

Spillover effect of family supportive work environments on employees with and without care responsibility

Work in Progress

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the effect of family supportive work environment on employee attitudes and behaviors with and without care responsibility in Switzerland. For companies, the implementation of family supportive services is financially costly. Due to this fact, the services are problematic when they do not have positive effects on attitudes and behaviors of the entire workforce. Using a survey of 1359 Swiss employees, we analyzed whether the perception of a comprehensive family orientation, involving family supportive services as well as family-friendly communication and culture, has different effects on employees with childcare, eldercare or without care responsibility. The results show, that a spillover effect exists. Whereas a positive rating of family supportive services such as family leave and care services enhance only the work-life-balance satisfaction of employees with childcare responsibilities, a positive rating of family supportive communication and culture reduces the intention to quit and enhances the commitment of the entire workforce, whether or not there is a direct benefit for the employees.

Keywords: family supportive work environment, spillover effect, care responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Working conditions for balancing work and family life have gained importance in industrialized countries. In the past, work and family were two separate fields. Whereas men were engaged in economic activities outside home, women took care of their family members, such as children or care-dependent older parents. Because of this clear separation of the two domains there was no need for employers to include family issues in the human resource management policies (Clark, 2001).

Today, the labor market situation in industrialized countries such as Switzerland has changed. The education of women and the lack of high qualified specialists have led to an increased demand for female workers. Whereas women become more integrated into the professional world in addition to their family responsibilities, men are becoming interested in home and family activities besides the job (Thompson et al., 1999). Due to this development, there is an overlapping of the work and family field which leads to a double burden of today's workers and encourages family supportive human resource management policies (Schneider et al., 2008). In European countries such as UK, Spain or Germany public policy encourages flexible work hours, paid parental leave for mothers and fathers and shorter weekly working hours to reduce the double burden and increase women's participation in the labour market (Appelbaum et al., 2006). For example, UK employment legislation decrees that employees with caregiving responsibility for young or disabled children, or for elderly parents, have the right to request a flexible working schedule, and that their employers have a duty to consider that request seriously (DTI, 2007). In Switzerland, employees with family responsibilities are mostly dependent on the support of their companies because there are only a few government regulations. Until now, only maternity leave and child benefits are regulated by law at the federal level (Seco, 2004). Therefore, getting the business case "right" is especially essential in Switzerland, where public policy is not a key driver for a family supportive work environment.

For companies, the development and implementation of family supportive services are financially costly (Meyer et al., 2001). Therefore, the question arises whether the investment in family-supportive services (e.g. childcare centers) pays off or not. The cost aspect makes the services problematic for firms when they do not have positive effects on attitudes and behaviors of the entire workforce (Siegel et al., 2005). So far, previous research has shown mixed results. Whereas some researchers have found that firms' work-family programs are

positively related to productivity (Konrad & Mangel, 2000) and retention (Grover & Crooker, 1995), other scholars have found that such interventions had no effect on employees attitudes or behaviors (e.g. Thompson et al., 1999). Reasons for the ambiguous results may be the different measures of family supportive work environments and the sample choice. Despite increasing diversity in family structures and employees' personal responsibilities (Rothausen, 1999; Teachman et al., 2000), most research on work-family issues examines married employees with children (Casper et al., 2007). The spillover effect of family-oriented services to other working groups such as employees with, without or with other care responsibilities (e.g. eldercare) has rarely been analyzed yet (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Given this lack of research, the following study tests the effect of a family supportive work environment on employees with care responsibilities such as child- or eldercare and employees without any care responsibilities.

In the first section, we present the work-family situation in Switzerland. The second part the theoretical background including the resulting hypotheses is presented. The third part contains the method: the sample and the collected variables are discussed. In a third stage the results will be presented. At the end we discuss the implications of the results.

WORK-FAMILY-SITUATION IN SWITZERLAND

Employees with care responsibility

According to the Swiss Federal Office of Statistics, 30% of Swiss employees have care-dependent children under 15 years (Seco, 2009). Workers in Switzerland still live in more traditional than modern family relationships (Grote & Staffelbach, 2010). More than half of women (60%) work part-time and bear the bulk of childcare duties. The majority of male employees (87%) works fulltime and is still less involved in childcare (Seco, 2009).

A smaller group of employees takes care of other family members such as elderly parents (Grote & Staffelbach, 2010). Due to the aging of the population, caregiving for elderly parents is becoming more important – especially because 90 per cent of older people wish to die at home (Martin & Kliegel, 2005). Improved nutrition and medical care are lengthening life spans, but as people age, their physical and mental impairments increase, leading to an expanding need for long-term care (Tönz, 2005).

Because parents give birth to children later and later, people aged between 40 and 50 years have sometimes a double family burden beside the job (see figure 1).

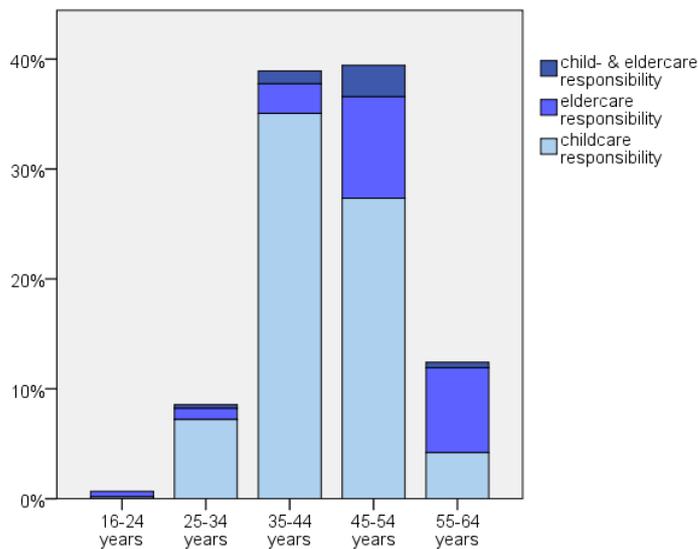


Figure 1: Employees with care responsibilities (HR-Barometer 2010)

First, these employees have to take care of their children. Second, they have elderly parents who need their help. A comprehensive family-oriented human resource management seems therefore important for people with different family responsibilities (Brand et al., 2009).

Employees without care responsibility

Besides the increasing family diversity, more and more couples remain childless in Switzerland. The highest proportions of childless women have the cities with 38% in the age group of 35- to 44-years. In Switzerland are on average 23% of women in this age group childless (Seco, 2000). Overall, there is an increasing of the single culture and couples without care responsibility. These employees have no direct benefit of family supportive work environments. Many companies extend family-friendly policies to attract and retain workers with family responsibilities (Mitchell, 1997). Such policies may create family-friendly backlash among single and childless employees (Young, 1996). Due to this fact, understanding the impact of childless employee's perception of a family supportive work environment is important.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Family supportive work environment

A family supportive work environment includes services which facilitate the reconciliation of work and family-life (OECD, 2001). The most common work-family services offered by organizations in USA and Europe (Allen, 2001, Galinsky et al., 1991) are the following:

- (1) Family leave: e.g. maternal leave beyond the statutory period or paternity leave
- (2) Family-supportive working arrangements: e.g. part time, flextime (which permits workers to vary their start and finish times), telework (working from home), job sharing (sharing a full-time job between two employees),
- (3) Care services: e.g. onsite childcare services, eldercare services
- (4) Counseling: informational assistance with work-family-balance
- (5) Financial assistance: e.g. with childcare or eldercare services, insurance etc.

According to the OECD definition "...only employees can decide, whether or not any particular service is actually family-friendly"(OECD, 2001, pp. 147). Corresponding to this statement, several studies have revealed that the availability of services does not guarantee their actual utilization, because the company culture, and more specifically managers and colleagues may not be supportive at all (Allen, 2001; Kluwer et al., 1997; Lewis and Taylor, 1996; Thompson et al., 1999). For example, many fathers do not use the offered paternity leave and part time work offers because they fear a negative impact on their careers (Lambert, 2000). Allen (2001) provides strong empirical evidence that, although availability of work-family services may have a relatively small effect on employee attitudes, the employee perception of intangible work-family supportiveness such as family friendly culture are strongly related to important outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Thompson et al. (1999) have demonstrated that not only the quantity (number of family supportive services) but the rating of the service quality by the employees enhances job related attitudes. Based on these research Schneider et al. (2008) developed a three-dimensional-measurement of family-supportive work environment (the family-friendly index), which records the perception of the employees:

- (1) *Rating of services*: This dimension represents the number of existing family-supportive offers in the company like childcare, extended maternity leave, paternity leave, financial assistance, counseling, etc.

- (2) *Rating of communication*: This dimension represents how well the firms communicate the offers to the employees so that working parents can effectively benefit.
- (3) *Rating of culture*: This dimension represents how family-friendly the managers and chiefs are and how many managers have family responsibilities themselves.

Universal versus specific appeal

A family supportive work environment, involving family supportive services, communication and culture, focus primarily on working parents and helps them to reconciling work and family life (Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001). In this paper we raise the question whether a comprehensive family orientation has only a specific effect on employees with childcare responsibilities or if there is also a spillover effect on employees without and with other care responsibility such as eldercare. Two theoretical approaches answer to this question contrary: the specific appeal approach and the universal appeal approach. The universal appeal approach argues for a spillover effect and is represented by the Signaling Theory. The psychological Organization-Person-Fit-Theory as well as the economic Incentive-Contribution Theory stands for the specific appeal approach.

Universal appeal approach

The Signaling Theory supports the universal appeal of work-family-environment. According to this economic theory, people use observable characteristics to make assumptions about unobservable characteristics when decisions have to be made with incomplete information available (Spence, 1973). During the recruitment process as well as during the engagement, employees with or without care responsibility may use the presence of family-supportive work-environment as positive signal for work-related supports (e.g. fair treatment, understanding supervision) (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Empirical support for this view gives the study of Honeycutt & Rosen (1997). They found that employees were more attracted to organizations offering flexible work arrangements (flexible career path and flexible work settings) than to more traditional organizations, regardless of whether their preferences centered on family, work-life balance or career. Further support for the universal appeal perspective is provided by Bretz & Judge (1994), who found that levels of work-life conflict among employees did not predict their attraction to companies offering a family-friendly human resource management.

According to the Signaling Theory all dimensions of a comprehensive family supportive work environment (family supportive services, communication and culture) act as a positive signal for all employee and have potentially positive effects on the attitudes (e.g. commitment) of employees with and without care responsibility. This leads us to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: the positive rating of work family communication has the same positive impact on employees' attitudes and behavior intention of the entire workforce.

Hypothesis 1b: the positive rating of work family culture has the same positive impact on employees' attitudes and behavior intention of the entire workforce.

Hypothesis 1c: the positive rating of work family services has the same positive impact on employees' attitudes and behavior intention of the entire workforce.

Specific appeal approach

According to the Organization-Person-Fit Theory individual differences among workers can moderate the appeal of a family supportive work environment. This psychological theory considers that individual differences are key predictors of the qualities an employee finds attractive in a company (Turban & Keon, 1993). Unlike the universal appeal perspective, which sees a family supportive environment as an advantage to recruitment and retention of all employees, the person-organization-fit predicts that work-family practices will be more useful in recruiting and retaining workers who will directly benefit from them. A similar view has the economic incentive-contribution theory (March & Simon, 1958). One core statement of this theory is that only those employees who receive incentives, e.g. care services, provide a contribution such as higher organizational commitment. The study of Kossek & Nichol (1992) supports the theoretical view of the Person-Organization Fit and the Incentive-Contribution-Theory. The researchers examined the impact of an organizational childcare centre. The researchers found that users of the childcare centre had longer organizational tenure and held more positive attitudes regarding the company than did employees who were on the waiting list. In another study, Rothausen et al. (1998) found that childcare provision had a positive effect on job-related attitudes only for current users, past users, and future users of the childcare centre.

According to the specific appeal approach the perception of family supportive services, communication and culture have little impact to attitudes such as satisfaction of employees

without care responsibilities because they can't use it and have no benefit. To workers with child care responsibility, who could use the services and benefit of a family-friendly culture and communication, a family supportive work environment may have a positive impact to attitudes and behaviors. The view of the specific appeal approach leads us to the next three hypotheses – which are contrary to the hypotheses of the universal appeal approach:

Hypothesis 2a: the positive *rating of work family communication* has a *higher positive impact* on employees' attitudes and behavior intention with care responsibility than on employees' attitudes and behavior intentions without care responsibility.

Hypothesis 2b: the positive *rating of work family culture* has a *higher positive impact* on employees' attitudes and behavior intention with care responsibility than on employees' attitudes and behavior intentions without care responsibility.

Hypothesis 2c: the positive *rating of work family services* has a *higher positive impact* on employees' attitudes and behavior intention with care responsibility than on employees' attitudes and behavior intentions without care responsibility.

METHODE

Research Setting

According to the OECD definition, only employees can decide whether a work environment is family supportive or not. In keeping with this view, we used data which express the employees' perspective. In Switzerland, data of family supportive work environments, psychological attitudes and behavioral intentions are rare and contain only small samples for specific sectors or professions (e.g. Gerlach et al., 2009). Because of this reason, we collected the data with the Swiss Human Relations Barometer. This is a survey of the University of Zurich (UZH) and the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) of Zurich, which annually measures the employees' perception of the current work situation in Switzerland.

Data collection took place between March 2009 and June 2009 in the German and French speaking part of Switzerland. Interviewers contacted employees between 16 and 64 years by phone at home by using a random sample of all registered telephone numbers in the German and French speaking part of Switzerland. The employees were included in the sample, if they had a dependent and paid employment and were employed at least 40%. Self-employed persons, business owners and trainees were excluded.

Measurements

Outcomes

The outcomes of a family supportive work environment on employees' attitudes and behavior intentions were measured by using three scales. Attitudes were measured with work-life balance satisfaction and organizational commitment, whereas behavior intentions were measured with intention to quit.

Work-Life-Balance-Satisfaction: we assessed the perceived satisfaction with the balance between work and private life with one item by Guest & Conway (2004) on a ten-point scale ranging from completely unsatisfied (1) to completely satisfied (10).

Organizational Commitment: A 3-item scale developed by Allen & Meyer (1990) was used to measure organizational commitment ($\alpha = .87$). The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they strongly disagreed (1) or strongly agreed (5). The items used were: "In my company I feel part of a big family", "I feel emotionally attached to the company" and "I feel a strong organizational affiliation".

Intention to quit: We measured intention to quit ($\alpha = .69$) with Guest & Conway's (2004) 2-item scale. Responses of the first item "How likely is it that you will voluntarily leave this organization in the following year?" were on a four-point scale (1 = low, 4 = high). For the second item employees had to choose one of four statements which applied best. If they chose "I have never even thought about leaving this job" they were labeled with 1 (low intention to quit), if they chose "I have sometimes thought about leaving this job, but have never done anything about it" they were labeled with 2, if they chose "I have looked around for other jobs" they were labeled with 3 and if they choose "I am currently in the process of trying to leave this job" they were labeled with 4 (high intention to quit). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for intention to quit is $\alpha = .69$.

Predictors

Rating of family supportive work environment: The evaluation of the family support was measured using the three dimensions (2 items per dimension) by Schneider et al. (2008). The respondents rated the family supportive work environment on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 = strongly disagree, 3 = strongly agree). The 6 items were the following:

- Services: “My company offers more family-supportive services compared to other companies” (quantity), “The family-supportive services are according to the needs of the employees” (quality). The Cronbach’s Alpha obtained for this scale is $\alpha = .81$.
- Communication: “The family-supportive services of my company are well to detect” (accessibility); “My company requests information about the needs of the employees to reconcile work and family” (initiative). The Cronbach’s Alpha is $\alpha = .76$.
- Culture: “The management is supportive for the reconciling of work and family” (management culture); “Many managers are hired with family care responsibilities” (careers). The Cronbach’s Alpha obtained for this scale is $\alpha = .60$.

Control Variables

We used personal and organizational control variables.

The personal factors included gender (1 = male, 0 = female), age in years, employment (1 = full-time, 0 = part-time), position (1 = with supervisory function, 0 = without supervisory function), highest educational qualification (measured with 8 dummy variables: compulsory school, apprenticeship/ vocational, high school, bachelor and master or equivalent and above), organizational tenure in years and month, monthly income (1 = less than 2’000 CHF, 2 = 2’000-4’000 CHF, 3 = 4’000-6’000 CHF, 4 = 6’000-8’000 CHF, 5 = 8’000-10’000 CHF, 6 = over 10’000 CHF), Career orientation (measured with 4 dummy variables according to Guest’s & Conway’s (2004) career types: traditional/loyalty career types for which it is important to have job security and a long time with one organization; traditional/promotion career types for which career success is very important; disengaged career types for which work-life balance is very important and independent career types for which it is important to manage their own career for themselves), employability (self-assessment according to Jansen, Sels & Brand (2003)), desire to have a child (1 =yes, 0 = no), number of children under 18.

The organizational factors included company size (measured with 3 dummy variables: micro, small/medium companies, big companies) and sector (measured with dummy variables: commerce, building industry, retail industry, transport industry, credit & insurance, real estate industry, public administration, education, health sector).

The sample

The sample consisted of 1359 Swiss employees. 56% of the respondents were without care responsibility (N = 761), 33 % with childcare (N = 448) and 11% with eldercare responsibility (N = 150) (see figure 2).

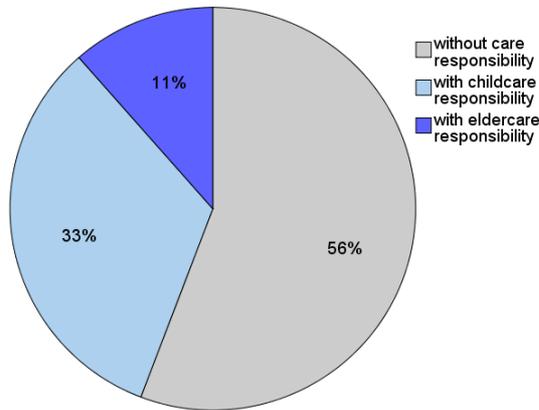


Figure 2: Employees with and without care responsibility

58% of the employees were male and 42% female. The average age among the respondents was 46 years (SD=11.04), and the average organizational tenure 11 years (SD=9.72). 62% work full time and 39% had a supervisory position. The formal education was as follows: 17% had a master's degree or Ph.D, 34% had a college or bachelor's degree, or had passed a higher vocational education, 44% had completed an apprenticeship or senior secondary school with university entrance certificate, and only 4% had completed junior secondary school. 14% worked in micro companies with less than 10 employees, 53% in small and medium sized firms with 10 to 249 employees and 33% in big companies with more than 250 employees.

The descriptive data for the three employee groups are shown in the table 1 and 2.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the family supportive work environment

| Descriptive Statistics: Family supportive work environment | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|
| | Without care responsibility | | With childcare responsibility | | With eldercare responsibility | |
| | Mean | Std. | Mean | Std. | Mean | Std. |
| Rating of services (1 = low, 3 = high) | 1.9 | .64 | 1.8 | .66 | 2.0 | .67 |
| Rating of communication (1 = low, 3 = high) | 1.9 | .67 | 1.9 | .72 | 1.9 | .70 |
| Rating of culture (1 = low, 3 = high) | 2.0 | .68 | 2.0 | .70 | 2.1 | .70 |

Table 2: Demographic data for the three groups

| Descriptive Statistics: Demographic data | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|
| | Without care responsibility | | With childcare responsibility | | With eldercare responsibility | |
| | Mean | Std. | Mean | Std. | Mean | Std. |
| Gender (Male = 1, Female =0) | .59 | .49 | .60 | .49 | .46 | .50 |
| Age (in years) | 47.03 | 11.37 | 43.36 | 6.77 | 49.41 | 8.90 |
| Full / part time (1 = full , 0 = part time) | .65 | .47 | .59 | .49 | .52 | .50 |
| Position (1 = with , 0 = without sup.) | .37 | .48 | .44 | .49 | .37 | .48 |
| Tenure (in years and month) | 11.78 | 10.63 | 9.48 | 7.81 | 13.40 | 9.82 |
| Compulsory School (dummy) | .04 | .19 | .04 | .19 | .03 | .18 |
| Apprenticeship (voc) (dummy) | .41 | .49 | .34 | .47 | .40 | .49 |
| High School (dummy) | .05 | .23 | .03 | .19 | .06 | .23 |
| Higher vocational (dummy) | .16 | .37 | .18 | .39 | .16 | .36 |
| Bachelor (dummy) | .15 | .36 | .15 | .36 | .20 | .40 |
| Master or above (dummy) | .16 | .37 | .23 | .42 | .13 | .34 |
| Wage (1 = < 2'000, 2 = 2000 to 4000, 3 = 4000 to 6'000, 4 = 6000 to 8000, 5 = 8000 to 10000, 6 = > 10000) | 3.76 | 1.40 | 3.77 | 1.46 | 3.73 | 1.54 |
| Career: traditional/ prom. (dummy) | .32 | .46 | .36 | .48 | .25 | .43 |
| Career: traditional/loyal (dummy) | .35 | .47 | .29 | .45 | .41 | .49 |
| Career: disengaged (dummy) | .23 | .42 | .24 | .43 | .21 | .40 |
| Career: independent (dummy) | .08 | .27 | .08 | .28 | .11 | .32 |
| Employability (1 = low, 5 = high) | 3.28 | 1.09 | 3.58 | .95 | 3.18 | 1.06 |
| Number of Children < 18 | .18 | .54 | 1.74 | .85 | .38 | .76 |
| Desire to have a child (1 = yes, 0 = no) | .25 | .43 | .00 | .00 | .11 | .32 |
| Company Size (micro) | .14 | .35 | .15 | .36 | .14 | .35 |
| Company Size (Small / medium) | .53 | .49 | .51 | .50 | .51 | .50 |
| Company Size (Big) (dummy) | .32 | .46 | .33 | .47 | .33 | .47 |
| Commerce (dummy) | .11 | .32 | .10 | .30 | .12 | .32 |
| Building industry (dummy) | .08 | .28 | .09 | .29 | .08 | .28 |
| Retail industry (dummy) | .09 | .28 | .10 | .30 | .10 | .30 |
| Transport & Media (dummy) | .07 | .26 | .07 | .26 | .04 | .19 |
| Credit & Insurance (dummy) | .06 | .25 | .08 | .27 | .08 | .28 |
| Real estate industry (dummy) | .06 | .24 | .05 | .23 | .04 | .19 |
| Public Administration (dummy) | .09 | .29 | .07 | .25 | .07 | .26 |
| Education (dummy) | .11 | .32 | .15 | .35 | .14 | .34 |
| Public Health (dummy) | .17 | .37 | .17 | .37 | .21 | .41 |
| Other Services (dummy) | .08 | .27 | .07 | .25 | .04 | .19 |

Data analysis

Multivariate linear regression analyses were used to measure the influence of the extent of a family supportive work environment (rating of services, communication and culture) on attitudes (work-life balance satisfaction, organizational commitment) and behavior intention (intention to quit) of the three different samples (employees with eldercare responsibility (N = 761), with childcare responsibility (N = 448) and without care responsibility (N = 150). To identify the effect of a family supportive work environment on attitudes and behavior of the three groups, the following regression was established for each group and each outcome:

Employees without care responsibility:

$$Y_{without} = \alpha + \beta_1 * S + \beta_2 * Co + \beta_3 * Cu + \beta_4 * X + \varepsilon$$

Employees with childcare responsibility:

$$Y_{childcare} = \alpha + \beta_1 * S + \beta_2 * Co + \beta_3 * Cu + \beta_4 * X + \varepsilon$$

Employees with eldercare responsibility:

$$Y_{eldercare} = \alpha + \beta_1 * S + \beta_2 * Co + \beta_3 * Cu + \beta_4 * X + \varepsilon$$

Whereas Y represents the outcomes of satisfaction, commitment and intention to quit, the regressor S represents the rating of family supportive services, Co the rating of family supportive communication and Cu of family supportive culture. X includes for all three regressions the same control variables (gender, age, full-/ part-time, position, education, wage, career, employability, desire to have a child, number of children, company size, sector). Only in the employee group with childcare responsibility the variable “desire to have children” was not included, because the question was not asked to this group.

RESULTS

The following section shows the results of multivariate regression analysis for each outcome.

Satisfaction with work-life balance

In the group of employees without care responsibility the rating of family supportive services has no impact on satisfaction (see table 3). However, in the group of employees with childcare responsibility the positive evaluation of family supportive services has a highly significant effect on their work-life-balance satisfaction ($\beta = .341$, $p < .001$). Similarly, the rating of communication has a moderate effect ($\beta = .292$, $p < .01$) on the satisfaction of the childcare employee group. Whereas the rating of services and communication has no impact on the satisfaction of the eldercare employee group, the positive rating of a family-friendly culture has a highly significant effect ($\beta = .795$, $p < .001$).

Table 3: Multiple Regression for Satisfaction with Work-Life-Balance

| | | Satisfaction with Work-Life-Balance | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Variables | | Without care responsibility | With childcare responsibility | With eldercare responsibility |
| Family Policies | Rating of services | .043 (.138) | .341 (.173) *** | -.052 (.298) |
| | Rating of communic. | .204 (.140) | .292 (.179) ** | .333 (.260) |
| | Rating of culture | .206 (.133) | .048 (.165) | .795 (.289)*** |
| Person | Gender | .085 (.167) | .072 (.245) | -.080 (.363) |
| | Age | .001 (.010) | -.007 (.014) | .004 (.021) |
| | Full / part time | -.471 (.180) *** | -.335 (.249) | -.355 (.358) |
| | Position | .135 (.148) | .327 (.206) | -.306 (.316) |
| | Tenure | .025 (.008) *** | .027 (.013) *** | .039 (.017)** |
| | Education | | | |
| | - Apprenticeship / voc. | .270** (.129) | .129 (.182) | -.070 (.276) |
| | - High School | .094 (.238) | -.138 (.358) | -.681 (.472) |
| | - higher voc. Educ. | .095 (.153) | .134 (.198) | .220 (.343) |
| | - Bachelor (FH) | .014 (.159) | .005 (.211) | .187 (.303) |
| | - Master or above (Base: compulsory) | -.475 (.167) *** | -.111 (.202) | .351 (.380) |
| | Wage | .016 (.065) | -.100 (.096) | .005 (.128) |
| | Career orientation | | | |
| | - traditional/promotion | -.048 (.269) | -.091 (.320) | .644(.527) |
| | - traditional / loyalty | .390 (.275) | .039 (.341) | .571 (.500) |
| | - disengaged (Base: independent) | -.046 (.280) | .026 (.338) | -.241 (.522) |
| | Employability | .095 (.072) | .072 (.096) | .223 (.149) |
| | Desire to have a child | .049 (.216) | | -.194 (.515) |
| | Number of children | .054 (.136) | -.023 (.107) | .205 (.203) |
| | Company | Company size | | |
| - little /middle | | .074 (.078) | .061 (.087) | -.202 (.233) |
| - big | | -.086 (.078) | -.082 (.087) | .189 (.168) |
| Sector | | | | |
| Commerce | | .078 (.203) | .155 (.269) | .874 (.389) |
| Building industry | | .348 (.236) | .053 (.281) | 1.13(.465)* |
| Retail industry | | -.313 (.213) | -.134 (.263) | .037 (.449) |
| Transport industry | | .217 (.232) | .269 (.307) | -.816 (.672) |
| Credit & Insurance | | -.209 (.245) | -.511 (.314) | -.345 (.533) |
| Real estate industry | | .103 (.251) | .325 (.342) | -.661 (.653) |
| Public Administr. | | -.166 (.211) | -.131 (.305) | .132 (.521) |
| Education | | -.224 (.219) | .155 (.265) | .028 (.425) |
| Health sector (Base: other services) | | .072 (.174) | -.244 (.235) | -.214 (.333) |
| N | | 761 | 448 | 150 |
| R ² | .081 | .068 | .234 | |

Note: standard errors in brackets. Significance is denoted as: * < .1; ** < .01; *** < .001

Intention to quit

In the group of employees without care responsibility the rating of family supportive services has no impact on intention to quit, but the rating of family supportive communication ($\beta = -.129, p < .1$) has a weak significant impact on their intention to quit. Further, a positive rating of a family-friendly culture reduces slightly their intention to quit ($\beta = -.111, p < .1$). In the group of employees with childcare responsibility the family supportive services has also no impact, but a positive evaluation of family supportive communication ($\beta = -.181, p < .001$)

and culture ($\beta = -.102, p < .01$) reduces the intention to quit significantly. For the employees with eldercare responsibility, neither the services nor the communication has a positive impact on their intention to quit. Therefore, the perception of a family-friendly culture reduce their intention to quit highly significant ($\beta = -.332, p < .001$).

Table 2: Multiple Regression for Intention to quit.

| | | Intention to quit | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Variables | | Without care responsibility | With childcare responsibility | With eldercare responsibility |
| Family Policies | Rating of services | -.001(.070) | -.011 (.073) | .077 (.141) |
| | Rating of communic. | -.129 (.070)* | -.181 (.076)*** | .119 (.145) |
| | Rating of culture | -.111 (.065)* | -.102 (.060)** | -.332 (.141)*** |
| Person | Gender | .113 (.084) | .180 (.104)* | .488 (.176)*** |
| | Age | -.013 (.005)*** | -.005 (.006) | -.018 (.010)* |
| | Full / part time | .044 (.091) | -.073 (.105) | -.105 (.174) |
| | Position | -.073 (.075) | -.104 (.087) | .205 (.154) |
| | Tenure | .001 (.004) | .002 (.006) | -.019 (.008)** |
| | Education | | | |
| | - Apprenticeship / voc. | -.159 (.065)* | -.110 (.077) | .110 (.134) |
| | - High School | -.204 (.120)* | .119 (.151) | .382 (.229)* |
| | - higher voc. Educ. | .039 (.077) | -.028 (.084) | -.305 (.166)* |
| | - Bachelor (FH) | -.124 (.080) | .129 (.089) | -.028 (.147) |
| | - Master or above | .043 (.084) | .129 (.086) | -.163 (.185) |
| | (Base: compulsory) | | | |
| | Wage | -.081 (.033)** | -.047 (.041) | -.060 (.062) |
| | Career orientation | | | |
| | - traditional/promotion | -.390 (.136)** | -.370(.135)*** | -.493 (.256)* |
| | - traditional / loyalty | -.514 (.140) *** | -.482 (.144) *** | -. 658 (.243)*** |
| | - disengaged | -.218 (.142) | -.183 (.143) | -.147 (.353) |
| (Base: independent) | | | | |
| Employability | -.008 (.036) | .025 (.040) | -.074 (.072) | |
| Desire to have a child | .003 (.109) | | -.101 (.250) | |
| Number of children | -.121 (.069)* | -.057 (.046) | -.091 (.100) | |
| Company | Company size | | | |
| | - little /middle | -.009 (.040) | .010 (.044) | .100 (.082) |
| | - big | .016 (.040) | -.005 (.044) | -.097 (.082) |
| | Sector | | | |
| | Commerce | -.061 (.040) | -.073 (.114) | .002 (.189) |
| | Building industry | .009 (.118) | -.031 (.119) | -.324 (.226) |
| | Retail industry | .019 (.108) | .048 (.111) | -.107 (.218) |
| | Transport industry | -.068 (.117) | -.139 (.130) | .057 (.327) |
| | Credit & Insurance | -.039 (.124) | .102 (.133) | .060 (.259) |
| | Real estate industry | -.008 (.127) | .217 (.144) | .348 (.317) |
| | Public Administr. | -.002 (.107) | -.019(.129)** | -.752 (.253)** |
| | Education | -.135 (.111) | -.099 (.112) | -.027 (.206) |
| | Health sector | .109 (.089) | .104 (.099) | -.035 (.162) |
| | (Base: other service) | | | |
| N | 761 | 448 | 150 | |
| R ² | .104 | .109 | .231 | |

Note: standard errors in brackets. Significance is denoted as: * < .1; ** < .01; *** < .001

Organizational Commitment

Whereas services have no impact on the organizational commitment of the employees without care responsibility, family-friendly communication ($\beta = .306, p < .001$) and culture ($\beta = .164, p < .001$) enhance commitment highly significant. In the group of employees with childcare we can observe the same positive effect: communication ($\beta = .288, p < .001$) and culture ($\beta = .247, p < .001$) have an enhancement effect on commitment. In the group of employees with eldercare only communication has a weak significant effect ($\beta = .301, p < .1$).

Table 6: Multiple Regression for Commitment

| | | Organizational Commitment | | |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Variables | | Without care responsibility | With childcare responsibility | With eldercare responsibility |
| Family Policies | Rating of services | .001 (.073) | .066 (.089) | .003 (.178) |
| | Rating of communic. | .306 (.074)*** | .288 (.092)*** | .301 (.184)* |
| | Rating of culture | .164 (.068)*** | .247 (.085)*** | -.108 (.178) |
| Person | Gender | -.193 (.088)** | .119 (.126) | -.269 (.223) |
| | Age | .004 (.005) | .002 (.007) | .030 (.013)* |
| | Full / part time | -.033 (.095) | -.331 (.111)** | -.257(.220) |
| | Position | .191 (.078)** | .287 (.106)*** | -.419 (.029)* |
| | Tenure | .013 (.004)*** | .018 (.007)*** | .039 (.011)*** |
| | Education | | | |
| | - Apprenticeship / voc. | .110 (.068) | .156 (.094)* | -.098 (.170) |
| | - High School | -.047 (.126) | -.305 (.185)* | -.195 (.290) |
| | - higher voc. Educ. | .014 (.081) | .058 (.102) | .351 (.211)* |
| | - Bachelor (FH) | .140 (.084)* | .026 (.109) | .071 (.187) |
| | - Master or above (Base: compulsory) | -.215 (.089)** | .066 (.104) | -.124 (.234) |
| | Wage | .020 (.034) | .082 (.050)* | .072 (.079) |
| | Career orientation | | | |
| | - traditional/promotion | .314 (.143)** | .351 (.165)** | -.021 (.324) |
| | - traditional / loyalty | .297 (.147)** | .407 (.176)** | -.157 (.308) |
| | - disengaged (Base: independent) | -.128 (.149) | -.058 (.174) | -.600 (.321)* |
| | Employability | .074 (.038)* | .195 (.049)*** | .257 (.092)*** |
| Desire to have a child | -.045 (.114) | | .097 (.317) | |
| Number of children | -.031 (.073) | .012 (.052) | .035 (.115) | |
| Company | Company size | | | |
| | - little /middle | .042 (.042) | .117 (.053)** | .229 (.104)* |
| | - big (Base: micro) | -.042 (.042) | -.133 (.053)** | -.232 (.103)* |
| | Sector | | | |
| | Commerce | -.015 (.108) | .163 (.139) | -.102 (.239) |
| | Building industry | .209 (.123)* | .097 (.145) | .513 (.286)* |
| | Retail industry | .177 (.113) | -.072 (.136) | .212 (.276) |
| | Transport industry | .030 (.123) | .231 (.159) | -.184 (.414) |
| | Credit & Insurance | -.027 (.130) | -.303(.162)* | -.150(.328) |
| | Real estate industry | -.054 (.133) | .057 (.176) | .145 (.402) |
| | Public Administration | -.179 (.122) | -.357 (.139)* | .376 (.321) |
| | Education | -.002 (.116) | -.240 (.137)* | -.283(.261) |
| | Health sector (Base: other services) | -.140 (.093) | .078 (.121) | -.115 (.205) |
| | N | 761 | 448 | 150 |
| | R² | .188 | .251 | .281 |

Note: standard errors in brackets. Significance is denoted as: * < .1; ** < .01; *** < .001

Discussion

A family supportive work environment, involving family supportive services, communication and culture, focuses primarily on working parents and helps them to reconciling work and family life (Allen, 2001). For companies, the investment in expensive family services such as care services is problematic, if they have no positive impact on the entire workforce, because employees with children represent on average only 30% of the workforce (Seco, 2009).

Due to this issue, this study analyzed the effect of a family supportive work environment on different employee groups, not only with childcare, but also with eldercare or without care responsibility. With survey data of 1359 Swiss employees, we analyzed whether the perception of family supportive services, communication and culture has a specific or a universal appeal for employees. The universal appeal approach argues for a spillover effect and is represented by the Signaling Theory. The Organization-Person-Fit-Theory as well as the Incentive-Contribution-Theory stands for the specific appeal approach. These theories argue that family-friendly work environments have only a positive impact on attitudes and behavior intentions of those who benefit of the family-friendliness.

The results of the multiple regression analyses show, that a spillover effect as well as a specific effect exist. The extent of the two effects depends on the dimension of a family supportive work environment and the affected working group.

First, our results show that the perception of a family supportive work environment – i.e. the family related services, communication and culture – has a significant influence on the attitudes and behavior intentions of the whole workforce in some way. These results are in line with the study of Allen (2001) and Thompson et al. (1999).

Second, the employer related outcomes, organizational commitment and intention to quite, demonstrates, that a family-friendly communication as well as a family-friendly culture has the same or similar positive impact on employees' with and without care responsibility. These results are consistent with the hypotheses 1b and 1c and support the view of the Signaling Theory (Spence, 1970), that a family supportive work environment has a universal appeal for the entire workforce.

Third, the employee related outcome, satisfaction with work-life balance, demonstrates that family-friendly services have only a positive impact on employees with child care

responsibility. Employees with childcare responsibility are more satisfied with their work-life balance if the company offers qualitative good services, whereas the other employee groups are not. This result is in line with the hypothesis 2a and the specific appeal approach of the Organization-Person-Fit-Theory (Turban & Keon, 1993) and the Incentive-Contribution-Theory (March & Simon, 1958).

Further, our results have shown that it is important for studies in the work-family-field, that the employees with caregiving responsibilities are divided into different working groups (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Whereas for employees with childcare responsibilities family-friendly services as well as family-friendly communication and culture are important, for employees with eldercare responsibility only a family-friendly culture is essential. This result may be an indication that family-friendly services in Swiss companies have so far focused only on working parents and not on employees with other family care responsibilities, such as eldercare (Tönz, 2005).

Overall, the results of this study lead us the following practical implication: Companies should invest primarily in family-friendly communication and culture. Whereas the investment in expensive services has only specific effects on employees with childcare responsibilities, the effort of employers for a family-friendly communication and culture has a positive spillover effect on the entire workforce. The promotion of family-friendly intangible factors, such as family supportive managers and the interest in the employees' needs to reconcile work and family enhance organizational commitment and reduce intention to quit of the entire workforce, without causing large costs.

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