

# Hard day's night: Work-life balance, ageism, subjective age, attitudes toward aging in older adults

Kseniya Katsman, M.A., Margo A. Jackson, Ph.D., & Thanos Patelis, Ph.D.  
Graduate School of Education, Fordham University



## Introduction

- Population of older adults in the U.S. is growing
- Many adults work beyond the age of retirement due to financial strain and the urge to continue contributing to society
- Economic turmoil across the world has led to higher unemployment rates and stiffer competition for open positions
- Increased impact on adults over the age of 55: concern over losing health insurance and not being able to add to pension savings
- Contributions of older workers to the workplace: abundance of experiences, skills, and knowledge, combining the strengths of different generations
- Work-life balance is essential to the full engagement in the workforce—beneficial to individuals, organizations, society
- Factors potentially affecting work-life balance for older adults: ageism, subjective age, attitudes toward own aging
- Research on retaining older workers remains scarce

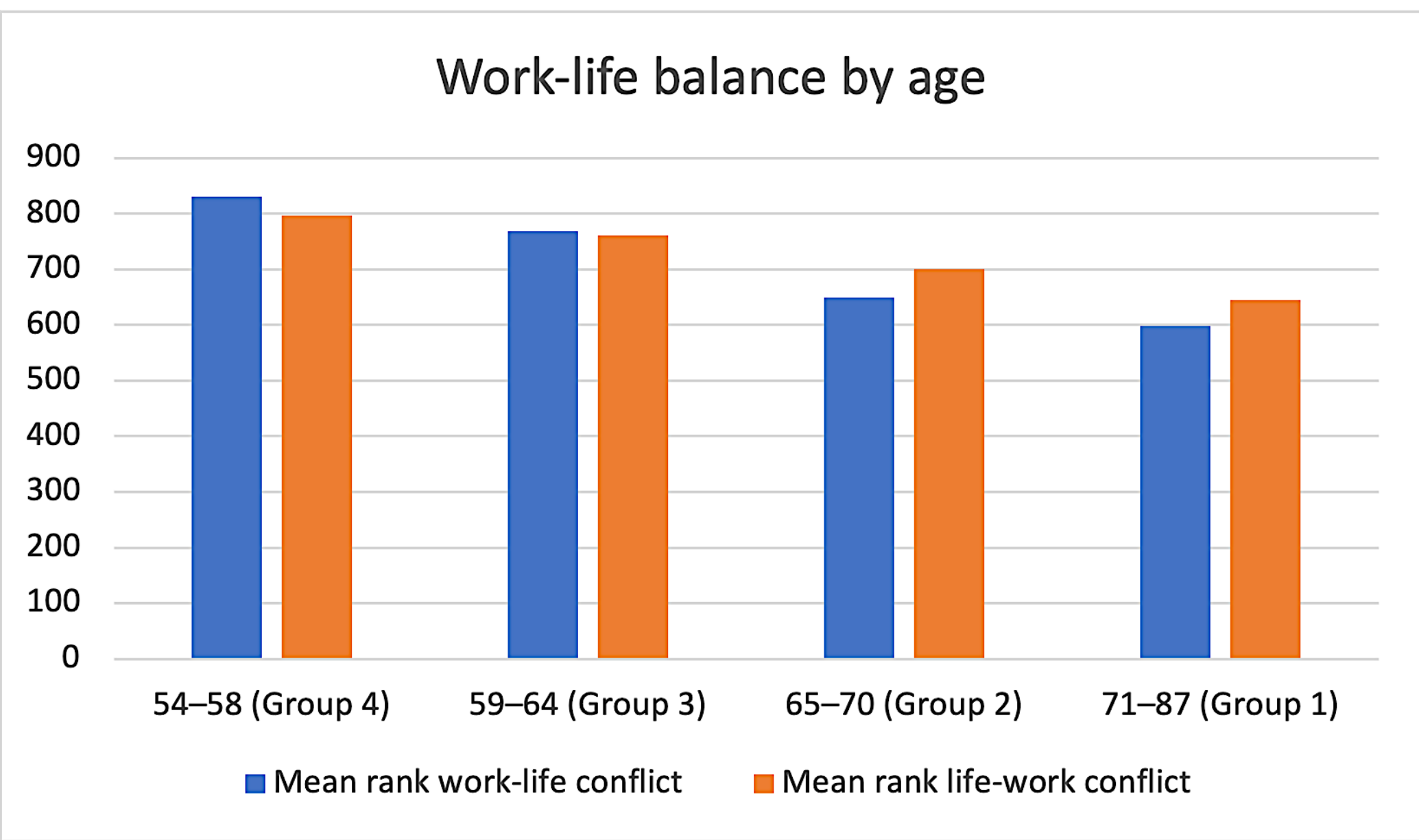
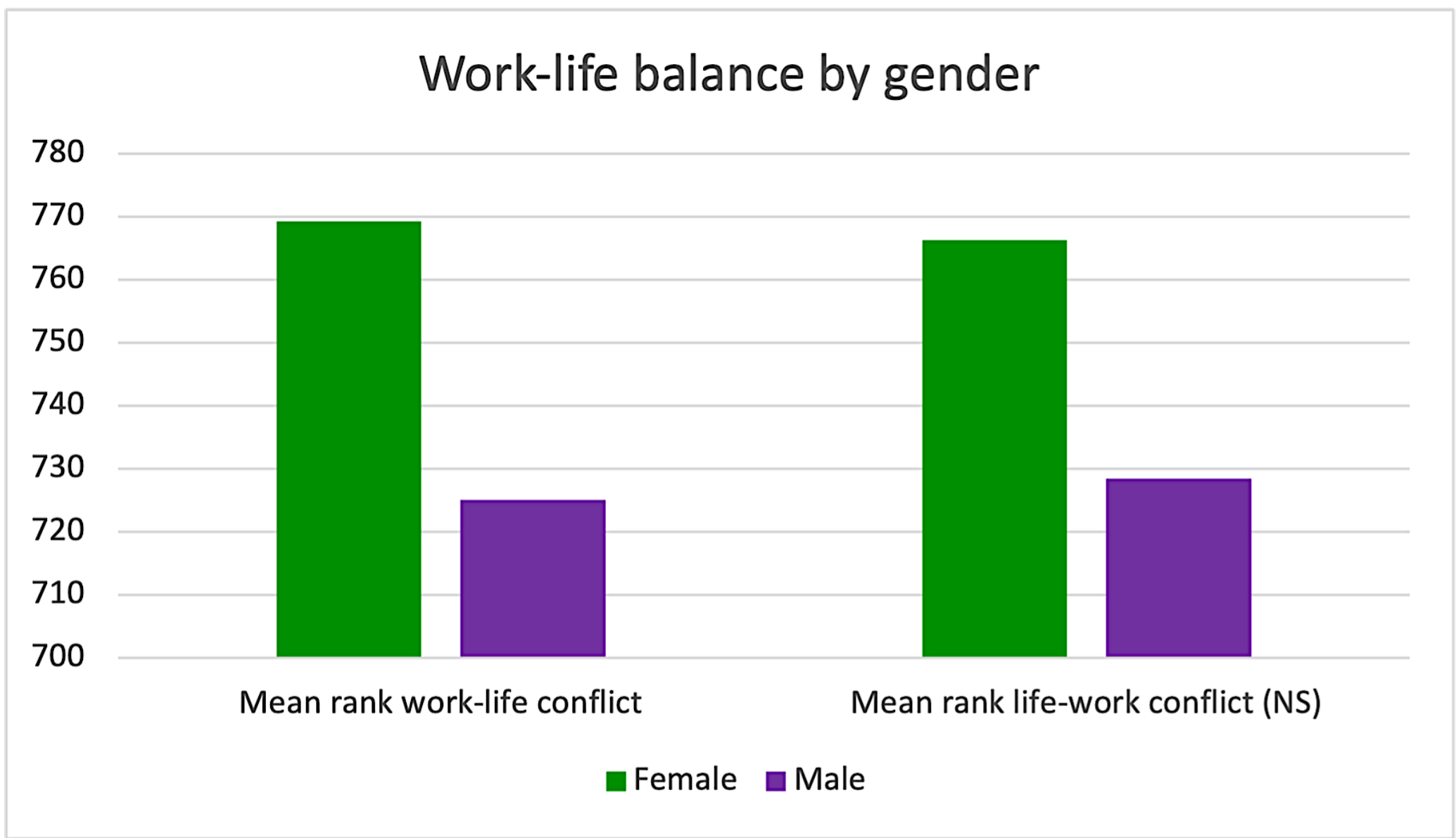
## Aims

- This study examined the relationship between work-life balance and experiences of ageism, subjective age, and attitude toward own aging
  - Work-life balance is defined as a conflict between work and personal life domains
- As work-related motivations differ among cohorts of older adults, the study also compared the work-life balance across four age cohorts
  - HWS and War Babies (Group 1): ages 71–87
  - Early Baby Boomers (Group 2): ages 65–70
  - Middle Baby Boomers (Group 3): ages 59–64
  - Late Baby Boomers (Group 4): ages 54–58
- Past research indicated that gender differences exist in balancing work and personal life. Therefore, we included gender as an additional variable

## Methods

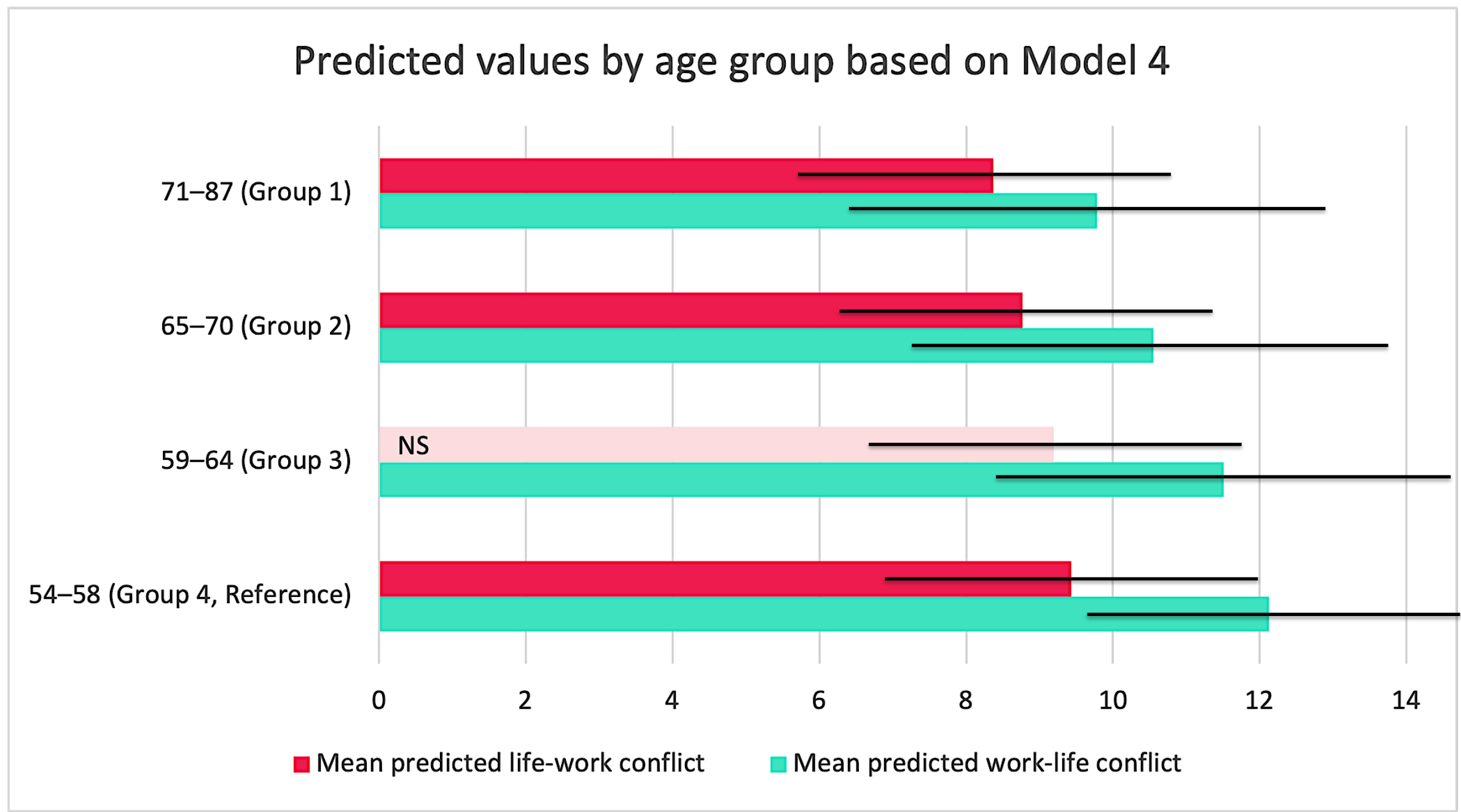
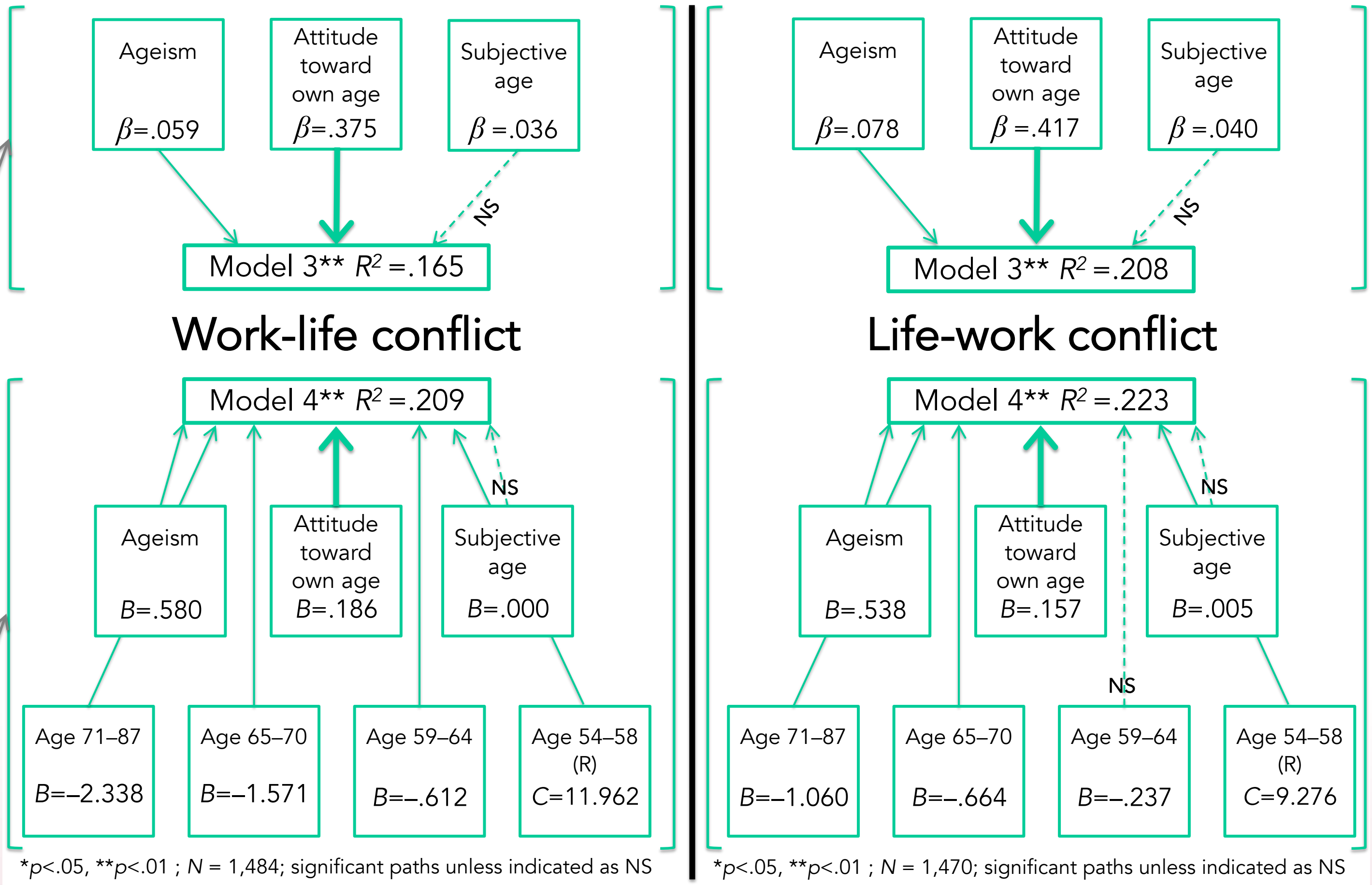
- A sample of 1,496 older adults from a publicly available data of the Health and Retirement Study by University of Michigan
- Work-life balance:** Q75, Leave-Behind Questionnaire
  - Work-life conflict: how work interferes with life (6 items)
  - Life-work conflict: how life interferes with work (6 items)
- Ageism:** Q29 & Q30, Leave-Behind Questionnaire
- Subjective age:** actual age minus subjective age (Q28a)
- Attitude toward own aging (ATOA):** Q28b, Leave-Behind Questionnaire
- Analytic strategy: Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis H test, hierarchical multiple regression using IBM SPSS v.25
  - Model 1: Ageism
  - Model 2: Ageism, ATOA
  - Model 3: Ageism, ATOA, Subjective Age
  - Model 4: Ageism, ATOA, Subjective Age, four age groups (Reference Group 4)

## Results



Significant group differences in work-life conflict: 1–3, 1–4, 2–3, 2–4  
Significant group differences in life-work conflict: 1–3, 1–4, 2–4

## Results



## Discussion

- The oldest participants (71–87 years old) experienced the least work-life and life-work conflicts; the youngest (51–64) experienced the most work-life and life-work conflicts
- Participants who identified as female and participants who identified as male statistically significantly differed on mean ranks of work-life conflict but not life-work conflict
- Greater experiences of ageism were significantly related to work-life and life-work conflicts
- The negative attitude toward own aging was the strongest significant predictor of work-life and life-work conflicts
- Implications and future directions: Populations of focus, Active Aging, Sense of purpose in the workplace