anticipated based on the experience of other research studies that most participants would come from urban centers and would have higher levels of education (Rosenzweig et al., 2020). Social media users who clicked on the *ads* were taken to the survey platform. It was also communicated that incentives (phone credit) would be provided for participation in the survey. Participants first needed to confirm that they were between 18 and 24 years old. If they refused to be within this age range, they were not permitted to continue the survey. If they confirmed, they were taken to the informed consent.

Following completion of the survey, participants received a “thank you” message and information on how they could receive the incentive. Confidentiality was kept throughout the entire research process. The only personal information collected in the survey was the phone number, which was used to transfer the phone credit and was subsequently deleted, minimizing therefore the possibility of identifying and tracking the respondent. Data from the online survey was stored on an online account, accessed by the research company that supported the researcher in data collection and later the researcher's electronic device.

### **Ethical considerations**

Prior to initiating data collection, ethical approval was received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The informed consent (Appendix B) and the

instrument (Appendix A) were entered into an online form and a link with these documents was generated. The link was disseminated electronically via social media *ads* and was accessed from the devices that young people use (smartphones, tablets, PCs).

The informed consent included a description of the study and the consent process. To give consent for participation in the survey, the participants were asked to click a button indicating that they understood and gave consent for participation. Only upon clicking this button, the participants had access to the instrument of the study. On the contrary, if they did not provide the consent, they were not able to view the instrument.

Participation in the study was confidential. The only information on the participant was a phone number, visible to the data collection company, which deleted it after the payment of the phone credit, minimizing therefore the possibility of tracking the identity. No other sensitive personal information was collected from the participants through the survey answers that would present harm, discomfort or threat to their psychological health or wellbeing.

Furthermore, the data were analyzed and interpreted at a group level and not an individual level, therefore, no one is able to identify which data belonged to which participant. This information was included in the informed consent.

### **Research instruments and measures**

The instrument of this study was an online questionnaire, composed of 14 questions. The instrument was translated to the Albanian language and then backtranslated to English from a certified interpreter to ensure consistency. No evident changes were required in the Albanian version of the questionnaire after the backtranslation. The respondents filled in the questionnaire in the local language.

*Outcome variable: work ethic and work ethic dimensions*

Work ethic was measured using the short form of the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile, the MWEPSF (Meriac et al., 2013). The scale has 28 items. Although the MWEPSF contains fewer items than the full version, it was expected to maintain acceptable psychometric properties, including the same factor structure, comparable reliability, construct validity evidence based on the nomological network. There were no indications from the literature review that the scale had been used or validated before in an Albanian sample.

Participants were asked to choose the alternative that best represented their agreement with the statement “Please rate how strongly the following statements describe you” (Meriac et al., 2013). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Fully Agree, with 1 signifying the lowest score and 5 the highest score. To score the short form, a composite score of the four items corresponding to each subscale was calculated as follows: Self-Reliance: items 10, 14, 19, 26; Morality/Ethics: items 3, 13, 23, 27; Leisure: items 4, 16, 18, 25 (reversed); Centrality of Work: items 2, 7, 24, 28; Hard Work: items 9, 11, 20, 22; Wasted Time: items 1, 5, 12, 17; Delay of Gratification: items 6, 8, 15, 21. Each work ethic subscale score was measured through a composite score of the four items in each subscale in response to the statement.

Self-reliance subscale (Table 2). The mean value of self-reliance subscale score for the sample was 4.33 ( $SD = .03$ ). The high mean value and negative skew (-1.196) indicate that most respondents in the sample reported a high self-reliance score. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ),

confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Incongruent with the study from Meriac (2017) where the Cronbach's alpha for the self-reliance subscale was  $\alpha = .79$ , in this study the coefficient was  $\alpha = .57$ , demonstrating a low internal consistency.

Table 2  
*Self-reliance Subscale Measure*

Items
10. Self-reliance is the key to being successful.
14. People would be better off if they depended on themselves.
19. I strive to be self-reliant.
26. It is important to control one's destiny by not being dependent on others.

Morality/ethics subscale (Table 3). The mean value of morality/ethics subscale score for the sample was 4.69 ( $SD = .02$ ). The high mean value and negative skew (-2.309) indicate that most respondents in the sample reported a high morality/ethics score. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Incongruent with the study from Meriac (2017) where the Cronbach's alpha for the morality/ethics subscale was  $\alpha = .64$ , in this study the subscale demonstrated a low internal consistency ( $\alpha = .43$ ).

Table 3  
*Morality/ethics Subscale Measure*

Items
3. One should always take responsibility for one's actions.
13. One should not pass judgment until one has heard all of the facts.
23. It is important to treat others as you would like to be treated.
27. People should be fair in their dealings with others.

Leisure subscale (reversed) (Table 4). The mean value of leisure subscale score for the sample was 2.11 ( $SD = .03$ ). The skewness score fell within a normal range (.561). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Incongruent with the study

from Meriac (2017) where the Cronbach's alpha for the leisure subscale was  $\alpha = .82$ , in this study  $\alpha = .56$ , showing questionable internal consistency.

Table 4

*Leisure Subscale Measure*

Items
4. I would prefer a job that allowed me to have more leisure time.
16. More leisure time is good for people.
18. The world would be a better place if people spent more time relaxing.
25. People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.

Centrality of work subscale (Table 5). The mean value of centrality of work subscale score for the sample was 3.62 ( $SD = .04$ ). The skewness value was within a normal range (-.375). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Congruent with the study from Meriac (2017) where the Cronbach's alpha for the centrality of work subscale was  $\alpha = .80$ , in this study the subscale also had a good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .79$ ).

Table 5

*Centrality of Work Subscale Measure*

Items
2. I feel content when I have spent the day working.
7. A hard day's work is very fulfilling.
24. I experience a sense of fulfillment from working.
28. A hard day's work provides a sense of accomplishment.

Hard work subscale (Table 6). The mean value of hard work subscale score for the sample was 4.46 ( $SD = .03$ ). The high mean value and negative skew (-1.774) indicated that most respondents in the sample reported a high hard work score. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Congruent with the study

from Meriac (2017) where the Cronbach's alpha for the hard work subscale was  $\alpha = .81$ , in this study the subscale also had a very good internal consistency ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

Table 6  
*Hard Work Subscale Measure*

Items
9. Working hard is the key to being successful.
11. If one works hard enough, one is likely to make a good life for oneself.
20. If you work hard you will succeed.
22. Anyone who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.

Wasted time subscale (Table 7). The mean value of wasted time subscale score for the sample was 4.31 ( $SD = .03$ ). The variable had a skew of -.919. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Incongruent with the study from Meriac (2017) where the Cronbach's alpha for the wasted time subscale was  $\alpha = .73$ , in this study the subscale had Cronbach's alpha coefficient of  $\alpha = .60$  showing adequate consistency.

Table 7  
*Wasted Time Subscale Measure*

Items
1. It is important to stay busy at work and not waste time.
5. Time should not be wasted, it should be used efficiently.
12. I constantly look for ways to productively use my time.
17. I try to plan out my workday so as not to waste time.

Delay of gratification subscale (Table 8). The mean value of delay of gratification subscale score for the sample was 3.88 ( $SD = .04$ ). The variable had a skew of -.613. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Incongruent with the study from Meriac (2017) where the Cronbach's alpha for the delay of gratification subscale was  $\alpha = .80$ , in this study the subscale had adequate reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .68$ ).

Table 8

*Delay of Gratification Subscale Measure*

Items
6. I get more fulfillment from items I had to wait for.
8. Things that you have to wait for are the most worthwhile.
15. A distant reward is usually more satisfying than an immediate one.
21. The best things in life are those you have to wait for.

A final composite variable (average mean score) was generated from the answers to the subscales/dimensions of work ethic, to identify the score of the work ethic in each participant in the sample. Cut off for the high score of work ethic was considered any score with at least half a standard deviation above the mean score for the study sample. The work ethic score and dimensions' scores were cross-examined with the other factors, identified as predictor variables, to identify the strength and direction of the relationship.

*Independent variables: parental factors*

Descriptive statistics of parental factors are presented in Table 13, Appendix C.

Perceived work ethic of parents. This variable was measured with a single item measure, in a five-point Likert scale for the centrality of work in the life of each parent: “My mother considers work as important in one's life.” and “My father considers work as important in one's life.”

The mean value of mother’s work ethic score for the sample was 4.60 ( $SD = .04$ ). The high mean value and negative skew (-2.408) indicated that most respondents in the sample reported a high work ethic score of mothers. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed.

The mean value of father’s work ethic score for the sample was 4.56 ( $SD = .04$ ). The high mean value and negative skew (-2.268) indicated that most respondents in the sample reported a high work ethic score of fathers. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro

Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed.

Employment duration of parents. This variable was measured with the question “My father has worked in a full-time job for pay most of his life.” in a five-point Likert scale. The same question was asked for the mother as well: “My mother has worked in a full-time job for pay most of her life.” in a five-point Likert scale.

The mean value of the mother’s employment duration for the sample was 3.62 ( $SD=.07$ ). Skewness was within the normal range (-.589). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. The mean value of the father’s employment duration for the sample was 4.16 ( $SD = .06$ ). The skewness value was negative (-1.345). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed.

Parent support. Parental support was measured using a scale used by Leenders et al. in 2017, previously developed for a study on solidarity in family relationships in Netherlands in 2006-2007 by Dykstra et al. (2012). Participants answered questions about their relationship with their mother. The scale is composed of 4 items: “I could always turn to my mother if I had problems”, “My mother and I were very close”, “I always felt that my mother supported me”, and “My mother understood very well what was on my mind.” The possible answers ranged from (1) = “totally disagree” to (5) = “totally agree.” (Leenders et al., 2017). The same items were used for the relationship with the father. A high score indicated a positive relationship with the parent. A mean score was calculated for the support of each parent. Cronbach’s alpha reported by Leenders et al. was .93.



The mean value of mother's support score for the sample was 4.23 ( $SD = .04$ ). The high mean value and negative skew (-1.236) indicated that most respondents in the sample reported a high maternal support. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Cronbach's alpha for the mother's support subscale was .83, showing very good consistency. As a continuous independent variable, the mother's support score was centered.

The mean value of father's support score for the sample was 3.72 ( $SD = .05$ ). The variable had a normal skewness (-.779). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Cronbach's alpha for the father's support subscale was .92, showing excellent consistency. As a continuous independent variable, the father's support score was centered.

Financial dependency from parents. This variable was measured by a single, ordinal measure, with the question "How dependent would you say you are financially from your parents?" Participants responded using an ordinal scale: (1) = "Fully dependent", (2) = "Mostly dependent", (3) = "Mostly independent" and (4) = "Fully independent." The mean value of financial dependency on parents for the sample was 4.12 ( $SD=.05$ ). The variable had a normal skewness (-.983). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed.

Perceived encouragement by their parents to pursue career. Perceived encouragement by their parents to pursue career was measured with a single,

dichotomous measure question “Did your parents encourage you to pursue a career?” The mean value of perceived strength of encouragement from parents to pursue career for the sample was 2.68 ( $SD = .05$ ). The variable had a normal skewness (-.240). Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilks statistics were both significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed.

*Independent variables: Individual-level factors*

Monthly income status. The monthly income status (before tax) of the participant was measured with a categorical measure, through the question: “Which category best describes your own monthly income before taxes?” The variable was categorical, and was treated as such, provided that the categories were arbitrarily created.

Gender. Gender of the participant was measured with a single, two-response item: ‘Male’ or ‘Female’.

Duration of being employed/volunteering. This variable was measured with the question “What is the duration of work experience (whether as full-time, part-time, service contract or volunteer work) you have?” to which the participants answered using these categories: ‘less than 3 months,’ ‘between 3 and 6 months,’ ‘between 7 months and 1 year,’ ‘1 - 2 years,’ ‘more than 2 years.’ The variable was categorical and treated as such and was also collapsed to create fewer categories.

Presence of a positive influence of a coach/sibling/influencer/role model. This variable was measured with the question “There has been a positive influence of at least one person as a role model and example in your life?” This was a dichotomous variable.

Have attended or attends a coaching/mentoring/training program. This variable was measured with the question “You have attended or are still attending a career coaching/mentoring program.” This was a dichotomous variable.

Years of education completed. This variable was measured with the question “How many years of education have you completed?” The participants were asked to provide a number. The variable was collapsed into categories for further analysis.

Higher average grade of the current/last year of education. This variable was measured with the question “What has been your average grade in the last year of formal education?” This was an open question that allowed only numeric values. GPA was measured by asking the participants to report it for the last year of education that they had concluded.

Desire to leave the country. The desire to leave the country was measured through a single question “Would you want to move abroad?” with three answer categories “Yes, and I would not return”, “Yes, but I would return” and “No.”

Area of living: urban/rural. This variable was measured by asking the participants whether they live in a city or a village. This was a dichotomous variable.

### **Data preparation and analysis**

Upon completion of online questionnaires by participants, the data were transferred onto IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v. 27 (IBM Corp., 2022) for analysis. Prior to analysis and before submission to the researcher, all data were screened, and personal information was deleted by Data Centrum. As answering questions was a requirement to proceed with the next question through the end of the survey, and skipping questions was not allowed, no missing values were recorded,

so all cases were included in the analyses. Analyses included reliability statistics for each scaled measure. To address research questions, regression models, correlations, and comparison of means/ANOVA were utilized to examine various relationships and patterns within the dataset and to draw meaningful conclusions from the cross-sectional data (Table 9).

Table 9.  
*Research Questions, Hypotheses, Variables and Statistical Analyses*

Research questions/hypotheses	Variables	Statistical analysis
<i>Research question 1: What is the state of work ethic of GenZ in Albania?</i>		
<i>Research question 2: What dimensions of work ethic (centrality of work, morality/ethics, self-reliance, hard work, leisure, delay of gratification and wasted time) does Albania GenZ view especially favorably?</i>		
	Centrality of work subscale	Descriptive analysis
	Morality/ethics subscale	Descriptive analysis
	Self-reliance subscale	Descriptive analysis
	Hard work subscale	Descriptive analysis
	Leisure subscale (reversed)	Descriptive analysis
	Delay of gratification subscale	Descriptive analysis
	Wasted time subscale	Descriptive analysis
	Work ethic score (composite variable)	Descriptive analysis
<i>Research question 3: Are parental factors statistically significant predictors of work ethic and work ethic dimensions in GenZ in Albania?</i>		
H3a: Parental factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic among GenZ.	Criterion variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work ethic</li> <li>• work ethic subscales</li> </ul> Independent variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perceived work ethic of the mother</li> <li>• perceived work ethic of the father</li> <li>• mother's employment</li> <li>• father's employment</li> <li>• mother's support</li> <li>• father's support</li> <li>• financial dependent on parents</li> <li>• encouraged to pursue career by parents</li> </ul>	Multiple linear regression analysis
H3b: Parental factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic dimensions among GenZ.		
<i>Research question 4: Do parental factors predict work ethic in a similar way among female and male participants?</i>		
H4a: There will be gender differences in how parental factors predict work ethic.	Criterion variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• female's work ethic</li> <li>• male's work ethic</li> </ul> Independent variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parental factors</li> </ul>	Multiple linear regression analysis
<i>Research question 5: Are individual factors statistically significant predictors of work ethic and work ethic dimensions of GenZ in Albania?</i>		
H5a: Individual factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic among GenZ.	Criterion variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work ethic</li> <li>• work ethic subscales</li> </ul> Independent variables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a lower income status</li> <li>• being a female</li> <li>• duration of employment</li> <li>• attended a mentoring program</li> <li>• having a role model</li> <li>• higher average grade</li> <li>• years of education completed</li> <li>• desire to leave the country</li> <li>• urban/rural living area</li> </ul>	Multiple linear regression analysis Comparison of means/ANOVA
H5b: Individual factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic dimensions among GenZ.		

Regression models helped identify and quantify the associations between the dependent and independent variables. Correlations were explored to determine the strength and direction of relationships between different variables. Additionally, a comparison of means was conducted to assess the differences in various variables across different groups, providing insights into disparities or variations.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter outlined the design and methods proposed to be used in this study. The chapter provided details on the sample and sampling procedures, with a description of how the participants were selected. This chapter outlined the details on the variables and measuring instrument used. Lastly, the ethical considerations of this research study were discussed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the main findings of the study. First, sample characteristics are presented. Results are described regarding each research question and hypothesis.

#### **Sample characteristics**

Demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 10. In addition, crosstab analysis results are described. Most of the participants in the survey were females (68.5%;  $n = 343$ ), while 31.5% ( $n = 158$ ) were males. The age ranged from 18 to 24 years old, with an average of 20.94 years ( $SD = 1.90$ ). Only 2.2% ( $n = 11$ ) reported elementary school years, 30.1% ( $n = 151$ ) reported upper secondary school years, the majority (51.9%;  $n = 260$ ) reported a bachelor level education and 15.8% ( $n = 79$ ) reported post-bachelor years of education. In this sample, 28.9% ( $n = 145$ ) reported an income of 9,900 Albanian lekë, or 99 USD or less. The majority reported monthly income between 10,000 – 49,999 Albanian lekë (100 – 499 USD) (42.1%;  $n = 211$ ). Monthly income of 50,000 – 99,999 lekë were reported by 16.2% of the sample ( $n = 81$ ), while 4% ( $n = 20$ ) reported income between 100,000 and 199,999 lekë and 8.8% ( $n = 44$ ) a monthly income before tax of 200,000 lekë or 2,000 USD. Most of the respondents had experience with employment. Those who had not been employed were 17.6% ( $n = 88$ ), those who had been employed less than a year were 48.3% ( $n = 242$ ) whereas those who had been employed more than a year were 34.1% ( $n = 171$ ). Most of the respondents reported living in urban areas (78.0%;  $n = 391$ ) versus those reporting living in rural areas (22.0%;  $n = 110$ ). The majority (83.4%;  $n = 418$ ) reported having at least one person in their own life who had a positive influence/had been an example, versus 16.6% ( $n = 83$ )

who reported they did not. Most respondents reported they had not participated in a career guidance program (64.1%;  $n = 321$ ) versus those who reported they had (35.9%;  $n = 180$ ). Only 12.6% of the respondents ( $n = 63$ ) reported that they would not like to go abroad. Those who reported that they would leave and come back were 47.7% ( $n = 239$ ), whereas those who would leave and not come back were 39.7% ( $n = 199$ ).

Table 10  
*Characteristics of Survey Participants*

Variable	(n = 501)	
	%	n
Gender		
Female	68.5	343
Male	31.5	158
Education years		
Elementary	2.2	11
Upper secondary	30.1	151
Bachelor	51.9	260
Post-bachelor	15.8	79
Monthly income before tax in Albanian lekë		
ALL 9,900 or less	28.9	145
Between 10,000 - 49,999	42.1	211
Between 50,000 - 99,999	16.2	81
Between 100,000 - 199,999	4.0	20
200,000 and above	8.8	44
Employment duration		
Never employed	17.6	88
Less than 1 year	48.3	242
More than a year	34.1	171
Area of living		
Urban	78.0	391
Rural	22.0	110
Having a person as a role model/example		
Yes	83.4	418
No	16.6	83
Having participated in a career guidance program		
Yes	35.9	180
No	64.1	321
Would like to go abroad		
Yes, and I would not come back	39.7	199
Yes, and I would come back	47.7	239
No	12.6	63
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	20.94	1.9

Most participants came from urban areas and had higher levels of education. In addition, the majority lived on a modest monthly income, had work/volunteering experience, and would want to leave the country. Most of them had not participated in a career mentoring program, which is supposedly part of the compulsory pre-university curricula. Based on these demographics, the characteristics of the sample are largely representative of the population of young people in the country.

The profile of the participants was explored further via crosstab analysis of the demographic variables. The analysis did not identify differences between gender and years of education completed. The analysis revealed significant differences in the distribution of income by employment duration ( $\chi^2(8) = 73.82, p < .001$ ). Higher percentages of lowest income were associated with unemployment or being employed for less than 1 year (35.2% of the youth with low income were unemployed and 52.4% employed for less than a year), whereas the highest income was associated with longer employment duration. This is to be expected as being in the job market for a longer time creates more opportunities for promotion and changing jobs for better pay. No differences were found in distribution of employment length or monthly income by desire to go abroad. Young people are prone to leaving the country regardless of how long they have been employed or how much they are being paid.

There were significant differences in the distribution of education grade by gender ( $\chi^2(2) = 27.35, p < .001$ ). Highest grades (9 to 10) were more likely reported by females (39.1% compared to 26.1% in males), whereas lower grades more likely reported by males (3.5% females vs 15.9% males). However, no differences were found in the distribution of average grade by length of employment.



There was a significant difference in distribution of education level by area of living ( $\chi^2(3) = 8.74, p = 0.033$ ). Living in rural areas was associated with higher percentages of elementary or upper secondary levels versus living in urban areas, whereas living in urban areas were associated with higher percentages of bachelor or post-bachelor level of education. Most young people who move from rural areas to cities do so for the purpose of continuing higher levels of education in the universities of these cities. In addition, higher levels of education are more likely to be a demand in city jobs than in rural areas.

### **Research question 1: What is the state of work ethic of GenZ in Albania?**

The first research question explored the status of work ethic of GenZ in Albania. The results indicate that more than half (54.1%) of the participants in this study endorse a high work ethic score (a score at least half a standard deviation above the mean score for the study sample).

The mean value of the work ethic total score for the sample was 3.91 ( $SD = .019$ ). The overall work ethic variable had a normal skewness value (-.754). Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic was significant at  $p = 0.008$  and Shapiro Wilks statistic was significant ( $p < .001$ ), confirming that the responses were not normally distributed. Cronbach's alpha for the work ethic scale was  $\alpha = .67$ , showing adequate consistency. When all items were used instead of the subscales' means, the reliability increased to  $\alpha = .82$ . In addition, when the leisure subscale was omitted, the scale demonstrated good consistency of  $\alpha = .78$ .

**Research question 2: What dimensions of work ethic (centrality of work, morality/ethics, self-reliance, hard work, leisure, delay of gratification and wasted time) does Albania GenZ view especially favorably?**

Out of the seven work ethic dimensions, the most favored in young Albanians were morality/ethics dimension ( $M = 4.69, SD = .46$ ) and hard work dimension ( $M = 4.46, SD = .72$ ), followed by self-reliance and wasted time dimensions. However, they favored leisure as well (had a low score of leisure dimension reversed) ( $M = 2.11, SD = .74$ ). A summary of subscales' descriptives is provided in Table 11.

Table 11  
*Descriptive Statistics of Work Ethic Subscales*

Subscale	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	Range	Min.	Max.	Skew
Self-reliance	4.33	.59	.57	4	1	5	-1.196
Morality/ethics	4.69	.46	.43	4	1	5	-2.309
Leisure (reversed)	2.11	.74	.56	4	1	5	-.561
Centrality of work	3.62	.94	.79	4	1	5	-.375
Hard work	4.46	.72	.83	4	1	5	-1.774
Wasted time	4.31	.61	.60	4	1	5	-.919
Delay of gratification	3.88	.85	.68	4	1	5	-.613

Most subscales were significantly correlated, even though none of the correlation coefficients were strong (Table 12).

Table 12  
*Correlations between Work Ethic Dimensions' Subscales*

	Self-reliance	Morality/ethics	Leisure	Centrality of work	Hard work	Wasted time	Delay of gratification
Self-reliance	1	.342**	-.184**	.372**	.436**	.493**	.384**
Morality/ethics		1	-.165**	.198**	.307**	.289**	.187**
Leisure			1	.051	-.165**	-.085	-.194**
Centrality of work				1	.459**	.430**	.436**
Hard work					1	.439**	.462**
Wasted time						1	.392**
Delay of gratification							1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Self-reliance was positively correlated with all other dimensions, except leisure. The correlation between self-reliance and morality/ethics was  $r(501) = .342, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of self-reliance are associated with higher levels of morality/ethics; between self-reliance and leisure was  $r(501) = -.184, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of self-reliance are associated with lower levels of leisure; between self-reliance and centrality of work was  $r(501) = .372, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of self-reliance are associated with higher levels of centrality of work; between self-reliance and hard work was  $r(501) = .436, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of self-reliance are associated with higher levels of hard work; between self-reliance and wasted time was  $r(501) = .493, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of self-reliance are associated with higher 'Wasted time' subscale scores; between self-reliance and delay of gratification was  $r(501) = .384, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of self-reliance are associated with higher levels of delay of gratification.

Morality and ethics dimension also correlated positively and significantly with all other dimensions, except leisure. The correlation between morality/ethics and leisure was  $r(501) = -.165, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of morality/ethics were associated with lower levels of leisure subscale score; between morality/ethics and centrality of work was  $r(501) = .198, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of morality/ethics are associated with higher levels of centrality of work; between morality/ethics and hard work was  $r(501) = .307, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of morality/ethics are associated with higher levels of hard work; between morality/ethics and wasted time was  $r(501) = .289, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of morality/ethics are associated with higher 'Wasted time' subscale score; between morality/ethics and delay of gratification

was  $r(501) = .187, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of morality/ethics are associated with higher levels of delay of gratification.

There was no significant correlation between leisure and centrality of work or leisure and wasted time. The correlation between leisure and hard work was  $r(501) = -.165, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of leisure score are associated with lower levels of hard work; between leisure and delay of gratification was  $r(501) = -.194, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of leisure score are associated with lower levels of delay of gratification.

Centrality of work correlated significantly with all other dimensions except leisure. The correlation between centrality of work and hard work was  $r(501) = .459, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of centrality of work are associated with higher levels of hard work; between centrality of work and wasted time was  $r(501) = .430, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of centrality of work are associated with higher 'Wasted time' subscale score; between centrality of work and delay of gratification was  $r(501) = .436, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of centrality of work are associated with higher levels of delay of gratification.

Hard work dimension correlated positively and significantly with all dimensions, except leisure, with which correlated negatively. The correlation between hard work and wasted time was  $r(501) = .439, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of hard work are associated with higher 'Wasted time' subscale score; between hard work and delay of gratification was  $r(501) = .462, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of hard work are associated with higher levels of delay of gratification.

Wasted time correlated positively with all dimensions but did not correlate significantly with leisure. The correlation between ‘wasted time’ subscale score and delay of gratification was  $r(501) = .392, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of ‘wasted time’ subscale score are associated with higher levels of delay of gratification. Delay of gratification correlated positively with all dimensions, but negatively with leisure.

Overall, one third of the work ethic subscales were moderately correlated and two-thirds poorly correlated, indicating that they are independent components and there is no multicollinearity, which helps to make stable predictions in response to the next research questions and hypotheses.

### **Research question 3: Are parental factors statistically significant predictors of work ethic and work ethic dimensions in GenZ in Albania?**

This research question was categorized into two hypotheses. The first one was interested to explore if parental factors were statistically significant predictors of work ethic among GenZ. The second was interested in understanding if parental factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic dimensions among GenZ.

#### *Correlational analysis*

Before testing the hypotheses under this research question, the correlation was explored between the parental factors and overall work ethic score of the young person. All parental factors positively and significantly correlated with overall work ethic score, except being financially dependent from the parent.

The correlation between the young person’s work ethic score and perceived mother’s work ethic was  $r(501) = .319, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of work ethic are associated with higher levels of perceived mother’s work ethic. The correlation between the young person’s work ethic score and mother’s employment duration was

$r(501) = .100, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of work ethic are associated with longer employment of the mother. The correlation between work ethic score and perceived father's work ethic was  $r(501) = .291, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of work ethic are associated with higher levels of perceived father's work ethic. The correlation between work ethic score and father's employment duration was  $r(501) = .146, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of work ethic are associated with longer employment of the father. The correlation between work ethic score and mother's support was  $r(501) = .298, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of work ethic are associated with higher maternal support. The correlation between work ethic score and father's support was  $r(501) = .257, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of work ethic are associated with higher paternal support. The correlation between work ethic score and parents' encouragement to pursue career was  $r(501) = .181, p = .01$ , indicating that higher levels of work ethic are associated with higher parental encouragement. No significant correlation was reported between total work ethic score and being financially dependent on parents  $r(501) = .067, p = .135$  (Table 14, Appendix C).

In summary, parental factors such as parents' work ethic and parental support correlated positively and significantly with most other parental factors, except with financial dependency on parents. Mother's employment duration did not correlate significantly with three other factors (father's work ethic, fathers' support and financial dependency on parents), while father's employment duration did not correlate only with financial dependency on parents. Correlations coefficients among the parental factors were moderate or weak. This served to check assumptions that there were no

multicollinearity or high correlations between variables, before running the regression analysis.

### *Regression analysis*

Overall, the regression analysis indicated that parental factors are predictive of overall work ethic and certain work ethic dimensions of the young persons. The results from these tests are presented in the following sections:

Testing H4a: Parental factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic among GenZ.

To test this hypothesis, a multiple linear regression analysis was carried out with overall work ethic score as a dependent variable and mother's work ethic, father's work ethic, mother's employment duration, father's employment duration, mother's support, father's support, and parent's encouragement to pursue career as independent variables. Financial dependency on parents was excluded as a variable from the model as it did not correlate with the work ethic score.

The overall model was significant,  $F(7, 501) = 14.76, p < .001$ , and explained 16.2% of variance in work ethic. However, three predictors, mother's employment duration ( $\beta = .01, p = .699$ ), father's employment duration ( $\beta = -.01, p = .578$ ) and parents' encouragement to pursue career ( $\beta = .01, p = .696$ ) were non-significant. Therefore these predictors were omitted and the final model was significant  $F(4, 501) = 25.84, p < .001$ , explaining 16.6% of the variance in work ethic. Therefore, this is the best explanation model for the work ethic in the young person (Table 15).

Table 15  
*Parental Factors and Work Ethic Regression Model*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Perceived mother's work ethic	.101***	.026	.195	3.886
Perceived father's work ethic	.052*	.023	.114	2.269
Mother's support	.076**	.024	.156	3.197
Father's support	.041*	.017	.118	2.425

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

The hypothesis was partially supported, because higher levels of both parent's perceived work ethic and both parents' support significantly predicted higher levels of work ethic, but parents' employment duration and encouragement to pursue career were non-significant. The relationship with both parents turned out to significantly predict the work ethic in the young person, however it was the perceived mother's work ethic that had the highest  $\beta$  coefficient among the predictors and a  $p$  value of less than .001 suggesting stronger evidence of a relationship with work ethic.

Testing H3b: Parental factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic dimensions among GenZ.

Regression analyses were run for all the subscales of work ethic and parental factors as identified in the predictive model (perceived mother's work ethic, perceived father's work ethic, mother's support, and father's support).

Self-reliance was investigated using the model of parental factors. The overall model was significant for the subscale as well,  $F(4, 501) = 21.57, p < .001$ , and the model explained 14.1% of variance in self-reliance. However, perceived father's work ethic ( $\beta = .05, p = .140$ ) and father's support ( $\beta = .02, p = .423$ ) were nonsignificant. After omitting these predictors, the model was significant:  $F(2, 501) = 41.23, p < .001$ , and the model



explained 13.9% of variance in self-reliance. Self-reliance, representing a drive toward independence in task accomplishment, is predicted more by maternal factors.

Morality/ethics was investigated using the model of parental factors. The overall model was significant for the subscale,  $F(4, 501) = 15.85, p < .001$ , and the model explained 10.6% of variance in morality/ethics. However, father's support ( $\beta = -.00, p = .957$ ) was nonsignificant. When omitted, the model was significant  $F(3, 501) = 21.17, p < .001$ , and explained 10.8% of variance in morality/ethics. Morality/ethics, a proclivity to engage in just/moral behavior, is again predicted more from maternal than paternal factors.

Leisure was investigated using the model of parental factors. Even though the model itself was significant for this dimension  $F(4, 501) = 5.03, p < .001$ , and it explained 3.1% of the variance, none of the predictors were significant.

Centrality of work was investigated using the model of parental factors. Even though the model itself was significant for this dimension  $F(4, 501) = 8.18, p < .001$ , and explained 5.4% of the variance, only one of the predictors was significant: perceived mother's work ethic ( $\beta = .14, p = .031$ ). Centrality of work, a belief that work is important in its own right, is only predicted by perceived mother's work ethic.

Hard work was investigated using the model of parental factors. The overall model was significant for the subscale as well,  $F(4, 501) = 23.58, p < .001$ , and the model explained 15.3% of variance in hard work. All predictors were significant as shown in Table 16. Hard work, the belief that an increased level of effort is the key to effective task accomplishment, is predicted by both maternal and paternal factors.

Wasted time was investigated using the model of parental factors. The overall model was significant for the subscale,  $F(4, 501) = 21.10, p < .001$ , and the model explained 13.9% of variance in wasted time. However, father's support was not significant ( $\beta = .04, p = .113$ ). Wasted time, a value regarding the productive use of time, is again predicted more from maternal than paternal factors.

Delay of gratification was investigated using the model of parental factors. The overall model was significant for the subscale,  $F(4, 501) = 10.40, p < .001$ , and the model explained 7.0% of variance in delay of gratification. The perceived father's work ethic was not significant ( $\beta = .051, p = .304$ ). When the variable was omitted, the model was significant  $F(3, 501) = 13.51, p < .001$  and the model explained 7.0% of variance in delay of gratification. Delay of gratification, the capacity to postpone rewards until a later date, is again predicted more from maternal than paternal factors.

#### **Research question 4: Do parental factors predict work ethic in a similar way among female and male participants?**

##### *Regression analyses*

The regression analyses indicated that there are differences in the way how parental factors predict work ethic among female and male young people. The model predicted more strongly work ethic in males than females. In addition, maternal factors were more predictive than paternal factors. This section presents in detail the results of the analyses.

Testing H4b: There will be gender differences in how parental factors predict work ethic.

Regression analysis indicated that the model was significant in both female and male respondents. The model was significant  $F(4, 501) = 13.46, p < .001$ , explaining 12.7% of the variance in work ethic of female respondents, while was significant  $F(4,$

501) = 12.51,  $p < .001$ , explaining 22.7% of variance in work ethic of male respondents (Table 17).

Table 17

*Parental Factors and Work Ethic Regression Model by Gender of Respondents*

gender		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
Female	Perceived mother's work ethic	.100**	.033	.187	3.069
	Perceived father's work ethic	.031	.029	.067	1.085
	Mother's support	.063*	.027	.140	2.330
	Father's support	.045*	.020	.135	2.230
Male	Perceived mother's work ethic	.093*	.044	.191	2.141
	Perceived father's work ethic	.078*	.038	.181	2.035
	Mother's support	.113*	.048	.203	2.356
	Father's support	.035	.030	.095	1.138

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

However, when explored further, some of the variables were not significant: perceived father's work ethic was not significant in predicting female respondents' work ethic, while father's support was not significant in predicting male respondents' work ethic.

**Research question 5: Are individual factors statistically significant predictors of work ethic and work ethic dimensions of GenZ in Albania?**

*Regression analysis*

The regression analysis indicated that only two individual factors included in this study were predictive of the overall work ethic strength: having completed secondary education and having had a role model. However, the variance explained by these predictors was not high. Two hypotheses were tested, and the results are shown in the section below:

Testing H5a: Individual factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic among GenZ.

The hypothesis is only partially supported. Multiple linear regression analysis found no significant relationship between the gender of the respondent, area of living, average grade, experience with employment, monthly income before tax, having attended a mentoring program, desire to leave the country and work ethic (Table 18).

Table 18  
*Regression Analysis of Work Ethic by Individual Factors*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Gender	-.072	.041	-.080	-1.732
Experience with employment	.063	.038	.076	1.659
Monthly income before tax	-.028	.041	-.030	-.665
Having a role model	.218***	.050	.194	4.321
Attended a career mentoring program	.024	.039	.027	.613
Living in urban or rural area	-.084	.045	-.083	-1.875
Average grade in the last year	-.049	.032	-.069	-1.523
Years of formal education completed	-.059*	.026	-.102	-2.263
Desire to leave the country	-.062	.056	-.049	-1.107

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

The relationship of having a role model and work ethic was significant  $F(1, 501) = 19.00$ ,  $p < .001$ , and explained 3.5% of the variance in the work ethic. The relationship of years of formal education completed and work ethic was significant  $F(1, 501) = 4.15$ ,  $p < .05$ , and explained 0.6% of the variance in the work ethic.

Testing H5b: Individual factors will be statistically significant predictors of work ethic dimensions among GenZ.

*Participants' gender.* Female participants endorsed higher scores in some work ethic dimensions. A statistically significant mean difference was found between female and male participants in terms of morality/ethics dimension and hard work dimension ( $p$

< .01). The Welch test indicated that the mean score of females ( $M = 4.74$ ,  $SD = .43$ ) was significantly different than male scores ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = .53$ ) and that female participants had higher levels of morality/ethics dimension and hard work dimension. The Welch test, run to understand differences in hard work dimension, indicated that the mean score of females ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) was significantly different than male scores in hard work dimensions ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .79$ ). Female participants had higher levels of hard work dimension (Table 19).

*Having a role model.* This factor was predictive of a number of work ethic dimensions. A statistically significant mean difference was found between participants who reported having a role model compared to those who reported not having had one, in terms of self-reliance dimension, centrality of work dimension, hard work dimension, wasted time dimension and delay of gratification dimension. The Welch test indicated that the mean scores of participants who reported having had a role model in their lives was significantly different than scores of those who did not report having a role model in their lives. Participants who reported having a role model in their lives had higher levels of these work ethic dimensions (Table 20).

*Living in a rural area.* This factor was predictive of some work ethic dimensions. A statistically significant mean difference was found between participants living in urban or rural areas, in terms of hard work and wasted time dimensions. The mean differences were significant: participants in rural areas had higher levels of hard work and wasted time dimensions at a  $p < .05$  (Table 23).

*Having completed upper secondary education.* A statistically significant mean difference was found between participants reporting different education levels, in terms

of centrality of work dimension. The mean differences were significant: participants with upper secondary education had higher levels of centrality of work dimension compared to those with post-bachelor education level at a  $p < .05$  (Table 25).

No mean differences were observed in work ethic dimensions between groups of participants who had participated in career programs and those who had not (Table 21), between groups of participants who had less than seven months of working experience and those who had seven or more months (Table 22), between groups of participants who had a desire to leave the country and those who did not want to leave (Table 24), between groups of participants with different levels of monthly income before tax (Table 26), or between groups of participants with grades average or below and above average (Table 27).

In summary, in this sample, the individual factors were more predictive of work ethic dimensions than overall work ethic score. Being a female, having a role model, living in a rural area, and having completed upper secondary education were predictive of several work ethic dimensions.

## DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the study results in the context of existing literature on work ethic correlates. Implications for theory and practice are presented. The chapter concludes with the limitations and directions for future research.

### **Summary of key findings**

This study explored work ethic, its dimensions, and correlates, in the GenZ of Albania. The most important finding was that more than half of the sample of young Albanians demonstrated a high overall work ethic score. Among the work ethic dimensions the most favored among youth were morality/ethics and hard work, but so was leisure. The second key finding was that parental factors such as higher levels of mother's and father's work ethic, and mother's and father's support significantly predicted higher levels of work ethic in the young person, while parents' employment duration, and parent's encouragement for the young person to pursue career were non-significant predictors. Thirdly, in this sample, most individual factors of interest to this study were not predictive of the work ethic of the young person, except having had a role model and having completed secondary education levels.

### **Strength of work ethic of GenZ in Albania**

Cross-sectional studies have shown that the meanings attributed to work change when data are collected from different generations and from individuals with different cultural backgrounds (Jin & Rounds, 2012). In this sample, more than half (54.1%) of the young Albanians demonstrated a high work ethic score.<sup>1</sup> While for lack of data a comparison with other generations is not possible, the findings can be compared with

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<sup>1</sup> Those with a score with at least half a standard deviation above the mean score for the study sample.

other studies. Young people in Albania possess good overall work ethic, similar to the findings by Arciniega et al. in Mexico (2019), Elchardus and Smits in Belgium (2008), Kwong in Hong Kong (2016), Meriac in the U.S. (2012, 2015, 2017) and Zúñiga et al. in Ecuador (2019). Elchardus and Smits (2008) found on a sample of 4,666 inhabitants of Belgium, that the traditional work ethic of young people was strong. Using the same definition of work ethic, a 22-item work ethic instrument from Mirels and Garreth (1971) and web-based data collection, Kwong (2016) found in a sample of 212 millennials in Hong Kong, that the mean score of work ethic among the respondents was 4.34 indicating that millennial respondents generally held positive work ethic beliefs and values. The mean of this score in the Albanian sample was 3.91. The cultural aspects may play a role in the strength of the work ethic, as both Albania and Hong Kong samples lean towards strong scores. It can be speculated that this is related to similarities of cultures in Albania and Asia, where collectivism is favored compared to individualism, family has an important role and children are expected to obey to authority, while social interactions are based on honor and shame.

While not exactly comparable in terms of methodology, the findings are congruent with the results of the World Values Survey wave 2017-2020: around 60% of the Albanian young people sample ( $n = 354$ ; up to 29 years old), agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Work is a duty towards society’ and where a majority (77%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Work should always come first even if it means less spare time’ (Inglehart et al., 2014). Findings in this current study are also similar to the 2019 FES study, in terms of the belief of the young Albanians that people should take responsibility for their actions. These studies were conducted at a time when



young people belonged to the millennials' generation and not exactly GenZ, however, similarities are noticed.

This study confirms what was found in previous research studies that work ethic was stronger in countries that are not industrialized or that are developing (Bozkurt & Yesilada, 2017; de Voogt & Lang, 2017; Furnham et al., 1993; Furnham et al., 1994). This is of importance for a poor, still a developing economy like Albania's, and it shows the prospect to rely on and encourage its young people existing values. Unfortunately, the high youth unemployment figures and the results of the work ethic from this study indicate that Albania is not tapping into its youth potential.

### Work ethic dimensions in GenZ of Albania

Studies using a similar or same scale that explored the work ethic dimensions as in the current study were conducted from John Meriac in the U.S. in 2012, 2015 and 2017, and Arciniega et al. in Mexico in 2019. Descriptives of work ethic subscales in these studies are compared in Table 28.

Table 28  
*Comparison of Descriptives of Work Ethic Subscales with Studies in the US and Mexico*

	<i>Current study 2023</i>		<i>Meriac, 2012</i>		<i>Meriac, 2015</i>		<i>Meriac, 2017</i>		<i>Arciniega et al. (2019)</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age of respondents	20.94	1.9	21.61	6.0	24.35	7.85	23.82	5.98	n/a	n/a
Subscale										
Self-reliance	4.33	.59	3.56	.60	3.67	.69	3.75	.68	4.41	.50
Morality/ethics	4.69	.46	4.30	.45	4.32	.52	4.64	.42	4.76	.34
Leisure (reversed)	2.11	.74	3.23	.60	3.23	.70	3.29	.77	3.22	.70
Centrality of work	3.62	.94	3.86	.56	3.65	.67	4.31	.55	4.38	.57
Hard work	4.46	.72	3.62	.55	3.89	.65	4.43	.53	4.47	.58
Wasted time	4.31	.61	3.53	.53	3.60	.65	4.05	.60	4.51	.44
Delay of gratification	3.88	.85	3.60	.64	3.58	.70	3.56	.82	4.00	.70

A lower mean in the leisure subscale (reversed), can be noticed in the results of Albanian youth work ethic, indicating that Albanian youth were more likely to endorse leisure as a value. Higher means of dimensions of morality/ethics, hard work, wasted time and delay of gratification are noted in the Albanian young people sample dimensions compared to the U.S. samples.

In trying to explain why the morality/ethics dimension was the most endorsed among other dimensions, it can be speculated that in the Albanian sample, the parents' values operate as a moral compass in this regard. Parents of GenZ belong mostly to GenX, a generation born in the times of communist dictatorship in Albania, when moral values of the person were largely imposed by the State Party and promoted, or even imposed, a high sense of responsibility towards work and community work, forced volunteerism, mutual and public accountability.

The results also align with those from the FES study and Neulinger et al. (cited in Furnham, 1990) in terms of high endorsement of leisure. The Albanian young people highly enjoyed healthy eating, being faithful to friends, partners, and employers, having a successful career and taking responsibility. They generally engaged in activities such as spending time with family, listening to music, going out with friends, watching movies, doing nothing/relaxing, or hanging out in cafes and bars (FES, 2019). It has been pointed out by other authors as well that leisure is important to the young generations. This was also what Kwong (2016) found in the Hong Kong millennials. According to the author, millennials did not think that leisure and work were mutually exclusive, were inclined to consider both leisure and work can co-exist and took a more balanced view on work and rest (Kwong, 2016, p. 302). It is important to acknowledge this finding, as well as the

potential implications of it, but also the apparent contradiction with the high score in hard work dimension. When accommodated in the job, young people may not be inclined to accept long work hours and taking work home at the expense of leisure time. Their concept of hard work may not necessarily correlate to working longer, but rather working in a smarter way to achieve the desired outcomes. This should be of interest to consider in designing and implementing management practices in various settings.

### **Parental factors and young person's work ethic and gender differences**

#### *Parental work values and youth work ethic*

As argued by Davies (2013) even in a digital age of smartphones, social media and online games, parents continue to play an influential role in their children's lives. Parents of the GenZ belong to the generation that has lived in between periods of totalitarian regime and the transition to open economy, which has changed the job market outlook. An eight to four type of job was no longer a reality during this transition, thus influencing the perception of their children around the parent's work values.

The findings that higher levels of both parents' work ethic significantly predicted higher levels of the young person's work ethic are in alignment with the study from Cemalcilar et al. (2018). Theirs was a meta-analysis of 30 studies conducted in 11 different countries totaling 19,987 participants, where they established that parental work values had a positive association with child work values ( $r = 0.20$ , 95%  $CI [0.15, 0.25]$   $p < .001$ ). Similar to this study: the correlation coefficient between the scores of the young person's work ethic and the mother's work ethic was  $r = .319$ ,  $p = .01$  while with the father's work ethic the results were  $r = .291$ ,  $p = .01$ . Cemalcilar et al. analyses suggested that when analyzed individually, both maternal and paternal work values had positive and

significant association with child work values and that these two effect sizes were not significantly different from each other. This was also true in this study: both mother's and father's work ethic were predictive of the young person's work ethic.

The current study findings are also similar to what Sümer et al. (2019) found in a comparative study with 6,056 young individuals and their parents from the Czech Republic, Spain, and Turkey. Authors assessed work values for both young adults and their parents through a seven-item questionnaire. Results indicated suggested a similarity transmission pattern of work values from both parents to children.

The results are partially in alignment with those of Furnham in 1987 of a positive mother-child association, but no father-child associations of work ethic among a sample of British college students (Furnham 1987 cited in Lee et al., 2016).

The results are close to the meta-analysis from Degner and Dalege (2013) of 131 studies with 177 independent samples, which included a total of 47,036 parent– child pairs. They found no gender effect: children were no more similar to their mothers than fathers, nor there was any difference between boys or girls in their similarity of work values to their parents.

This study contradicts the results from Lee et al. (2016) study with a sample of African American families and those from Roest et al. (2010) study in Netherlands. Lee et al. (2016) measured work ethic via self-reporting by mothers, fathers, and youth (mean age 12.2) using a six-item measure from Greenberger and Bond 1984. They found that mother's and father's work ethic was not statistically correlated, while in this study there was a moderate statistical correlation  $r = .548, p = .01$ . In addition, the authors found that a significant positive link was only evident between fathers' and older siblings' work

ethics. In contrast, no linkages involving mothers' or younger siblings' work ethics were evident, which was not found in the Albanian sample.

Participants in the study from Roest et al. (2010) were fathers, mothers, and their adolescent (mean age 17.55) and emerging adult children who participated in the 1998 Child-rearing and Family in the Netherlands Study. Again, the methodology was not the same as in the current study and investigated bi-directional parent-child transmissions on work as duty and hedonism across a 5-year period. Data collection took place at home, face-to-face. These authors used two subscales of socio-cultural value orientations: work as duty (4 items) and hedonism (4 items). The results showed greater paternal transmissions on work as duty in the family and interpreted it with the idea of fathers having a more instrumental role in the family.

It is challenging to infer conclusions from comparisons with other studies. Meta-studies have revealed that work values were significantly similar between parents and children, and this is also what this study indicated. It must be emphasized that previous studies in the field differed from the current study in terms of sample characteristics, data collection method and instruments: parents were direct participants in the study and their self-reports were directly captured. In this study, the parent's work ethic was measured as perceived and reported by the young persons and using one-item measure, instead of the full scale.

Parents' employment duration did not affect the work ethic in the Albanian sample. Mothers in the sample were perceived to have worked full-time less than fathers were (difference of means significant at  $p < .001$ ). It can be speculated that before the '90s, whether in the urban or rural area, women in every family were equally employed

in full-time work as their husbands or male members, which has created a profile of a working woman. After the '90s, the lifestyle of women changed, with more women choosing to be stay-at-home, especially with the privatization of the previously state-owned industry or if the spouse would be engaged in entrepreneurship. This might explain why mothers were perceived to be working full-time paid jobs less frequently than fathers were. Regardless of this change in the perceived parent's duration of employment, the work ethic of both parents was a significant predictor of the young person's work ethic, suggesting that the perceived role of both is important in framing work values in the sample of GenZs.

However, the difference on how the youth gender affected the relationship between the parental factors and work ethic was an interesting finding. The higher effect size of the mother's perceived work ethic in the study can be interpreted with the prominent role of the Albanian women in the family. A child raised in an Albanian family, notices that mothers are constantly working whether in a paid or unpaid job and this may influence their perception of what work ethic entails. It can be that the young persons, due to the evolving beliefs, may see work ethic as something one exhibits in any activity paid or unpaid.

In addition, the findings support the role of parents in the strength of the work ethic dimensions. The perceived mother's work ethic was significantly associated with almost all dimensions of work ethic, except with leisure, which was not associated with any parental factor. The perceived father's work ethic was significantly associated on the other side with morality/ethics, hard work, and wasted time. This reinforces again the

finding that the parent's work ethic, especially the mother's, is important in the formation of dimensions of work values in the young person.

*Parent support and young person's work ethic*

The finding that the mother's support and the father's support significantly predicted higher levels of work ethic in the young person is in alignment with the findings from the metaanalysis of 30 studies from Cemalcilar et al. (2018), which found that supportive parenting (perceived positivity of parenting) had a positive association with child work values. Individuals who had closer relations with their parents and whose parents were more involved and interested in their upbringing reported having stronger work values. In addition, perceived positivity of maternal parenting had positive and significant association with child work values, which was congruent with the findings in this study.

The findings from this study contradicted those from Axelsson et al. (2005) with 606 Swedish upper secondary school students (median age 18 years). In this study, the authors were interested in work ethic (measured with 4 items) as well as general work attitudes (measured with 3 items) of the students. They found that not work ethic, but general work attitudes were predicted by good parental support (measured by two variables: support from father and support from mother). This contradiction is most probably a matter of measurement and operational definitions of the concepts.

In the study from Leenders et al. (2017), it resulted that people who had a more positive relationship with the father, had a more positive work orientation and individuals who had a more positive relationship with both parents had a stronger work ethic than people who had a less positive relationship with both parents. This was revealed true also

from this study, in which mother's and father's support were both predicting factors of the young persons' work ethic.

There were some gender differences found in the Albanian sample partially similar to the findings from Leenders et al. (2017) where men who had a more positive relationship with their mother and father had a stronger work ethic than men with a less positive relationship with their mother and father. In the Albanian sample, the mother's support was a significant predictor in both males and females, even though a stronger predictor for males than females. On the other hand, father support was significantly associated with work ethic in females, but not in male respondents. The scale used in the current study is adopted by Leenders et al., however, the difference is that they asked for relationship with parents at age 15, while in this study, it was not required to specify the age.

The findings lead to the interpretation that the support of both parents is important for the formation of work values of the young person. The gender differences found in this sample point however at a more distant or demanding style of parenting from mothers to daughters and fathers to sons in the Albanian families, which is worth exploring further. It is a culturally embedded attitude towards children which is driven by their gender and seems to be transmitted over generations. It is common to hear in conversations that "mothers have a special relationship with their sons" and "fathers are tough on their sons." In addition, the gender differences may also point at a family dynamic where GenZs were raised, where fathers were not as emotionally involved as the mothers.



## **Individual factors, work ethic and work ethic dimensions**

### *Education and work ethic*

Previous studies have linked work ethic with lower educational levels of both the parents and their children in the Dutch study (ter Bogt et al., 2005). In the Albanian sample, work ethic and one of its dimensions (centrality of work) was highest among respondents who had completed upper secondary school. A decrease was noticed in the work ethic score with the increase of years of education, which is in alignment with the Dutch study. It might be explained with a belief that it is hard work, not necessarily the length of years in formal education that is of importance in one's life. It can also be speculated that this belief was reinforced by the examples of the individuals who became successful because of entrepreneurial skills instead of their education level.

### *Income level and work ethic*

This study did not find that work ethic was related to lower income as in Furnham (1990) or ter Bogt et al. (2005). Lechner et al. (2018) used data from a 10-year longitudinal Finnish study and found that youth from lower-SES families endorsed extrinsic work values more strongly than did their higher-SES counterparts, thus to the importance placed on external rewards or outcomes of paid work, such as a good salary, possibilities of promotion, or job security. These aspects of work values were not the focus of this study, so it is not possible to compare the findings. However, as found in an earlier study, being poor, unemployed, and affected by corruption were main concerns of the young in Albania (FES, 2019), so it could be of interest to explore further how the perception of these factors could affect the work ethic score and dimensions. It is interesting that the level of income does not relate to the strength of work ethic in

Albanian young persons. This means that no matter how high the income is, the work ethic is not expected to change. Some other element in the incentive package can be more effective for young people therefore, which needs to be explored further. This is somehow congruent also with the importance that young people give to leisure, so a job that allows them to have more free time, rather than higher pay, could be more attractive to them.

#### *Work experience and work ethic*

This study intended to explore among other things the relationship that work ethic has to the work experiences that young people have had. Even though various studies have argued that having work experience is one of the factors associated with the formation of work values in early adulthood (Axelsson et al., 2005; Cheung & Tang, 2012; Mortimer et al., 1996; Tucker & Loughlin, 2006) this was not found to be true in the Albanian sample. The findings of this study are similar to those of a four-year longitudinal study with 930 adolescents, where authors did not find that work status itself, or the intensity of adolescent work, had consistent effects on work value formation (Mortimer et al., 1996). This difference is worth exploring further, but it can be related to the fact that the current study only measured the duration of the work experience, rather than the type or quality of the experience. Also for the majority of young people, the length of this experience as less than a year. Nonetheless, it is interesting to notice this lack of relationship in this sample. It could also be that the work experiences have not exposed young people to situations, learning and opportunities to further enhance their work ethic. This may mean that the job market is not prepared to welcome and accommodate young people and generate more sparks of work ethic in them.

### *Gender and work ethic*

Even though most research studies show women have a higher work ethic than men (Axelsson et al., 2005; Furnham & Muhiudeen, 1984; Harðardóttir et al., 2019), this study did not confirm this hypothesis in the Albanian sample. The findings were similar to the study of Turkish university students which found that there were no gender differences in the work ethic (Aygün et al., 2008). While there are gender differences in the type of work values endorsed (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Hirschi, 2010; Mortimer et al., 1996), this study did not explore the various types of work values. It explored the various dimensions of work ethic and gender differences and found that female participants had higher levels of morality/ethics dimension and hard work dimension compared to male participants. Also, it is interesting to consider the perspective of the employers, mainly in private sector, who perceived that men were more capable of handling stress and focusing on difficult tasks, even though they did not report that women were less skilled (World Bank, 2018). This should be challenged in the sense that while there are no overall work ethic differences, there are dimensions where women are stronger than men. It can therefore be of importance to look at gender differences in the work ethic dimensions, rather than at the overall work ethic score.

### *Role models and work ethic*

Having a role model was significantly associated with the work ethic and several of the dimensions of work ethic (self-reliance, centrality of work, hard work, wasted time and delay of gratification) in young people. This study did not ask young people to describe their role model, therefore it is hard to infer whom they had in mind when they responded to this question. In the age of information technology, very often the role

models are influencers who use social media as a channel of communication to the audiences. Given the significant association, it can be inferred that some aspects of the profile of the role model or influencer are reinforcing the work ethic aspects of young people. It could be that the persistence of generating media content, as shown by the number of followers, is perceived as a result of hard work. It could also be, however, that the young person has in mind somebody closer to her: a sibling, a teacher, a mentor, a member of the family circle, somebody from the family who is perceived to have been successful in life. It can also be that they have more than one role model in life, which is also another aspect that needs to be explored.

#### *Living in urban or rural areas*

This study did not find a significant association between the area of living and the work ethic of the young persons, however, hard work dimension and wasted time dimension were significantly associated with the living in the rural area. It can be interpreted with the belief that coming from a disadvantaged area, like rural areas of Albania, requires hard work and good use of time to achieve the goals. This can be affected by the challenge of young persons in rural areas to integrate in the job market compared to those living in urban areas, due to more limited access to quality education opportunities and jobs.

#### *Having participated in a career mentoring program*

Work ethic was not related to participation in a career mentoring program. It was hypothesized that this factor would have an effect on the work ethic of the young person. It might be important to explore further what the participation of the young person in this program means, and what type of program she has participated in. It might be that the

high school formal education classes of career orientation are what the young person had in mind when responded to the question. Similar to employment, the career orientation or mentoring program may have missed the point at providing the young person with the opportunity to strengthen her work ethic.

#### *GPA and work ethic*

In this study, there was no significant association between GPA and work ethic or work ethic dimensions, contrary to the findings from Meriac in various studies. In the 2015 study he hypothesized that hard work will be positively related to college GPA, but it was negatively related. In another study in 2015, Meriac hypothesized that wasted time and hard work would be positively related to GPA, however they were not. The author found that delay of gratification was positively related to GPA, but this was not found in the Albanian sample. This is interesting and raises the question of whether the young persons accurately remembered and reported their GPA and whether the GPA of the young person in Albania is a valid measure of the academic performance. It could also be true that work ethic, in the case of Albania young people, is not correlated with intelligence, which in turn would be correlated with GPA. This is something to be explored further.

#### *Desire to move abroad and work ethic*

The findings from this study showed that even though not related to work ethic, the desire to move abroad was strong, as found in the national-level survey from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. This is in a way good news for the country, considering that even if not the majority, there are still young people who have a strong work ethic and a desire to stay in the country. It is, however, an important finding to know that young

people who intend to leave the country have a strong work ethic, which raises the chances for them to accommodate in the job market of other countries, especially with the increasing demand for workforce in the EU.

Figure 1  
*Predicting model of the work ethic in young people*



### Theoretical implications

First of all, this study has implications for the organization of the correlates of work ethic based on Bronfenbrenner’s model. Just as Bronfenbrenner has posed learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressively complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favor of the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, p.60). The study confirms the associations between work ethic and microsystem factors, thus

revealing to be helpful in using this theoretical framework in the study of work ethic or work values.

In addition, as found by the literature review, this was the first time that the MWEP-SF was used in Albania as an instrument to measure work ethic of young people. While work values were studied tangentially, there had not been a thorough study on this topic to date. This study enhances our understanding of the subject matter and while attitudes to work may have changed since Weber's time (Dawson, 2005) the results of this study reveal that work ethic in young people is high and vibrant.

The relationship with the parental factors is another aspect of importance for the existing theories, as it supports again the argument that parents are key players in the microsystem of the individual and that work ethic develops within the family context (Blustein, 2011; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Lee, Padilla & McHale, 2016; Schultheiss, 2007; Stephens, 2009).

An important theoretical observation is that the results under the dimension of leisure were not in alignment with the other dimensions, pointing to a different perspective that the young people in this context have around this aspect of life. The dimension affects the reliability of the entire scale, therefore might be of interest to explore if the subscale can be constructed differently, or if the dimension of leisure is omitted from the scale.

Another implication relates to the need to test whether the same work ethic dimensions are identified when the measure is administered in a different setting or with a different sample through factor analysis.

## **Practical implications**

The study has some practical implications in the sectors of human resources practices including attracting, retaining, and promoting young talents, as well as management practices. It is very likely that the current way companies and organizations are organized and function, in terms of attracting, recruiting, and accommodating young people, is not matching young people's needs and values. While work ethic may be a personality construct, the environments can be changed to ensure that the person develops the right skills and attitudes for the job, through workplace training.

The findings of this study are also important for policymakers, youth-focused organizations, and donor agencies to build programs and policies that prepare job environments for the work values of the young. The findings will be useful to the practitioners interested in the professional youth skillset development and mentoring programs, student exchange and visiting programs, employee attitudes, values and motivation in the work environment, and the workforce recruitment. The results will help build solutions and identify ideas worth exploring to keep young people motivated and fulfilled as they integrate in the job market. The education practitioners can also learn from the findings in this research. In fact, what Furnham wrote 32 years ago in his book, is still relevant today that all involved in education have had to consider the relevance, salience and usefulness of what they teach to young people in order to help them with the attitudes and skills appropriate for the world of work, preparing them for choices and transitions.



### **Limitations and future research directions**

An unavoidable limitation of this study is its cross-sectional design. As is well known, cross-sectional studies cannot examine or establish causality, since all data are collected at once (Setia, 2016).

Another limitation is that the study was based on self-report data alone, which could have led to common method bias. Although participants were assured about confidentiality and especially because of the topic of the study may not have had a known motivation to distort their responses, an assumption of self-report data is that respondents can and will provide honest and accurate responses. However, participants may either intentionally or unintentionally distort their responses (Bing et al., 2007) for social desirability. This can explain the high means of work ethic, parental variables, and other variables.

Another limitation is a reduced generalizability of the results due to more highly educated and urban youth completing the survey. This was controlled however with the size of the sample.

Although the MWEP-SF contains fewer items than the full version and is practical to use, especially in a virtual survey, it did not seem to retain the consistency reported from authors in other studies. The internal consistency of few work ethic subscales was questionable and might reduce the power of the study to find significant relationships. It is recommended for future research to revisit the importance of leisure in the larger work ethic scale, considering that omitting this subscale improved the work ethic scale consistency in this study.

The research was collected via an online questionnaire, which while quick and comfortable for the respondent and for the process of data collection, still being a self-report method does not exclude the possibility of social desirability, as mentioned earlier. In addition, this type of data collection via social media *ads* demonstrated that it attracts a certain demographic profile of respondents, which is more urban and with higher education levels, creating challenges in the generalizability of the findings. In addition, although research suggests that youngsters can accurately perceive parental work experience (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992, cited in Cheung & Tang, 2012), it might be more valid to involve parents directly as participants in the survey, to avoid collecting perceptions.

Another issue with this study is the assumption that work ethic as such is a beneficial trait. While the benefits of work ethic are established by research, there are also other camps that believe it may not necessarily be beneficial to societal prosperity and individual wellbeing. Some theologians dispute the value of strong work ethic, claiming that work already takes much of the worker's time, and space, while it is not among the highest goods of the person, but rather an ambivalent one (Malesic, 2015). Martin (2012) points at the new protestant work ethic, as a neoliberal mythmaking of well-being, which is being given more priority and value than deserving. Schrifft et al. (2016) found on the other hand that individuals with a protestant work ethic were shown to complicate decisions. The dark side of a strong work ethic may be something that the young people are regulating themselves, by giving work and leisure an equal place.

The conceptual framework of this study was based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, however covering only factors related to the microsystem and especially parental factors.

It can be of interest to study how the factors in the outer layers of the microsystem such as the mesosystem affect the work ethic of the young person. It may be interesting to identify the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates such as family, peers, school/university, and work (Bronfenbrenner, 2009, p.25). For example, it could be useful to understand how the system and the approach of education and schooling in Albania affects work ethic of the young person and whether strict discipline, or certain elements of pedagogy, focus in academic or non-academic performance can be responsible to explain variance in the work ethic (see comparative study of Baumann, Hamin, & Yang, 2016). The reason for that is because this study does not explore the mechanics of the relationship between parental factors or individual factors and work ethic. The macrosystem or exosystem factors such as media, social and political trends, including the prospect of EU integration of the country, and migratory waves. In addition, as it is already established that work ethic correlates with other psychological variables, it would be of interest to explore it versus intelligence, academic and work performance, and personality traits. A deeper inquiry into the value system of young people would be of interest as well in future research, to establish a robust model of explaining work ethic. Perceptions and feelings towards corruption, justice, poverty, preferences in role models, working arrangements and type of mentoring or career programs, religiosity, hope, optimism, temperance and especially use of technology.

### **Conclusions**

Work ethic has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on success in personal, work, academic or societal settings. This study has established that work ethic

is present and strong in Albanian young people. It does resemble, however, purely the traditional, Weberian concept, as leisure seems to hold an important place in the life of young people. Nonetheless, looking at these results and the level of unemployment among young people, it is unfortunately true that Albania is not tapping into the potential of its young people. The study advances our understanding of the role that parental factors play in the strength of work ethic. Parents' work ethic and parental support were particularly significant in predicting the strength of work ethic. Programs targeting family support should take into consideration such a role that parents play in the lives of their children. Several relationships were examined, and the results were compared and interpreted in the Albanian context. The strength of work ethic among young people with secondary education, and strength of some of the work ethic dimensions in females, people living in rural areas, are of importance to be considered in recruitment, talent retention and management styles. It is important in particular to build up the capacities of public employment agencies to provide tailored support to young people. The results provide further evidence for the nature of work ethic and create a basis for further research directions.

## APPENDICES

Appendix A

Survey questionnaire

Q1 Please rate how strongly the following statements describe you:

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Fully (5)
1. It is important to stay busy at work and not waste time.					
2. I feel content when I have spent the day working.					
3. One should always take responsibility for one's actions.					
4. I would prefer a job that allowed me to have more leisure time.					
5. Time should not be wasted, it should be used efficiently.					
6. I get more fulfillment from items I had to wait for.					
7. A hard day's work is very fulfilling.					
8. Things that you have to wait for are the most worthwhile.					
9. Working hard is the key to being successful.					
10. Self-reliance is the key to being successful.					
11. If one works hard enough, one is likely to make a good life for oneself.					
12. I constantly look for ways to productively use my time.					
13. One should not pass judgment until one has heard all of the facts.					
14. People would be better off if they depended on themselves.					

Q1 Please rate how much you agree with the following statements:	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Fully (5)
15. A distant reward is usually more satisfying than an immediate one.					
16. More leisure time is good for people.					
17. I try to plan out my workday so as not to waste time.					
18. The world would be a better place if people spent more time relaxing.					
19. I strive to be self-reliant.					
20. If you work hard you will succeed.					
21. The best things in life are those you have to wait for.					
22. Anyone who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.					
23. It is important to treat others as you would like to be treated.					
24. I experience a sense of fulfillment from working.					
25. People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.					
26. It is important to control one's destiny by not being dependent on others.					
27. People should be fair in their dealings with others.					
28. A hard day's work provides a sense of accomplishment.					

Q2 How much do the following statements describe your parents:

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Fully (5)
My mother has considered work as important in one's life. (1)					
My mother has worked in a full time job for pay most of her life. (2)					
My father has considered work as important in one's life. (3)					
My father has worked in a full time job for pay most of his life. (4)					

Q3 Please rate how much the following statements describe your relationship with your mother:

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Fully (5)
I could always turn to my mother if I had problems. (1)					
My mother and I have been very close. (2)					
I always felt that my mother supported me. (3)					
My mother understood very well what was on my mind. (4)					

Q4 Please rate how much the following statements describe your relationship with your father:

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Fully (5)
I could always turn to my father if I had problems. (1)					
My father and I have been very close. (2)					
I always felt that my father supported me. (3)					
My father understood very well what was on my mind. (4)					



Q5 How dependent would you say you are financially from your parents?

- I am fully financially dependent from my parents. (1)
  - I am mostly financially dependent from my parents. (2)
  - I am mostly financially independent from my parents. (3)
  - I am fully financially independent from my parents. (4)
- 

Q6 Which category best describes your own monthly income before taxes?

- \$99 or less (1)
  - Between \$100 and \$499 (2)
  - Between \$500 and \$999 (3)
  - Between \$1000 and \$1999 (4)
  - Above \$2000 (5)
- 

Q7 Did your parents encourage you to progress in a career?

- No (1)
  - Yes (2)
- 

Q8 Your gender

- Female (1)
  - Male (2)
- 

Q9 What is the duration of (full-time, part-time, service contract or volunteer) work you have?

- Less than 3 months (1)
- Between 3 and 6 months (2)
- Between 7 months and 1 year (3)
- 1 - 2 years (4)
- More than 2 years (5)

Q10 Please answer if the following has been true for you:

	yes (1)	no (2)
There has been at least one person who has had a positive influence/has been a role model and example in your life. (1)		
You have attended or are still attending a career coaching/mentoring program. (2)		

Q11 How many years of education have you completed? (Please add a numeric value in digits) \_\_\_\_\_

Q12 What has been your average grade in the last year of formal education? (Please add a numeric value in digits)

---

Q13 Would you want to move abroad?  
Yes, and I would not return (1)  
Yes, and I would return (2)  
No (3)

Q14 Do you live in an urban or rural area?

Urban (1)

Rural (2)

## Appendix B

### Informed consent

Information about the Research Study  
Clemson University

### **Work ethic in young people in Albania Survey**

#### **KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY**

You are being invited to participate in an online survey about attitudes related to work. Eljona Elmazi is a doctoral candidate, leading this research, under a supervision of a doctoral committee chaired by professors at the Psychology Department of Clemson University, in South Carolina.

**Study Purpose:** The purpose of this research is to investigate attitudes of youth towards work, their parents' attitudes as well as the relationship with parents. The survey intends to establish if the work ethic correlates with the relationship with parents or parental work ethic.

**Voluntary Consent:** Participation is voluntary, and you have the option to not participate.

**Activities and Procedures:** Your part in the study will be to respond to this survey online in an anonymous way, by using any of the electronic devices that works for you.

**Participation Time:** It will take you about 10-12 minutes to fill in the study.

**Risks and Discomforts:** We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

**Possible Benefits:** This research will contribute to understanding the work ethic of young people in Albania and help design programs that will help youth in their path to work life.

#### **EXCLUSION/INCLUSION REQUIREMENTS**

In order to participate in this survey, you need to be between 18 and 24 years of age, live in Albania, have Albanian citizenship and use social media platforms (Instagram or Facebook).

#### **INCENTIVES**

You will receive 5 EUR of mobile phone credit for completing the survey.

#### **PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations.

Your response to this survey is confidential. Your phone number will be collected to indicate that you have completed the survey so that you may receive your participation incentive, however, your information will not be linked to your survey response.

Identifiable information collected during the study will be removed and the de-identified information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent from the participants.

We might be required to share the information we collect from you with the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance and the federal Office for Human Research Protections. If this happens, the information would only be used to find out if we ran this study properly and protected your rights in the study.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-0636 or [irb@clemson.edu](mailto:irb@clemson.edu). The Clemson IRB will not be able to answer some study-specific questions. However, you may contact the Clemson IRB if the research staff cannot be reached or if you wish to speak with someone other than the research staff.

If you have any study related questions or if any problems arise, please contact Eljona Elmazi, at [eelmazi@g.clemson.edu](mailto:eelmazi@g.clemson.edu) or +355692130158, or Mark Small, at [msmall@clemson.edu](mailto:msmall@clemson.edu) or +1 864.656.6286.

### **CONSENT**

**By clicking in the ‘Start survey’ button below, you indicate that you have read the information written above, been allowed to ask any questions, and you are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research. You do not give up any legal rights by taking part in this research study.**

## Appendix C

### Tables

Table 1.  
*Descriptive Results of Responses to “Work Should Always Come First Even if it Means Less Spare Time” in Albania*

	Total	Up to 29	30-49	50 and more	No answer
Agree strongly	62.7%	45.6%	62.3%	73.3%	39.4%
Agree	27.9%	31.0%	31.0%	23.6%	-
Neither agree nor disagree	4.6%	11.8%	2.5%	2.1%	-
Disagree	4.0%	9.7%	3.6%	0.4%	60.6%
Disagree strongly	0.7%	1.6%	0.5%	0.3%	-
Don't know	0.1%	0.2%	-	-	-
No answer	0.1%	-	-	0.4%	-
(N)	(1,454)	(354)	(500)	(594)	(6)

Source: World Values Survey wave 2017-2020

Table 13  
*Parental Factors Descriptive Statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Perceived mother's work ethic	4.60	.81	501	4	1	5
Mother's employment duration	3.62	1.53	501	4	1	5
Perceived father's work ethic	4.56	.97	501	4	1	5
Father's employment duration	4.16	1.28	501	4	1	5
Mother's support	4.23	.87	501	4	1	5
Father's support	3.72	1.21	501	4	1	5
Parents' encouragement for career	4.12	1.04	501	4	1	5

Table 14  
*Correlations Between Overall Work Ethic Score and Perceived Parent's Work Ethic, Parents' Employment Duration and Parent's Support*

	Perceived mother's work ethic	Mother's employment duration	Perceived father's work ethic	Father's employment duration	Mother's support	Father's support	Parents' encouragement for career	Financially dependent on parents
Work ethic score	.319**	.100*	.291**	.146**	.298**	.257**	.181**	.067
Perceived mother's work ethic	1	.186**	.548**	.257**	.286**	.142**	.103*	-.058
Mother's employment duration		1	.077	.330**	.240**	.072	.095*	.032
Perceived father's work ethic			1	.443**	.231**	.283**	.191**	-.061
Father's employment duration				1	.229**	.214**	.208**	-.055
Mother's support					1	.504**	.438**	-.038
Father's support						1	.492**	-.016
Parents' encouragement for career							1	-.005
Financially dependent on parents								1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 16  
*Regression Analyses of Work Ethic Dimensions with Parental Factors*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
<i>Self-reliance</i>				
Mother's perceived work ethic	.183***	.037	.249	4.896
Father's perceived work ethic	.049	.033	.076	1.479
Mother's support	.101**	.034	.147	2.959
Father's support	.019*	.024	.040	.802
<i>Morality/ethics</i>				
Mother's perceived work ethic	.108***	.030	.186	3.583
Father's perceived work ethic	.074**	.027	.145	2.779
Mother's support	.056*	.027	.103	2.039
Father's support	-.001	.020	-.003	-.053
<i>Leisure</i>				
Mother's perceived work ethic	-.088	.050	-.095	-1.751
Father's perceived work ethic	-.062	.044	-.077	-1.407
Mother's support	-.075	.045	-.087	-1.660
Father's support	-.003	.032	-.004	-.082
<i>Centrality of work</i>				
Mother's perceived work ethic	.136*	.063	.116	2.163
Father's perceived work ethic	.063	.055	.061	1.133
Mother's support	.083	.057	.076	1.456
Father's support	.078	.040	.099	1.920
<i>Hard work</i>				
Mother's perceived work ethic	.146**	.045	.164	3.241
Father's perceived work ethic	.112**	.040	.142	2.792
Mother's support	.114**	.041	.137	2.777
Father's support	.072*	.029	.121	2.471
<i>Wasted time</i>				
Mother's perceived work ethic	.108**	.039	.141	2.765
Father's perceived work ethic	.080*	.035	.118	2.300
Mother's support	.138***	.035	.193	3.893
Father's support	.040	0.025	.078	1.588
<i>Delay of gratification</i>				
Mother's perceived work ethic	.114*	.056	.108	2.037
Father's perceived work ethic	.051	.049	.055	1.029
Mother's support	.113*	.051	.115	2.225
Father's support	.080*	.036	.113	2.209

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 19  
*Gender Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Female (n = 343)		Male (n = 158)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Work ethic score</i>	3.93	.405	3.87	.443	2.437	.119
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.36	.544	4.27	.687	2.506	.114
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.74	.432	4.60	.532	8.560	.004**
<i>Leisure</i>	2.11	.715	2.09	.814	.081	.776
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.63	.929	3.60	.985	.131	.717
<i>Hard work</i>	4.52	.680	4.33	.788	7.500	.006**
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.30	.615	4.32	.626	.089	.765
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.88	.834	3.89	.889	.006	.937

\*\**p* < .01

Table 20  
*Having Had a Role Model Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Have had a role model (n = 418)		No role model (n = 83)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.38	.556	4.12	.720	13.357	.000***
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.70	.469	4.64	.472	1.109	.293
<i>Leisure</i>	2.11	.750	2.07	.735	.278	.598
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.67	.915	3.36	1.057	7.484	.006**
<i>Hard work</i>	4.52	.662	4.15	.903	19.169	.000***
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.34	.601	4.15	.675	6.610	.010*
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.93	.829	3.66	.927	7.139	.008**

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

Table 21  
*Having Participated in Career Program Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Has participated in career program (n = 180)		No participation in career program (n = 321)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.33	.609	4.33	.586	.001	.978
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.68	.513	4.70	.443	.340	.560
<i>Leisure</i>	2.16	.801	2.08	.714	1.467	.226
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.67	.905	3.60	.968	.658	.418
<i>Hard work</i>	4.51	.673	4.43	.745	1.606	.206
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.33	.606	4.29	.625	.399	.528
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.94	.826	3.85	.865	1.085	.298

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

Table 22  
*Employment Duration Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Worked less than 7 months (n = 249)		Worked 7 or more months (n = 252)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.33	.558	4.33	.628	.001	.970
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.69	.451	4.70	.488	.004	.949
<i>Leisure</i>	2.04	.708	2.17	.779	3.387	.066
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.64	.914	3.60	.914	.206	.650
<i>Hard work</i>	4.43	.720	4.49	.720	.714	.398
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.26	.622	4.35	.610	2.738	.099
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.89	.866	3.87	.838	.047	.828

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

Table 23  
*Area of Living Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Urban (n = 391)		Rural (n = 110)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.31	.593	4.41	.593	2.653	.104
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.69	.443	4.70	.556	.001	.973
<i>Leisure</i>	2.11	.736	2.10	.788	.003	.955
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.60	.930	3.70	1.000	1.008	.316
<i>Hard work</i>	4.42	.737	4.59	.642	5.001	.026*
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.28	.609	4.41	.637	4.319	.038*
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.86	.837	3.96	.837	1.120	.290

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

Table 24  
*Desire to Leave the Country Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	No (n = 63)		Yes (n = 438)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.39	.666	4.32	.583	.749	.387
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.64	.646	4.70	.439	.860	.354
<i>Leisure</i>	2.22	.850	2.09	.730	1.755	.186
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.71	1.109	3.61	.921	.569	.451
<i>Hard work</i>	4.39	.973	4.47	.677	.665	.415
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.35	.685	4.30	.608	.354	.552
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.93	.979	3.88	.832	.204	.652

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001



Table 25  
*Level of Education Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Elementary (n = 11)		Upper secondary school (n = 151)		Bachelor (n = 260)		Post-bachelor (n = 79)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.20	.579	4.37	.655	4.34	.568	4.26	.555	.855	.464
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.57	.734	4.65	.569	4.72	.387	4.70	.464	.975	.404
<i>Leisure</i>	2.18	.845	2.18	.811	2.08	.731	2.04	.649	.903	.439
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.50	1.162	3.79	.922	3.61	.933	3.36	.956	3.679	.012*
<i>Hard work</i>	4.14	.996	4.54	.699	4.54	.736	4.35	.649	1.883	.131
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.14	.876	4.28	.669	4.32	.602	4.32	.524	.451	.716
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.84	.673	3.98	.848	3.89	.880	3.67	.754	2.259	.081

Table 26  
*Monthly Income Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Less than 50,000 ALL (n = 249)		50,000 ALL or more (n = 252)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.33	.543	4.33	.704	.013	.909
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.71	.431	4.66	.551	1.285	.258
<i>Leisure</i>	2.10	.693	2.12	.868	.035	.853
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.65	.922	3.55	1.001	1.308	.253
<i>Hard work</i>	4.48	.650	4.40	.867	1.409	.236
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.30	.609	4.31	.639	.033	.855
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.88	.837	3.88	.887	.000	.994

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

Table 27  
*Grade Differences in Work Ethic Dimensions*

	Average or below (n = 324)		Above average (n = 177)		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Self-reliance</i>	4.35	.585	4.30	.609	.991	.320
<i>Morality/ethics</i>	4.69	.487	4.71	.436	.332	.565
<i>Leisure</i>	2.15	.778	2.02	.680	3.298	.070
<i>Centrality of work</i>	3.66	.968	3.56	.904	1.267	.261
<i>Hard work</i>	4.44	.761	4.48	.639	.329	.567
<i>Wasted time</i>	4.28	.635	4.34	.585	1.077	.300
<i>Delay of gratification</i>	3.91	.821	3.83	.904	.995	.319

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001

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