



INSTITUTO
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**PARENTHOOD & LEADER'S ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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Master of Science in Human Resources & Organizational Consulting

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October, 2020



**BUSINESS
SCHOOL**

Department of Human Resources & Organizational Consulting

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“Don’t be afraid. Be focused. Be determined. Be hopeful. Be empowered.”

- Michelle Obama

Resumo

Escândalos éticos no mundo corporativo demonstram como a falta de ética pode afetar negativamente as empresas, incentivando uma melhoria ética e responsabilidade social corporativa. Os líderes desempenham um papel essencial na conduta ética de uma organização. Portanto, é crucial que hajam estudos exploratórios sobre liderança ética e tomada de decisão de um líder relativamente a situações éticas. Estudos anteriores abordam extensivamente a tomada de decisão ética dos líderes. No entanto, os autores não incluíram outros papéis sociais em seus estudos. Este estudo exploratório tem como objetivo avançar o conhecimento relativo à tomada de decisões éticas, integrando dois temas: o papel da parentalidade e da liderança. Esta análise qualitativa tem como objetivo explorar as narrativas e experiências de pais líderes sobre a paternidade e o seu efeito na abordagem de tomada de decisão ética nas organizações. Para tal, foram realizadas 22 entrevistas semiestruturadas com pais que desempenham papéis de liderança. Através de uma análise temática, quatro temas e 11 subtemas foram identificados. Os resultados mostraram que os líderes que são pais demonstram maior empatia quando tomam decisões referentes a outros pais. Relativamente à tomada de decisão ética, a sua consciência moral é maioritariamente afetada pelo papel de pais quando confrontados com situações problemáticas de outros pais. Noutras situações éticas infundidas no contexto de trabalho, os líderes tendem a separar o papel parental do papel de liderança para agir de forma eficaz. Este estudo incita a teoria e as organizações a terem em consideração o indivíduo como um todo.

Palavras-chave: tomada de decisão ética; paternidade; maternidade; liderança

JEL classificação:

- Y4 Dissertações
- M12 Gestão de pessoas | Executivos | Remuneração dos executivos

Abstract

Many ethical scandals in the business world have shown how ethical misconduct can negatively affect the company and have further urged improved business ethics and greater corporate social responsibility. Leaders play an essential role in the ethical conduct of an organization. Therefore, it is crucial to further study leaders' ethics and decision-making regarding ethical infused situations. Previous research provides a profound collection of empirical studies that study leaders' ethical decision-making approach. However, authors have failed to include other social roles in their studies. This study aims to advance knowledge in ethical decision-making by integrating two roles: the role of being a parent and the role of being a leader. This qualitative study aims to capture parent leaders' experiences on parenthood and its effect on their ethical decision-making approach in the context of work. For this purpose, 22 semi-structured interviews with parent leaders have been conducted. With the help of the thematic analysis, four themes and 11 sub-themes have been identified. The findings showed that parent leaders show higher empathy for other parents which increases the moral intensity. Regarding their ethical decision-making, their moral awareness is mainly affected by their parental role when confronted with other parents' problematic situations. For any other ethical infused situations in the context of work, leaders tend to compartmentalize their parental role from their leadership role to act on their role effectively. Implications of this study urges theory and businesses to consider the whole self of an individual.

Keywords: ethical decision-making; fatherhood; motherhood; parenthood; leadership

JEL classification:

- Y4 Dissertations
- M12 Personnel Management | Executives | Executive Compensation

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research background and problem formulation

Ethical conduct for businesses is crucial for both their short-term and long-term success (Fleishman et al., 1991; Mumford et al., 2007). The financial crisis in 2007 is a good example of how decisions that are not based on ethical values can affect stakeholders and, ultimately, companies in a bad way. Other corporate scandals further prove the urge of improved business ethics and greater corporate responsibility, such as Enron, who falsified their accounting books, or Monsanto, who is dealing with critical issues regarding their genetically modified crops. These scandals resulted in various consequences for organizations such as a bad reputation, lawsuits, and loss of trust among the stakeholders (Selart & Johansen, 2011). These, however, are the big scandals that attract the attention of the media and the wider public. Nevertheless, behaving unethically not only links to big misdemeanors but also applies to relatively "smaller" offenses. Behind any (un-)ethical action, there lays an ethical decision-making process an individual goes through which is applied to resolve an ethical problem (Yang et al., 2016). According to Jones (1991), an ethical decision is both legal and morally acceptable to the wider community. Conversely, an unethical decision is illegal and not morally acceptable to a large part of the community (Jones, 1991).

In the business context, the role of a leader plays a critical role in the ethical conduct of an organization. According to Brown et al. (2005), leaders are in "a unique position to mete out justice because of their legitimate power, control of resources, and responsibility for important decisions about employees" (p.119) and other stakeholders (Kuhn & Weibler, 2012). Previous research has shown the importance of ethical leaders and their positive effect on followers' ethical conduct and ethical decision-making practices (Sharif & Scandura, 2014) and overall positive organizational outcomes such as increased consumer trust and reduced follower turnover intentions (Eisenbeiss, 2012).

Given the detrimental consequences of unethical decisions, understanding how leaders make ethical decisions, and the factors that influence ethical decision-making become critical. Empirical studies have looked at the effects of individual and organizational variables on ethical decision-making, including education, job satisfaction, and work experience (Ford & Richardson, 1994; Loe et al., 2000; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). Such studies tend to include general measures and theoretical mechanisms (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). Starting with Jones (1991), other studies have looked at the impact of moral issues characteristics (moral intensity) on ethical decision-making (Selart, 1996). Many empirical studies have studied the effects of individual and organizational variables at different stages in ethical decision processes, including awareness, ethical judgment, intent, and behavior. However, to the

knowledge of the researcher no other study has studied how other social roles an individual occupies in his/her self, influences their ethical decision-making process in the context of work.

Just like leaders, parents are part of a challenging environment with varying degrees of human interaction that become increasingly complex over time. According to Guglielmo & Palsule (2014), an important leadership capacity is to be able to thrive in ambiguous situation. Hence, leaders are forced to make decisions with little or vague guidance. This is something that parents often also have to do because they are often faced with situations or challenges connected with their children where they have little knowledge of. Parents often make a common statement by saying: "Being a parent makes you a better person." In fact, parenthood is one of the keystone experiences in the lives of humans and is associated with psychological and physiological changes for parents (e.g., Berg & Wynne-Edwards, 2001; Eibach & Mock, 2011; Gilead & Liberman, 2014; Gordon et al., 2010).

Due to the similar nature in tasks and responsibilities, the researcher in this study assumes that leaders who are parents have a different approach to ethical decisions. This is because becoming a parent automatically creates the emergence of a new social role. According to Ashforth (2001), "individuals develop a sense of who and what they are - their goals, values, beliefs, and normative way of thinking, acting, and even feeling - at least partly from their social membership. When the social identity is salient, the individual thinks and acts as an exemplar of the category or role" (p.26). In the parents' case, some exemplary behaviors assigned to them are: being responsible and acting as role-models while always being guided by a moral compass. These are traits and behaviors that are favorable for the ethical decision-making of leaders.

1.2 Research objective and questions

With the increasing need to understand leaders' ethical decision-making process and hence, reduce unethical misdemeanors in the context of work, this thesis aims to further explore knowledge in the field of ethical decision-making by integrating two social roles: the role of being a leader and the role of being a parent. Because no other scholar has linked the influence of parenthood on the ethical decision-making process of leaders, the focus of this thesis is made on firstly generating a broad understanding. Therefore, this study adopts a qualitative approach to capture parents leaders' experiences with parenthood and the changes they have experienced in their sense of self and how these impact their ethical decision-making process.

To achieve the overall aim of this study, three research questions have been formulated:

- RQ1: According to parent leaders, how did they as individuals change due to parenthood?
- RQ 2: What differences between mothers and fathers are evident from parent leaders' reported perspectives and narratives on changes due to parenthood?
- RQ3: According to parent leaders, how has parenthood changed their approach to moral issues in the context of work?

Answering the research questions will shed light on parent leaders' internal processes and how parenthood influences their ethical decision-making as reported by the participants. It will help to get a deeper understanding of this topic and hence facilitate the generation of hypotheses for future researches.

1.3 Outline

In chapter 2, the researcher looks at empirical studies in the field of parenthood, leadership and ethical decision-making. The goal is to create a clear picture of previous research's status quo while also highlighting gaps in current literature that are aimed to be filled within the framework of this study. This thesis at hand uses a qualitative approach to achieve the overall research aim and to be able to answer the research questions. In chapter 3, the means to collect and analyze necessary and valuable data is presented. Chapter 4 summarizes the interviews' findings as analyzed using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clark, 2006). Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the findings and the respective research questions. In chapter 6, the limitations of this study are outlined, and the overall conclusion to the study is formed.

2. Literature Review

As evident from the previous chapter, there is a need to further understand leaders' ethical decision-making process by including other social roles that constitute the individual. This thesis further includes the role of being a parent due to its similarity. The following chapter will present the current status quo of empirical studies in parenthood and ethical decision-making. In the interim conclusions, the importance of this study will be highlighted

2.1 Parenthood

2.1.1 Parenthood and leadership

This study integrates two social roles that share many similarities in the nature of their responsibilities. In both scenarios, the objective is to lead a group of individuals and exert influence (Overbey & White, 2017). For example, parents who have a young child need to focus on basic needs. This is comparable with junior-level leaders who have to focus on basic and directive leadership style skills. The older the child gets, the more the parent has to consider education and their children's social aspects. Similarly, leaders with more seniority are learning various leadership styles that are more engaging (Overbey & White, 2017).

Ferguson et al. (2006) found a connection between autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles in parenting. The authors argued that leadership styles are crucial in comprehending parenting, as well. They described parenting as a type of leadership that influences the development and personalities of children (Ferguson et al., 2006), similarly to how leadership styles have an impact on "group morale and group performance" in adults (Ferguson et al., 2006, p.43). They concluded that an interactive relationship between parenting and leadership exists and that the chosen leadership styles of parents influence both their execution of leadership in the workplace and their homes (Ferguson et al., 2006). Similarly, Popper & Mayseless (2003) established a link between 'good parents' and transformational leaders by exploring the relationship between transformational leaders and their followers in a comparable way as the relationship between parents and their children.

In her dissertation, Fedrizzi-Williams (2016) explored the lives of women who were both college presidents and mothers. The study's objective was to find out how the skills related to mothers related to their skills as college presidents (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016). The findings showed that the participants agreed that their experiences as mothers enhanced their attributes, skills, and experience as leaders (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016). The participants in her study also stated that being mothers gave them a greater perspective in their leadership positions and more confidence to handle difficult situations at work (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016). Furthermore, they also highlighted that their parental role enhanced their ability to negotiate, work better with diverse teams, employ a team-work approach, display greater emotional

intelligence and become more empathetic in dealing with others (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016). Lastly, the participants articulated that dealing with their children's different personalities helped them deal effectively with a variety of people at work (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016).

Even though empirical studies show that leaders can benefit from their parental role positively, there are also limits to the similarities between the two roles. It is essential for parent leaders to know when to use their parental skills in the context of work because subordinates are not children. Inappropriate references can be seen as offensive by employees. If leaders understand the differences and similarities between their workplace and their family, they can profit from their parenting skills. In their book, Chris and Reina Komisarjevshy (2004) compared the two roles. The authors stated that similarly to employees, children are different and need various approaches to empower and support them in their development. These studies and statements show that parenthood can have an influence on the skills of working parents in the context of work.

2.1.2 Parenthood and the self

Transition to parenthood is a life-changing time for parents and a significant developmental stage that influences aspects of their psychological functioning and their well-being (Meleis, 2010; Mercer, 2004). When thinking of the parental role, traditionally, specific tasks and behaviors are ascribed to a mother and a father's role. Women are the ones who do a more significant share of the housework and the family-related work. In contrast, the fathers are seen as the breadwinners who provide financial security for their family (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2003). However, in modern parenthood, the roles are slowly being re-defined with an increase in significant social and economic changes in the family. Next to the increasing change of family composition (e.g., same-sex marriage or single-parenting), women desire to combine motherhood with full-time employment (Polivanova, 2018). Despite how society defines parents' role, one thing is clear: becoming a parent always means adjusting to a new social role.

Social roles are deeply connected with the concept of identity. Identity refers to the unique characteristics of individuals in particular roles in society (Stets & Serpe, 2013). In social identity theory (SIT) and identity theory (IT), the self is flexible and can be categorized, classified, or named in particular ways concerning other social categories. In social identity theory, this process is called self-categorization (Turner et al., 1987) and identification in identity theory (McCall & Simmons, 1978). By applying the self-categorization process, an identity is formed (Stets & Burke, 2000). According to social identity theory, the individual is made out of a personal and social identity. While personal identity includes idiosyncratic features, the social identity contains attributes and is more salient (Stets & Burke, 2000). Identity Theory, on the other hand, has its roots in symbolic interactionism. The

sociological theory suggests that a large proportion of one's sense of self is based on others' perceptions (Mead, 1934). By interacting with others socially and internalizing collective values, meanings, and standards, one comes to see oneself from others' perspectives. Consequently, one can build a more or less stable sense of self (Burke, 1991; Stryker, 1980). Additionally, IT notes that the sense of self is based on the various roles a person is occupying in society. Here, Ashforth (2001) states that interacting with other individuals, one acts out a particular role. Besides that, the sense of self can also vary across roles. This is because values, meanings, and standards tend to vary across roles, too. The IT further notes that the roles one occupies are set up in a hierarchy of salience (Stryker, 1980) which shows the willingness to act on an identity (Stryker & Serpe, 1994, p.17). Following Stryker, this readiness resides in the individual and not in the situation (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). People show their salient role identities to express themselves and gain acceptance from members of their role set (McCall & Simmons, 1978).

Both theories, the SIT and the IT see the self as a social construct where the definitions of the self are deduced from the person's membership in particular social categories (SIT) and roles (IT) (Ashforth, 2001). The typical response of a person to the question "who are you?" is usually made in social categories (e.g., male, husband) (Ebaugh, 1988). According to Ashforth (2001), "following identity theory, to the extent that a role cues or connotes a certain persona [...] we can speak of a role-based identity or simply, role identity. Role identities are socially constructed definitions of self-in-role (this is who a role occupant is) and anchor or ground self-conceptions in social domains. To switch roles is to switch social identities" (p.27).

2.1.3 Parental and work-family challenges

Occupying different social roles can be very challenging in terms of integrating the responsibilities that come with the roles in one's life. Due to definitions established about parents' role by society, parents also have the challenge of being faced with prejudices whenever they are acting outside the norm of how a parent normally should.

Various studies showed that parents' perception of social pressure and judgments influences their parenthood (Brown, 2010; Damant et al., 2012; Garcia, 2011; Trice-Black, 2010 as cited in Lévesque et al., 2020). Women are especially pressured to conform with social definitions of the ideal mother. These pressures also apply to mothers' ability to balance their roles as partners, mothers, and professionals (Trice-Black, 2010 as cited in Lévesque et al., 2020). They are pressured to invest their time and energy in their child while also being independent and pursuing their career and interests (Brown, 2010 as cited in Lévesque et al., 2020). Consequently, they are not free to define the maternal role for themselves. They, however, try to conform to the *new momism*, which refers to the set of ideals, practices and norms that often shown in the media. On the surface, these set of ideals seem to celebrate

motherhood but in reality, set unrealistic standards of perfection that are outside of reach (Douglas & Michaels, 2004). On the other hand, fathers are pressured to provide adequate family income and be the family's primary wage earner (Kushner et al., 2017). According to Kushner et al. (2017), this social pressure limits their possibility of enacting other parenting roles and to be as involved in their child's education and development.

Nevertheless, modern parenthood has moved away from traditional models, introducing new family definitions (Lévesque, 2020). The Pew Research Study from 2013 shows that American mothers now spend, on average, 21 hours per week on paid work while in 1965, it was 8 hours. American fathers now spend more time with housework and child care compared to half a century ago. Nevertheless, fathers have not caught up to mothers regarding time spent on child care and doing household chores.

With an increasing number of dual-income households where more women and men demand more involvement in either their work or parental role, the challenges of integrating work and family are also increasing. When talking about successfully integrating work and personal life, the concept of work-life balance is important to be discussed. Work-life balance is a state of well-being to handle multiple responsibilities and has become a trending topic for organizations in the past decade (Ahmad, 2008). For employees, work-life balance is an optimal solution to handle work responsibilities and family obligations effectively. Organizations with policies that favor work-life balances are seen as a massive incentive by employees and an additional motivator besides their salary. Studies found out that employees favor the quality of life more than the remuneration (Vloeberghs, 2002). They want to have the feeling of doing meaningful work and have more control over their tasks. Hence, the most attractive employers are not great only because of their benefits, but because of their modern culture and policies that provide a supportive workplace with meaningful work (Buddhapriya, 2009). When it comes to the challenges of integrating work and family, women are more affected than men by work-life conflict. Work-family conflict is the conflict between the work and the family role where energy, time, or behavioral demands caused in one role negatively collides with the other role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Even though men also face these challenges, women are more so affected simply because they do most of the household and the child care work, take care of other (older) family members, and other dependents (Ahmad, 2008). Although occupying different roles in work and family can be a source of satisfaction for working women (Crosby, 1987 as cited in Buddhapriya, 2009), a combination of work and family roles is often associated with conflict and stress (Frone et al., 1991; 1992; Lewis & Cooper, 1987; 1988 as cited in Buddhapriya, 2009). In general, work-family conflict is associated with many negative outcomes with regards to work and personal life such as job satisfaction, job turnover, organizational commitment or physical health as well as family and life satisfaction (Allen &

Armstrong, 2006; Allen et al., 2000; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Kossek et al., 2006; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Netemeyer et al., 1996).

Grounded in role theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978), work-family conflicts emerge due to the lack of compatibility between the work and family roles. Work-family conflicts can occur in two directions: work to family or family to work (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Next to the dual-direction, work-family conflict can have multiple forms: time-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflicts. Time-based conflict emerges when time devoted to one role makes it hard for the individual to participate in the other role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Strain-based conflict, on the other hand, refers to the conflict where strain caused in one role impedes successful participation in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Lastly, behavior-based conflict emerges when certain behaviors mandated by one role are not compatible with the other role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For instance, whereas a rather aggressive approach is expected in certain job positions, the same behavior is not suitable for the family who likely needs emotion and affection (Carlson et al., 2003 as cited in Magnini, 2009).

2.1.4 Transition to parenthood

So far, it is evident that becoming a parent also means adjusting to a new social role and that the individuals undergo different types of changes (e.g. Barclay & Lupton, 1999, Ladge & Greenberg, 2015). However, what kind of changes does an individual experience when transitioning to parenthood? Many researchers have studied the effects of changes on individual's psychological and physical well-being and personality traits.

When referring back to the identity theory presented previously in this chapter, personality traits are an essential contributor to identity formation who also serve as an expression of it. In personality literature, there are two leading personality theories. For one, there is the five-factor theory (McCrae & Costa, 2008) that argues that the development of personality traits is primarily determined by intrinsic biological maturation. The social investment theory (Roberts & Wood, 2006), on the other hand, states that personality maturation is linked to age-graded life transitions such as marrying or becoming a parent. This is because the new social roles require individuals to invest in it. For example, parents are expected to act (among other behaviors) in a mature manner, which can lead to changes in their personality traits in the long-run (Bleidorn, 2015; Hennecke et al., 2014).

Under the premise of the social investment theory, few researchers studied the effects parenthood has on individuals' personality traits by mostly using the Big Five personality traits (Bleidorn et al., 2013; Galdiolo & Roskam, 2014). The Big Five personality traits are broad dimensions that consist of *extraversion*, *conscientiousness*, *openness*, *agreeableness*, *neuroticism*. Extraversion is related to sociability, and as Watson and Clark (1997) state, extraverts are more open for social contacts and have more impulses and are more active. On

the other hands, they are less self-preoccupied than introverts and they are less introspective. Extraverts are more likely to take over leadership roles because their traits are very fitting for the nature of a leadership job (Watson & Clark, 1997). Conscientiousness is based on three facets: achievement-oriented, dependability, and orderliness (planning and organization). Openness refers to an individual interest for new things. Individuals who score high in openness, are usually open for new thoughts or ways (Judge et al., 1999). Individuals who score high on agreeableness, on the other hand, are characterized by a cooperative (caring) nature and are likable (good-natured and gentle). The trait neuroticism is characterized by sadness and emotional instability. Individuals who score high in neuroticism tend to experience mood swings, anxiety, and sadness. Individuals who score low in this trait tend to be more stable and emotionally resilient Watson and Clark (1997).

In the study of Scheppingen et al. (2016), the researchers studied if parents show pronounced mean-level increases in agreeableness and conscientiousness compared to non-parents. The authors were able only to find one significant difference between parents and non-parents: fathers-to-be increased significantly more in openness than non-fathers did. In general, several studies found no association between the transition to parenthood and personality change (e.g., Galdiolo & Roskam, 2014; Neyer & Asendorpf, 2001; Bleidorn et al., 2013). On the other hand, other studies reported an increase in neuroticism for parents (Jokela et al., 2009) while others report a decrease in conscientiousness (Specht et al., 2011) over the transition to parenthood. The differences in the outcomes can be accounted for by the researchers' different research designs. Nevertheless, even though some researchers studied parenthood's effects on personality trait development, there is only little research. These studies' results are also not providing a clear picture of how the transition to parenthood influences personality trait changes.

Even though literature still has to increase research forces regarding the personality trait development of parents, there is much more research on the effects of parenthood on various kinds of conditions of individuals such as well-being. When getting close to becoming a parent, many couples decide to get married (Baizán et al., 2004), and many, mostly women, change their work hours after the arrival of their child (Hynes & Clarkberg, 2005). Next to the working hours, partner status is also an essential indicator of parents' well-being in the transition to parenthood. In their study, Kaizer et al. (2010), took these two types of changing conditions to study how parent's well-being is affected by parenthood in the transition phase. They found out that the loss of the work role is one of the factors that decrease new mothers' partnership satisfaction. On the other hand, for new fathers, the transition from a cohabiting relationship to a marriage creates greater loneliness.

2.1.5 Interim conclusion

Individuals who become parents have to adjust to a new social role that brings changes to how they structure their lives, challenges they have to face, and changes in their personality traits. Between the role of being a parent and the role of being a leader Previous research has conducted many studies to determine how parenthood affects individuals' psychological/physical condition, the parent-child relationship, or the child's development. However, it has failed to let parents freely state the changes they have experienced due to parenthood and how they see themselves before and after becoming parents. This is especially important because while reviewing previous research, it is evident that many findings are conflicting. This shows that many aspects of parenthood cannot be easily studied because it is a unique phenomenon being experienced and processed differently. This further supports this work's qualitative approach to give parents the room to express their experiences freely. Besides that, scholars have not extensively researched how individuals can profit from parenthood in their work role as for the skills, insights, and learnings they can apply to work processes. This thesis's main objective is to establish a link between parenthood and leader's ethical decision-making by exploring changes experienced due to parenthood that might impact a leader's ethical decision-making process. Under the premise of the social investment theory, the researcher wants to find out how parents see themselves after parenthood and how they have changed. Previous research and the existing gap in literature supports this objective to advance knowledge in this area. Empirical studies also show differences between mothers and fathers when it comes to parenthood and the experiences they make. Hence, it is evident that it is important to also look include the subjective of both genders in this study.

2.2 Ethical decision-making

The ethical decision-making process is applied to solve an ethical problem (Yang et al., 2016). An ethical problem is a dilemma with an ethical component that requires a reaction. Every ethical problem has a moral intensity, which captures the extent of an issue related to moral imperative in a situation (Jones, 1991). Jones (1991) subdivides moral intensity into six characteristics that influence the ethical decision-making process:

1. Extent of consequences
2. Consensus within society
3. Probability of occurrence of the effect
4. Temporal immediacy
5. Effect of proximity
6. Effect of density

Each of these components increases the moral intensity. For instance, a person who is faced with an ethical problem that shows a significant physical distance to the decision-maker can be considered less morally significant than a problem that occurs in immediate proximity. According to Yang et al. (2016), just merely noticing an ethical problem does not necessarily mean that the decision-maker will choose to act in an ethical manner.

In ethical decision-making research, gender is the most studied variable (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005). While many studies did not find any significant differences between men and women regarding ethical decision-making (Chan and Leung, 2006; Sweeney and Costello, 2009; Zgheib, 2005), other researchers found significant differences in their studies between the two sexes. Here, the results are mixed. In a few researches, the authors have found out that women are more ethical than men (e.g., Decker & Calo, 2007) and in others studies, women were found to be more unethical than men (e.g., Doty et al., 2005; Marques & Azevedo-Pereira, 2009). These mixed results motivated other authors to conduct meta-analyses to clarify these findings. In those meta-analyses, it was found that women are more ethical than men (e.g., Borkowski & UgrasSource, 1998; Franke et al., 1997; Pan & Sparks, 2012), or that men are more unethical than women (e.g., Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). According to Yang et al. (2016), women are more vulnerable to social desirability by behaving in ways that are appreciated by society. Hence, the fact that women were found to be more ethical than men can be attributed to females' higher social desirability response bias (Dalton & Ortegren, 2011; Yang et al., 2016). Social desirability describes the tendency of individuals to portray themselves in a favorable manner with respect to current social norms (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Researches in business ethics, in general, are sensitive to social desirability response bias due to two distinct reasons (Fernandes & Randall, 1992; Schoderbek & Deshpande, 1996; Yang et al., 2016). First, individuals tend to exaggerate willingness to behave ethically to produce a society-oriented image (Cohen & Pant, 1998; Peterson, 2004). Second, in ethical decision-making research, self-administered questionnaires have been used extensively. This, however, led to results that were affected by the social desirability response bias (Randall & Gibson, 1990; Yang et al., 2016).

2.2.1 Components of ethical decision-making

Kohlberg's (1969) model of cognitive moral development is the theoretical foundation for many theories of ethical decision-making (Rest, 1986; Trevino, 1986). Kohlberg developed a six-stage moral development model in which he addressed how the cognitive processes of ethical decision-making become more sophisticated as individuals mature (Haines & Leonard, 2007). In this study, Kohlberg (1969) highlights that children's cognitive ability progresses from stage to stage. He divided the six stages into three levels: Level 1 – pre-conventional morality, level 2 – conventional morality, and level 3 – post-conventional morality. Level 1 includes the first

two stages, namely punishment orientation (stage 1) and reward orientation (stage 2). Level 2 contains good boy/girl orientation (stage 3) and authority orientation (stage 4). Lastly, level 3 incorporates the last two stages, namely social-contract orientation (stage 5) and ethical principle orientation (stage 6). In his study, Kohlberg designed a series of dilemmas (e.g., Heinz steals the drug) presented to participants in a guided interview-style testing. Here, the reasoning participants noted to justify their answers were used to represent one's moral developmental stage.

Resting upon Kohlberg's work, Rest (1986) further developed the theory while also retaining the cognitive-developmental perspective. He presented his four-component ethical decision-making model consisting of moral awareness, moral judgment, moral intention, and moral action. In the first step of the model, the ethical problem needs to be noticed by the person (moral awareness). Noticing an ethical problem includes two aspects: (1) The person has to realize that he/she has the choice between at least two alternatives, and (2) his/her actions can have an impact on other persons. In the second step, the person judges this problem using values, social norms, and professional codes (moral judgment). Thirdly, the person has to intend to act ethically or not (moral intention). Finally, the person implements his/her intention by behaving accordingly (moral action) (Yang et al., 2016). The model is the most common framework in the field of ethical decision-making (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008; Trevino et al., 2006) and assumes that ethical decisions are made conscious and rational (Fahr, 2014). The interplay between conscious and unconscious behavior is displayed by Tensbrunsel & Smith-Crowe (2008). According to the authors, there are four different results from ethical decision-making: (1) intended ethicality, (2) intended unethicity, (3) unintended ethicality, and (4) unintended unethicity. According to Rest (1986), an individual can only move through the ethical decision-making process when he/she notices the ethical implication in the situation he/she faces. However, various studies show that individuals often do not notice an ethical problem due to limited cognitive information processes and the resulting mistakes and biases in noticing the ethical component. Even though the four different components influence each other, they do not necessarily blend into each other. For that reason, an individual is able to accomplish a component but not the subsequent component. An individual is, for example, able to notice an ethical problem and form the right kind of judgment about it but will still not act ethically.

2.2.2 Motivation for unethical behavior

Even though the consequences of behaving unethically can be drastic, there are still several motivations for unethical behavior. According to Winston (2007), the motivators for unethical behavior are competition, strive for success, and the lack of preparation for ethical decision-making. The author further notes that "ethical choices that may result in less immediate

success may be difficult to make when faced with competing individual and organization priorities, such as being successful in relation to competitors and the overall market and potential financial rewards” (Winston, 2007, p. 233). In addition to the previously mentioned motivators, research in connection with ethical decision-making also shows that especially managers overestimate their ability to make ethical decisions (Winston, 2007). Banaji et al. (2003) made the following statement in regards to that: “More than two decades of research confirms that, in reality, most of us woefully short of our inflated self-perception. We are deluded by what Yale psychologist David Amor calls the illusion of objectivity, the notion that we are free of the same biases we are so quick to recognize in others. What is more, these unconscious, or implicit, biases can be contrary to our consciously held, explicit beliefs” (Banaji et al., 2003, p. 56).

Concerning unethical decision-making, Tenbrunsel & Messick (2004) introduced the concept of ethical fading, which refers, according to the authors, to the process in which the moral implications in a moral issue is ‘fading’. Moral decisions and emotions are processed in the same parts of the brain. Therefore, ethical decisions are made automatically, instinctively, and are therefore prone to self-deception. According to Tensbrunsel & Messick (2004), self-deception refers to an individual's unawareness of the process that leads to form opinions and judgments. This includes the lies individuals tell themselves and the secrets that they keep from themselves (Bok, 1989 as cited in Tensbrunsel & Messick, 2004). An ethical decision is a tradeoff between self-interest and moral principles. By avoiding the moral implication in a dilemma, individuals can decide and behave in a self-interested manner while still believing that they are an ethical person. False beliefs about oneself can lead to errors in judgment regarding moral responsibility and the estimates of the amount of harm it can cause (Bok, 1989 as cited in Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). Hence, self-deceit is in the way of morality, and by getting rid of self-deceit, individuals would be more capable of making moral decisions (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004).

2.2.3 Interim conclusion

Given the consequences of unethical decisions, understanding how leaders make ethical decisions, and how internal and external factors influence the approach is fundamental. So far, previous research has studied the effects of individual and organizational variables on ethical decision-making. However, when it comes to individual factors, empirical studies have failed to include other social roles, such as parenthood, that individuals occupy besides their work role but could substantially impact how they view, process, and approach moral issues. For that reason, the purpose of this study of capturing parent leader's changes due to parenthood and the impact it has on their ethical decision-making process is sustained.

3. Methodology

Employing qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data has gained more research popularity in the past decades (Strauss & Corbin, 2006). Other than quantitative research methods where the representation of the world is symbolized with numerical values, the qualitative research method approach offers representations of the world, which are primarily linguistic (Heppner et al., 1999). Qualitative research studies the behavior of individuals. The interpretation of this behavior is according to Heppner et al. (1999) the most significant process to be studied. In this study, the purpose is to capture parent leader's changes due to parenthood and study the effect on their ethical decision-making process in the context of work. Qualitative inquiry and analysis fit this purpose better than a quantitative methodology could offer because it allows the researcher explore the data with stronger sensitivity regarding the participant experiences. Besides that, there is no research on this topic so far. Therefore, qualitative methods are suitable for this study because it allows to freely explore the topic. Due to the fact, that the qualitative approach uses individual experiences, context and subjective interpretation, generalizability is not possible, nor is it a goal (Heppner et al., 1999).

3.1 Participants

For qualitative research, several authors (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005) recommended using 8 to 15 interviewees (especially for deep non-structured interviews), with fewer participants needed when more than one interview is conducted per participant or when the group of participants is particularly homogenous. Given that the researcher emphasized an equal gender distribution within the participants, 22 interviews were conducted with 12 fathers and ten mothers who expressed interest in participating. This, in turn, exceeds the suggested 12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Participants in this study were recruited with the snowball sampling (also known as chain referral sampling) method. With this method's help, interview partners with whom the author has already been in contact with use their social network to refer the researcher to further persons that fit the criteria of the participants needed for this study. A total of 30 leaders were contacted per mail to participate in the study. The email informed the potential participants of the researcher's identity and the research purpose and method.

PARENTHOOD & LEADER'S ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

The potential participants were asked to consider participating if they met the following criteria:

- the person has at least one child
- the person is currently occupying a leadership position where she/he executes leadership tasks and manages a team of a minimum of two persons
- the person occupied a leadership position before and after having children

Participants ages ranged from 32 to 68 years (Mean = 45.8 years; Median = 46 years) and had, on average, two children. Most of the interview participants obtained a Master's degree and currently work in the insurance sector. On average, the interviewees have a total experience of 14 years. Table 1 on the next page shows a detailed look at the demographic information of the participants.

PARENTHOOD & LEADER'S ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

Table 1: Overview of demographic information of the interview participants

| Interviewee | Age (years) | Gender | Educational level | Current job position | Seniority current company (years) | in Total number of years as a leader | Total number of children |
|-------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| I01 | 49 | M | Master's degree | Chief Financial Officer | 2,5 | 19 | 4 |
| I02 | 38 | M | PhD | Member of the executive board | 3 weeks* | 8 | 1 |
| I03 | 49 | F | Secondary school | Team leader | 29 | 20 | 1 |
| I04 | 68 | M | Master's degree | Chief Executive Officer | 40 | 40 | 3 |
| I05 | 36 | M | Master's degree | Head of department | 4 | 7 | 1 |
| I06 | 56 | F | Secondary school | Chief Executive Officer | 25 | 35 | 3 |
| I07 | 49 | F | Secondary school | Team leader | 28 | 22 | 2 |
| I08 | 47 | F | Master's degree | Head of department | 23 | 19 | 1 |
| I09 | 62 | M | Secondary school | Head of department | 22 | 26 | 3 |
| I10 | 38 | M | PhD | Head of department | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| I11 | 37 | M | Master's degree | Head of department | 2,5 | 2,5 | 1 |
| I12 | 56 | M | Secondary school | Team leader | 35 | 27 | 1 |
| I13 | 35 | M | Master's degree | Head of department | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| I14 | 52 | M | Master's degree | Team leader | 18 | 22 | 2 |
| I15 | 51 | F | Secondary school | Team leader | 28 | 22 | 2 |
| I16 | 41 | F | PhD | Team leader | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| I17 | 42 | F | PhD | Head of division | 1 | 13 | 2 |
| I18 | 32 | F | Bachelor's degree | Head of department | 14 | 9 | 1 |
| I19 | 35 | F | Secondary school | Team leader | 16 | 5 | 1 |
| I20 | 40 | F | Master's degree | Manager | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| I21 | 50 | M | Master's degree | Head of department | 23 | 19 | 2 |
| I22 | 45 | M | Secondary school | Head of department | 22 | 13 | 2 |

* In the interview, the participant mostly referred to his previous role where he has been the head of department for three years

3.2 Data collection

The data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews. Due to the explanatory nature of this thesis, the non-standardized (qualitative) interview is ideal for probing answers so that the interviewees can explain or build on their responses. This will, in turn, add more significance and depth to the data (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007). Besides that, this form of data collection led to the discussion of topics that the researcher has not considered but contributes to the understanding of this subject.

The researcher has created the interview transcript for the semi-structured interviews in cooperation with the thesis supervisors. Initially, the transcript has been formulated in English but has been translated to German. This is because the researcher decided to conduct the interviews in German to allow participants to elaborate their responses in a language that they feel comfortable with and possessed the linguistic tools to do so. The translation has been checked proofed by a British/German native who fluently speaks German and English.

It is important to highlight that the topic of ethics is very sensitive to most individuals. To avoid social desirability response bias, the researcher did not include the terms *ethical* or *morals* in the interview transcript. The author replaced these terms with the synonyms *difficult decisions* and *dilemmas*. Social desirability response bias refers to the tendency of participants to give answers in a manner that are seen favorably by others based on social norms and standards (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). In order to produce a more society-oriented image, individuals tend to exaggerate willingness to behave ethically (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987).

After the final review, the transcript included 16 main questions which roughly covered the following subjects (please see appendix A for the full interview transcript):

- Changes in the self, due to parenthood in private life
- Changes in the self, due to parenthood in the context of work
- Changes in working style and relationships due to parenthood in the context of work
- Participant's general decision-making process
- Participant's changed approach to difficult decisions due to parenthood

Before posing the questions, the researcher exerted a lot of importance to the interview's opening because of its influence on the rest of the interview. Here, the topic of the thesis has been presented as well as the objective. The author presented herself and obtained verbal consent from the participants to record the interview for data analysis purposes.

Initially, the researcher opted for face-to-face interviews because in-person interaction allows for a naturalistic setting while investigating a social phenomenon (Heppner et al., 1999). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out at the beginning of 2020, video calls

and phone interviews have been conducted to not harm the participants' and the researcher's health. Next to the interview transcript, the interviewees were also asked to provide the researcher with socio-demographic information about themselves (please see appendix B for the socio-demographic questionnaire). In a period of three weeks (21.04.2020 - 08.05.2020), all of the interviews have been conducted which varied in length between 22 and 55 minutes (Mean = 22:35 minutes).

3.3 Data Analysis

For data analysis the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) called MAXQDA has been used which is a tool that helps to analyze qualitative research. According to Saunders & Thornhill (2007), the use of CAQDAS offers a range of advantages such as providing continuity and enhancement of transparency and methodological rigor.

To analyze the data qualitatively, the researcher opted for thematic analysis. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), the method is useful to identify, analyze and to report themes in data. One of the main advantages of thematic analysis is the flexible use of it, that enables the researcher to take on the exploratory nature of this study. As for the approach, the author followed the five phases as described by Braun & Clark (2006; *Note: There are actually six phases in thematic analysis. However, phase 6 has not been included because this thesis already fulfills this phase*):

- Phase 1: familiarize yourself with the data
- Phase 2: Generating initial codes
- Phase 3: Searching for themes
- Phase 4: Reviewing themes
- Phase 5: Defining and name themes

Phase 1: Familiarize yourself with the data

For phase 1, the author familiarized herself with the data generated by the semi-structured interviews by transcribing those into written form. In total, 173 (DIN-A4) pages of transcript have been produced. Due to the fact that the interviews have been conducted in German, the researcher translated them to English. This led to a higher involvement and familiarization with the data because the researcher did not only put the recordings into writing, but it required the researcher to also engage with the linguistic context to translate them correctly. After translating and transcribing all interviews, the author read through all of them and immersed herself with the data. Immersion is the active reading of text passages which is repeated multiple times to search for patterns (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

In phase 2, initial codes have been identified with the help of a mix approach using the inductive and deductive approach. Consequently, the researcher used existing literature on parenthood and ethical decision-making as well as the interview transcript to generate initial codes based on it (King, 2004). This starting point (also referred to as *a priori*) for data analysis can be found in appendix C. In the next step, the researcher actively read through all the interviews using the codes included in the *a priori* list but also adding new ones to the list whenever those appeared to be interesting to the author. Ultimately, a long list of different codes from the deductive and inductive approach has been collated.

Phase 3: searching for themes

In this phase, the researcher re-focused the analysis at a broader level and sorted the different codes from the previous phase into potential themes. For this purpose, the researcher wrote down all the codes on a separate paper and organized them in different themes-piles. The researcher carefully monitored the process of data saturation throughout the coding process to ensure quality and rigor of the themes. Saturation refers to the process of coding data until no new categories, codes or concepts are present (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Empirical studies show that saturation can happen with as little as 12 participant interviews (Guest et al., 2006). This study with a sample of 22 participants, exceeds the suggested 12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006).

Phase 4: reviewing themes

In the fourth phase, the created themes-piles were further refined by taking out themes that show a lack of data support (low number of mentions throughout the data set) or that show high diversity where no relation can be established. Other themes that cohered together meaningfully have been merged while others have been separated due to the clear and identifiable distinction between them.

Phase 5: defining and naming the themes

In this phase, the selected themes are defined and further refined. In this process the author identified the core meaning of each theme and the aspects it captures (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, four themes and 11 sub-themes have been created. Table 2 on the next page shows the final list of themes and sub-themes from the mixed approach (deductive and inductive).

Table 2: List of themes and sub-themes

| Themes | Sub-themes |
|------------------------------------|---|
| (1.) Meaning of parenthood | (1.1.) Responsibility (1.2.) New focus/shift in priorities* |
| (2.) Work-family challenges | (2.1.) Time-based challenges (2.2.) Prejudices and stereotypes* |
| (3.) Developed skills and traits | (3.1.) Empathy* (3.2.) Regulation of emotions* (3.3.) Social skills* (3.4.) Effective use of time* |
| (4.) Approach to ethical decisions | (4.1) No difference to non-parents* (4.2) Rational decision-making (4.3) Moral action |

Note: All the (sub-)themes who have been added to the a priori list in the course of the inductive approach are marked with *

Out of the 11 sub-themes shown in the table, seven of them have been added to the list with the help of the inductive approach. As mentioned before, these are the themes that have emerged from the interviews and represent new information that show a high importance to achieve the overall research objective of this thesis. The remaining sub-themes were included from the a priori list (deductive approach).

3.4 Ethical considerations

The thesis at hand was created in accordance with existing ethical principles for researchers. The researcher has informed all interview participants about the purpose of the study and its objective. Besides that, the researcher assured each participant's privacy by anonymizing any information that could reveal their identity. For that reason, any mentioned names in the interviews have been replaced with the term 'anonymous.' When more than one person's name has been mentioned, the letters 'a, b, c,' and so on, following the alphabet order, have been added to the term. The same has been done for company names which have been replaced by the term 'company'. Also, the job titles have been adjusted by removing specific department names and replacing them with general terms such as "department" or "team" to further ensure the interviewees' privacy. After transcribing all the interviews, the recordings have been deleted.

4. Findings

The main objective of this study is to capture parent leaders' experiences on how changes they experienced in their sense of self due to parenthood have changed their approach to moral issues. As presented in table 2, four themes have been established: 1) meaning of parenthood, 2) developed skills and traits, 3) work-family challenges, 4) approach to ethical decisions.

In the following chapter, the themes and related sub-themes are presented, defined and supported with quotes from the interviews. Due to confidentiality reasons, the names of the interview partners have been concealed. In order to be able to distinguish the participants, the letter "I" and a number from 1 to 22 have been assigned. The number represents the order in which the interviews took place. In addition, the gender of the participant is presented. Due to the limitation of space, not all the comments per theme are represented but only some examples are presented. For all the comments assorted per theme please refer to appendix D.

4.1 Meaning of parenthood

The first theme is 'meaning of parenthood' and refers to the feelings and thoughts the parent leaders have when they describe what parenthood means to them personally. For the participants, parenthood has a very important meaning for them that evokes many positive feelings and emotions. Here, two sub-themes have been especially salient for all participants and show a high frequency: 1) responsibility and 2) new focus/shift in priorities.

Table 3: Theme 1 including sub-themes and frequency

| Theme | Sub-themes | Frequency |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Transition to parenthood | (1.1.) Responsibility | 15 |
| | (1.2.) New focus/shift in priorities | 13 |

Sub-theme 1.1.: Responsibility

Entering parenthood means also entering a new role filled with many tasks for parents. For 15 participants, this transition equipped them with one big duty: the responsibility for another human being besides themselves. In the interviews, the responsibility has been linked to different obligations. For one participant, his responsibilities are connected with his actions where he has to plan accordingly and act with foresightedness:

"In my role as a father, the most essential aspect is the responsibility I took over. Especially, because now I have to plan more into the future. I, now, always have to see

all my actions in the context of my family and I need to consider how this helps the family.”
(I12 – male)

However, being faced with this duty does not come naturally but rather is a learning process. Here, one participant stated that he had to grow into the task of being responsible for someone else:

“[...] my handling with responsibility definitely changed. I think, at the beginning, for me personally it was a completely new role to have responsibility for a little human being and you slowly learn how to handle it. The handling of responsibility for other people is definitely something that you can learn.” (I2 – male)

For some interviewees, the responsibility they now have is connected with the task of equipping their children with the right values and skills for their life.

“[...] for me personally it (fatherhood) means to take over responsibility. I have a responsibility to make sure that the kids learn something from me which they can use to participate successfully in life.” (I4 – male)

“For me personally it means being responsible for two more persons and to teach those persons values.” (I7 – female)

One participant (I9) saw himself responsible for securing the financial aspects regarding his children and family. He put himself in the position of the main wage earner and also measured the success of fulfilling this overall responsibility by how much money he makes.

“There are many responsibilities I had to meet. The most important one was the role of the wage earner. [...] The financial side of the family was always covered by me.” (I9 – male)

Sub-theme 1.2.: New focus/shift in priorities

Next to the responsibility of fulfilling a child's emotional and physical needs, parenthood puts things into perspective for 13 of the participants. This ultimately leads to a shift in their priorities and a new outlook for their lives. It is apparent from the statements of many of the interviewees that becoming a parent has shifted them from an egocentric to a more altruistic attitude. Here, the needs and well-being of their children is put above all other matters in their life including their job.

"I think I was always focused on my career and the kids gave me a different premise. How can I say it? //...They give me a different component that is always in the fore. I have my career and I am basically self-employed but the children are more important." (I06 – female)

"I believe that I used to be a person that was focused on their own topics. I think that is normal at a certain age. It was all about: "What am I doing today? What hobbies do I have? I am going to the gym." Family and friends were also there, of course, but you are in the center of your own world and adjust everything to it. Now, this has shifted completely and I don't think it's sad. This is exactly what this is about. I am not in the center of my thoughts anymore. There are many things that used to be important for me that aren't anymore. I don't think as much about myself. Now, my little one and my family are in the foreground. [...] Other things are in the center of my life and my priorities have changed." (I16 – female)

"While my job was my main priority before I became a mother, it is now still important, but my child is even more important to me." (I18 – female)

For one respondent, this new outlook initiated by becoming a father is also linked to his overall life satisfaction which brings him closer to the answer for the meaning of life.

"I think if you think a lot about the meaning behind life, you get much closer to the answer if you have children. It is very fulfilling and satisfying. Before, you might aim for your career and power but when you have children, you really feel satisfied. Your children become the focus and other things become less important." (I22 – male)

This new focus in life is not only aimed at the children only but is aimed at their family in overall. Some participants clearly state that becoming a parent has made them more family-oriented and value their family more than before.

"I am more family-oriented now not only with regards to us (husband and children) but also regarding the rest of the family. I used to be more in the background but I bonded more with my family and it got reinforced because of the children. When I used to be without children it was often that I thought to myself: "Parents are annoying" ...(laughing). However, now it is not like this anymore and family has a different and more important role for me." (I06 – female)

4.2 Work-family challenges

In the interviews, the parent leaders reported many work-family challenges they face as working parents. This theme refers to the challenges parent leaders face by integrating their work and parental role. Within this theme, two types of challenges have been stated the most by the participants: 1) time-based challenges and 2) prejudices and stereotypes.

Table 4: Theme 2 including sub-themes and frequency

| Theme | Sub-themes | Frequency |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Work-family challenges | (2.1.) Time-based challenges | 11 |
| | (2.2.) Prejudices and stereotypes | 5 |

Sub-theme 2.1.: Time-based challenges

Occupying two roles (or more) can lead to a certain degree of unavailability in terms of time for either the child or the job. In the interview, 11 participants described the challenges that arise due to that timely unavailability. In order to care for their children, parents have to leave work at a certain time and working overtime cannot be done easily as before their parenthood.

“Yes, you try to make everything possible, especially if there are meetings that are out of the normal business hours, in which it could be negatively registered that I again was not able to attend due to the fact that I have a child. So, I try my best not to show that I am timely limited at work.” (I18 – female)

“I often have heard from my colleagues that I am very dedicated and focused at work. I am not that interested in coffee breaks or private talks. This is simply because I want to get even more done in a shorter time. I have heard from my colleagues that they experienced me, let's say, more unfriendly. Please don't get me wrong, I think that my colleagues like me as a person, they just told me that they know that they cannot have private talk with me at work. When I became a mother, this factor has probably even further pointed out which is due to the fact that I don't have much time and I want to get my work done quicker.” (I20 – female)

According to one respondent, women who work part-time due to their motherhood have reduced chances to climb up the career ladder due to the sparse time they have available to perform at the job or to do tasks that require a high energy and time invest:

“We (the interviewee and her partner) are very well organized but mostly women who come back from maternity leave work part-time. And when you work part-time then

everything is different for you and here it also depends on how much percentage you are working. Imagine you are working 20 hours per week, what are you going to do? What about school, further education, networking or more challenging tasks that you are not able to do in those 20 hours? Reducing your hours like that, it is difficult to make a career and to keep up with the pace in the professional setting.” (I16 – female)

Sub-theme 2.2.: Prejudices and stereotypes

Being faced with prejudices and stereotypes is a challenge as stated by 5 respondents. As mentioned before, combining the role of a parent and a leader can lead to reduction of availability in terms of time or even energy resources for either the children or the job. This unavailability is source for many prejudices the interviewees are confronted with:

“[...] I was confronted with statements such as: “You have children and you work? Why are you doing that?” When our children were small, there was this saying: “A good German mother stays home”. You have to take care of the children and whenever I brought my children to the kindergarten and left they were already gossiping about the fact that I was working [...] They said stuff like: “How can she work with three children and her husband is a doctor. What is she doing?”. This was very hurting for me and I had to learn to ignore it and let them speak.” (I06 – female)

“I experienced this especially among other women. Especially other women who have decided to be a mother only and have no job look at me very critically and claim that I might not have enough time for my child.” (I08 – female)

Two male participants stated that due to various stereotypes, taking time from work for their child is still not a usual matter considered for fathers. Hence, they are encountered with a lack of understanding by other colleagues.

“I think it's partially difficult to combine the role as a father with work. So, when I say: “I have to take care of my daughter” or “My daughter is sick and I have to go home”. Not everybody is able to understand that, to formulate it carefully.” (I02 – male)

“Well, I would say that the way how this is still established in our society, it is partly not how it should be. The woman is still more associated with the traditional role and as the person who cares about the children. So, if she has to leave earlier, this makes sense to many people and they accept it easier, while people might have a lack of understanding for a man and would require him probably to focus better on the job by asking why he

needs to look after the children. I think that this is wrong, but I also think that way of thinking is partly still in place. So, a woman in her role as a mother might be able to easily require some flexibility to fulfil her responsibility towards her child and might also be able to easier communicate the challenges that result from this to her.” (I13 - male, pos. 41)

4.3 Developed skills and traits

The third theme generated from the interviews is ‘developed skills and traits. This theme reflects reported changes/development of participants’ traits and skills due to parenthood. For the participants, four skills/traits have been especially developed due to their parental role namely: 1) regulations of emotions, 2) empathy, 3) social skills and 4) organizational skills.

Table 5: Theme 3 including sub-themes and frequency

| Theme | Sub-themes | Frequency |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Developed skills and traits | (3.1.) Regulation of emotions | 14 |
| | (3.2.) Empathy | 20 |
| | (3.3.) Social skills | 10 |
| | (3.4.) Organizational skills | 11 |

Sub-theme 3.1.: Regulation of emotions

This theme refers to participants’ ability to influence the way they experience and express their emotions to a calmer state. In total, 14 participants have stated that becoming a parent has made them calmer in their nature where they don’t respond to situations in the private and work context as intense as before.

“In general, I would say that I became more relaxed, especially as a parent you cannot always freak out due to what your children have done. When I am confronted with difficult decisions then I am calmer and take my time to evaluate everything. I mean did so before too but I would say but now it really is a bit different. With kids you just don’t freak about everything and this is something you start to you apply at work, too.” (I10 – male)

In the interviews, the reason for the calm nature and the increased ability to regulate emotions has been linked to the fact that being a parent put things into perspective and reacting to situations that are not seen as important anymore, is not worth the energy and/or the time.

„I am not too worried when something is cancelled because the world is not going to end because of that. I also don’t have to work to nurture our family. I mean of course it’s nice but if I am not earning as much money, it’s not a problem for us. Therefore, this is not as dramatic as it used to be during the time when I didn’t have children. I used to freak out

when orders didn't come in and now I am calmer. Generally, I am calmer since I have my children. "(I06 – female)

"Well, I was never loud or impetuous, but I think it made me calmer and deliberate. For example, problems I have from which I thought before that they would be very serious [...] are now addressed calmer. It made me focus on the essential." (I13 – male)

Besides that, some interviewees have made the connection between their calm nature and the acceptance of situations. They reported that becoming a parent also means to accept situations the way they are. Especially when they can't exert any control. For one participant (I16), accepting the fact that she now has another priority due to which she is not as available at work was necessary in order to put less pressure on herself of over-performing and proving that she as woman can successfully combine the role of a mother and a leader.

"I felt under pressure and I had to let this go. This has definitely changed when I came back to work. I had to become more relaxed. Fact is I am trying my best and I have a child who gets sick at times and this is my priority. When she throws up in kindergarten and has fever, then it doesn't matter what is going on at work. I complete it and delegate tasks and then I am leaving to pick up my little one. It's a form of acceptance. Things are the way they are and I can't change them. Certain things have priority and I have to organize myself in a different way." (I16 – female)

Sub-theme 3.2.: Empathy

In the interviews, nearly all of the participants (20 participants) agreed on the fact that parenthood has developed their understanding and empathy for the (problematic) situations of other parents and families, in general.

"I think I have more understanding of the complexity of stress and/or pressure that some employees have to go through or have to endure. For example, we have this home office situation at the moment and one of my closer female colleagues sometimes is not able to participate in long calls because she has to take care of her children who are six and four years old. For that I need to have sympathy on how this quarantine affects her life and I think due to my own paternity I have a lot more understanding compared to other people who don't have children who feel like she could put her children in front of the tv just to have time to do her work. Due to my paternity I know that it is not possible." (I01 – male)

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Some respondents reported that now being a parent themselves, they are able to empathize and understand family problems in a way that they haven't when they didn't have children on their own.

"[...] let me put it this way: I am more understanding towards people who are not able to do their work especially because they have to take care of their children. As a leader when you have children yourself, it doesn't matter how compliant you are trying to be, you assess family emergency situations differently compared to when you don't have children."
(I05 – male)

"This changed me to the extent that I am able as a leader to understand my team members better who have all children. I am perfectly able to understand their problems like the current Corona time or when I just notice that they are not really in a good mood because of the children. These are moments where I am able to show more understanding because I have kids on my own. I feel like this also has effect on how I make decisions. I am not going to decide differently due to the fact that someone is a mother or a father. However, when they are in situations due to which they are not able to perform as well, I know how it feels and try to consider different types of solutions. Back then I didn't really do that."
(I07 – female)

Sub-theme 3.3.: Social skills

Some participants have stated that their interactions with regards to their relationship with colleagues and employees have slightly changed due to parenthood. In conversations with colleagues or employees, they now share their experiences made in their parenthood. One respondent (I08) mentions that sharing private stories about her children and the challenges she suffers with her employees has made her more relatable and overall made them closer as such:

"Here, I also showed the human side of me and moved away from facts only when I communicated my motherhood to the team. This triggered the emotional side of the people and I think this is something that I experienced as well when I consider how my colleagues interacted with me after I became a mother." (I08 – female)

For one respondent, becoming a parent has given him a higher seniority where mostly older co-workers now feel as if he has 'matured' in a sense.

"I would say that my colleagues are more interested in my private life, they want to know more about me, what is going on in my private life and who I am. So, this has brought us closer together on the private level. I also would say that my colleagues opened up a bit more. To a certain extent that gave bit more of a psychological security in the team. This is for sure one of the elements. And I think that there is a degree of recognition that comes with the fatherhood. If you decide to start a family this is of course a big step in your life and brings you to a higher degree of seniority. I think that colleagues don't perceive as a junior anymore but rather more as a senior." (I11 – male)

Sub-theme 3.4.: Organizational skills

It is difficult for parents to combine their parental and leader role as evident from the sub-themes 'time-based challenge'. Both roles demand a timely invest and therefore it is important for the participants to effectively use their time when engaging in their roles. Especially, because they don't have much time to 'waste' and every minute/hour is seen as a scarce resource that should be used wisely. In order to do so, participants reported that they have developed their organizational skills (including delegation and prioritization) to better manage the workload and to effectively use their time at work.

"I reduced the working hours when I came back from maternity leave. I have noticed that it's working out very well. I got better in delegating tasks. Despite Corona, at a certain time I have to pick up my child from child care and then I have to drop my pen and leave. In case there is something to do, I have to reschedule it and move it to another day. At other times, I delegate the tasks to my employees. This was also kind of my dream that my team manages to do a lot of the tasks by themselves when I am on maternity leave. This really worked out fine. So, when I came back things stayed like that. To conclude, I delegate tasks more and got calmer." (I19 – female)

In order to spend time with his children while also following a career aspiration, one participant, first shifted a part of his work tasks to the evening but soon came to the realization that it does not work out. As a result, he started to prioritize his tasks and hence, carefully evaluates where he wants to invest his time resources.

"So, when I started my family with my wife, I blocked periods in my schedule. For example, I do not accept meetings before 9.00 am since I am having breakfast with my family and I always try, also in very stressful periods, to always be home for dinner. Admittedly, this also has another effect. Since I am an ambitious person, I am interested in taking over challenging tasks and going the extra mile in order to develop my career. As a result of

this, my working hours have been shifted to the late evening. At the beginning, I was trying to go home earlier and then do the rest of my daily tasks in the late evening. However, this of course does not work properly. As a result, I started to prioritize all tasks that have to be done. I always carefully evaluate which tasks I invest my time resources in. Yes, due to the fact that I have a family, I was not longer able to decide this selfishly, but had to show consideration for my family. So, in the early days before I founded my family, I also always worked late hours and also often hit an after-work party afterwards. This felt very nice because I like this ambitious working style. However, with a family, this is simply not possible anymore. As a result, my parenthood led to a strong change in priorities, how I structure and manage my day and into what I invest my time resources.” (I13 – male)

For some participants, being confronted with limited time to accomplish their work tasks before they have to pick up their child from daycare, means that they have to stick to their schedule. This leaves them with little to no room for spontaneous encounters, meetings or talks with others. In other words, they are less flexible and they have to organize their day very well.

“[...] I am more under time pressure at work. I know that my work day is from 8 until 3.45 pm, or until 4 pm at the latest. This means I have to be more structured and organized than before to manage the same tasks as before in less time. You have less time to drink a coffee with colleagues or to take 5 minutes for yourself when things are getting stressful. You just work through it. It's not a personality trait but it's something that has definitely changed.” (I16 – female)

4.4 Ethical decisions

Table 6: Theme 4 including sub-themes and frequency

| Theme | Sub-themes | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Approach to ethical decision | (4.1) No differences to non-parents | 20 |
| | (4.2.) Rational approach | 14 |
| | (4.3.) Moral action | 11 |

In the interviews, the participants were asked to recall a dilemma situation they were once faced with and where they had to make a difficult decision (synonym for moral issue). In this theme, three sub-themes have been salient for the participants: 1) no difference to non-parents, 2) rational approach and 3) moral action.

Sub-theme 4.1.: No difference to non-parents

In the context of work 20 of the 22 participants agreed that ideally no difference between parents and non-parents should be made. Even though the interviewees are aware that parents require flexibility at work, they all agree that the fact that an employee is a parent should not be considered in the decision-making.

„I don't think there is a difference that is being made between parents and non-parents. In special cases, for example when the child is sick or something like that, the employer might show understanding. However, normally there is no difference made between who have children and those who don't have children.“ (I14 – male)

Furthermore, many participants believed that that parenthood should not prevent the employee to perform as before their parenthood.

“[...] I also think what is expected is that children don't cause any impairment with regards to the work. So, basically that your performance doesn't suffer from it.” (I02 – male)

Sub-theme 4.2.: Rational approach

In general, the interviewees depicted a rather rational approach to decisions where they gather all necessary information, determine important factors and weigh them. Many of the participants also stated that they also like to include others in the decisions to involve other perspectives. With regards to difficult decisions, the participants state that their approach is more or less the same. However, two further aspects are important. First, there is their gut-feeling which is formed over the years of their work-experience and secondly, they consult others who have made similar experiences or are experts in the field where they have a moral issue.

“Well, I always ask for data and facts before making a decision. If there are not data or facts, it is very hard to decide. I often adjourn the decision then since if there are not enough information available at this time, the decision should not be made then. [...]” (I10 – male)

“[...] I always try to differentiate objectively. Especially in organizational topics, there is not always the one right solution but each different solution brings different advantages and disadvantages. Having this in mind, I always try to consider the needs of all stakeholders but also do not forget political aspects of the decision. In the next step then, I tried to evaluate each different solution according to these different aspects in order to be able to

conclude the problem at the end and evaluate one solution against the other. This is basically the approach I followed in the last years. Also try to adapt this in the private part of my life. If I need to find a solution to a problem here, I also evaluate pros versus cons in order to find the best solution.” (I11 – male)

With regards to their parenthood, many of the participants stated that they are more aware of the issues that parents/families have to deal with because being a parent themselves, they understand the ethical implications in many of the issues. However, they also understand that their role requires them to act in the business' favor which it is important for them to find a good balance.

“I try not to let other things that have nothing to do with my job influence it. I try to be as rational as possible to ensure that I am doing the right thing. I mean generally I am more aware of parent's situations and the difficulties they have to endure but in my job I have the responsibility to lead my team and to follow the company's objective. Of course, I am willing to give parents or families more flexibility than I used to but I also have to always make sure that our goals are met and the job performance is good.” (I07 – female)

“I would say that I now understand my employees better who have family. I mean was understanding before but now it is different I would say. Looking at some situations they are facing because of parenthood, I now immediately understand when it is tricky or difficult for them. In the past, they kind of that to bring to my attention more because when you are in work bubble you tend to oversee some stuff.” (I01 – male)

Sub-theme 4.3.: Moral action

Putting their approach to difficult decisions in context of their parenthood, most of the participants stated that they believe that their parental role has no influence on their moral action when faced with moral issues in the context of work. Some of them, however, have mentioned that while their parental role is not significant in the final decisions, it does have an influence on their personal decisions with regards to the choice of employer or job position.

“Well, I mean not intentionally. This might have played a role without me being aware of this. However, it really depends on the kind of decision. Thus, if I had to make a decision in regards to a job change, for example, so decisions that influenced me directly, my motherhood clearly influenced me. But when it comes to situation in which I have to give a warning to an employee or where I have to fire someone in the process of restructuring to save costs, my motherhood has no influence.” (I03 – female)

Especially, when it comes to subject-related decisions the participants feel like their parental role has no influence on their ethical decision-making process and ultimately on their decision.

“Well, in the case I just mentioned there was no influence. In the context of work ideally it has no influence. Morally seen as a leader and how I approach things or not, I don't think it has an influence. [...] Subject-related decisions stay to be subject-related and with regards to human decisions I hope that I was kind enough to understand that I would have never made a decision that would have hurt my employees in a way that I could not advocate in a moral manner. I have more understanding for certain things but the decisions should be similar.” (I16 – female)

With regards to other parents at work and decisions impacting them, some participants stated that they try to give those parents more flexibility in a time of need.

“I have to say that I am more lenient towards employee who are parents compared to employees who are just lazy. They kind of get a bonus. Not in terms of money but in terms of understanding and flexibility. However, I am trying to do the same for other employees who are no parents and have a difficult situation.” (I01 – male)

4.5 Differences between mothers and fathers

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews with respective citations. From the data analysis, four themes have been identified: 1) meaning of parenthood, 2) work-family challenges, 3) developed skills and traits and 4) approach to ethical decisions. Next to the valuable results that will help to accomplish the overall research objective, the findings also showed differences between the genders for some sub-themes. Table 7 on the next page shows an overview of the themes including the frequency assorted by gender.

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Table 7: List of themes and sub-themes including frequency assorted by gender

| Themes | Sub-themes | Mothers | Fathers |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| (1.) Meaning of parenthood | (1.1.) Responsibility | 6 | 9 |
| | (1.2.) New focus/shift in priorities* | 7 | 6 |
| (2.) Work-family challenges | (2.1.) Time-based challenges | 8 | 3 |
| | (2.2.) Prejudices and stereotypes* | 3 | 2 |
| (3.) Developed skills and traits* | (3.1.) Empathy* | 10 | 10 |
| | (3.2.) Regulation of emotions* | 5 | 9 |
| | (3.3.) Social skills* | 3 | 7 |
| | (3.4.) Organizational skills* | 8 | 3 |
| (4.) Approach to ethical decisions | (4.1) No difference to non-parents* | 9 | 11 |
| | (4.2) Rational decision-making | 7 | 7 |
| | (4.3) Moral action | 6 | 5 |

Note: All the (sub-)themes who have been added to the *a priori* list in the course of the inductive approach are marked with *

For the first theme 'meaning of parenthood' including its sub-themes, it is evident that there is a small difference in the responses. In terms of responsibility, more men in this study did mention that parenthood for them means being responsible for another human being, while more women stated that parenthood shifted their priorities. A much bigger difference can be seen in the next sub-theme 'time-based challenges'. The female participants clearly seem to be more affected by those type of challenges than are their male counterparts. Concerning the prejudices and stereotypes, only a small difference is evidently. The participants stated that parenthood has developed their empathy for other parents. Here, both genders agree and a difference is not observable but rather a similarity between mothers and fathers is observable. Regarding the 'regulation of emotions' and 'social skills', the male participants more frequently stated changes due to parenthood. The female participants, however, stated more changes in terms of the development of their organizational skills. As for the last theme 'approach to ethical decisions', a small difference between genders can be seen for the sub-themes 'no difference to non-parents' and 'moral action'. Just like the sub-theme 'empathy', a similarity in the gender can be seen for 'rational decision-making'.

5. Discussion

The objective of this exploratory study is to capture parent leader's experienced changes due to parenthood and its effect on their ethical decision-making process in the context of work. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews with 22 parent leaders have been conducted. After collecting the data, the researcher applied thematic analysis with an inductive and deductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which resulted in four themes and 11 sub-themes. From the 11 sub-themes, seven were included in the course of the inductive approach representing the new information obtained from the data: new focus/shift in priorities, prejudices and stereotypes, empathy, regulation of emotions, social skills, organizational skills and no difference to non-parents. In the following, the discussion of the themes generated from deductive and inductive is presented and put into context with the research objective and underlying literature. It is important to note that no claims are made as to the wider transferability of the findings. Nevertheless, the transparency of the method of analysis helps to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the results.

5.1 Changes due to parenthood

The first research question of this study aimed at finding answers to the question of how parent leaders have changed due to parenthood. Based on the findings, the researcher is able to divide the answer in two ways: 1) intrapersonal changes and 2) interpersonal changes. Intrapersonal changes refer to the changes within a person whereas interpersonal changes concern the alterations between individuals. While presenting the changes in the following, the differences between mothers and fathers (research question 2) will be highlighted as well which has been observable from the findings.

5.1.1 Intrapersonal changes

Concerning the intrapersonal changes observed within the participants after becoming parents and the impact it had on their personalities, they revealed that parenthood had brought them closer to the true importance of life where the child represents a greater significance than any other domain in their life.

In self theory, it is said that individuals relate themselves differently to the collective. These two images in relation to the collective are best known as independent vs. interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Persons with an independent self-construal see personal attributes focusing on self-interest as central to themselves while people with interdependent self-construal emphasize social relations and interconnectedness with others. Generally, both cognitive representations are present in an individual's self-concept. However, only one dominates thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Hannover & Kühnen, 2004). For the

parent leaders in this study, it is evident that their parenthood has induced a switch from an independent to a more interdependent self-construal. This is further supported by their statement of being more family-oriented due to parenthood.

Rather than stating that they experienced absolute changes due to parenthood, the parent leaders said that specific skills and traits they already possessed before becoming a parent have now further developed to fulfill their role and successfully manage parenthood challenges. In this study, some differences in those skills/traits were observable between the male and female participants. The female participants reported that they now face many challenges in their availability of time due to motherhood. Combining their work and parental role successfully is no easy task for them and forced them to develop their organizational skills (e.g., prioritization or delegation of functions) to effectively use their time at work and being able to be there for their child on time (e.g., picking up the child from child care). A study conducted by Cheung & Halpern (2010) also proved that women who juggle both a job and a family had enhanced multi-tasking skills. The necessity of delegating tasks and empowering their team came with the feeling of not being able to do everything on their own once they realized that being mothers required a better distribution and management between the two respective roles. Therefore, their mothering responsibilities triggered giving up control, trusting their teams at work, and involving them in decision-making processes and collaboration. Next to the delegation and prioritization of tasks, the female participants cut down their work hours after returning from maternal leave to successfully encounter the time-based challenges. Whereas all the fathers in this study work full-time, most of the mothers work part-time. This is in line with previous research that reports that women change their work hours after the arrival of their child (Hynes & Clarkberg, 2005). The mothers in this study highlighted that the pressure of successfully juggling the two roles is further exerted by prejudices and negative assumptions about working mothers. A key assumption is that women are less committed to their jobs and not as eager to continue their careers once they become parents (Hynes & Clarkberg, 2005).

In this study, the male participants reported a change in their mental state as to being and reacting more calmly to family and work situations. Just like for their female counterparts, this skill has been further developed by their parental role. Rutherford et al. (2015) examined in their study the role of emotion regulation in parenthood. They found out that emotion regulation is necessary for parents because when faced with their distressed child, they need to respond sensitively to calm and facilitate regulation in their child. The reason for this can be the normative neurobiological, hormonal, and behavioral shifts that parents experience in the transition to parenthood and which favor such a regulation (Rutherford et al., 2015). However, research in this field is sparse, and more empirical studies are needed to make more profound statements. In this study, the fathers reported at a higher level than the mothers that they have become calmer. (Barclay et al., 1996) found out that fathers see themselves as a support

system to their partner during and after the pregnancy. Consequently, it can be assumed that next to their child, fathers also have to regulate their emotions to provide an adequate outlet for their partners and hence fulfill their role as a support system.

5.1.2 Interpersonal changes

In one aspect, both genders agreed: they gained a greater awareness and sensitivity for others and articulated the ability to place themselves in the shoes of, mostly, other parents. This finding is in line with current literature. In the study of Nunes-Costa et al. (2020), the authors found out that participants with children have higher empathy scores than those without children. Other authors further support this (e.g., Clore & Jeffrey, 1972; Batson et al., 1996; Christy & Voigt, 1994; Hodges et al., 2009) who state that individuals who have been through a distressing event are more sympathetic toward others facing the same event compared those with no experience. However, contrary to this research's findings, Zaki (2014) stated that parenthood makes individuals less empathetic because the emotional investment they put in the children leads them to not have the resources for other individuals. This finding was not found to be true for the participants in this study. Here, some of the interviewees even mentioned that their parental role gives them more energy and stability in challenging work situations. In general, the parental leaders displayed a great array of emotional intelligence skills which parenthood had enhanced, especially in their emotional self-control (regulation of emotion), communication (being able to share and listen to emotional information), and empathy (having awareness and concern for the feeling of others) (Goleman, 2001). Next to that, the fathers in this study reported that their relationship with colleagues and employees have changed to the extent that now they share information from their experiences with parenthood. This has the effect that they are able to build a more profound and trusting relationship with their employees.

Even though the parent leaders understand from their own experiences that parents require a different type of flexibility, they still think that ideally, no difference between parents and non-parent should be made at work. This finding has been surprising for the researcher because, at the time of the interviews, Germany was during the lockdown phase due to Covid-19, and most of the participants worked from home. Like the participants, their co-workers/employees with children had to juggle working from home with child care and homeschooling. This extreme situation for families required much flexibility from the employer, which is, in fact, making a difference between parents and non-parents. Nevertheless, in general, for the parent leaders, it is important that they do not discriminate against those who do not have children and treat every employee the same.

5.2 Parenthood and its effect on parent leaders' ethical decision-making

The third research question aimed to find answers to how parent leaders' approach to moral issues has been altered due to parenthood. The following sub-chapter will discuss this question with regards to this study's findings and current literature.

Generally speaking, organizational leaders have to accommodate to three types of stakeholders group for which they hold a significant amount of responsibility (Effelsberg, 2013). They are responsible for generating success for the business (stakeholder group 1). They are responsible for leading their employees on ethical grounds (stakeholder group 2) and conducting business on ethical grounds with customers and business partners (stakeholder group 3). The focus on these three stakeholders is especially important in situations where there is a conflict of interest between the three. In fact, many of the ethical scandals (e.g., Monsanto, Wirecard) are characterized by these conflict areas (Effelsberg, 2013). As for the third research question, it can be said that parental leaders follow the same approach to moral issues as before their parenthood. Even though they have acquired a new social role that evoked the development of skills and traits, any of it is not evident in their approach to moral issues post-parenthood. This phenomenon can be explained with the self-defense mechanism called *compartmentalization*. Compartmentalization is used to avoid mental discomfort, cognitive dissonance, and anxiety caused by conflicting values, beliefs, and ideas (Rozuel, 2011). With compartmentalization, the conflicting ideas can co-exist by inhibiting direct or explicit acknowledgment and interaction between separate compartmentalized self-states (Leary, 2014). In other words, the roles of being a parent and being a leader are kept separate so that the individual "forgets" about one role when engaged in the other. This strategy is essential for leaders to represent their leadership role and, hence, the business objectives, which can sometimes conflict with the ideas, beliefs, and values of their parental role. This is especially evident in the examples of difficult decisions depicted in the interviews. Here, many difficult situations concerning employees have been presented, such as firing employees in restructuring processes or giving out warnings. Concerning that, a recurring statement was: "It is part of the job, and it is what it is," which shows that the parent leaders aim to fulfill their job description and act primarily on the business interest. In her journal article 'the moral threat of compartmentalization: self, roles and responsibility,' Rozuel (2011) highlighted that we as individuals have learned that 'business is business' which leaves no place for other roles. She further states that "the compartmentalized person is not connected to self, and this 'absence to one's self' eventually threatens both moral judgment and moral behavior" (p.691).

Even though the participants seem to follow the same approach to moral issues, it is evident that now they have a different sense of proximity when confronted with moral infused employee decisions where another individual's family is involved. According to Jones (1991), a moral issue's characteristics will dictate how an individual will respond to that moral issue. In

theory, this characteristic is called *moral intensity*, which is composed of six stages. Among those six stages, there is a stage referred to as *proximity*. According to Barnett (2001), proximity is defined "as the degree of nearness or closeness that the decision-maker has for those affected by the issue or action in question" (p.1040). The higher the moral intensity, the higher the chances that the individual will pass the ethical decision-making process (moral awareness, moral judgment, moral intention, and moral action). The closer the decision-maker feels to those affected by the issue, the higher the moral intensity (Jones, 1991). The parent leaders all stated that they feel this type of closeness with regards to other parents at their work. At the time of the interviews, Germany (amongst many other countries in the world) was in the lockdown phase due to the Corona pandemic. This is why the parent leaders presented many examples of how this pandemic has affected them and their employees/colleagues as working parents. Many employers laid off employees or reduced their working hours to save costs. In this challenging time, parent leaders considered their parental role more in their ethical decision-making process because this time required for organizations to not only overcome the economic crisis as damage-free as possible but also to be particularly flexible and attentive to employees' needs. Especially, the component of moral awareness seems to be impacted by the parental role of the participants.

Despite the pandemic, parental leaders generally show an increased level of moral awareness towards moral issues involving other parents and families. Due to their own experiences, which is, for example, formed through the challenges they have to face as working parents and their meaning of parenthood, they now can notice situations that have ethical implications and concern other parents. In the interviews, the participants made statements such as "I noticed" or "I am more aware," which shows that even though they had empathy for other parents before becoming a parent, now they also feel the sense of proximity due to their parental role. Though other parents and their situation trigger the ethical decision-making process of the parent leaders, or at least their moral awareness, it is essential to highlight that solely the fact that one is a father or a mother does not result in that. The parent leaders strictly believe that no difference between parents and non-parents should be made. Everyone at work shall receive the same treatment based on their work performance and despite their family status. However, when there is a situation where the health, well-being, or safety of family members are threatened, and the individual cannot perform at work due to it, the moral awareness of the parent leaders is triggered. In those situations, the parent leaders are morally aware of the situations and decide and act in a manner to accommodate and help out the employee. This, however, is only done when the performance at the job does not suffer for too long, or their decision does not affect the business negatively. Regarding the other steps in the ethical decision-making process (moral judgment, moral intention, moral action), the researcher cannot clearly say how they are affected by the parental role based on the

findings of this study. The theory presents the concept of *the hot-cold empathy gap*. According to Ruttan & McDonnell (2015), empathy gaps is the tendency of individuals who are not affectively aroused to underestimate the impact of effect on their judgment. In other words, when an individual is not currently experiencing the affective state, such as going through a divorce, they cannot freely re-experience it. This is connected with one's constrained memory for affective experiences Ruttan & McDonnell (2015). So, when a distressing event has been overcome (e.g., work-family challenges), the individual relies on their immediate feeling in the 'cold' state to form a judgment because they believe that is how they have felt (e.g., Read & Loewenstein, 1999; Van Boven et al., 2013 as cited in Ruttan & McDonnell, 2015). Even though this study could not find evidence to support the arguments in this concept, it can serve as an explanation for parent leaders who might not show a higher level of moral awareness for other parents. However, regarding the discussed points from a higher level, it can be said that not only parents but also other employees who occupy different social roles that put them in challenging situations such as the ones that can arise from work-family conflicts are able to trigger parent leaders' moral awareness. In fact, not the role per se (being a parent) triggers parent leaders' moral awareness but the fact that one has obligations that put him/her in a situation that collides with work. Due to their own responsibility of having a child and knowing the struggles that can arise from it, the parent leaders can also empathize with employees who have other social roles, which presents a similar meaning to them as parenthood does for the parent leaders.

To sum up, the parental role and its impact on parental leader's ethical decision-making process is only given when confronted with difficult family situations that affect the employees' performance or availability. For other types of difficult decisions such as subject-related decisions or any other kind of dilemma regarding employee decisions, the parental role does not have an impact on the parent leaders. This is because parent leaders compartmentalize their parental role to fulfill their work role responsibility and reduce the distress that might be caused if no compartmentalization would occur. As for employees' family situations that might interfere with their job performance, the interviews showed that parent leaders show a higher moral awareness to come to a decision. Their developed understanding of families' situations and their own experiences with challenges are key reasons why their ethical decision-making process is triggered. These experiences form proximity that is closer and consequently intensify the moral intensity. However, for other employees who are not parents, parent leaders show the same reaction when facing similar challenges due to their other social roles.

5.3 Theoretical and practical implications

Many of the findings in this study support insights generated in empirical studies, such as the fact that parenthood promotes a more interdependent self-construal (e.g., Li & Gong, 2018). Besides that, this study also found out that working mothers experience more time-based challenges than working fathers (e.g., Allen, 2012). This study also contributes new findings to the fields of parenthood and ethical decision-making. First, concerning the changes parent leaders have experienced, the fathers show a higher level of emotional regulation. This finding has been explained with the father's role in the pre- and post-parenthood. Here, they occupy the position of the support system for their partners. In this position, they serve as an outlet for their partner, and to regulate their significant other's emotions, they have to be able to regulate their own. With the arrival of the child, this skill is further developed. Secondly, parent leaders' approach to moral issues is only affected by their parental role when confronted with employees' decisions that involve the family. In this case, moral intensity increases because they feel closer to the affected person (proximity), and their moral awareness is triggered. However, the simple fact that one is a mother or a father will not evoke this. This thesis challenges and urges researchers to consider the whole or at least many more facets of the self when conducting studies to explain psychological processes. Studying and considering the effect of the whole self allows for more discussion and more insights into moral imagination (Rozuel, 2011) and ethical decision-making processes. This study is presenting the first step and connects the role of parents and leaders in regards to leader's ethical decision-making.

In connection with the theoretical implications, businesses should allow and support employees to show their whole self at work. According to a Deloitte survey, 61% of employees either cover or downplay parts of their identity. For example, pregnant women might hide their belly under big clothes. The findings of this study have important implications for HR departments and leaders alike. Even though businesses have understood that work-life balance and flexible policies positively affect businesses (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011), it is now essential for companies to search for a dialogue with employees who are parents. Despite the progress organizations have made to facilitate working parents' life, there is still much to do. Many prejudices are still in place, challenging mothers to integrate themselves in the workplace and fathers in their child care. The study at hand was conducted with German participants. Germany has been battling with low fertility rates for the past decades and is one of the countries with the lowest birth rates globally (Sanderson, 2010). One in five women aged 45 to 54 has no children at all. This mainly impacts academics who have spent a lot of time in their professional careers. Policies for working parents to ensure that they have the right to take care of their child without fearing losing their job (Sanderson, 2010) is an important step that the German law already implemented. However, HR professionals and leaders need not only provide the framework for parents but also encourage them in their roles by considering

the following recommendations. First, conduct parental reviews with employees who will become parents to discuss their wishes and objectives for their time after their parental leave. In this way, parents are able to state how much they want to work and invest in their work career. Leaders, on the other hand, know how to allocate tasks and set realistic expectations concerning the employees. Secondly, if not in place, organizational policies should be set up to allow parents to flexibly leave work for their child care or work from home. To reduce discrimination against employees who are not parents, the same amount of flexibility should be shown. Thirdly, create business events that focus on the topic of parenthood. Discussing and sharing the subject of parenting should be done openly in business contexts. In this way, employees who are parents have a platform to exchange information with other working parents, work on improvements, and also to serve as role models. In the interviews, many male participants highlighted that it is still not common for fathers to take care of their children. In her doctoral dissertation, Kelland (2018) supported this matter by stating that fathers receive less workplace support than mothers for caregiving. By creating platforms in the business for mothers and fathers to discuss such issues, organizations are able to improve their workplace with regards to that. This, in turn, will have a positive impact on parents who are able to expose more of themselves in the context of work.

5.4 Limitations and future research

This study's objective was to capture parent leader's experiences made with parenthood and its effect on their ethical decision-making in the context of work. Researching to find valuable findings, the researcher faced various limitations that impacted the interpretation of the results. Firstly, to avoid social desirability response bias, the participants were not directly asked about ethics. Instead, the researcher used the terms *difficult decision* and *dilemma* as synonyms for (un-)ethical decisions. The researcher had to rely upon the information that the parents considered necessary to share and on whether or not examples or references were made that were relatable to the components of the ethical decision-making process. The used synonyms have not been defined for the participants, and they were free to interpret it for themselves. Indeed, this could have led the participants to think of difficult decisions that do not have an ethical implication. The researcher did not ask the participants for their leadership style and how this style has been affected by their parental role. Obtaining this information would have potentially altered the analysis of the findings. Ultimately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted via telephone or video call, which either limited or completely removed the possibility of considering and interpreting body language. Besides that, video calls or telephone interviews are proven to have higher speech rates where the interviews are concluded in a much faster time, which represents a loss in additional information for the analysis (Krouwel, 2019). Next to that, the pandemic altered the participants' schedule, and

many of the interviews had to be conducted within a specific timeframe due to the participants' tight timetable. Despite the limitations, the findings in this research project are of value. The approaches and methodology used are based on theory and are reliable. Hence, the overall aim of this thesis has been achieved.

For further researches, the following recommendations are made. This thesis focused on the approach to ethical decisions rather than on the outcome of such decisions. However, it may be of interest to study the result of the decision and investigate if parenthood makes parent leaders act in a more ethical or (un-)ethical way in the context of work. Besides that, the methodology of this study at hand did not include the use of scenarios. For future studies, it would be interesting to have scenarios in the interviews that concern moral issues and where a decision is required by the interviewees. The decisions can then be taken as a basis for analysis to investigate how the ethical approach has altered due to parenthood. The participants were preliminary white, heterosexual, and many worked within the same company under the same company culture and conditions. The results may be entirely different when parents of color, of other companies, and with different family arrangements (e.g., single-parents or homosexual parents) would be included in future research. The participants had to reflect on their time before and after parenthood. Often, they were not able to state changes because many of them happened unconsciously. It would be interesting to conduct the same study and include the parent leaders' partners and colleagues/employees to receive an extensive view of how parenthood has changed them. Besides that, the researcher recommends future research to include a comparison group composed of non-parents to more effectively highlight the differences between parents and non-parents in the approach to moral issues.

6. Conclusion

With the increasing need to understand the process behind (un-)ethical conducts, it is essential for researchers to further explore and understand ethical decision-making processes. This thesis aimed at increasing understanding and knowledge in the field of ethical decision-making and parenthood. The underlying assumption of this thesis is that parenthood has an impact on the ethical decision-making process of leaders. Due to the similar nature of tasks, the two roles were included in this study. Based on this thesis's exploratory approach, 22 semi-structured interviews with parent leaders have been conducted. The findings resulted in four themes and 11 sub-themes that shed light on how the parents see themselves after becoming parents and what changes they have experienced as individuals. Furthermore, the results also provided the researcher with information on how parenthood impacts the leaders in their ethical decision-making process in the context of work. The findings showed that the parent leaders haven't changed much personally but rather developed traits and skills they already possessed to better fulfill their role tasks. Differences between the genders were also observable. While the mothers were affected by their parental role in their time management, the fathers have become calmer and regulate their emotions more due to parenthood. For both, an increase in emotional intelligence noticeable whereby they showed a higher empathy and proximity to other working parents. As for their ethical decision-making, this study found out that there is no impact due to parenthood except for when leaders are confronted with moral issues that concern other parents/families. Due to their proximity, the moral intensity increases, and their moral awareness is triggered. As long the business is not suffering or not impacted negatively, the parent leaders are more willing to decide in favor of the employee with the family problem. A similar response can be seen towards non-parents at work who occupy other social roles that present the same or an equal significance as parenthood does for the parent leaders. However, for other moral issues (e.g., subject-related decisions), the parent leaders compartmentalize their parental role and engage and act solely in their leadership role. This study provides detailed insights. Even though there remains a large gap of empirical evidence to fill, this study represents the first step in the right direction to research ethical decision-making more intensively and integrate other social roles. Therefore, this study's findings can open new lines of argumentation and thoughts as well as research pertaining to parenthood, leadership, and ethical decision-making in literature.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview transcript

My name is Priscilla and I am a Master student studying Human Resources & Organizational Consulting at ISCTE Business School in Lisbon. I would like to thank you very much for participating in this interview! The purpose of this interview is to find out more about the influence of parenthood on decision-making in the context of work. This study is created for the completion of my master thesis. All information that might uncover your identity or the company you work for will be anonymized to ensure your privacy.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and I am asking for your permission to record it to ensure that I can include all aspects mentioned by you in the analysis. I will transcribe the recording and delete the audio tape as soon as I am done.

Introduction

- To start, I would like to hear more about your job and duties. Can you please give me a short description of your role, tasks and responsibilities?
- How many children do you have?
- How old are your children?
- Where you already in that position/role at the time your (last) child was born?

Part A: Changes due to parenthood

1. For you personally, what does it mean to be a mother/father?
2. How and why has becoming a mother/father changed you as a person - both in general and at work? Namely, the way you see yourselves in general and at work. Please give examples.
3. What are the characteristics you have developed or gained due to the fact that you are a parent?
4. How did becoming a parent changed the way you do your work?
5. How did becoming a parent changed the way you deal with others at work? Please tell me also why you think that is so.
6. How did becoming a parent changed the way others deal with you at work? Please tell me also why you think that is so.
7. How do your co-workers treat you compared to your time as a non-parent? Please tell me also why you think that is so.

PARENTHOOD & LEADER'S ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

8. How did becoming a parent has changed the way you make decisions at work, and in your other domains of life? What exactly has changed?
9. Why do you think the way you make decisions has/has not changed? In which way having a child/children has an influenced that?
10. What (e.g. behavior) is generally expected from a mother/father at work?

Part B: Difficult decision-making

11. Referring back to the topic of decision-making. What kind of decisions do you have to make in your job?
12. When you have to make a difficult decision at work, what aspects do you take into consideration?
13. Think about a dilemma in terms of decision-making you have faced by thinking of one specific situation where you had to make a difficult decision. During the decision-making process, what did you take into consideration? How did you ultimately decide? Why did you make this decision?
14. Looking back, do you believe that having children influenced the decision you made? If yes, how so?

Part C: Conflict Management

15. When you have to manage conflicts between people how do you do? How do you proceed? What do you take into consideration?
16. In what way having a child/children has changed the way you manage conflicts? Why has it changed?

End of the interview

This was the last question of the interview. Do you wish to add something related with the issues we covered in this interview or do you have any questions?

Before we finish the interview, I would like to ask you to fill in a short questionnaire. This questionnaire is used to characterize the participants according to socio-demographic characteristics. Due to the pandemic, I will fill in the information for you. I am only going to ask you a few questions.

(fills in socio-demographic information for participant)

Thank you very much for your time and for your participation! If you have any questions regarding the thesis or remarks that you want to add, you can always contact me.

Appendix B: Socio-demographic questionnaire

1. Age ____ years old

2. Sex

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Rather not say

6. Education

- ☐ Secondary School
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Other: _____

7. Profession _____

8. Tenure in current company _____

9. Sector of the Company where you work _____

10. Seniority in the company _____

11. Number of children _____

12. Ages of the children _____

(Note: The participants in this study did not fill in the socio-demographic questionnaire manually. Due to Covid-19, the interviews were conducted via phone or video call. Hence, the researcher asked for the information after the interviews and filled in the information for the participants)

Appendix C: A priori list

| |
|--|
| <p>Parenthood</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strain-based conflict: Stress arising in one social role and is transferred to another social role. b. Time-based conflict: Time invested in one role, makes it complicated for the person to act on his/her other role. c. Behavior-based conflict: Certain behavior useful for one role, but not for the other role. 2. <u>Self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Interdependent self-construal: The self is connected to other people. b. Independent self-construal: Individual sees internal attributes as central to his/her self. |
| <p>Ethical decision-making</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Approach to ethical decision-making (Trevino & Klebe, 2011)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gather all the facts: The person collects all the information needed to make a decision. b. Define ethical issue: The person identifies and defines the ethical component in the issue. c. Identify affected parties: The person identifies and includes all the individuals affected by the decision. d. Identify the consequences: The person identifies the degree of harm anticipated in terms of money and/or time when the decision is made. e. Identify the obligations: The person identifies his/her tasks in the decision-making process and ultimately in the moral action. f. Consider the character and integrity: The person actively thinks about his identity and all the values and norms that are important to him/her when making a decision. g. Think about potential actions: The person considers different alternate actions of behaviours. h. Check your gut: The person includes his intuitions and experiences in the decision-making process and uses it as a 'check'. 2. <u>Ethical decision-making approach (Rest, 1986)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Moral awareness: Moral awareness refers to the recognition of a person that an ethical problem exists. b. Moral judgment: Moral judgment refers to a person's the evaluation of actions with respect to norms and values established in society. c. Moral intention: Moral intention refers to the desire to act ethically when facing a decision. d. Moral action: Moral actions refers to the person's behaviour based on norms and values established in society. 3. <u>Moral intensity (Jones, 1991)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Magnitude of consequences: Sum of harm or benefits to affected individuals. b. Social Consensus: Degree of social agreement that a certain behavior is good or bad. c. Probability of Effect: Probability that the decision will take place and the expected harm or benefit will take place. d. Temporal Immediacy: Time between the decision and the consequences of the moral act. e. Proximity: The feeling of closeness for the affected individuals. f. Concentration of Effect: Number of people affected by the decision. 4. <u>Characteristics of a moral person (Aquino & Reed, 2002)</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Caring: The person displays kindness and concern for others |

- b. Compassionate: The person feels or shows sympathy or concern for others.
 - c. Fair: The person treats people equally without favouritism or discrimination.
 - d. Friendly: The person is kind and pleasant towards other people.
 - e. Generous: The person shows a readiness to give more of something than is necessary or expected.
 - f. Helpful: The person is giving or ready to give help to other individuals.
 - g. Hardworking: The person works diligent and tends to work with a lot of energy and commitment.
 - h. Honest: The person is free of deceit, truthful and sincere.
 - i. Kind: The person thinks about other people's feelings.
5. Rational decision-making (Bazerman, 1994)
- a. Identify the problem: The person identifies the problem/issue at hand.
 - b. Establish decision criteria: The person establishes criteria that he/she sees as important to make a sustained decision.
 - c. Weigh decision criteria: The person weights the criteria he/she established.
 - d. Generate alternatives: The person generates different alternatives.
 - e. Evaluate alternatives: The person evaluates the alternatives with the help of the criteria he/she established.
 - f. Select best alternatives: The person selects out of all the alternatives the most suitable alternative.

Interview transcript

- 1. Identity changes: The person reports changes when becoming a parent in his/her identity based on personal traits. Changes can be of 'positive' or 'negative' nature and can be referred to work or in general.
- 2. Perception of others: The person states how others perceive him/her due to parenthood.

(Note: The following a priori list has been created based on previous research and the interview transcript used in this study)

Appendix D: Summary of interview quotes per (sub-)theme

| Code | Code segments |
|--|--|
| 1. Meaning of parenthood\1.1 Responsibility | Well, first it's a form of responsibility for the child. I02-CGM: 29 - 29 (0) |
| | Thirdly, <i>my handling with responsibility definitely changed. I think, at the beginning, for me personally it was a completely new role to have responsibility for a little human being and you slowly learn how to handle it. The handling of responsibility for other people is definitely something that you can learn.</i> I02-CGM: 31 - 31 (0) |
| | The same applies to the topic of having responsibility I02-CGM: 33 - 33 (0) |
| | for me personally it means to take over responsibility. I have a responsibility to make sure that the kids learn something from me which they can use to participate successfully in life. I04-BHM: 27 - 27 (0) |
| | I have responsibility...responsibility and compared with those who don't have a child, I have a completely different center of life. I05-KFM: 27 - 27 (0) |
| | For me personally, it means being responsible for two more persons and to teach those persons values. I07-TPF: 27 - 27 (0) |
| | I think you become more anxious, careful and considering in many situations since you are aware of the fact that you took over a much higher degree of responsibility. I08-RMF: 29 - 29 (0) |
| | Well, it is an absolute enrichment for my life, there is much responsibility coming with it. I09-URM: 29 - 29 (0) |
| | This is hard to answer. There are many responsibilities I had to meet. The most important one was the role of the wage earner. This role was good at least for my ego. I do not know if it was |

good for me as a person. Nevertheless, I earned much credits for this from all sides. The financial side of the family was always covered by me. However, I am not sure if I would also have fulfilled this role the same way without children due to my personal ambitions. I am not sure about that. Nevertheless, it was a win-win situation for my ego, for me personally and for my family.

I09-URM: 31 - 31 (0)

his is already a good question. It means for me to take over much responsibility, but also to have the chance to enable another human being to realize itself in this world and to grow the child under the best conditions that are possible. I think it is also important to give the child the chance to try out things without telling everything but still let the child know that there is someone it always can rely on. It is also a great shared responsibility for me and my girlfriend which brings us closer together again. I would describe the parenthood as a constant feeling of happiness that you experience every day.

I11-CBM: 27 - 27 (0)

Now, my focus is set on having time with my family instead of on the work only. Next, my awareness of my responsibilities increased. I was of course also aware of my responsibilities before I became a father but due to my role, I am much more aware of my responsibilities. The responsibilities I had before are not comparable to the new possibility I have because I am raising a child. So, the awareness of my responsibilities increased. I also sometimes think that I became more risk averse. I would not say that I am scared of situations now, but and now consider decisions I make more compared to before. I also thought before that I would be much more relaxed in regard to things that are related to my child. I think that these are the main points. Reconsidering your question before, I think that it also has become clear to me what I want in my life and what I do not. I do not say yes anymore to or things, it became easier to me to also say no sometimes.

I11-CBM: 31 - 31 (0)

The outstanding change is of course that I am not that free in my actions anymore. *In my role as a father, the most essential aspect is the responsibility I took over. Especially, because now I have to plan more into the future. I, now, always have to see all my actions in the context of my family and I need to consider how this helps the family.*" This is of course a limitation in the personal life, on the one hand, but it is, on the other hand, really an enrichment because there are coming new aspects I also did not know before. It is a challenge that has at the end of the day its equivalent in the many positive factors and aspects you can experience then as a parent.

I12-STM: 29 - 29 (0)

Yes, I would that that I am more thoughtful and responsible.

I12-STM: 31 - 31 (0)

To take over responsibility for the development of a new human being and communicating everything I know in the best way possible to enable the child to have a very satisfying and happy life, with a good combination of job, self-confidence and friendships

I13-SLM: 27 - 27 (0)

A lot of responsibility. Yes, a lot of responsibility but also a lot of fun. I don't think I have thought so much about things in my life like I did after my kids were born.

I14-SPM: 27 - 27 (0)

Well, it is a very responsible task. I want to help my children to have the best possible start in life and therefore I have to take over a lot of responsibility. Maybe it is different for women that become mothers later in life, however I think that actively taking over responsibility is essential

I15-SSF: 29 - 29 (0)

What I had to learn first is that I am not alone anymore and that everything else comes after the children and that you take over responsibility for the rest of your life, even after your children became adults.

| | |
|---|--|
| | I17-PRF: 29 - 29 (0) |
| | Wow, this is a profound question. I would say it means to enlarge your own life, since there is now a person in your life that is as important as you to yourself. In my opinion, it is very different from having a relationship. However, its filled with a lot of love but also with stress and sleepless nights. Next to this, it also means to take over responsibility for |
| | I18-AGF: 27 - 27 (0) |
| | Oh god! That's a good question. First of all, it is a great present. I am now responsible for the most important personal development project in my whole career and to support my children in their development is something I am very excited about. |
| | I20-JBF: 27 - 27 (0) |
| | Having more responsibility and getting closer to the meaning of life. I think if you think a lot about the meaning behind life, you get much closer to the answer if you have children. <i>It is very fulfilling and satisfying. Before, you might aim for your career and power but when you have children, you really feel satisfied. Your children become the focus and other things become less important.</i> |
| | I22-MEM: 27 - 27 (0) |
| 1. Meaning of parenthood\1.2 New focus - shift in priorities (+) | I have responsibility...responsibility and compared with those who don't have a child, I have a completely different centre of life. |
| | I05-KFM: 27 - 27 (0) |
| | I think it's more focused on the family and less on myself and less on my job. |
| | I05-KFM: 29 - 29 (0) |
| | But not like ...for me it feels more stable and less hectic now, compared to the time where I only focused on work. |
| | I05-KFM: 35 - 35 (0) |

Well, before I had a child ...my son is two years old now...I was only focused on myself, my job and my wife. I was able to invest as much energy and thinking into my job as I wanted to and...ehhm...it doesn't work like this anymore. When I get home from work, or now it's more when I leave the office space in my house, then it doesn't matter what happened at work. For me it's important to take care of my child.

I05-KFM: 37 - 37 (0)

I think I was always focused on my career and the kids gave me a different premise. How can I say it? //...They give me a different component that is always in the fore. I have my career and I am basically self-employed but the children are more important. Whenever it burned down here, it was always clear that the kids come first and I wouldn't have thought like that before having the children.

I06-SHF: 35 - 35 (0)

Traits...puhh...good question. I am more family-oriented now not only with regards to us but also regarding the rest of the family. I used to be more in the background but I bonded more with my family and it got reinforced because of the children. When I used to be without children it was often that I thought to myself: "Parents are annoying" ...(L). However, now it is not like this anymore and family has a different and more important role for me. Other personal traits? Spontaneously, there are no others that come to my mind that have changed due to the kids because I think that you have your personality which doesn't change dramatically just because of the children.

I06-SHF: 43 - 43 (0)

Yes, I can deal with it better. Ehhm...now that I have family and I just told myself that this is priority. Therefore, I am not too worried when something is cancelled because the world is not going to end because of that. I also don't have to work to nurture our family. I mean of course it's nice but if I am not earning as much money, it's not a problem for us. Therefore, this not as

dramatic as it used to be during the time when I didn't have children.

I06-SHF: 75 - 75 (0)

I think as a resume for me an important aspect is that parenthood bring you really back to earth. I think as a mother I became more grounded and reflect even more my principles and values and I became more caring and careful in making decisions or other situations. I think that this would be my resume after all your questions. I think that my personality did not entirely change but the factors described indeed changed due to my role as mother.

I08-RMF: 71 - 71 (0)

Yes, this is hard. What did this do to me? Actually, this is not that complex in my specific situation like it is for other people. I always had in mind that I have to find the good job in order to make enough money. Therefore, my fatherhood might not has changed me actually. I always was in the situation in which I wanted and had to make good money.

I09-URM: 33 - 33 (0)

Now, my focus is set on having time with my family instead of on the work only. Next, my awareness of my responsibilities increased. I was of course also aware of my responsibilities before I became a father but you due to my role, I am much more aware of my responsibilities. The responsibilities I had before are not comparable to the new possibility I have because I am raising a child. So, the awareness of my responsibilities increased. I also sometimes think that I became more risk averse. I would not say that I am scared of situations now, but and now consider decisions I make more compared to before. I also thought before that I would be much more relaxed in regard to things that are related to my child. I think that these are the main points. Reconsidering your question before, I think that it also has become clear to me what I want in my life and what I do not. I do not say yes anymore two or things, it became easier to me to also say no sometimes.

I11-CBM: 31 - 31 (0)

It made me focus on the essential

I13-SLM: 31 - 31 (0)

Problems from which I thought that they have to be solved immediately with much pressure can be addressed not with more calm. At a certain point, you see your children and figure out what is important in live next to your job.

I13-SLM: 31 - 31 (0)

Well, I got older as well so that I am not sure if these changes or developments are due to my role as mother or simply because I got older. What really changed for me due to my motherhood is my focus in life. Now, the focus is always on my children.

I15-SSF: 31 - 31 (0)

Funny (L). That is a good question. I believe that I used to be a person that was focused on their own topics. I think that is normal in a certain age. It was all about: "What am I doing today? What hobbies do I have? I am going to the gym." Family and friends were also there, of course, but you are in the center of your own world and adjust everything to it. Now, this has shifted completely and I don't think it's sad. This is exactly what this is about. I am not in the center of my thoughts anymore. There are many things that used to be important for me that aren't anymore. I don't think as much about myself. Now, my little one and my family are in the foreground. For example, instead of going to the gym which I still do and love to do, I also enjoy to stay at home and spend time with my family. In the past, I thought of nothing but myself. Things that used to be important such as: "What clothes am I wearing?" and getting ready in general are just a minor matter. Another example is: "Where am I going for vacation?" It's just a family vacation and the most important thing is that we are together as a family. This is not something enforced or forced but it feels just natural. Other things are in the center of my life and my priorities have changed. Thank god! I am more relaxed now regarding many topics in life I have worried about. Also, in the professional

setting where I am like: "It is what it is and everything is fine the way it is."

I16-VDSF: 29 - 29 (0)

You experience what your parents have told you before about this. I would say that you are a bit more other-directed.

I17-PRF: 29 - 29 (0)

I think, I became a bit less egoistic and I think I am a bit more flexible and became more spontaneous. I think that this is necessary to deal with children.

I17-PRF: 31 - 31 (0)

I think not to a large extent like others do. You often hear from others during pregnancy: "Wait until you have given birth to your child. Then, you will see everything differently." I have to admit that this did not happen to me. You of course set priorities differently. While my job was my main priority before became a mother, it is now still important, but my child is even more important to me. However, I would not say that I have changed as a person.

I18-AGF: 29 - 29 (0)

I think that the decision-making itself became even easier to me. In my opinion, my role as a mother confronts me with very essential decisions I have to make. Every time when I have to decide, how I react to something my children did well or bad or make any other decision relating to my children, I am much more aware of the fact that this decision is crucial. In this context, decisions that I have to make in the job seem even easier to me since they are not that essential anymore. As result, it becomes even easier to me to make decisions in the work context due to my role as mother.

I20-JBF: 59 - 59 (0)

This is difficult to describe. I basically take every problem for solvable in the work context. At work I know that we can discuss everything with colleagues, exchange opinions and find, if really necessary, the solution for a problem in the team. As a mother,

you have to make a decision on your own at a certain point in time. Here, I have to make sure that each and every interest has been considered and the best solution has been found for everyone. This is something that is completely in my hand as a mother. This is much easier at work. Here, I can discuss a problem with everyone I want, refer to facts and figures and base my solution on them. As a result, it is not difficult for me anymore to make a decision or give a recommendation after a good and professional discussion.

I20-JBF: 61 - 61 (0)

Well, it is easier to me. However, I do not want to say that I would not care that much about how good a solution is because I am very dedicated at work. I am identify myself very much with the company I work for, so it is not an easier decision for me because I do not care about the quality of the solution that much. Especially In the field I am working in, decisions that I make here have a strong influence on staff salaries and the people that are working for the company. The difference is that I can discuss all aspects there are involved in influenced by the problem and the resulting solution with other qualified colleagues or I can rely on facts. This makes it much easier for me to gain and overview quite quickly about what is best for the company. Here, the focus is always on doing the best of the company. Even if the best solution would be that my job becomes obsolete, I would be fine with it because I think that I always can find another job or start a company independently. I am not a person who is that much worried about financial security.

I20-JBF: 63 - 63 (0)

Well, this was a long period of time and I had to grow into that. Me and my wife actively decided to become parents. As a result of this decision, I also had to re-shift the focus of my life. Thus, I was able to put my focus on the family as soon as I got my daughters. I always wanted to have a family, since I am myself from a big family. So, it was clear to me that I focused more on

family than I was doing when I was student without any children. This shift in my focus was very strong. Especially in the first years of my fatherhood. Even though I also had to change to take over my role as a manager during this time, it was always essential to me to put my focus as well on my family. It was very important to me to have enough time for my children in order to be able to experience their childhood, compared to putting my focus only on my work and career. It was, for example, very important to me to bring my children to bed at least three times a week. I would say that the fact that I put my focus on the family is still valid today. A social life is very important to me also. To be able to have enough interaction with friends as well as of course with my family. This is something my children take over as well, and me and my wife as parents like this very much.

I21_LSM: 29 - 29 (0)

Having more responsibility and getting closer to the meaning of life. I think if you think a lot about the meaning behind life, you get much closer to the answer if you have children. It is very fulfilling and satisfying. Before, you might aim for your career and power but when you have children, you really feel satisfied. Your children become the focus and other things become less important.

I22-MEM: 27 - 27 (0)

I think that this is connected to the first question. Before becoming a parent, you try to become complete with a lot of things such as your job career. However, you are never able to feel complete with only that. It's like a circle. When you have children this circle gets completed in fuller sense. I think this is where the serenity comes from.

I22-MEM: 31 - 31 (0)

2. Developed skills and traits\2.1 Empathy

Well, okay they would be total assholes, if they would not have reacted. When I say: "Hey guys, I am not able to stay in the evening because my wife is not at home and I have to take care of the kids". In these situations, I did receive some degree of understanding.

I01-TBM: 47 - 47 (0)

But I have to say that I received a lot of understanding. There were quite some situations where people carried that also but

I01-TBM: 47 - 47 (0)

Of course, I am a little bit more lenient compared to other people.

I01-TBM: 53 - 53 (0)

I think I have more understanding for the complexity of stress and/or pressure that some employees have to go through or have to endure. For example, we have this home office situation at the moment and one of my closer female colleagues sometimes is not able to participate in long calls because she has to take care of her children who are six and four years old. For that I need to have sympathy on how this quarantine affects her life and I think due to my own paternity I have a lot more understanding compared to other people who don't have children who feel like she could put her children in front of the tv just to have time to do her work. Due to my paternity I know that it is not possible.

I01-TBM: 75 - 75 (0)

Yes, I think so. I think that people who have a more complex life due to family and children, I give them more credit compared to people who are just lazy to finish their tasks or to develop themselves further. For me personally, it is a big difference if someone is arriving late to a meeting because he has to bring his child to kindergarten compared to someone who says: "I drank 3000 coffees and therefore, I lost track of time". And all the people I know who have a more complex private life, they automatically receive a bonus from me. I mean not financially but a personal bonus when it comes to flexibility or indulgence.

I01-TBM: 77 - 77 (0)

I have now a real respect for parents. Often when you don't have children, you have some kind of a prejudice and now I find myself in situations where I am like: "Oh wow". In the past I would have probably said: "What are they doing?" Now that I am father I

realize that having children is a real exertion. Sometimes when you dressed weirdly or when you have stains on your clothes. In the past, I would have thought: "What is going on with this person?" (L)

I02-CGM: 31 - 31 (0)

The treatment hasn't changed but the only thing that has changed is the traceability to bring together work and family. My perspective with regards to that has definitely changed. I have a lot more understanding for colleagues from which I know that they have children or who work part-time or who have to take care of their children and work at home during this Corona situation. However, the direct dealings with co-worker hasn't changed.

I02-CGM: 35 - 35 (0)

I think its partially difficult to combine the role as a father with work. So, when I say: "I have to take care of my daughter" or "My daughter is sick and I have to go home". Not everybody is able to understand that, to formulate it carefully. I think this it's still a difficulty, therefore I can understand people who have children and who have to organize work and their children.

I02-CGM: 37 - 37 (0)

Well, this is difficult to answer. Maybe others can answer that even better. I am not sure regarding my personality, did I become softer? I might have become more understanding, but I am not sure if this is only because of my motherhood or maybe because I matured to judge some things differently. I think that this has not really something to do with being a mother itself. There were situations when I was younger where I was really though and showed a lack of understanding but by getting older, I mustered up more understanding. Thus, I am not sure if this is really because of being a mother only. Next to this, well I do not know my personality indeed changed, maybe I got softer.

I03-ATF: 29 - 29 (0)

No, there is also no trait I could mention, at the moment, that has changed or if I added some new. /...No, I am still as patient as I was before. I think I was loving before as well but of course the kind of love that you give to your child is much different compared to the kind of love that you give to another individual. Like I said, maybe I got softer in some situations and have more understanding.

I03-ATF: 33 - 33 (0)

With softer, I mean that I am more understanding in some situations.

I03-ATF: 35 - 35 (0)

No, I was well organized before as well. I again have to refer, like I said, from my point of view only, so others might say something differently. I think I became more understanding in some things. I think, I was empathetic towards my employee before as well. Thus, this might also be linked with me getting older. I am not sure if you can trace this back to motherhood and having a child that I am more relaxed or more understanding.

I03-ATF: 41 - 41 (0)

No, there is nothing that comes to my mind. I did not get any feedback regarding this, except for, as I mentioned before, that I became more understanding. But other than that, there was no situation in which someone came to me and said: "Since you are a mother, you are now like this or like that." or something comparable. I wasn't told that.

I03-ATF: 53 - 53 (0)

What has changed with the co-workers is that before I had a child, and a lot of friends didn't have children either...ehhm...let me put it this way: I am more understanding towards people who are not able to do their work especially because they have to take care of their children. As a leader when you have children yourself, it doesn't matter how compliant you are trying to be, you

assess family emergency situations differently compared to when you don't have children.

I05-KFM: 39 - 39 (0)

I can't really judge it. I would say that it is mutual. I have more acceptance for their situations just like they have more for mine and we get involved with each other more.

I05-KFM: 41 - 41 (0)

Yeah, it's more about mutual understanding and about seeing the other person as a whole and not only as person who does the job. Ehhm...yes, we talk a lot about private manners but I think this is only part of it. Ehhm...I think it has a lot to do with the fact that I have been working with my team for a long time now.

I05-KFM: 43 - 43 (0)

I would say generally that you have to organize yourself very well, especially when you work and you have to be on the same terms as your partner so that things can work out. I am also in a different generation as you and when the man doesn't support you in your decision to continue to work while having a family then it doesn't work. It has to be an interplay and...ehhm...what was the question?

I06-SHF: 37 - 37 (0)

Ehhm...my co-workers joined me when I already had the children. My employees all came when I already had my kids and when I wanted to expand a little bit. They all joined at that time and they are all in the same situation as I am and we always say that if something is going on with the children then we will handle this as a team and the person is able to go to his/her family and manage the problems there without having to worry about work. This of course applies to me, too. We have this agreement that we are there for each other because we have similar situations.

I06-SHF: 51 - 51 (0)

This changed me to the extent that I am able as a leader to understand my team members better who have all children. I am perfectly able to understand their problems like the current Corona time or when I just notice that they are not really in a good mood because of the children. These are moments where I am able to show more understanding because I have kids on my own.

I07-TPF: 29 - 29 (0)

At the beginning I noticed and my boss also confirmed this that I unconsciously got softer. I can't really give examples but where I used to be stricter, I got unconsciously softer in my formulations. I also think that I got an understanding for other families

I07-TPF: 31 - 31 (0)

This is where I have more understanding.

I07-TPF: 31 - 31 (0)

I have more understanding for family situations. You also mature from things like that because when you have children and the first problems appear with them, a different understanding is formed which is something that happened with me, too. It's always like that in life, whenever you experience something like sickness or a bereavement or when it is something beautiful like children it is something different. Yes, because of that I am able to understand how my team members are affected even better even if I didn't experience their specific case. Therefore, I would say that it is mainly this understanding.

I07-TPF: 35 - 35 (0)

Something I have noticed too is that I altogether try to push and encourage female team members and I have to admit that I show more understanding towards them and I try to enable them as much as I can.

I07-TPF: 35 - 35 (0)

Of course, it is difficult to say how things would be without children because I also matured over the time. Probably without children, I also would have gotten another understanding, another organization because the older you get, the less you are resilient for certain things and I think you have to learn to organize yourself in a different way. Ehm...but yes, I am going to put the hypothesis up that I have more understanding,

I07-TPF: 37 - 37 (0)

However, it is getting more and more accepted that a parent needs a certain degree of flexibility. I experience this more and more, even though the development towards this acceptance is slow. So, some years ago when I had to leave the office earlier to pick up my son, I had to do this with a bad feeling and hoped that no one notices that I leave earlier. Today, I can do this without any bad feeling and can tell everyone that I have to pick up my son since this is more accepted now. Thus, I think there is definitely a difference. Today, it is fine if I am limited timewise since I have to look after my son. I am now freer to also clearly communicate this and to rearrange my schedule accordingly.

I08-RMF: 45 - 45 (0)

Exactly, I can deal with that today much more open and transparent.

I08-RMF: 47 - 47 (0)

Well, I hope it did not. Also, in my job before, the consultancy did a lot to support parents in their job in regard to flexible working solutions and more. So it was always clear that family comes first. Even in the time I had no children but other colleagues in my team, it was normal that they were not there sometimes since they needed to look after their children. As result, I was already quite used to it. My current employer supports me here as well, especially now during Corona I am very flexible in my working time. It is never questioned that the family is more important than the job. So, we are currently planning the work around the childcare, homeschooling and so on. I think I always did it that way also with employees who had children before I became a

father. Thus, I do not think that there has changed a lot in my interaction with colleagues.

I10-NSM: 39 - 39 (0)

People are more understanding and considerate. So, they understand if I am not able to attend every call or that I am not available sometimes over the day. This is what I recognized, my colleagues try to help me managing my family next to my job by enabling me to be that flexible. This is of course something the people might not do that extend to a colleague who does not have children.

I10-NSM: 41 - 41 (0)

I would say that I am still confronted with the same expectations and that I still need to perform the way I did before. However, there is now as well a higher understanding that other topics are more important to me and are in the focus of my life.

I11-CBM: 41 - 41 (0)

Here, the biggest change is that I now have a deeper understanding for situations or problems, I would not have had in my focus before, especially in regard to other colleagues who also have children. For example, I now understand colleagues who schedule their vacations in the school holidays due to their children. Before, I was more doubting why they can book their vacations this way and are maybe given priority but now I can understand this. I think this kind of experience is something you really have to make in person. Others can of course tell you about this but to really fully understand this situation, you have to make this experience on your own.

I12-STM: 33 - 33 (0)

Yes, definitely. Generally, I ask my employees who do not have children to be understanding to those who have children in general. Next to this, it also often depends on the age of the children of the employee since different needs from a child arise in different ages. Therefore, I try to sit down with the employees

to determine what he or she currently really needs and how I, as the manager, can help. I think that there is a lot to talk about with every employee. This works very well. We have many employees with children in different ages. To optimize the working situation here, it is necessary to invest some time to figure out the best solution.

I12-STM: 45 - 45 (0)

Well, let me recover the topic. By discussing the topic with my colleague, we often ask ourselves what parenthood does to the job itself. In this context we also ask ourselves what the employer does in this point actively. We often conclude then that the French are much more progressive in the field of integrating parenthood in the job while there is still a way to go in Germany. These are things that become meaningful in the job context quickly. Since today codes of conducts and company rules play an essential role, we still see much room for development here. This topic should be approached more actively. This is not a topic that can be solved mathematically or objectively, to bring this to a proper solution, a change in the culture itself needs to take place. To do so, the employers need to address this topic actively to move away from the old cliché that the employee either wants to be a parent but has to give up the career at least partly or just fully focuses on the job. We here see much need for further development. In this context, a master thesis like this can be an important milestone in this way.

I12-STM: 67 - 67 (0)

Well, did it change? Also here I would say that the same topics, tranquility and communication, have been improved. What I also recognize is that the parenthood also connects you to other colleagues who also have children. So, if you sometimes admit that you are absolutely tired to a colleague who is also a parent, the understanding is better, which leads to a higher degree of trust and intimacy.

I13-SLM: 35 - 35 (0)

However, due to my role as a father, the understanding and sensibility about in which world people really live and which kinds of problems they have has been increased. I have to admit that I imagined the role as a parent much easier as it is. Do not get me wrong, I really enjoy it, but I thought that it would be easier. I also hear this from others I talk to. When I now hear about a private problem like stress because the daughter moves out for college, I would have had an ear before as well. Nevertheless, I would have missed the real understanding for this before my role as a father. This means, now after I really have own children, I can understand a parent who worries about a child. Especially in the scope of my role in a leading position, I am now even more willing to give someone the flexibility to leave earlier if the time is needed to look after the child, even though I would have considered this as well before I became a father.

I13-SLM: 53 - 53 (0)

Yes. Exactly. I remember how it was when I did not find any sleep for two nights because of my child. In this situation, the person might not need any super smart advice or pressure, maybe there is just someone needed who offers to cover for him. Even if this person says that he or she still can take over the task, still the feeling is important that there is someone who understands this kind of problem and gives some backing.

I13-SLM: 55 - 55 (0)

I have more understanding for fathers which is something I didn't have before. In general, I have more understanding for the topic of family this includes mothers, too. The topic of family has a different significance then when you don't have children. When there are family celebrations or a child is graduating, then this is something I can understand more and empathize more with compared to when you don't have children.

I14-SPM: 37 - 37 (0)

I would say that you get more understanding of the problems, colleagues might have due to their role as parents, if you have

children on your own. You are of course better able to empathize with these problems since you often know these problems from your own children. So, I would say that you see this from a different perspective if you have own children.

I15-SSF: 43 - 43 (0)

Acceptance and understanding that has changed but other than that? I would have to think about because right now I don't know.

I16-VDSF: 37 - 37 (0)

At the end of the day I found a proper compromise. My children understand that I enjoy doing my work and that I also need it for me. Nevertheless, I am not fully dedicated anymore since I always have my children in mind. I also told each employer in my application that the children always come first. If my children really need my support, I would immediately set my priorities accordingly. Luckily, I did not have to do that yet.

I17-PRF: 33 - 33 (0)

Well, I would say that I expect understanding from my colleagues. So what I mean is that if there is something with my children and I have to be there for them, I expect my colleagues to understand this without questioning if or why I have to leave work earlier. On the other hand, I think I am more understanding to colleagues with children

I17-PRF: 35 - 35 (0)

No, I do not think so. My colleagues are understanding, sometimes more sometimes less. However I never came the situation in which somebody really questioned the necessity that I have to be there for my children.

I17-PRF: 37 - 37 (0)

On the one hand, I am more understanding to my employees, especially to those who have children as well, because I know what that means.

I18-AGF: 65 - 65 (0)

Something that I have noticed is, and my boss also confirmed this, that I now have distinct sense of justice. I mean had that before as well but something that I have noticed is that I approach more the emotional level in terms of understanding. This does not only apply for people with children but also to those without children. However, I have a much greater understanding for the worries and problems of parents. Especially, in this Corona time. That was something I haven't had before becoming a mother and now I am able to understand these worries.

I19-SAF: 29 - 29 (0)

Because I separate this well. I either work or I look after my children. Therefore, I would not say that my behavior changed here. Maybe now it is a bit different due to Corona. Here, everything is a bit more difficult and other topics come up. Nevertheless, I try to satisfy the needs of both roles. I want to make sure that my work does not suffer only because I have a child now. Well, what I notice is that you have other topics to talk about with your colleagues or employees. When I talk to other team leaders who have children it is easier to talk to compared to those who don't have children. For example, when my child is sick, other parents are much more understanding compared to those who don't have children. However, I don't think that the relationship to my colleagues have changed besides that.

I19-SAF: 35 - 35 (0)

I did not change totally. I was relaxed also before I became a mother but this characteristic has been further developed due to my new role. And another point that is really essential especially as a HR director is that I am much more understanding towards other colleagues who are parents as well. Before I became a mother, I was not always able to see the need for the flexibility in working time for parents. Since I now experience this on my own, I became much more understanding.

| | | | | |
|----------|----|---|----|-----|
| I20-JBF: | 33 | - | 33 | (0) |
|----------|----|---|----|-----|

Yes, definitely. I know from my own experience that it is not always possible to be productive while you look after your children. I know that if a child is, for example, ill it is not possible to really get things done. This is totally fine, here I would rather expect from other employees who are not at their full capacity to take over the tasks of the specific employee, no matter if they are parents or not.

I20-JBF: 45 - 45 (0)

This is a very difficult question. In my team there are also some parents. I would say that I became more understanding towards them due to my fatherhood. Especially with regards to flexibility in scheduling work time. I also organized events like a parent-child-day at work where every parent was able to bring his or her children. This created a higher awareness and understanding in the team. So, I would say that I am now more focus on the topic of parenthood at work.

I21_LSM: 35 - 35 (0)

I would say that I also became more relaxed. I often see parallels between situations with my employees and situations with my children. Due to this, I would say that I treat my employees differently. I am a bit more understanding and I have more patience

I22-MEM: 33 - 33 (0)

I would generally say that there's much understanding existing towards parents in the company I am working for, also from colleagues who have no children. I don't think that the expectation towards the colleague changes if he or she becomes a parent. In general, the same is expected from colleagues. It doesn't matter if they are a parent or not. You might even be able as a parent to ask for more flexibility in regard to your working time. There is maybe more understanding existent that you want to be a good father or mother.

I22-MEM: 39 - 39 (0)

Well, the company and the managers of the company expect the parents to invest time in their family. The company wants you to be able to also spend time with your children. This is taken quite seriously. I think that this is a maximum of what a company can expect. The company of course cannot influence the way how parents raise their children. But this is an essential factor.

I22-MEM: 41 - 41 (0)

Yes, I think when it comes to flexibility in regard to the work time of employees. I am more understanding to the needs of young parents in regard to the flexibility of working time. You are just better able to understand the situation. I think that my fatherhood definitely has an impact here.

I22-MEM: 59 - 59 (0)

2. Developed skills and traits\2.2 Regulation of emotions

but what you learn as a parent for sure is a big portion of humbleness towards situations and things that you cannot change, where you just have to get along with the situation where it does not matter if you like it or not and this is one of the most outstanding difference between people who are parents and people who are no parents.

I01-TBM: 29 - 29 (0)

When I leave work in my home office and I open the door and I see a lot of toys that lay around on the floor over which I trip and my son screams because his sister pulled his hair and I just got out of six hours of calls then it does not help me to get mad about it because children will fight whenever they will fight. The situation is what it is and I have to go there.

I01-TBM: 31 - 31 (0)

I also notice with my friends who have no children that the topic of biorhythm is different, okay? There is one who works during the night and sleeps in in the morning and there is the other one

who likes to work in the morning and naps in the afternoon for two hours that is something you can forget with young kids. The day starts at six in the morning and at eight o'clock in the evening when they are in bed you have time to think about the other topics that you have to deal with in life. You can do whatever you like but you have to accept the situation. I think this is the main point. It's patience, it's humbleness, it's the acceptance of external factors which make a big difference.

I01-TBM: 31 - 31 (0)

In the beginning it was very hard for me until you come to realize that it is pointless to fight it. They are here and you have to see the positive side and let yourself in to the positive things. Even if it's hard at times when you don't have much sleep or when you don't have much time for yourself. I would say that this is a huge development process to experience this humbleness and to partly give up control over my life and to have learned this really helps me out now.

I01-TBM: 39 - 39 (0)

Then you start a career after your studies and you get to a very critical point in the career, you usually have the drive, you have your own imagination on how you want to invest time and energy into work and into the career and I had a clear vision on how I want to proceed and what I want to do for it. This was taken away from me to a certain extent and to see this compared to the colleagues who get upset about certain things where I am like: "If you only knew what is happening to me parallelly". Then you have to take certain topics such as: "How do I react on criticism? How do I react to additional requests from co-workers that I have to reject?". But reject them in a way that I am not perceived as a nine to five employee who is just simply there for his family but I have to accommodate both things somehow and it gets difficult to stand against criticism. I also have to say that I have colleagues who are just concerned about themselves and their career and to see in comparison that

I can't do it and I have to manage both things, I personally have to say that my personal boiling point strikingly decreased where I had to withdraw myself a little bit. So, basically the way I dealt with my co-workers changed because we didn't have the same pattern anymore. I had to personally learn to take it. They can't do it different. From their perspective, they act completely right and in the interest of the firm. Me not being able to sleep during that night because I had to get up three times, shouldn't be of their concern. To learn this and to reflect this and to understand this, especially when you normally a person who puts his all into things and others accuse you of not putting your all into certain things and to accept this, that is like the biggest difficulty. They are basically right but I am not able to change it and I basically have to try to make it work which is very difficult. This is also something you take home with you.

I01-TBM: 43 - 43 (0)

The topic of humbleness, calmness and just letting things happen lead to a different assessment of dilemma situations.

I01-TBM: 79 - 79 (0)

Well, I more patient now. That is definitely something that you will learn. /...You definitely have to show more patience towards children than you are usually used to. For example, my wife and I have the agreement that I take the little one to the kindergarten before Corona came and just the process of dressing her, taking her to the kindergarten and handing her over to the preschool teacher, this process is not really calculable (L). It can take 5 minutes, if it goes fast, but it can also take 25 minutes. That is something that you definitely have to engage yourself to. This is a trait I have learned...to be more patient.

I02-CGM: 31 - 31 (0)

Secondly, a certain humbleness, I would call it, for a lot of things.

I02-CGM: 31 - 31 (0)

...and now I am much humbler

I02-CGM: 31 - 31 (0)

The topic of calmness is something that you can use in certain aspects at work.

I02-CGM: 33 - 33 (0)

No, I was well organized before as well. I again have to refer, like I said, from my point of view only, so others might say something differently. I think I became more understanding in some things. I think, I was empathetic towards my employee before as well. Thus, this might also be linked with me getting older. I am not sure if you can trace this back to motherhood and having a child that I am more relaxed or more understanding.

I03-ATF: 41 - 41 (0)

You are not trying to enforce everything.

I04-BHM: 29 - 29 (0)

I got milder. I think I also got calmer. I am definitely more resilient compared to before...well, yeah.

I05-KFM: 31 - 31 (0)

Basically, the application of the traits I just mentioned. I think I am more relaxed in situations. This is in so far interesting because I have received the feedback in the office that...ehhm...I come off as if things don't matter to me. Which of course is not the case, it's just that I am more composed in the assessment of things.

I05-KFM: 33 - 33 (0)

Yes, I can deal with it better. Ehhm...now that I have family and I just told myself that this is priority. Therefore, I am not too worried when something is cancelled because the world is not going to end because of that. I also don't have to work to nurture our family. I mean of course it's nice but if I am not earning as much money, it's not a problem for us. Therefore, this not as dramatic as it used to be during the time when I didn't have

children. I used to freak out when orders didn't come in and now I am calmer. Generally, I am calmer since I have my children.

I06-SHF: 75 - 75 (0)

Ehhm...I am calmer now when I have a conflict. I am trying to find a solution and my approach is relaxed and I am more engaged. In the past, I wasn't able to sleep at night but I am not doing that anymore. Of course, I still take a conflict with me somehow but now I look for solution and just deal with it. The older you are the more conflicts you have seen and you just know how to solve a lot of them.

I06-SHF: 83 - 83 (0)

In general, I would say that I became more relaxed, especially as a parent you cannot always freak out due to what your children have done.

I10-NSM: 73 - 73 (0)

I am not that spontaneous and impulsive like before anymore, also due to the fact that, as a parent, you are always under observation and you are seen as a role model.

I12-STM: 31 - 31 (0)

The experience I made here really surprised me. I recognized that I became much more patient but also much more stress resistant.

I12-STM: 59 - 59 (0)

Well, I was never loud or impetuous, but I think it made me calmer deliberate. For example, problems I have from which I thought before that they would be very serious or under much time pressure are now addressed calmer. It made me focus on the essential.

I13-SLM: 31 - 31 (0)

Problems from which I thought that they have to be solved immediately with much pressure can be addressed not with more calm. At a certain point, you see your children and figure out what is important in live next to your job. To sum it up, it

brought more calm in my life together with a further developed de-escalation and communication competence.

I13-SLM: 31 - 31 (0)

I am more relaxed now regarding many topics in life I have worried about. Also, in the professional setting where I am like: "It is what it is and everything is fine the way it is."

I16-VDSF: 29 - 29 (0)

Yes, when I came back from maternity leave, I felt extremely under pressure to function. More than before becoming a mother. I felt like I have to prove that as a woman I am able to manage this in a leading position. I don't know how things are for your generation but I still feel that the roles of men and women are a bit different and I question it. I am a person who questions myself a lot. I felt under pressure and I had to let this go. This has definitely changed when I came back to work. I had to become more relaxed. Fact is I am trying my best and I have child who gets sick at times and this is my priority. When she throws up in kindergarten and has fever, then it doesn't matter what is going on at work. I complete it and delegate tasks and then I am leaving to pick up my little one. It's a form of acceptance. Things are the way they are and I can't change them. Certain things have priority and I have to organize myself in a different way. My schedule is not only determined by me and my tasks anymore but also by my family. You still are able manage everything. I think for the employer it's better because there is a different form of calmness, acceptance and understanding for people. This has changed. I am determined by other people. Doing overtime, this is something I can't just do anymore. I am not able to stay for two more hours when things get stressful. This is something I have to dovetail with my boyfriend because I am the one who picks the little one up at 4 pm.

I16-VDSF: 33 - 33 (0)

Well, I would say that it started already during my pregnancy that I became more calm. Afterwards, this characteristic has even got more manifested. It's not that I don't care about things

anymore but I am just more calm compared before. Before, from time to time I took things home from work that emotionally affected me. Today, even if I have had a bad day, when I come home or pick my child up everything is gone, especially due to the fact that my son has nothing to do with it. So why should I let him feel that?

I19-SAF: 29 - 29 (0)

My employees also tell me that I have become more calm.

I19-SAF: 29 - 29 (0)

I would say that I have become more able to work under pressure and I would say that I have got calmer.

I20-JBF: 29 - 29 (0)

On the other hand, I would say that I became a calmer in my family and in my life in general. I also think that I was quite a relaxed person before. However, this trait also further developed due to my role as father. I would say that these are the two main aspects in this regard.

I21_LSM: 31 - 31 (0)

First, I have become more relaxed. Probably it would be easier to answer this question for people who have experienced me over this time. I would also say that I have become things like impatience and ambitions more under control. This results in a higher degree of serenity. I now see the world from a different angle

I22-MEM: 29 - 29 (0)

I would say that I also became more relaxed. I often see parallels between situations with my employees and situations with my children. Due to this, I would say that I treat my employees differently. I am a bit more understanding and I have more patience

I22-MEM: 33 - 33 (0)

I would say that I became more patient. Before I became a father, I probably gave up earlier and had no understanding

anymore why a specific solution cannot be adapted, or a conflict cannot be solved easily. My role as a father made me more patient here. However, this can also be due to my gained experiences in life since I became older.

I22-MEM: 63 - 63 (0)

Because you really need patience at the father. When being a young father, you often cannot understand why specific things does not work immediately. For example, I was not able to understand why my first child did not eat properly immediately. However, this is something you learn quickly. So, you learn not to immediately think that in things you are good at, other people are good at as well. Here, I develop more patience and learned to come to a proper solution in smaller steps.

I22-MEM: 65 - 65 (0)

2. Developed skills and traits\2.3 Social skills

The second thing I can say is that children are often topic in conversations with colleagues. Every now and then, they ask about the well-being of my child and in this way, we have a more personal interaction. This is, I would say, is a positive aspect and when you see a leader who is a parent, this make you a little bit more approachable. So basically, the problem of appearing unapproachable as a leader makes you appear more approachable as a father.

I02-CGM: 37 - 37 (0)

No, I haven't noticed anything in regards to that. However, I have heard from team members... especially one example comes to my mind where I was telling my team members about the school problems of my 13-year old son and one woman told me that she really likes when I tell them about my problems with the children because then she can see that even I have problems and that not everything runs smoothly for me. In this moment I kind of got the impression that she sees me as a role model which I thought was very cute...(L). This was also actually my aim. She is currently also struggling with Corona. Her husband is a police officer and she doesn't how to handle everything at the moment and well yes, we talked a little bit and

this is when I noticed that I am probably a role model for some of the female team members.

I07-TPF: 39 - 39 (0)

Here, I showed also the human side of me and moved away from facts only when I communicated my motherhood to the team. This triggered the emotional side of the people and I think this is something that I experienced as well when I consider how my colleagues interacted with me after I became a mother.

I08-RMF: 39 - 39 (0)

Besides, I also would say that the parenthood gives the new opportunity to come in contact with other colleagues. The parenthood is a private topic that has many in common. This brought me closer to several colleagues I have.

I11-CBM: 33 - 33 (0)

Well, the only regard in which it has changed he is on the private level because I have opened up more. I started to share insights about my own life in the team. I knew that they would be interested in it since they started asking me questions. So, I became more opened on private level due to my parenthood. However, I do not think that I have changed the way of interaction in other regards.

I11-CBM: 35 - 35 (0)

I think that this is a combination of several factors. I now of more the feeling of having arrived. I am proud of my child and I became more relaxed. As result of this proudness, the child becomes a topic more often and my colleagues are interested in it. I am generally more this kind of person who does not make much things of his private life public since I assume that others are not so interested in it.

I11-CBM: 37 - 37 (0)

I would say that my colleagues are more interested in my private life, they want to know more about me, what is going on in my

private life and who I am. So, this has brought us closer together on the private level. I also would say that my colleagues opened up a bit more. To a certain extent that gave bit more of a psychological security in the team. This is for sure one of the elements. And I think that there is a degree of recognition that comes with the fatherhood. If you decide to start a family this is of course a big step in your life and brings you to a higher degree of seniority. I think that colleagues don't perceive as a junior anymore but rather more as a senior.

I11-CBM: 39 - 39 (0)

I am not that spontaneous and impulsive like before anymore, also due to the fact that, as a parent, you are always under observation and you are seen as a role model.

I12-STM: 31 - 31 (0)

If I consider the characteristics that shape me as a person, I would rather say no. Except for situation in which children play a role. Like in regard to leading employees. Besides, there is a better connection to colleagues who also have children since you always have a dialogue topic more. Thus, if you might have communicated on professional base only before, there might now be some private words exchanged, too.

I12-STM: 35 - 35 (0)

Yes, I think that there are just more connection points also for the other colleagues to me. So, if they recognized that I am now a father, they might also have had more chances to find topics to talk about. Therefore, I think that many colleagues socially interconnected better with me. I think especially colleagues who are in a leading position are influenced by this. If there was maybe a more hieratically structure before, this structure might has been dissolved.

I12-STM: 41 - 41 (0)

Well, also here my role as a father has helped me to develop this. I always already had the understanding that, if two conflict

parties harmony emotionally better, the conflict can be brought to a solution easier. However, my role as a father has enriched this by more aspects. However, children have of course other topics to discuss like adults. Thus, it cannot completely be compared. Nevertheless, I would say that my role as father has led to the fact that I managed to do this generally better.

I12-STM: 65 - 65 (0)

So, the connection to these colleagues strongly improves. Often, children are the topic because of which a conversation starts, but since this is already quite private, the familiarity increases, and the conversations partners often open up much more. I think that I did not do this to this degree before.

I13-SLM: 35 - 35 (0)

Yes, I would say so. Children are very often a connecting factor which creates conversations more often than only once. If I would not have any children....I recognize that the fact that often conversations started with a dialogue about the children, the atmosphere is often very positive. Especially since you often have to deal with the same colleagues, you are able to create a very positive and warm atmosphere. I think after the ice broke once to share something private like this, and I think that this is a private topic that is socially very positively recognized, especially compared to other very private topics, the described warm atmosphere can be easier created. You always have the connecting factor with the colleague by only asking things like "Is your child now sleeping better?" etc. and this creates a circle of trust, also in the following relationship with the colleague.

I13-SLM: 37 - 37 (0)

At that time definitely. I had the feeling that everyone at work is happy for you. To respond the question you asked before, I would like to tell you about one specific example. My daughter was abroad for a study abroad and my co-workers sympathized with me and showed a lot of interest by asking. I don't think they would have done that if I only had a dog at home (L).

I14-SPM: 41 - 41 (0)

Yes, I talk more about their children with them now (L). This is something that definitely changed but I try not to do it too much because there are also other topics. But other than that. //...no, I wouldn't say that something has changed.

I19-SAF: 33 - 33 (0)

Because I separate this well. I either work or I look after my children. Therefore, I would not say that my behavior changed here. Maybe now it is a bit different due to Corona. Here, everything is a bit more difficult and other topics come up. Nevertheless, I try to satisfy the needs of both roles. I want to make sure that my work does not suffer only because I have a child now. Well, what I notice is that you have other topics to talk about with your colleagues or employees. When I talk to other team leaders who have children it is easier to talk to compared to those who don't have children. For example, when my child is sick, other parents are much more understanding compared to those who don't have children. However, I don't think that the relationship to my colleagues have changed besides that.

I19-SAF: 35 - 35 (0)

In general, I would not say so. However, in my experience you have a higher degree of interaction with colleagues who are also parents since they is always a topic that you can discuss or share. But besides that, I would not say that the interaction from other colleagues with my changed. Especially with colleagues I worked a lot with before, I went on working the same way after my fatherhood.

I21_LSM: 37 - 37 (0)

Generally, not much, but there are other topics you can discuss with your colleagues. When I became a manager, I was the youngest of my colleagues. The older ones started talking about children and I was not able to join the conversation. Now after having my own children, it is much easier for me to be part of that which is quite nice to experience.

I22-MEM: 37 - 37 (0)

2. Developed skills and traits\2.4 Effective use of time

Therefore, I am now more included. Back then my goal was to pursue my career and then you have different expectations from your partner compared to when you say let's do 50/50 or 60/40. I only have to time it. When I am in calls, I am not able to take care of the kids but if my partner knows how my schedule looks like, we are able to get it arranged. For me personally, this is a huge difference between back then and today.

I01-TBM: 33 - 33 (0)

Yes, definitely. I have always organized my work and when you get home you manage your small tasks at home like ironing your blouse and a shirt...(L)...but when you have a family you have to organize yourself even more otherwise it won't work.

I06-SHF: 41 - 41 (0)

Hmm...more efficient, clearer. I don't let myself get distracted or I am just more focused. When you are alone you don't have this pressure. Now, I have my working time and in this time I am getting my job done and in the other time I am trying to get other stuff done or when the children were still small, I spent time with them.

I06-SHF: 49 - 49 (0)

For me personally it means a lot of organization and being responsible for two more persons and to teach those persons values. Ehhm...yes, I think I have mentioned it before...organizing to reconcile family and professional life.

I07-TPF: 27 - 27 (0)

and I had to learn very fast that I am only able to manage this when I delegate tasks. This has a wonderful advantage because the employees are flattered when I approach them and ask them if they want to do a specific task. Actually, it is a win-win situation because it takes pressure off of me. This is something I have learned very fast. I am a person who likes to do a lot of tasks in a day and sometimes too many tasks. So, this was a learning process for me but it was something that I have learned very fast.

I07-TPF: 33 - 33 (0)

Ehhm...but yes, I am going to put the hypothesis up that I have more understanding, have better organizational skills...ehhm...that I am more flexible because you have to react more flexible to things also in your family life. When I decide to present something in Cologne tomorrow and my child gets sick during the night, I have to come up with something and I always have to react fast. That is something that you learn from this and you are able to adapt this very nicely to your team. I claim that I learned all of this because of my children...(L).

I07-TPF: 37 - 37 (0)

Maybe, and this is not even entirely positive, I am even more attached to my personal schedule. Before, I was more flexible timewise and consequently more open to drinking a coffee with a colleague or having a nice chat, but now I am more under time pressure as a mother. Thus, I always try to manage both, the professional and the private. This is something I might miss a bit, being flexible enough to have a coffee with some colleagues, since now I always have in mind that I have to decide how I invest the time. Either I spend it with the colleagues, or I go home half an hour earlier to be there for my son.

I08-RMF: 37 - 37 (0)

First, I prioritize much more. Now, my focus is set on having time with my family instead of on the work only.

I11-CBM: 31 - 31 (0)

So, when I started my family with my wife, I blocked periods in my schedule. For example, I do not accept meetings before 9.00am since in am having breakfast with my family and I always try, also in very stressful periods, to be always home for dinner. Admittedly, this also has another effect. Since I am an ambitious person, I am interested in taking over challenging tasks and go the extra mile in order to develop my career. As a result of this, my working hours have been shifted to the late evening. At the beginning, I was trying to go home earlier and

then do the rest of my daily tasks in the late evening. However, this of course does not work properly. As a result, I started to prioritize all tasks that have to be done. I always carefully evaluate into which tasks I invest my time resources. Yes, due to the fact that I have a family, I was not longer able to decide this selfishly, but had to show consideration for my family. So, in the early days before I founded my family, I also always worked late hours and also often hit an afterwork party afterwards. This felt very nice because I like this ambitious working style. However, with a family, this is simply not possible anymore. As a result, my parenthood led to a strong change in priorities, how I structure and manage my day and into what I invest my time resources.

I13-SLM: 33 - 33 (0)

Yes, I think doing more together and dovetail more. I am more of a team player now. I have to dovetail a lot with my partner. For example, we cook together now. In the past, I just got it done in a fast way but now it's not about doing it fast but about having fun, engage the little one so she can learn something and more dovetailing so that everything fits. Especially now with Corona, my boyfriend and I have to dovetail to clarify who is having which appointment at which time and who is taking the little one. This demands to engage with another person.

I16-VDSF: 31 - 31 (0)

Fact is I am trying my best and I have child who gets sick at times and this is my priority. When she throws up in kindergarten and has fever, then it doesn't matter what is going on at work. I complete it and delegate tasks and then I am leaving to pick up my little one. It's a form of acceptance. Things are the way they are and I can't change them. Certain things have priority and I have to organize myself in a different way. My schedule is not only determined by me and my tasks anymore but also by my family. You still are able manage everything. I think for the employer it's better because there is a different form of calmness, acceptance and understanding for

people. This has changed. I am determined by other people. Doing overtime, this is something I can't just do anymore. I am not able to stay for two more hours when things get stressful. This is something I have to dovetail with my boyfriend because I am the one who picks the little one up at 4 pm.

I16-VDSF: 33 - 33 (0)

///... I don't know. I think becoming a mother doesn't make you a completely different person. I am not going to be Mother Teresa (L) but I am more under time pressure at work. I know that my work day is from 8 until 3.45 pm, or until 4 pm at the latest. This means I have to be more structured and organized than before to manage the same tasks as before in less time. You have less time to drink a coffee with colleagues or to take 5 minutes for yourself when things are getting stressful. You just work through it. It's not a personality trait but it's something that has definitely changed. You are very jam-packed and you try to integrate the human sides. When employees try to discuss something with you, of course I am taking the time for it but at 4 pm I have to leave and this can't be changed. Thus, I am very well organized and I think I work very efficiently. Something that falls by the wayside are the breaks for myself and networking which is really important for the job. Some people only do it for the job. For me personally, it's fun to meet new people and to exchange information with others is very healthy for your own tasks but I am only able to do it in a limited way.

I16-VDSF: 35 - 35 (0)

I would say that parents are expected to be good in organizing things. Since everybody expects them to be good in this, the expectation to parents is to manage 10 things at a time. And I think that is expected from parents to be able to plan longer in advance, for example in regard to vacations, since parents are tight to school holidays. So if, for example, the children get older and are not tight anymore to school holidays and now you want to schedule a vacation outside the school holidays, everyone is

surprised at first. So, parents are expected to be well organized to make sure that their parenthood has no influence on their work.

I17-PRF: 39 - 39 (0)

I think yes. I would say that, well you can't really faster but I am not wasting my time anymore. I think that I never did this anyways. However, time became even more precious. I'm not that kind of person who discusses a topic for hours. A decision is being made and then we follow the procedure. I also would say that I became a bit harder. Everyone thinks that you probably become rather softer, but I cannot confirm that. Maybe this goes in the same direction with what I said in regards to being more time efficient. If there is something that really does not work, I clearly point it out and want the person to change. I think that I might have been a bit more diplomatic before.

I18-AGF: 31 - 31 (0)

I am not full-time anymore. I am not sure if this is relevant here. I fulfill now 80% of the job I did before. I would say that I, and also many other mothers I know who are also working, are very good in time management. We are all quite efficient in prioritizing tasks and responsibilities simply because it is necessary. When it comes to overtime, it of course still exists. However, before I had no problem with overtime, but now this means for me that I am not able to see my child for this day. Therefore, this is now a much less acceptable option for me.

I18-AGF: 37 - 37 (0)

Definitely in my working time. I reduced the working hours when I came back from maternity leave. I have noticed that it's working out very well. I got better in delegating tasks. Despite Corona, at a certain time I have to pick up my child from child care and then I have to drop my pen and leave. In case there is something to do, I have to reschedule it and move it to another day or appointment. At other times, I delegate the tasks to my employees. This was also kind of my dream that my team manages to do a lot of the tasks by themselves when I am in

maternity leave. This really worked out fine. So, when I came back things stayed like that. To conclude, I delegate tasks more and got more calm.

I19-SAF: 31 - 31 (0)

I would say that I have become more able to work under pressure and I would say that I have got calmer. Before, I already had the tendency not to be easily distracted but now this characteristic has been further developed due to my motherhood. And I would say that I am a person who always gives 150% but due to my children, I learned that also sometimes 80% are enough especially due to the fact that my 80% are 100% to other persons. However, I didn't lose my demand for the quality of my work. I learned to better prioritize the tasks and not to take over each and every of them. I would say that I have become more focused due to the fact that I have less time available.

I20-JBF: 29 - 29 (0)

In regards to my work I would say that I made a change that is quite operative. So, if needed, I clearly say that I now have to leave the office if necessary. So, I give a better feedback about what I can do in general and what the priority should be here. It is not possible timewise to do everything and also cannot come back to the office at midnight to complete tasks that have not been completed over the day. They are also private things to handle and organize and, as a result, time is rare. Before I became a mother, I liked to sit down between 8 pm and midnight to complete some tasks that were still open but now this is not possible anymore.

I20-JBF: 31 - 31 (0)

3. Work-family challenges\3.1 Time-based challenges

Back then, I was in my early 30s and I just entered a critical career stage. I arranged myself differently with my ex-wife. I attached great importance to say that I am integrating myself in quality time but I also have to invest the time into my career because I was not able to choose when to work and that is what

I did. It's not like I am regretting this but it's definitely different now regarding my two children that I have now.

I01-TBM: 33 - 33 (0)

I used to work in the transaction services department at *Company A*. Brutal project business where there is no nine to five. Especially there, if there are mothers or fathers that have to leave at three in the afternoon because they have to get their child from kindergarten or they have to leave at five pm to feed their children and bring them to bed...for them there is only a restricted amount of sympathy shown by the company and I see it the same way.

I01-TBM: 53 - 53 (0)

On the other side, and I personally also was like that for my first two children, there are colleagues who get the projects done because they just simply have to get it done and I have to put my focus on the quality time that I have with them.

I01-TBM: 55 - 55 (0)

Well, my daughter turns 16 now, so I come back to a degree of normality. It was quite stressful I would say because I had to manage this balancing act between being there for my employees, manage the workload and parallelly do justice to my child.

I03-ATF: 39 - 39 (0)

Personal traits...puh. I am not sure if I can put it in a nutshell. I used to be very organized and yes, that is something that you keep and you organize the children, the household and the work. Yes, it is about managing the balance between all the different areas but you definitely also fall by the wayside.

I06-SHF: 39 - 39 (0)

However, I think that it is often the case that women take over the main responsibility for the child. As a result, men often do not recognizably decrease or limit their work time or invest in the job while women rather do it. Thus, this might be a disadvantage for women in the further career. However, I am

not sure about that since I have not personally observed it. But I think that the reduction of working time is rather recognized with women.

I11-CBM: 41 - 41 (0)

Well I am not sure to what extent I changed. Maybe when I was promoted into the leading position. I have grown up with more conservative hierarchy models and also saw this in the first years when I started in this insurance. So, I saw many managers who worked until 10pm or cancelled their children's birthday party if the managing board needed a specific document or presentation. Already in these days when I saw this, I hoped that this would change later since I personally do not want to do this as well. When I took over my first leading position in 2018, I saw that many colleagues around me worked differently. They always stayed longer in the office and put their priorities clearly on the job. However, I was always sure that my way of working is the right one and that I can live with it. So, when I started my family with my wife, I blocked periods in my schedule. For example, I do not accept meetings before 9.00am since I am having breakfast with my family and I always try, also in very stressful periods, to be always home for dinner. Admittedly, this also has another effect. Since I am an ambitious person, I am interested in taking over challenging tasks and go the extra mile in order to develop my career. As a result of this, my working hours have been shifted to the late evening

I13-SLM: 33 - 33 (0)

No. I would say it did not change in my case. I was always ambitious, and my focus was always on getting a good job and the work itself. This maybe led to the fact that I was not able to be always there timewise for my children, at least not to the extent I would have wished it to be.

I15-SSF: 37 - 37 (0)

Fact is I am trying my best and I have child who gets sick at times and this is my priority. When she throws up in kindergarten and has fever, then it doesn't matter what is going on at work. I complete it and delegate tasks and then I am

leaving to pick up my little one. It's a form of acceptance. Things are the way they are and I can't change them. Certain things have priority and I have to organize myself in a different way. My schedule is not only determined by me and my tasks anymore but also by my family. You still are able manage everything. I think for the employer it's better because there is a different form of calmness, acceptance and understanding for people. This has changed. I am determined by other people. Doing overtime, this is something I can't just do anymore. I am not able to stay for two more hours when things get stressful. This is something I have to dovetail with my boyfriend because I am the one who picks the little one up at 4 pm.

I16-VDSF: 33 - 33 (0)

///... I don't know. I think becoming a mother doesn't make you a completely different person. I am not going to be Mother Teresa (L) but I am more under time pressure at work. I know that my work day is from 8 until 3.45 pm, or until 4 pm at the latest. This means I have to be more structured and organized than before to manage the same tasks as before in less time. You have less time to drink a coffee with colleagues or to take 5 minutes for yourself when things are getting stressful. You just work through it. It's not a personality trait but it's something that has definitely changed. You are very jam-packed and you try to integrate the human sides. When employees try to discuss something with you, of course I am taking the time for it but at 4 pm I have to leave and this can't be changed. Thus, I am very well organized and I think I work very efficiently. Something that falls by the wayside are the breaks for myself and networking which is really important for the job. Some people only do it for the job. For me personally, it's fun to meet new people and to exchange information with others is very healthy for your own tasks but I am only able to do it in a limited way.

I16-VDSF: 35 - 35 (0)

Yes, I think they exist but I also think that it is completely different for men and women mostly also because for many families the roles are distributed in a traditional way. There are other cases but the percentage distributions are clear. They are many statistics about this. I think it's going to change in the next years but all my female employees who have children are working part-time. What does that mean for the career?! My boyfriend worked full-time and I work part-time. He is doing a lot and I would not be able to handle it if he wouldn't do so much. We are very well organized but mostly women who come back from maternal leave work part-time. And when you work part-time then everything is different for you and here it also depends on how much percentage you are working. Imagine you are working 20 hours per week, what are you going to do? What about school, further education, networking or more challenging tasks that you are not able to do in those 20 hours. Reducing your hours like that, it is difficult to make career and to keep the pace in the professional setting. Accordingly, people see you differently because you are not working in the core hours when everybody else is working, you are not taking as long in a call, you are not going to any network events, in the evening you are at home and you are not able to go to any kind of conference or meet up. I do think that this is a different picture. What is being expected from you? You are more limited in a time sense and kids also get sick and it depends on which role you have in the family. Are you the main person to take care of the kids or does your partner support you or is your partner maybe the main responsible one? Based on that, you are able to invest time and engagement into your profession which is seen by others and which decides on how things are going to be for your professionally.

I16-VDSF: 45 - 45 (0)

Well, you always try to meet expectations from two sides. The employer expects you to be 100% dedicated as before, but you also need to be there for your children. Making both to full extent is not possible. At the end of the day I found a proper

compromise. My children understand that I enjoy doing my work and that I also need it for me. Nevertheless, I am not fully dedicated anymore since I always have my children in mind. I also told each employer in my application talks the children always come first. If my children really need my support, I would immediately set my priorities accordingly. Luckily, I did not have to do that yet.

I17-PRF: 33 - 33 (0)

Yes, you try to make everything possible, especially if there are meetings that are out of the normal business hours, in which it could be negatively registered that I again was not able to attend due to the fact that I have a child. So, I try my best not to show that I am timely limited at work.

I18-AGF: 49 - 49 (0)

I often have heard from my colleagues that I am very dedicated and focused at work. I am not that interested in coffee breaks or private talks. This is simply because I want to get even more done in a shorter time. I have heard from my colleagues that they experienced me, let's say, more unfriendly. Please don't get me wrong, I think that my colleagues like me as a person, they just told me that they know that they cannot have private talk with me at work. When I became a mother, this factor has probably even further pointed out which is due to the fact that I don't have much time and I want to get my work done quicker."

I20-JBF: 39 - 39 (0)

My interaction with employees definitely changed and my interaction with colleagues partly as well. Colleagues might have seen you before as the person who is really striving for a career but now they expect you to see things differently. So, things change a bit here. I now have other priorities or at least one more priority in my life, which is my family. This means that, for example, staying longer in the night to finish up a specific task is not that important for me anymore. Colleagues who have children on their own understand this while colleagues who have no children are not able to understand this to a full extent. They of course understand this objectively but from an

emotional point of view they still ask why I am not able to finish the task late in the night. This is what I meant when saying that you now see things a bit differently.

I22-MEM: 35 - 35 (0)

3. Work-family challenges\3.2 Prejudices and stereotypes

I think its partially difficult to combine the role as a father with work. So, when I say: "I have to take care of my daughter" or "My daughter is sick and I have to go home". Not everybody is able to understand that, to formulate it carefully.

I02-CGM: 37 - 37 (0)

I think it is still expected that work comes first and that the child, so to say, is second priority.

I02-CGM: 39 - 39 (0)

It is a good question to see if career perspective also plays a role. So that basically when you have children, career shouldn't play a big role. Especially for women this probably still plays a big role like bringing career and children together for men this probably is a bit different.

I02-CGM: 39 - 39 (0)

I used to be a leader of a big department and then I got self-employed. In my time, when a woman had children and worked, it was not easy to see this and I was confronted with statements such as: "You have children and you work? Why are you doing that?" When our children were small, there was this saying: "A good German mother stays home". You have to take care of the children and whenever I brought my children to the kindergarten and left they were already gossiping about the fact that I was working. Today it's different. Today it's normal.

I06-SHF: 45 - 45 (0)

This has been a huge learn process for me because I was not able to understand the problem of the other mothers. When I had my first child, shortly after that my twins were born and I never stopped working. I mean I had an office at home but I

never stopped and this didn't fit in the pattern of many people and they confronted me about it or did behind my back. They said stuff like: "How can she work with three children and her husband is a doctor. What is she doing?". This was very hurting for me and I had to learn to ignore it and let them speak. It is what it is. Nowadays, when you will have children it's probably different.

I06-SHF: 47 - 47 (0)

Before in theory I thought: "She chose to work and to have children"...ehhm...I was also not completely free of it and I thought to myself: "Where is the problem?" and I can reflect it way better now what it especially means for women.

I07-TPF: 31 - 31 (0)

There is also this prejudice where it is said that leaders who work part-time are not taken seriously anymore and this is something I haven't experienced at all, no.

I07-TPF: 39 - 39 (0)

On the other hand, there are also people who look at my parenthood disparagingly. I experienced this especially among other women. Especially other women who have decided to be a mother only and have no job look at me very critically and claim that I might not have enough time for my child.

I08-RMF: 39 - 39 (0)

I think in the working world, people mainly look very positively on my two roles or they just do not care.

I08-RMF: 43 - 43 (0)

Well, I think generally, also at work, the traditional way to think about this is not fully outdated. I think that especially from men it is expected that they still show a strong presence at work. I think among parents at work there is also a difference. From my subjective way of observing it, I feel like that women sometimes communicate more often among each other compared to men would do. I think that the man still is expected that he is strong and that nothing is a problem for him. Often, it is also expected

that he cares about others and does not show any weakness. Or if he does so, he should sell it as a strength. I think that this is expected from a father at work. Luckily, the insurance I am working for does not have a working culture in which you can be called in the middle of the night and need to deliver some content but I think that especially with this in mind, people would even wonder if I would say often that it is hard to manage job and family. I think it would not be entirely negative, but as a man, you are more expected to see this as a challenge you need to take. I think that this is different for women.

I13-SLM: 39 - 39 (0)

Yes. Well, I would say that the way how this is still established in our society, it is partly not how it should be. So, yes, due to the fact that the woman is still more associated with the traditional role as the person who cares about the children. So, if she has to leave earlier, this makes sense to many people and they accept it easier, while people might have a lack of understanding for a man and would require him probably more top focus better on the job by asking why he needs to look after the children. I think that this is wrong, but I also think that way of thinking is partly still in place. So, a woman in her role as a mother might be able to easier require some flexibility to fulfill her responsibility towards her child and might also be able to easier communicate the challenges that result from this to her.

I13-SLM: 41 - 41 (0)

I think that there is currently a strong development in the role as a father. I think that I am part of the first generation that moves away from the role that the father only looks after the children but is distanced but the mother guarantees the development of the child. I think that this separation of the roles clearly changes. I think that it is also much more accepted that both have the same right to focus on the career. I also share this opinion. However, I also recognize that it is sometimes tough in society

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| | <p>to fit in the classic expectations the society has for you, I explained that earlier, but still fit in the role as a good father.</p> <p>I13-SLM: 63 - 63 (0)</p> |
| <p>4. Approach to ethical decisions\4.1 No difference to non-parents</p> | <p>From their perspective, they act completely right and in the interest of the firm. Me not being able to sleep during that night because I had to get up three times, shouldn't be of their concern</p> <p>I01-TBM: 43 - 43 (0)</p> <p>Yes, the expectations are very clear to say that you have to be as involved during work time as before. The more you climb the career ladder, the higher are the expectations. For some they are in the company for eight hours, get in their car and are at home for dinner and in other areas</p> <p>I01-TBM: 49 - 49 (0)</p> <p>Okay, I am back. The expectations are to do your job. I used to work in the transaction services department at <i>Company A</i>. Brutal project business where there is no nine to five. Especially there, if there are mothers or fathers that have to leave at three in the afternoon because they have to get their child from kindergarten or they have to leave at five pm to feed their children and bring them to bed...for them there is only a restricted amount of sympathy shown by the company and I see it the same way. Of course, I am a little bit more lenient compared to other people. However, finally, the one thing is a job where I want to develop myself and where the business expects me to proceed and where I earn money and where I make career. On other side, I am not able to go there and say: "You have to give me my parental bonus. I only want to accomplish $\frac{3}{4}$ because I am only able to accomplish $\frac{3}{4}$ but I want to have the same development." This is a balancing act I have experienced from both sides: me representing the company and me being a father.</p> <p>I01-TBM: 53 - 53 (0)</p> |

Secondly, I also think what is expected is that children don't cause any impairment with regards to the work. So, basically that your performance doesn't suffer from it.

I02-CGM: 39 - 39 (0)

I am not sure how it is today... I think there is a development here. So, it is hard for me to say how this question is to be answered as a parent in a leading position today. I think the understanding for parents that you are not always available for work has further developed. I think when I became a mother 16 years ago it was expected that you still are always available and able to fulfill your job to the same degree as before. Back in these days, there was of course some understanding to some extent but there was the expectation that you complete all tasks as before.

I03-ATF: 59 - 59 (0)

I can only talk from my point of view. It is expected that they stay focused on their work and handle them in a good way with co-workers.

I04-BHM: 51 - 51 (0)

The same as everybody else. I wouldn't make a difference. From a company perspective, from a leadership perspective I pay someone to do the work. Therefore, it doesn't matter if the person has a child or not.

I05-KFM: 47 - 47 (0)

Well, you have to be at least as perfect as the others. Ehhm...you were supposed to look good, do your work in a responsible way and be in cheerful spirits. It's not quite the thing to be, for example, tired only because the children were stressful or something like that. In general, a professional behavior is expected.

I06-SHF: 55 - 55 (0)

They have to show the same performance as a normal employee. When I answer this question from the perspective of a leader, I can say that all the leaders I know that work part-time, at least have to accomplish the same things as a full-time leader. In my case I only work 80% and to say that I am only

able to manage 80%, this is not possible. You have to show the same performance as if you were working 100%. For example, all the leaders in the customer center need to do six coachings with the employees in a year and I am not able to tell my boss that only because I work part-time I am only able to do five. That is something that you learn very fast. Either you manage the job in this way or you don't and then you shouldn't do it. When you are a leader or a specialist, then it is expected that you go on business trips or that you work overtime and these are things that you have to expect and also do.

I07-TPF: 41 - 41 (0)

I think, after all it is mainly expected that parenthood has no influence on the job

I08-RMF: 45 - 45 (0)

So, people expect that you are available and engaged the same way as before you have become a parent. Thus, I think there is no change in regard to the expectations to a parent at work.

I08-RMF: 45 - 45 (0)

Well, I know that what I am going to say now is not that intelligent. I would say that it is expected from mothers and fathers at work not to be parents but employees only. This is of course an immense challenge. Even though I know that employees who are satisfied or do not have private problems are more capable of doing good work, but I was not able to expect this. I was not able to leave this way of thinking apart in which I was living in. As result, I expected my employees to be equally dedicated to the company like me. I recognized that in the past years the world has changed and work life balance becomes more important. Nevertheless, I did not accept these changes resulting from this development. My way of leadership was strongly considering the employers interests only. Only if a candidate mentioned the importance of work life balance to him or her in an application talk, I was able to accept this since I knew it from the beginning.

I09-URM: 49 - 49 (0)

I would say the same with people without children. Let me say it that way. If someone has or has not children is not important to me. I mean, I am of course thoughtful as well and understand if the colleague needs some flexible working time as well. However, when it comes to the job itself, I do not think that this plays an essential role. I would say that my team is equally mixed with colleagues with and without children. I do not honestly think that having children does change anything in regard to how the colleagues work or what is expected from them.

I10-NSM: 43 - 43 (0)

Well, I would say that the expectations towards me as a manager in a leading position almost did not change. I would say that I am still confronted with the same expectations and that I still need to perform the way I did before. However, there is now as well a higher understanding that other topics are more important to me and are in the focus of my life.

I11-CBM: 41 - 41 (0)

There is, in my opinion, no clearly defined expectation from the company to their employees regarding any style of behavior, because here everybody needs to be treated the same independently if they have a child or not. However, what might come up from time to time negatively is that the company often expects employees that have children to be equally available and engaged as employees without children. Based on the experiences I made, this does not work. A company here need to consider this and has to help their employees to organize this. A very good example especially now in times of corona now is that in home office the child might cry in the background even though you might be in a meeting, but you are not able to leave the child alone. Therefore, I think that it is necessary that things have to be adapted to address these needs. But this goes in both directions.

I12-STM: 43 - 43 (0)

I don't think there is difference that is being made in normal life. In special cases like the child is sick or something like that, the employer was always understanding. However, normally there is no difference made between who have children and those who don't have children.

I14-SPM: 45 - 45 (0)

Yes, when I came back from maternity leave, I felt extremely under pressure to function. More than before becoming a mother. I felt like I have to prove that as a woman I am able to manage this in a leading position. I don't know how things are for your generation but I still feel that the roles of men and women are a bit different and I question it. I am a person who questions myself a lot. I felt under pressure and I had to let this go. This has definitely changed when I came back to work. I had to become more relaxed.

I16-VDSF: 33 - 33 (0)

The employer expects you to be 100% dedicated as before, but you also need to be there for your children. Making both to full extent is not possible.

I17-PRF: 33 - 33 (0)

I would say that parents are expected to be good in organizing things. Since everybody expects them to be good in this, the expectation to parents is to manage 10 things at a time. And I think that is expected from parents to be able to plan longer in advance, for example in regard to vacations, since parents are tight to school holidays. So if, for example, the children get older and are not tight anymore to school holidays and now you want to schedule a vacation outside the school holidays, everyone is surprised at first. So, parents are expected to be well organized to make sure that their parenthood has no influence on their work.

I17-PRF: 39 - 39 (0)

Okay, I generally would expect also for my employees that they still are flexible and dedicated to the work. I would not make a

difference between employees with and without children in the first step.

I18-AGF: 47 - 47 (0)

This is difficult since it always depends. Generally, I always expect that an employee at work gives his or her very best. If this is not possible due to private reasons, for example, then I would at least expect that they communicate openly to me so I am aware of the issue. Then, I might even be able to help with the problem. I would also make sure that the other colleagues show more understanding to the employee with the problem. But in general, if everything is normal and fine with the children then you work just like everybody. This might also be an escape from the daily life as a parent.

I19-SAF: 41 - 41 (0)

That would be very nice! My husband works in the same company as me. However not in a leading position. But he definitely became more emotional. It is really not easy. I became of course more emotional and also more relent because I now have this little human but I try not to show this at work. Especially because I am in a leading position. But you are of course a human as well. So, I try to be even more understanding than before, but nevertheless, clear company measures or obligations do not change because of this. This makes it quite difficult. I became of course more understanding too young parents who have to combine the work life with their role as parent, but you still somehow have to manage it.

I19-SAF: 67 - 67 (0)

Generally, I would say that the person who signs the employee contract should at least fulfill all the requirements that are requested from him or her in the contract. However, I expect from employees, no matter if they are parents or not, that they are dedicated and give their very best. If employees who are parents for some reason cannot be fully dedicated from time to time, then I can understand this. Nevertheless, I generally make

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| | <p>no difference in my expectations to employees. For me, it's not relevant if they are parents or not</p> <p>I20-JBF: 43 - 43 (0)</p> |
| | <p>Well, I would not say that I would have different expectations to colleagues who are parents compared to those colleagues who are not. From a perspective of a manager, I would not make any difference in regard to efficiency here. I would rather say that there is an expectation towards the employer which is the flexibility. However, I would not say that there is any difference in expectations towards employees in general.</p> <p>I21_LSM: 39 - 39 (0)</p> |
| | <p>I would generally say that there's much understanding existing towards parents in the company I am working for, also from colleagues who have no children. I don't think that the expectation towards the colleague changes if he or she becomes a parent. In general, the same is expected from colleagues. It doesn't matter if they are a parent or not. You might even be able as a parent to ask for more flexibility in regard to your working time. There is maybe more understanding existent that you want to be a good father or mother.</p> <p>I22-MEM: 39 - 39 (0)</p> |
| 4. Approach to ethical decisions\4.2 Rational approach | <p>On one side it is important for me that we develop our company.</p> <p>I01-TBM: 69 - 69 (0)</p> |
| | <p>but in general it is important to see what kind of consequences the decisions have in general on our society. So basically, the decision is not only based on economic considerations but also to see what kind of long-term impact it has on our society in general.</p> <p>I02-CGM: 49 - 49 (0)</p> |
| | <p>I consider the economic situation, the affect on our customers and the affect on the society and at the end I try to weigh everything so that I have a good feeling in all dimensions.</p> <p>I02-CGM: 53 - 53 (0)</p> |

Ehhm...first of all information is very important. When I make a decision for a customer I try to consider every potential information in the universe. For one, it's the company of the customer like who are they and what are they doing? Then the customers of the customer need to be considered. That is also important like how are they reacting and so on. And what about the stakeholders, how are they reacting? So basically you consider the important different parts of the framework and look how the decisions might affect each and every one of them.

I04-BHM: 69 - 69 (0)

Which employees can you use? Which ones can't you use? Who performs? Who doesn't perform? Who damages the others? Who is doing good? Who takes the other with them and so on. How are you handling the bank? This is a critical point. What are you telling them? I could go on and on but in essence the information is a very critical factor.

I04-BHM: 73 - 73 (0)

//...well, in business cases there needs to be a strategic fit of the topic. Ehhm...of course regulatory requirements also have to be fulfilled and according to that the cost-expense ratio needs to be right.

I05-KFM: 53 - 53 (0)

Exclusively organizational aspects. My personal opinion doesn't matter.

I05-KFM: 57 - 57 (0)

Exactly. The decisions are very transparent. I need to represent and explain the decisions in front of the board of directors and all the shareholders. Decisions are never made based on a gut feeling. They are always made based on hard economical and entrepreneurial assumptions. The other thing is, we don't have much funds and this is exactly why it has to be reasonable.

I05-KFM: 59 - 59 (0)

For the usual, daily decisions I rely on the framework and the values of *Company A*. *Company A* says that the customer comes first and you just kind of have to see. When someone says that they are only able to take care of their child in the morning due to Corona and they want to start working at 7.15 am but I see at 7.15 am there is no need, then I have to tell them that the customer comes first and not you in this case, let's find a compromise. *Company A* specifies some clear values like the customer comes first, for example, or courage. This is something I can also rely on and also remind the employees about that.

I07-TPF: 49 - 49 (0)

Well, I generally abstract everything. I have the ability, wherever it comes from, to identify the most important aspect of a situation or problem. This is also how I learned at school. When I read a book, I make notes next to it and have them available after I finished the book. This is basically the same with projects at work. I look at them and can identify the most crucial aspects of the project. Then, I focus on these points, evaluate them and base my decisions on these.

I09-URM: 55 - 55 (0)

Well, I always ask for data and facts before making a decision. If there are not data or facts, it is very hard to make a decision. I often adjourn the decision then since if there are not enough information available at this time, the decision should not be made then. I think that this is a very good analogy to the decisions currently made in Germany because of the Corona pandemic. At the end of the day, nobody really knows what will be right and wrong. I am glad that I am not a politician since it is now expected from them to make decisions. However, they have to currently decide only based on an unsecure database. This is, according to me, the worst that can happen in a decision-making process. However, they have to make the decision now and therefore do it the best they can. I would try to adjourn the decision in this case, but however, in this situation

this would not be possible. Thus, the decision made can be good but could also go wrong of course.

I10-NSM: 53 - 53 (0)

This is of course not always easy. However, I always try to differentiate objectively. Especially in organizational topics, there is not always the one right solution but each different solution brings different advantages and disadvantages. Having this in mind, I always try to consider the needs of all stakeholders but also do not forget political aspects of the decision. In the next step then, I tried to evaluate each different solution according to these different aspects in order to be able to conclude the problem at the end and evaluate one solution against the other. This is basically the approach I followed in the last years. Also try to adapt this in the private part of my life. If I need to find a solution to a problem here, I also evaluate pros versus cons in order to find the best solution.

I11-CBM: 47 - 47 (0)

I like to put things into writing. I am not only listening to my gut feeling but I also write down the parameters that lead to a decision to have it visually in front of me but also for the people who are affected by the decision or who have to decide with me. For me it's important to write it down.

I14-SPM: 53 - 53 (0)

When it comes to the subject-related topics, I am trying to ask for the consequences. Something you can see a lot is that the more a specialist is moving away from his role as a specialist, he moves on thin ice like licenses, money or data privacy. It's like throwing a stone into the water. In the middle is the stone which is the specialist who jumps into the water. Here, the waves are the highest and here he knows the ropes. The bigger the circles are getting, the thinner the ice gets. This is what I am trying to find out. I am trying to find out which parameters are affected and for each of the parameters I am trying to collect all the information available. I am doing this for the disciplinary

decisions as for the subject-related decisions. Often, I also need a bit time to come up with a decision.

I14-SPM: 55 - 55 (0)

You try to collect as many information about the subject as possible and then you decide at a certain point.

I16-VDSF: 51 - 51 (0)

It depends. When I have time then I try to consult experts. Either I have the information myself then I try to do it on that basis. When it's an important decision that has strategic consequences on the whole department then I first try to reflect and analyze it for myself, collect all information, structure it and decide.

I16-VDSF: 53 - 53 (0)

The more consequences it has strategically, the more time you should take thinking about your decision like collecting information, reflect it, structure it and then to decide. When its small decisions with small consequences then you can decide quickly but the more long-term consequences you have the more time you should take.

I16-VDSF: 53 - 53 (0)

Yes, it depends. I actually think that the question is hard to answer. A decision can be very complex. There can also be a decision with short-term consequence but that involves a lot of money. Here, I also think twice before I decide. In general, for easy and small things who have a short-term consequence, I am very relaxed and try to decide to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I16-VDSF: 55 - 55 (0)

The bigger the topic is and the more severe the results of that decision are in terms of money or time, you have to think for a longer time. It can also be a personal decision that you make for an employee where not money is involved but the life of a

person. This is something I view as a difficult decision. When I have to give bad feedback to an employee in a performance review then I don't do it just easily, I reflect on how I want to give the feedback to the person and I also think of possible measures to help the person to improve his performance.

I16-VDSF: 55 - 55 (0)

I had a customer, a broker who had a customer and we receive a lot of money in terms bonuses but the contract hasn't been going good for a while because the loss ratio has been very high. Therefore, I had to do something and I didn't know how hard I should approach this whole story because it's a lot of money for us. The distribution partners had his own idea on how to approach this scenario and this is where I had to look for myself on what I should do. On one side you have your own goal which is not putting too much money in the contract which also reflects the goal of the company I work for but on the other side you want to keep the good relationship with the customer and make sure that his problems are solved. Before the contract was going very good and suddenly it's not going well and we had to find out why the situation worsened. We approached this problem with the distribution partners and this took a lot of time and a lot of talking because human factors were involved like the goal setting of the distribution partner and bonuses. Nevertheless, we found a good solution at the end. It was not a dramatic case but it's something that happens every now and then at work but this was the last topic I dealt with that took a lot of time.

I16-VDSF: 59 - 59 (0)

Let me illustrate this at hand of the Corona pandemic, which is a difficult situation for the employer and the employee. If I need to make decisions in this context, I rely only on objective factors. Here, I base my decision on reports gained from my colleagues and teams around Germany to receive important information in combination with experiences I made over my working life. Then

I, of course, consider as well how I would decide this as a person, so in regard to personal needs of the employees.

I17-PRF: 45 - 45 (0)

I am generally a person who is more objective-oriented. Thus, I always try to make decision based on objective factors. I am often successful in doing that. I always try not to be too influenced by emotions when I have to make a decision. This is in my field of work of course easier, since financial decisions are often based on numbers and objective measures only.

I21_LSM: 45 - 45 (0)

I always try to establish a complete picture about the situation and have an objective look on it in order to make the decision that is best according to me. For this purpose, it is very important to me to have all information at hand.

I22-MEM: 47 - 47 (0)

I once was in a situation in which I had to terminate three employees without notice. These employees have committed illegal actions inside the company. I discussed this situation with the HR department, and they ask me if I really want to proceed the termination or not since at the end of the day this decision was up to me. I then decided to terminate them because it was, according to me and according to my sense of justice the right solution. So, I decided not to have sympathy with these employees or to be scared to enter this massive conflict. This was of course a decision that influenced the whole team and my employees were also a little bit scared of me afterwards. In this situation, I really felt the insecurity of the other employees towards me as a manager.

I22-MEM: 51 - 51 (0)

Yes. Well, I terminated three of their colleagues. Some of the employees saw this as a trivial offense. The situation was concretely about hosting music data on company equipment to a large extend. This was an infringement of the legal copyrights of this music which is of course not acceptable for a company.

However, some employees asked if it is really necessary to react this harsh by terminating them. They wanted me to be more indulgent. Nevertheless, the termination without notice was fully according to all legal aspects involved.

I22-MEM: 53 - 53 (0)

4. Approach to ethical decisions\4.3 Moral action

"I would say that I now understand my employees better who have family. I mean was understanding before but now it is different I would say. Looking at some situations they are facing because of parenthood, I now immediately understand when it is tricky or difficult for them. In the past, they kind of that to bring to my attention more because when you are in work bubble you tend to oversee some stuff."

I01-TBM: 51 - 51 (0)

I think it's an indirect influence. I think that I don't decide differently just because I am a father. Even when I am not a father I think that I would consider similar factors in my decisions

I02-CGM: 55 - 55 (0)

I think if I regard myself I would say that at the end I think that it has just little influence and it doesn't matter if I am a father or not. It's more of a personality trait and not so much about the fact if I am a father. I think, however, that the way to a decision can be influenced and maybe certain focuses, I consider, can be different. It's probable that my approach is different due to the fact that I am a father but the ultimate result is the same.

I02-CGM: 67 - 67 (0)

However, I am not sure that the final decision is influence by the role of being a parent.

I02-CGM: 67 - 67 (0)

Well, I mean not intentionally. This might has played a role without me being aware of this. However, it really depends on the kind of decision. Thus, if I had to make a decision in regards to a job change, for example, so decisions that influenced me directly, my motherhood clearly influenced me. But when it

comes to situation in which I have to give a warning to an employee or have to fire someone, my motherhood has no influence. Thus, I am not sure which kind of decision you currently mean with this question.

I03-ATF: 81 - 81 (0)

... because I don't make the decisions by myself. I decide together with 12 other leaders in a council and if we had different perspectives based on the fact if you are a parent or not, we would notice it there but this is not the case. Everybody has different technical arguments but there is nothing based on a private argument.

I05-KFM: 61 - 61 (0)

I try not to let other things that have nothing to do with my job influence it. I try to be as rational as possible to ensure that I am doing the right thing. I mean generally I am more aware of parent's situations and the difficulties they have to endure but in my job I have the responsibility to lead my team and to follow the company's objective. Of course, I am willing to give parents or families more flexibility than I used to but I also have to always make sure that our goals are met and the job performance is good.

I07-TPF: 50 - 50 (0)

That is very different. In most and everyday decisions, there is no big impact.

I07-TPF: 57 - 57 (0)

Yes, I think so. Well, let me think about it if this has changed due to my role as mother. /...No, actually I think that this has not changed because of my role as mother.

Actually, I am not sure why this should have changed because of my son. I think that this is rather some principle that I as a person developed over time and learned from my parents, I do not think that this has changed because of my son.

I08-RMF: 59 - 61 (0)

I do not think that there is any influence. If there might be any influence, then it is on the very fundamental base, which is the provider role I saw myself always in. Well, then it has an influence on each decision on a stand-alone basis. When I changed my employer to the company I am currently working in, my main motivation was to secure my salaries to provide my family a stable financial situation. So, I did not change the employer due to a more interesting project portfolio but only due to financial security considerations. However, after I changed my employer, my children did not influence the many decisions I had to make since then.

I09-URM: 65 - 65 (0)

Well, it depends what is meant by taking influence. If this means that if I have had decided differently if the person would have been a parent. In this case the person had a boyfriend and no children. I am just reflecting if I would have decided differently or processed the dialogue differently if the person would have had children. Maybe I would have proceeded the dialogue differently in regard to financial existence, for example. So I would have considered if this person would have had a financial backup plan, but in the end of the day, the decision would have been stayed the same for me. Because I still say if there is a person who really has huge problems in the job and is very unsatisfied, this will have an influence on the person's private live as well. Maybe the child also does not experience the person at its best as well. So, maybe I would have approached the process a bit differently, but the decision itself would not have been changed.

I13-SLM: 59 - 59 (0)

I never thought about that consciously. //...I don't think it has influence. Maybe for the interpersonal aspects there could be an influence because I know that it can be complicated with kids at home but when it comes to subject-related decisions I don't think this has an influence.

I14-SPM: 61 - 61 (0)

Yes, my children do not play a role in this situation. I also tried to relative this now bit. At the beginning of this interview we also talked about work life balance and I now see then I probably have not done everything right in this regard. Here, I should have also concentrated more on my private life instead of a job only.

I15-SSF: 77 - 77 (0)

Well, in the case I just mentioned there was no influence. In the context of work ideally it has no influence. Morally seen as a leader and how I approach things or not, I don't think it has an influence. I am thinking while talking but for me it has no influence. Subject-related decisions stay to be subject-related and with regards to human decisions I hope that I was kind enough to understand that I would have never made a decision that would have hurt my employees in a way that I could not advocate in a moral manner. I have more understanding for certain things but the decisions should be similar. What I notice is that due to the limited working time the work life is structured in a different way but for the decision itself no...

I16-VDSF: 61 - 61 (0)

In my opinion, I consider this very often, however, more on an emotional level. Here, I often express my understanding but then come back to my original points anyways. Well, I do this unless I really see a situation that is not acceptable for the employee and I know this because of my experience as parent as well, I try to support the specific employee. I do this for employees who are parents but also for employees who are not.

I19-SAF: 53 - 53 (0)

No, I do not think that I really make a different decision in the last consequence. Like I explained, I try to emotionally make sure that my decisions are understood better. So, I always express my understanding for the situation towards the employee, but then come back to the facts. In consequence, I do not decide differently but I tried to make sure that there is a

certain level of understanding, unemotional as well as on rational level.

I19-SAF: 55 - 55 (0)

Because it would be unfair. I of course have to be credible. If I would now act or decided completely different than it did before, everyone would be confused. Besides, I still have to get my job done and represent the interests of the company. This is why I would not do this. I might have become milder, but there are certain things that are not to be discussed. I would not make this depend on my role as a mother.

I19-SAF: 57 - 57 (0)