



For Immediate Release

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SFU RESEARCH SHOWS CHALLENGES AT HOME AFFECT ON-THE-JOB PERFORMANCE

But Beedie School of Business studies also note a “positive” home environment usually has no corresponding beneficial effect at work

VANCOUVER, BC – Two new studies from the Beedie School of Business, SFU link the negative influences of juggling daily family demands with a detrimental effect on one’s performance at work. However, the opposite is not true. They found positive family experiences have little corresponding impact on work performance. Preliminary findings show that employees with heavy family demands find it difficult to focus at work, which harms their performance. Employees with positive family experience seem to be in a better mood at work and can focus better, but this did not help them to perform better.

Lieke ten Brummelhuis, assistant professor at Simon Fraser University and lead researcher on the two studies, who gathered results from 208 participants, suggests this has implications for enterprises which regularly look for ways to support their employees – including training, upskilling, technological enhancements to name a few. All those efforts may be for not, if employees are not in the right frame of mind to start their days.

“There are a number of implications from this that employers should consider,” says Christian Codrington, Senior Manager, Professional Practice with the Human Resources Management Association (HRMA). “While many employers struggle with elaborate and often expensive employee wellness programs, there are a number of easy and cost-effective things that can be done to help their employees see the positive aspects of their lives and focus less on the negative ones”.

Ten Brummelhuis recommends employers start with relatively simple solutions to help their employees in the workplace. Allowing them time to reflect upon the positive pieces in their lives could be one approach to overcome negativity. Ten Brummelhuis is currently working on a study to test if employees, by using a positive reflection exercise, can leverage more on positive aspects of family life. “If we can prevent that employees dwell on negative family aspects while reminding them of positive ones, they might stay in a better mood, have a better focus and eventually perform better at work”.

Codrington notes employers may also consider options such as coaching employees on setting priorities, or offering employee assistance programs. These could include support to offset things like the costs and responsibilities of chores such as home cleaning, or helping provide childcare. “Leaving personal problems at home is often much easier to say than actually do, and this research helps managers and supervisors to see that it is simply good for the company’s bottom line for the employer to do what it can to help balance the demands of personal and work life,” he says.

About HRMA

The BC-based Human Resources Management Association (HRMA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the HR profession through advocacy, awareness and professional development opportunities such as conference, workshops, symposiums, mentorship and volunteer programs.

The association provides leadership to more than 5,500 members and 3,000 affiliates that collectively represent CEOs, directors of HR, consultants, educators, students, HR generalists, and small-business owners. Established in 1942, HRMA is a founding member of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) and the exclusive grantor of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation in British Columbia and Yukon. www.hrma.ca.

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