



**Work-family policies and the transformation triangle:
Women, organizational culture and managerial strategy.**

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Work-family policies and the transformation triangle: Women, organizational culture and managerial strategy.

1-Introduction

Work family-policies have held a very important place in work-family literature since the 1990s, and they still prompt considerable interest (Garg and Agrawal, 2020). Some researchers have framed them as a proxy for firm work-family responsiveness (Bardoel, 2003; Bloom, *et al.* 2011; Miliken, *et al.* 1998), although empirical research shows mixed results concerning their effects on variables such as work-family conflict (Allen, *et al.* 2013). Perrigino, *et al.* (2018) suggest that work-life balance policies may have a “dark side,” because it is not entirely clear what impact they have on resolving work-life conflict. Putnam, *et al.*'s (2014) review of workplace flexibility initiatives as a potential remedy for work-life conflicts discloses tensions and contradictions in the ways that employees, managers and organizations develop, enact and respond to them. A recent, minor trend frames work-family policies as part of socially responsible human resource management (Chinchilla and Grau, 2013; Heikkinen, *et al.* 2020). This means considering employees not only as strategic human resources for the company but also taking care of them and their needs, including work-family balance. A process of change toward work-family balance in the company requires work-family policies and also a supportive work-family culture (Erden and Bayazir, 2019; Koekemoer and Petrou, 2019; Thomson *et al.* 1999) and a clear commitment from top managers (Been, *et al.* 2017; Kossek, *et al.* 1994; Major and Litano, 2016; Perrigino, *et al.* 2018, Poelmans, *et al.* 2003).

Researchers consider the percentage of women in an organization's workforce to be a determining factor in the transformation of the company. However, the empirical evidence provides ambivalent results on this point. Some authors report a positive link (Goodstein, 1994), while others (Adame, *et al.* 2016; Ingram and Simons, 1995; Miliken, *et al.* 1998) find no such link. One of the reasons that may help account for this discrepancy is that the female share workforce has been analysed from the perspective of institutional theory (Oliver, 1991) as a constituency that pressures firms into introducing more policies, and this perspective does not explain how companies internally develop changes (Blair-Loy and Wharton, 2002). In this regard, as Kim and Faerman (2013) state, the existence of laws and an increased proportion of women workers do not guarantee work-family policies. Moreover, research has focused on the effect of women on policies

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3 without taking into account how they affect work-family culture and top manager actions
4 as drivers of change.
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6 This paper fills this gap by addressing how companies develop a process of
7 transformation to work-family responsiveness and how the female work force affects
8 such change. The argument outlined here is that women may be a driving force to enable
9 and sustain change. The research proposes that the female workforce influences
10 transformation to a family responsible firm through a supportive work-family culture and
11 a managerial strategy for work-family balance, comprising a triangle of variables
12 necessary to understand such change. To the extent that the female workforce is capable
13 of fostering the two internal dimensions, a true process of transformation may happen
14 across the company.
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23 The analysis is performed on a sample of 1,048 Spanish firms. In Spain, as in most
24 of the developed world, the female activity rate has followed an upward trend, going from
25 36.2 % in 1995 to 54% in 2015, with a greater increase in the period prior to the 2008
26 economic crisis. This fact increased concern about the work-family balance in a
27 significant way; both at the institutional level and at the private / business level, giving
28 rise to the set of initiatives described in the following section, which constitute a
29 differentiated framework as compared with that in the Anglo-Saxon context. Many of the
30 studies on family work relationships focus on Anglo-Saxon contexts but, as Kim and
31 Faerman (2013) state, research shows that a country's cultural values affect the use of
32 work-family policies. This paper contributes to this understanding.
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42 **2-The Spanish context**

43 Spain is a country with a predominantly masculine culture, where differences in
44 gender roles are heightened (Silván-Ferrero and Bustillos, 2007). The latest available INE
45 report (2018) indicates that despite a more balanced participation of men and women in
46 the labour market in recent years, women continue to take on most family and domestic
47 responsibilities. A consequence of these factors, more acute for women, was reflected in
48 the claim by almost one third of Spanish employees that they have difficulty balancing
49 work and family life.
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55 Since the end of the 20th century, several important initiatives have been intended to
56 turn this situation around and steps have been taken to address it with the approval of
57 different laws. The most recent "Law on Urgent Measures to Guarantee Equal Treatment
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3 and Opportunities for Women and Men in Employment and Occupation (Law 6/2019)”
4 establishes the conditions to enforce and activate the rights to family-work conciliation
5 and equal treatment between women and men.
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8 In the private sector, some entities (International Center for Work and Family
9 (ICWF) at IESE Business School and Más Familia Foundation) have developed
10 initiatives to help companies become family responsible and certify them. Moreover,
11 since 2010, public authorities have promoted the creation of a distinctive award for
12 companies with equity plans and excellent work-life balance (DIE). By 2018, 148
13 companies had received this distinction, and 575 companies have been certified to date
14 in 2020.
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20 However, even with these efforts, only a small percentage of Spanish firms, 14% in
21 2019, had formalized work life balance and equality policies as a programme (Las Heras,
22 *et al.* 2019). These percentages are lower than those for other countries, coming in the
23 middle of the ranking of European countries in 2018 (Chzhen, *et al.* 2019).
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27 There are two main reasons for the weak implementation of these programmes: poor
28 executive management of work-family conciliation and equality programmes and, as a
29 result, lower expectations among female employees regarding such policies. In relation
30 to executive management, corporate culture in Spain is still marked by an emphasis on
31 ‘presenteeism’, which limits the effective implementation of flexible work policies. There
32 is also an implicit penalization of motherhood in Spain and women fear negative labour
33 consequences (León and Marcaletti, 2019). External factors should also be taken into
34 account: the cost of childcare, the lack of childcare facilities and the gradual decline of
35 the family support network.
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43 Moreover, the major recession in 2007 induced drastic reforms and a general cutback
44 in social policy spending. Gender equality and work-life balance policies were also
45 adversely affected when they conflicted with economic austerity measures (Campillo,
46 2014). The increase in the unemployment rate during this time also made companies less
47 interested in offering work-family policies. The 2007 crisis slowed the implementation
48 of family responsible policies by companies, and individual workers were less inclined
49 to take advantage of them. The 2019 Law aimed to change this dynamic. However, while
50 the new crisis due to COVID19 is likely to paralyze the situation again in terms of the
51 budgeting of funds to cover the costs involved, it may also be an opportunity to effect real
52 cultural change and develop new kinds of flexible working.
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3-Theoretical framework

3.1. The family responsible firm

The family responsible firm model (Chinchilla and Grau, 2013, Chinchilla, *et al.* 2003) is based on academic research and includes the main dimensions that literature about the work-family relationship considers relevant: work-family policies, a supportive work-family culture and a managerial strategy for work-family balance.

Work-family policies are defined as the set of formal measures (flexibility, services, professional support and other benefits in addition to remuneration) that the company adopts to help employees reconcile their family life with professional commitments (Glass and Findley, 2002). A supportive work-family culture is defined by Thomson *et al.* (1999, p. 394) as “the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees’ work and family lives”. The work-family culture drives the use of work-family policies. Finally, the managerial strategy for work-family balance is defined as “the mental or cognitive process resulting in the selection of a course of action among several alternatives when a manager has to decide whether to introduce, how to design and implement, and whether and to what degree to allow work-family benefits to an employee” (Poelmans, *et al.* 2013). According to Meindl, *et al.* (1985), in the romance of leadership theory, organizational action is often attributed to the decisions of CEOs and other key organizational decision-makers.

This research includes in the model the female share of the workforce as a driver of change. The proposal is that the proportion of women workers can produce changes both in company culture and in managerial actions, in turn driving more work-family policies. Therefore, the supportive work-family culture and the managerial strategy for work-family balance act as mediators between the female share workforce and work-family policies (see Figure 1). The following section presents the theoretical arguments to justify these relationships.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

3.2. Hypotheses

3.2.1. Female share workforce, supportive work-family culture, and work-family policies

Gender enables the distinction between a competitive or masculine culture and a supportive or feminine culture (Bajdo and Dickson, 2001; Cartwright and Gale, 1995; Catanzaro, *et al.* 2010; Kossek, *et al.* 2017; Lewis, 2001). Hierarchical authority, independence, autocratic leadership styles and top-down communication characterize masculine culture, and greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships and the sharing of power describes feminine culture.

Values regarding how work-family relationships are faced differ considerably in the two types of culture. Gender role theory (Eagly, 1987) helps explain how masculine culture develops, and the role that woman, or rather the absence of such a role, plays in this process. This theory assumes a traditional division of roles in separate spheres (Haas and Hwang, 2007): public sphere for men, private for women. This vision allows employers to claim that they have little responsibility in relation to family well-being. Therefore, attention to family responsibilities is considered a lack of commitment towards the firm.

At the other end of the spectrum are organizations with a “feminine culture”, which is the basis of a supportive work-family culture. The feminine culture changes the vision of the separated spheres and introduces the concept of “an ethic of caring”, associated with feminine values, including concern for others, a sense of social responsibility, and preference for collaborative over competitive interaction (Haas and Hwan, 2007). With respect to work-family relationships, a feminine culture incorporates values from the private into the public sphere, and therefore work-family balance is seen in a much more natural way.

Although research indicates the dominance of masculine culture in organizations (Catanzaro *et al.* 2010), feminine culture may also be present. If organizational culture comprises the set of shared values and beliefs of individuals, following Schein (1985), the fact that the workforce is composed of men or women can have a great influence on those values. A large body of research literature documents the effects of demographic composition on work attitudes and behaviour (Blair-Loy and Wharton, 2002), and although gender and sex are two different concepts, there is a high correlation between them (Cartwright and Gale, 1995). Bajdo and Dickson (2001) point out that organizations tend to reinforce the value system of the dominant gender, thus influencing values

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3 regarding how family relationships work. In fact, there is empirical evidence (Haas and
4 Hwang, 2007; Mauno, *et al.* 2005) of a more family-supportive organizational culture in
5 traditionally “female” economic sectors in which the percentage of women is higher.
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7 Thus, in organizations where the workforce is made up mainly by women, for whom
8 feminine values are important, further development of a supportive work-family culture
9 may be possible.
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13 **Hypothesis 1.a.** Female share workforce drives a supportive work-family culture
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17 Schein (1985) divided an organization's culture into three distinct levels: artefacts,
18 values and assumptions. The term level denotes the degree to which the cultural
19 phenomenon is visible to the observer. These levels range from deeply embedded and
20 unconscious assumptions to very tangible artefacts that one can see and feel. In between
21 these layers are beliefs, values, norms and rules of behaviour. Based on this view, some
22 authors (Kim and Faerman, 2013; Lewis, 1997) interpret work-family policies as artefacts
23 of the culture, the surface-level indicators of organizational intentions and explain the
24 links between a supportive family work culture and work-family policies. How deeply
25 rooted such values and assumptions are in an organization will have a direct impact on
26 the development of family-responsible policies.
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34 The behaviours and actions of supervisors and employees will be different if the
35 culture is more traditional or masculine or, on the contrary, more feminine or supportive
36 of work-family balance. As Kossek, *et al.* (2017) state, cultural norms supporting gender
37 equality, or the lack thereof, shape implementation of work-life policies and a supportive
38 work family culture and may also prevent the stigma and inequity effect associated with
39 work-family policies (Perrigino, *et al.* 2018). Firms with masculine culture fail to develop
40 actions to promote work-family balance, or if they do so, reinforce the feminine bias with
41 policies aimed exclusively at women (Cartwright and Gale, 1995; Haas and Wang, 2007).
42 In a supportive work-family culture, employees are no longer penalized, and may even
43 be praised for trying to strike a balance between their family and work responsibilities
44 There is significant empirical evidence indicating a positive link between a supportive
45 work-family culture and work-family policies (Haas and Hwang, 2007).
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55 According to Zilber (2012), due to their numerous points of connection, institutional
56 and organizational culture theories may be regarded as complementary. In our study,
57 pressure from a predominantly female workforce transforms the beliefs, values and
58 assumptions about how the family-work balance should be managed, which in turn brings
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3 about a cultural change that may lead to a more integrated view of the relationship.
4 Because of this process, work-family policies could become more widespread.

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6 **Hypothesis 1.b.** A supportive work-family culture is a mediator between female share
7 workforce and work-family policies.
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10 11 12 3.2.2. *Female share workforce, managerial strategy for work-family balance and work-* 13 *family policies* 14 15

16 The literature about the provision of work-family policies applies the following
17 approaches in explaining why top management drives them: neo-institutional theory,
18 business case argumentation and the managerial interpretation approach (Been *et al.*
19 2017). Neo-institutional theory accounts for management involvement in terms of the
20 institutional pressures that the company faces (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram and Simons,
21 1995). Business case (De Cieri, *et al.* 2005; Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000) explains the
22 decision in terms of management perceptions of the strategic impact of the work-life
23 relationship. When the employment rate is low, work-family policies are a way to
24 compete for scarce resources in the labour market (Poelmans, *et al.* 2003) and to recruit
25 and retain qualified workers. Finally, the managerial interpretation (Bardoel, 2003;
26 Kossek, *et al.* 1994; Miliken, *et al.* 1998) establishes that managers will be involved in
27 the development of a strategy regarding work-family balance to the extent that they are
28 aware of the need for work-life arrangements among their employees.
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39 There are some theoretical arguments in support of the idea that a female share
40 workforce influences top management decisions to develop a more proactive approach to
41 work-family balance, considering the three perspectives that drive management
42 behaviour. Researchers following Institutional Theory (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram and
43 Simons, 1995; Oliver, 1991) have conceptualized the female share in an organization's
44 workforce as a constituent that pressures top management. The greater this proportion,
45 the greater the pressure exerted. From a business case perspective, organizations with a
46 substantial proportion of female workers may benefit from the effect of work-family
47 arrangements more than male-dominated organizations. The increase in productivity,
48 absenteeism and turnover (Den Dulk, 2001; Goodstein, 1994; Poelmans, *et al.* 2003) will
49 be higher because women have been associated with the need for work-family balance.
50 Finally, according to the managerial interpretation, a higher proportion of women in the
51 workforce will increase the management's perception that work-family relations pose a
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3 problem for workers. Upper echelons theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) suggests that
4 managers make their decisions in line with their cognitive biases. Higher female share
5 workforce may modify the cognitive biases of managers and drive them to develop more
6 proactive behaviours in relation to work-family balance.
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10 **Hypothesis 2.a.** Female share workforce drives managerial strategy on work-family
11 balance.
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13 The literature about the provision of work-life arrangements has so far generally
14 sidestepped the actors who decide about the adoption and implementation of these
15 arrangements within organizations, and treated organizations as if they somehow make
16 the decision themselves (Been, *et al.* 2017). However, some researchers (Bardoel, 2003;
17 Been, *et al.* 2017; Kossek, *et al.* 1994; Milliken, *et al.* 1998; Perrigino, *et al.* 2018) state
18 that top managers are the main decision-makers about organizational strategy regarding
19 the adoption of work-life arrangements. That is, their role is decisive; without their
20 support, such policies will not be implemented.
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28 Some authors (Beer, *et al.* 1990) argue that it is often thought that a change in
29 attitudes will modify behaviour in organizations. The starting point of any successful
30 change effort is a defined business problem to be solved as such. Of the important
31 elements for the development of change, Covin and Kilman (1990) cite the importance
32 of visible and consistent management, top-level support and widespread employee
33 participation, communication regarding programme goals and tying the programme to
34 business needs. Some authors (Kirby and Krone, 2002; Ryan and Kossek, 2008)
35 emphasize the importance of communication in the correct implementation of work-
36 family policies. According to Ryan and Kossek (2008), the implementation of work-
37 family policies is a strategic decision that must be correctly planned and implemented to
38 be successful. Managers at all levels must work in a coordinated manner (Major and
39 Litano, 2016) and set out a plan to align all efforts to achieving the goal of work-family
40 balance.
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51 Considering the previous arguments, our proposal is that a larger female workforce
52 will influence managerial strategy in developing a proactive behaviour to enhance work-
53 family balance, carried out through economic and personal resources and communication,
54 which in turn will involve work-family policies.
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58 **Hypothesis 2.b.** Managerial strategy for work-family balance is a mediator between
59 female share workforce and work-family policies
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4.-Research Method

4.1.-Sample

This study uses data obtained from a survey conducted by the ICWF to collect information on family-supportive policies in 1,048 SME and large Spanish firms that was completed in 2010 and focuses on company analysis. The financial crisis hit the Spanish economy hard, which meant that the implementation of work-family policies in companies was put on hold. From a legal perspective, this problem was not addressed until 2019, so the sample may still be read as representative of the situation of companies over the last decade.

4.2-Dependent Variable

WFP is the dependent variable that collects the level of accessibility of work-family policies for firm employees. According to Ryan and Kossek (2008) to be effective work-family policies must reinforce the creation of an inclusive workplace. The variable combines 28 items related to four dimensions of the work-family policies following the classification outlined by Milliken, *et al.* (1998) and an adaptation of Bardoel (2003). The first dimension, which could be labelled flexible work arrangements, includes 13 items relating to flexitime, flexible working hours, part-time working arrangements, the compressed working week, shorter workday arrangements, special leave for family, workplace flexibility, etc. The second comprises 6 items relating to the provision of advice and training services. The third covers 3 items relating to other services provided by the firm, such as dependent care facilities; and the fourth, comprising 6 items, relates to economic-type benefits, such as insurance schemes, health and medical benefits or retirement plans for workers and their families.

The respondent is asked to rate the accessibility of each specific practice mentioned and their answers are classified using a four-point ordinal scale. The points of the scale are non-accessible to all employees (non-existent) code 1; accessible to some employees (limited accessibility) code 2; accessible to most employees (wide accessibility) code 3; and accessible to all employees (universal accessibility) code 4.

For the purposes of analysis and in line with previous research (Adame, *et al.* 2016; Bardoel, 2003; Bloom, *et al.* 2011; Miliken, *et al.* 1998) the 28 items were aggregated into one variable (*WFP*) to synthesize the data and enable comparison with other variables composed of different items. We assess the internal consistency of the *WFP* measure

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3 using Cronbach's alpha, which is .85. A good alpha value guarantees the reliability of our
4 measure.
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6 In order to calculate the WFP variable, we used two different approaches: one taking
7 raw values following Bardoel (2003), and the other transforming raw values into
8 standardized values following Bloom, *et al.* (2011). The results presented are those
9 obtained via the second approach, which we consider more accurate, although those
10 obtained from the first were largely similar.
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16 **4.3.-Independent and Control Variables**

17 *4.3.1. Independent variables*

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21 *Women* variable collects the female share of the workforce. The questionnaire elicits
22 the percentage of women in the workforce. The responses were classified on a four-point
23 ordinal scale and coded 1 for less than 25%; 2 for 25 to 50%; 3 for 50 to 75%; and 4 for
24 over 75%.
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28 *SWFC* variable measures the perception of the respondents about the supportive
29 work-family culture in the firm. Our measure is an adapted short-version of the work-
30 family culture described by Thompson, *et al.* (1999). Mauno (2010) proposed that work-
31 family culture may be defined in relation to two components: managerial support and
32 work-family barriers; this is the definition used in this paper. It includes 8 items relating
33 to the time spent in the workplace and how it may affect promotion opportunities,
34 managerial support in such areas and sensitivity and positivity of attitude towards work-
35 family policies. Cronbach's alpha = .79.
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42 *MSWF* variable represents the managerial strategy for work-family balance in the
43 firm. Following the research by Poelmans, *et al.* (2003) and Adame, *et al.* (2016), this
44 variable collects 4 items and includes aspects such as the existence of earmarked funding,
45 a specific agenda, the communication of policies in the firm and the appointment of a
46 specific head of work-family policies. The 4 items are on a four-point ordinal scale
47 ranging from "Nothing" (1) to "Very much" (4). The aggregated variable is computed in
48 the same way as described for WFP and the Cronbach's alpha equal to .81 is sufficiently
49 high to guarantee the reliability of the measure of the MSWF variable.
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56 *4.3.2. Control Variables*

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58 *Size*: A dummy variable was created, taking value 1 for a large firm and 0 for an
59 SME.
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3 *Industry/Sector:* A firm-type dummy was created, taking value 1 for service
4 companies and 0 for manufacturing.

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6 *Non-temporary:* Respondents were also required to state the percentage of employees
7 with permanent contracts. The responses were classified on a three-point ordinal scale
8 and coded as follows: 1 for a percentage below 80%; 2 for a percentage between 80 and
9 90%; and 3 for a percentage above 90%.

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13 *Trade union:* The questionnaire tests for the presence of trade unions within the firm
14 and their support for work-family policies. The responses were classified on a four-point
15 ordinal scale and coded from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates no support from trade unions and
16 4 indicates full support from trade unions.
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21 22 **4.4.-Model Estimation and Results**

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24 The hypotheses are tested using mediation models and then a multiple regression
25 model that integrates the set of the analysed variables. Although endogeneity could be
26 present in our estimation, due to an error in variable measures, we think this problem is
27 minimised by closely following the measures used in the literature. We used the STATA
28 software package for the estimation.
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32 We follow Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediated regression technique and Sobel's test
33 to determine the significance of the mediation. We also use bootstrap re-sampling with
34 5,000 and 10,000 iterations as an additional means to test the null hypothesis of no indirect
35 effect by determining whether zero is inside the confidence interval without making any
36 assumptions about the distribution of the indirect effect.
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41 The results of the estimation of the relationship between the presence of women in
42 the workforce and the accessibility of WFPs and the mediating effects of SWFC are given
43 in Table I. The first column of Table I shows the effect of female share workforce on
44 work-family policies. This relationship is statistically significant ($B = .089$, $SE = .03$, $p <$
45 $.01$), indicating that a higher percentage of female employees increases the accessibility
46 of work-family policies in the workplace. Column 2 presents the results of the relationship
47 between the female workforce and SWFC in the company. The Women variable has a
48 significant impact on the variable, SWFC ($B = .102$, $SE = .03$, $p <$
49 $.01$); therefore, an increase in the Women variable in the workforce leads to an increase in the SWFC
50 variable. This finding is consistent with hypothesis 1a because the presence of women
51 fosters a feminine culture that regards work-family balance as a natural consideration.
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60 The third estimation, column 3, which includes both the mediator variable (SWFC) and

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3 the independent variable (Women) on the work-family policies, yields some interesting
4 findings. While the SWFC variable is significant ($B = .378, SE = .02, p < .001$), there is a
5 clear drop in the statistical significance of the variable representing female share in the
6 workforce ($B = .051, SE = .03, p < .10$). The initial effect of the Women variable ($B =$
7 $.089$) on the WFP (first column) decreases to $B = .051$ (Women coefficient in third
8 column), and becomes marginally significant. The proportion of total effect of Women
9 on WFC that is mediated is 43.17%, suggesting a total mediation effect. This result offers
10 some clues as to the mediating role of the SWFC variable, which is confirmed both by
11 the Sobel test and by the bootstrap estimation. These tests significantly reject the null
12 hypothesis of no mediation, given the clear level of statistical significance found for the
13 indirect effect, $B = .038$, of the female share in the workforce through the mediation of
14 the SWFC variable. These results support hypothesis 1b that indicates that a supportive
15 work-family culture is a mediator between female share workforce and work-family
16 policies. Thus, if a female workforce can transform the values concerning work-family
17 balance, a cultural change that in the end enhances work-family policies may be brought
18 about.

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31 Regarding the control variables, in the last estimation (column 3), the Size variable
32 is positive and significant ($B = .238, SE = .06, p < .001$), the Non-Temporary variable is
33 also positive and significant ($B = .139, SE = .03, p < .001$), and the same is the case for
34 the Trade Union variable ($B = .302, SE = .02, p < .001$). This pattern is similar in columns
35 1 and 2 except for the Size variable in column 2. Therefore, the results indicate that more
36 workers that are permanent and more support for trade unions favour the presence of WFP
37 and SWFC. Large companies promote WFP but the effect of the Size variable on the
38 SWFC is negative and significant ($B = -.183, SE = .07, p < .05$). Company size may be a
39 key variable in the promotion of policies as a set of work family practices. A programme
40 with a budget and a team or human resources to start it is more likely in large companies.
41 Culture could be less important in these companies for this reason. The Sector variable is
42 not significant; this variable does not seem to influence WFP or SWFC.

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The second step of the analysis focuses on the effect that the presence of women has on the MSWF and the role of this variable as a mediator in the relationship between female share workforce and WFP. The data obtained from the analysis, examining the relationship between Women, MSWF and WFPs are given in Table II.

The results in column 2 present the effect of the Women variable on MSWF ($B = .131$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < .001$), confirming hypothesis 2a stating that female share workforce drives managerial strategy on work-family balance because women workers can modify the cognitive biases of managers and drive them to develop more proactive behaviours in relation to work-family balance. The following column shows the mediating effect of the variable MSWF on the relationship between women and WFPs. Given the loss of significance of the Women variable we can say that there is complete mediation, as the tests show indirect effect ($B = .068$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$) and direct effect ($B = .021$, $SE = .03$, $p > .05$). These results support hypothesis 2b because the presence of a female workforce may influence managerial strategy, which in turn will involve work-family policies; thus, the managerial strategy for work-family balance is a mediator between female share workforce and work-family policies. The initial model had an adjusted $R^2 = .19$. Table I indicates that the incorporation of SWFC as a mediator increases the adjusted $R^2 = .33$, an increase of 69%. The consideration of MSWF as a mediator implies a higher increase in moving to an adjusted $R^2 = .39$ (Table II), an increase of 105% with respect to the initial model.

INSERT TABLE II ABOUT HERE

Table III gives the results of the joint estimation of the effects of female share workforce, SWFC and MSWF on WFPs. The simultaneous estimation with the three variables enables assessment of the effect of mediators while taking into account the others. The coefficients of the SWFC and MSWF variables are significant ($B = .228$, $SE = .02$, $p < .001$ and $B = .418$, $SE = .03$, $p < .001$ respectively) and the female presence variable loses its significance completely ($B = .011$, $SE = .02$, $p > .05$). These results point to the importance of the female workforce in the transformation of the SWFC and MSWF variables and the importance of these in the availability of WFPs. The coefficient of MSWF is $B = .418$, almost double the coefficient presented by the SWFC variable ($B = .228$), showing the significance of the MSWF variable. This model features an adjusted $R^2 = .44$, $F(7, 1040)$, $p < .001$, which amounts to an increase of 126% with respect to the

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3 initial model, in which only the Women variable of the triangle of variables involved in
4 the transformation was considered. These results prove the complementary and
5 significant effect of SWFC and MSWF on developing WFP. Changes in culture and
6 managerial actions are important factors in the improvement of work-family policies. The
7 role of the female workforce may be a key driver of these mediators.
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15 INSERT TABLE III ABOUT HERE
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20 21 **5.-Discussion, limitations and future research**

22 This paper contributes to the research literature by analysing how three widely
23 discussed topics in the area of work-family balance – gender, organizational culture and
24 managerial strategy for work-family balance – relate to achieving family responsible
25 firms. We propose a mediation model in which the female workforce is a key element in
26 the development of WFP, but its effect is through their influence on the SWFC and
27 MSWF. These three variables comprise a triangle to develop family-responsible
28 behaviour.
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34 This helps to explain the differences in previous research findings regarding the
35 effects of women on work-family policies. Research papers that have found no such
36 relationship (Adame, *et al.* 2016; Ingram and Simons, 1995) include female workforce
37 and other variables like corporate culture or the role of management in the empirical
38 analyses. The apparent lack of impact by the female workforce may be because its
39 mediating influence is occluded by the inclusion of all variables in the models at the same
40 time.
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46 Our results suggest that SWFC mediates the relationship between women and WFP.
47 In other words, when the female workforce increases, there is a boost in SWFC, which in
48 turn may lead to increased WFP. These results are in line with literature suggesting just
49 such an effect (Cartwright and Gale, 1995; Haas and Hwang, 2007; Mauno, *et al.*, 2005).
50 A greater presence of women in the workforce changes the shared assumptions, beliefs
51 and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the
52 integration of employees' work and family lives, fostering SWFC (Thomson, *et al.* 1999).
53 This change of culture makes the company develop visible actions to deal with work-
54 family relationships through work-family policies.
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3 Furthermore, our results indicate that MSWF also mediate the relationship between
4 women and WFP, and therefore greater participation of women in the workforce will
5 increase MSWF, which are associated with higher levels of WFP. The results are in line
6 with previous arguments about the role of female employees in the organization. Female
7 share workforce can affect the decisions of top managers to include proactive behaviours
8 in relation to work-family balance, whether their reasons are their potential to attract and
9 retain skilled workers (De Cieri, *et al.* 2005), or if they seek to consider the needs of
10 workers (Bardoel, 2003).

11
12 Our model supplements the role of SWFC (Kim and Faerman, 2013) with top
13 management through a proactive behaviour that includes and makes work-family balance
14 visible in the company's strategy, that is, MSWF.

15
16 The paper contributes to the theoretical debate about WFP and encompasses recent
17 developments on the conditions that must be met in this regard (Perrigino, *et al.* 2018;
18 Putnam, *et al.* 2014; Ryan and Kossek, 2008). Our measure of WFPs gathers the
19 accessibility to all workers – men and women – of each specific practice, which implies
20 that these be universally available. This measure precludes the stigma mechanism and the
21 inequity of work-family policies (Perrigino, *et al.* 2018). Work-family issues are not an
22 exclusively female concern because both men and women have work-family needs.
23 Putnam, *et al.* (2014), emphasize the need to customize policies to fit the needs of
24 workers, equitable implementation and a supportive work-family culture. Companies that
25 succeed in achieving a high value for this variable may meet all the conditions required
26 to implement family-responsible behaviours.

27
28 Some practical implications may also be highlighted. Work-life balance is not an
29 exclusively female problem; it affects society (De Cieri, *et al.* 2005) and measures for
30 improvement must begin with awareness raising at individual, firm and national levels.
31 Governments and society as a whole should urge firms to use all means at their disposal
32 to guarantee the formal adoption of WFPs. As in other policy areas, governments wishing
33 to promote this type of policy need to undertake formal action and impose guaranteed
34 standards on all firms.

35
36 Some authors (Koekemoer and Petrou, 2019) argue that certain measures might be
37 put in place to advice companies on how to deal with their workers' work-family
38 relations. Knowledge of the mechanisms through which the transformation comes about
39 will enable them to focus on those with the most decisive impact on companies and
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3 society in the future as new trends emerge from the COVID19 crisis: an increase in
4 telecommuting, flexible arrangements and gender equality in families.

5
6 It may seem obvious that the incorporation of women into the labour market
7 encourages a more supportive work-family culture; in fact, while the presence of women
8 in the labour market does lead to new demands, the goal now must be to ensure the real
9 implementation of WFP for all: men and women. However, this does not remove the need
10 for the active reinforcement of this culture, such that workers cease to see their careers or
11 jobs threatened by a refusal to take work home, leaving work on time, opting for a shorter
12 working day or putting family first in certain circumstances.

13
14 The role of managers in promoting WFPs appears clear too. Managerial strategy,
15 communication, planning and involvement are all key factors in the development of work-
16 family policies. The main impulse must therefore be directed at raising awareness among
17 firm leaders, since these are the ones in the driving seat when it comes to putting ideas
18 into practice. Organizations with genuine convictions regarding these policies should
19 devote resources to training managers in how to implement them effectively and
20 efficiently at all levels of the workforce to ensure success.

21
22 Limitations stemming from the survey used for this study must be taken into account
23 when interpreting the results obtained. A broader study with other measures obtained
24 from a new survey that distinguishes between the availability and uptake of the practices
25 might yield more insightful results.

26
27 As for the Women variable, our study only considers the number of women workers.
28 It is likely that the seniority of women may be a key factor in establishing work-family
29 policies (Bajdo and Dickson, 2001; Ingram and Simons, 1995; Milliken, *et al.* 1998).
30 However, information of the seniority level of women is not available in the survey.
31 Having this kind of information would help to better understand the role of women in
32 organizations and in their transformation towards family-responsible companies.

33
34 The cross-sectional nature of the data does not enable conclusions in relation to the
35 possible causality of relationships. We have tried to minimize this limitation through our
36 theoretical explanation of the relationships, but the results are limited to the period
37 analysed. Having longitudinal data in the future could enrich the results obtained and
38 facilitate comparative analysis.

39
40 Finally, since the survey refers to firms in Spain where there was a delay in the
41 adoption of work-family policies, the findings may only apply to countries whose
42 characteristics are like those of the Spanish setting and generalizations must therefore be
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made with caution. The extension of this analysis to other cultural settings might generate more widely applicable guidelines for managerial action.

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Figure 1. Model of family responsible firm and female share workforce

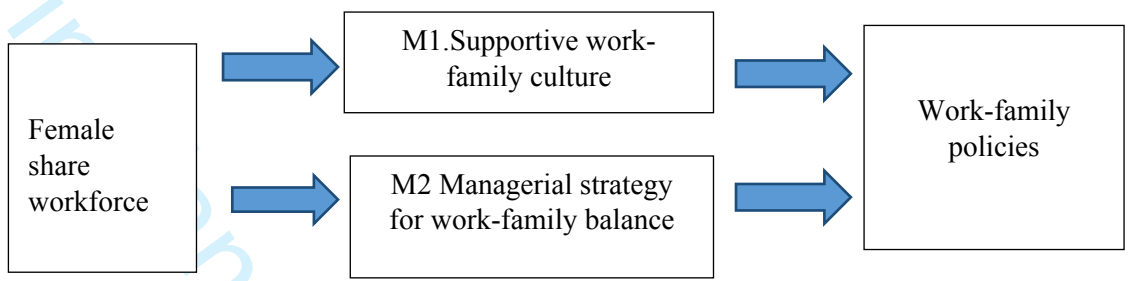


Table I. Results for the relationship between female share workforce and WFP and mediating role of SWFC.

	Dependent Variables					
	WFP		SWFC		WFP	
<i>Independent and control variables:</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
SWFC					.378***	.02
Women	.089**	.03	.102**	.03	.051	.03
Size	.168*	.07	-.183*	.07	.238***	.06
Non- Temporary	.196***	.03	.151***	.04	.139***	.03
Sector	.107	.06	.040	.06	.087	.05
Trade Union	.372***	.02	.185***	.03	.302***	.02
<i>Intercept</i>	-1.525***	.14	-.794***	.16	-1.225***	.13
F(5,1042)	51.12***		F(5,1042)	14.41***	F(6,1041)	85.69***
Adj R ²	.19			.06		.33
Indirect Effect	(Sobel)				.038**	.01
Direct Effect					.051	.03
Indirect Effect	(boots5000)				.038**	.01
Direct Effect					.051	.03
Indirect Effect	(boots10000)				.038**	.01
Direct Effect					.051	.03

Starred coefficients *p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Table II. Results for the relationship between % of women and WFP and mediating role of MSWF

	Dependent Variables					
	WFP		MSWF		WFP	
<i>Independent and Control variables:</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
MSWF					.052***	.03
Women	.089**	.03	.131***	.03	.021	.03
Size	.168*	.07	-.079	.06	.210***	.06
Non- Temporary	.195***	.04	.116**	.04	.135***	.03
Sector	.102	.06	.052	.06	.075	.05
Trade Union	.372***	.03	.447***	.02	.139***	.03
<i>Intercept</i>	-1.52***	.14	-1.326***	.14	-.834***	.13
F(5,1042)	51.12***		F(5,1042)	69.23***	F(6,1041)	115.70***
Adj R ²	.19			.24		.39
Indirect Effect	(Sobel)				.068***	.01
Direct Effect					.021	.03
Indirect Effect	(boots5000)				.068***	.02
Direct Effect					.021	.03
Indirect Effect	(boots10000)				.068***	.02
Direct Effect					.021	.03

Starred coefficients *p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

Table III. Results for the relationship between % of women, SWFC, MSWF and WFP. Starred coefficients

	WFP	
<i>Independent and Control variables:</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Women	.011	.02
SWFC	.228***	.02
MSWF	.418***	.03
Size	.243***	.05
Non- Temporary	.112***	.03
Sector	.071	.05
Trade Union	.142***	.02
<i>Intercept</i>	-.788***	.12
F(7,1040)		117.19***
Adj R ²		.44

*p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001