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Factors improving parents' work – life balance

47 % of the Swedish parents report that they often experience difficulties in managing everything they have to do. I use this as an indicator of work – life imbalance. The study is solution-oriented and the aim is to understand more about how work – life balance can be improved among parents. The question that this study tries to answer is what factors that can explain why some parents experience work – life balance while others experience imbalance. I use quantitative cross-sectional data from Statistics Sweden based on questionnaires and time diaries from 1500 Swedish parents. My method is mainly multivariate regression analysis.

I have identified about 15 significant factors. The first group of factors illustrates that the likelihood of experiencing work-life balance is higher if one lives in a “modern nuclear family” – factors as parents living together; to have few children and not to take practical responsibilities of older parents are increasing ones work - life balance. The second group of factors is that the likelihood of experiencing work – life balance is greater if one spends fewer hours on paid work and commuting. The number of hours ones partner spends on paid work also affects ones own work-life balance. The third group of factors has to do with type of job. Parents without managerial jobs and without “goal-oriented” jobs can be expected to experience a higher degree of work – life balance. The forth group of factors imply that parents having a less consumption-oriented lifestyle are more likely to experience work-life balance. A lower household income increases the expected work life balance. An interpretation of this is that a low income makes ones spare time less goods-intensive and less activity-intensive.

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