Does the availability of schedule flexibility increase employees’ affective commitment?

Introduction

This study investigated if the availability of schedule flexibility (SF) improves employees’ affective commitment (AC) as it was found in previous studies (e.g. Butts et al., 2013; Grover & Crooker, 1995). It was suggested that the effect might be indirect and perceived organizational support (POS) was proposed as a mediator. This would highlight the importance for employees to feel supported by their organizations in this matter. Another factor is perceived usability (PU) which represents the actual possibility of using the offered SF. Studies have revealed that some employees do not feel comfortable using SF because they fear punishments (e.g. Eaton, 2003). Therefore a moderating effect of perceived usability on the relationship between SF and POS was proposed. Further, it was evaluated if the relationship between SF and AC might be different for women and men with family responsibilities (FR) since men still report to invest less time in family responsibilities than women (Hill, 2005). To look at this interaction the participant’s gender roles were assessed.

Hypotheses

H1: The availability of SF has a significant relationship with AC.
H2: POS mediates the relationship between the availability of SF and AC.
H3: PU moderates the relationship between the availability of SF and POS.
H4: The relationship between the availability of SF and AC is stronger for women than for men with FR.

Sample, Method & Instruments

N = 328 (171 clickworker.de, 25 ct/person) | sex = 54.6% | age 31-45 = 42.7% > 30 hours per week | no teachers | no self-employed

Online-Questionnaire | T-Test | Mediation & Moderation in PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013)

Results

✓ H1: The means of affective commitment for flexible employees were significantly higher (3.41) than for non-flexible employees (3.00).

✓ H2: POS fully mediates the relationship between availability of SF and AC.

✓ H3: The moderating effect of perceived usability on the relationship between availability of SF and POS was not significant.

✓ H4: The moderating analysis of sex on the relationship between SF and AC was not significant.

Discussion & Implications

Due to the many positive effects of AC, e.g. a stronger feeling of belonging to the organization and fewer turnover intentions (Grover & Crooker, 1995), its promotion via SF is beneficial for employees and employers. The results highlight the importance of POS, which fully mediated the connection between SF and AC.

Providing SF can be interpreted as a sign that the organization (Eaton, 2003) cares about its employees’ well-being (Grover & Crooker, 1995). 

Employers should try to offer support to their employees by showing interest in their well-being (e.g. counselling, focus groups).

Employees should be given the possibility to adapt time schedules to their individual needs, which stresses the importance of informal policies where a bigger scope in terms of time management is available (Eaton, 2001).

It is recommended to focus on performance than solely on working hours.

Nevertheless, PU was not found to moderate the interaction between SF and POS. Explanations could be scale inconsistencies and a smaller sample. It is still important to mind that positive outcomes could be smaller or even missing if supervisors or coworkers do not support the offered SF (Grover & Crooker, 1995). No differences between men and women with family responsibilities were found. An explanation could be the changed gender role attitude in today’s society (see chart), where a positive social view about working mothers and caring fathers has emerged (Pongracž, 2011).

When offering SF, women and men should be therefore addressed equally.

References


Zusammenstellung sozialwissenschaftlicher Items und Skalen. Butts, M., Casper, W., & Yang, T. (2013). How important are work–family support policies? A meta-analytic investigation of their effects on employee outcomes.


