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Effects of responsible HRM practices on women employees' turnover intentions: The moderating role of supervisor gender

Abstract

This study focuses on the effects of socially responsible HRM practices on women employees' turnover intentions, and the moderating effect of supervisor gender on this relationship. With a sample of 212 female employees from eight different industries, results indicate that the socially responsible HRM practices play a significant role in reducing women's turnover intentions. In addition, supervisor gender makes a difference in this relationship: female supervisors demonstrate a more significant and stronger impact on the relationship than male supervisors.

Introduction

Women's participation in the workforce worldwide has increased over recent decades, at the same time increasing the challenges women face in managing their responsibilities in both work and home. Previous research shows that women may leave their jobs not only due to domestic care responsibilities of their family (Ely et al. 2014), but also they feel that their values and preferences in their current workplace are not respected (Rusbult & Farrell 1983; Allen 2001; Lee & Hong 2011; Lämsä & Piilola 2015). The costs of women's turnover and leaving the organization can be remarkable (Moynihan & Landuyt 2008). Turnover causes a loss in the organizations' social and human capital and can affect negatively on organizational performance (Hill 2009).

Previous studies suggest that problems in women's careers cannot be explained by women's lack of motivation and interest but rather by organizational culture, policies and practices (Jyrkinen & McKie 2012; Hearn et al. 2015). One important way for organizations to keep women committed to the organization is paying attention to gender equality in their human resource management (HRM) practices (Gilbert et al. 1999; Daly et al. 2008). This is a key feature of responsible HRM (Hobson 2011; Jamali et al. 2015), but it tends to be absent from many organizations' HRM strategies and practices (Grzywacz & Carlson 2007). Women are likely to be willing to continue in professional life in organizations which actively promote women's careers and support work-family balance (Ely et al. 2014; Lämsä & Piilola 2015).

This study focuses on the effects of socially responsible HRM (hereafter SR-HRM) practices on women employees' turnover intentions. The fact that working women face greater challenges than men in the workplace and take more responsibility than working men for (unpaid) care responsibilities at home might explain why women are more likely than men to feel that their expectations have not been met in an organization, which may increase the women's turnover intentions (Rosin & Korabik 1995; Griffeth et al. 2000; Jiang et al. 2012). Relying on previous research results which show that HRM has an effect on employee-centered outcomes of the organization (e.g. Combs et al. 2006; Boxall & Macky 2009) we argue that SR-HRM practices, which in this study mean the promotion of equal career opportunity in the workplace and opportunity to combine work and family (Kujala 2001; Pitt-Catsouphes & Googins 2005: Lämsä et al. 2016), negatively affect women employees' turnover intentions.

In addition, since it has been shown that supervisor gender has an important impact on employee outcomes (Douglas 2012; Wang et al. 2013), we argue for the moderating effect of supervisor gender on the relationship between SR-HRM practices and women employees' turnover intentions. Previous research indicates that when the aim is to affect women's turnover intentions, the strength of female and male supervisors' influence might be different (e.g. Douglas 2012; Eagly & Carli

2003; Wang et al. 2013; Lämsä & Piilola 2015). To understand how supervisor gender alters the strength of the relationship between SR-HRM practices and women employees' turnover intentions, it is necessary to compare the effects of the same practices performed by both female and male supervisors. Specifically, we aim to investigate the effect of supervisor gender and equal career opportunity practices on women's turnover intentions, and the effect of supervisor gender and work-family integration on women's turnover intentions respectively.

Our study makes two-fold contributions to the literature. Firstly, we aim to shed light on the effects of gender equality practices in the workplace, focusing especially on their capabilities to discourage women leaving their job and encourage them continuing their professional career in the organization. In this respect, we advance the knowledge about the connections between SR-HRM practices and employee outcomes such as women's turnover intentions and make a contribution to a wider field of corporate social responsibility (hereafter - CSR) studies. As highlighted by Morgeson et al. (2013) and Jamali et al. (2015), although the impact of socially responsible practices on outcomes for the organization has gained attention in organization and management research (e.g. Grosser 2009), research on the connections between HRM, CSR and employee outcomes is still in its early phase. Secondly, based on the social role theory and the similarity-attraction paradigm, the present study extends previous research on gender roles in the organization (e.g. Eagly 2000; Douglas 2012; Eagly & Carli 2003; Carli & Eagly 2011; Wang et al. 2013) by testing the moderating effect of supervisor gender on the relationship between SR-HRM practices and women employees' turnover intentions.

Theoretical background and hypotheses
SR-HRM practices
In this study, SR-HRM means not only understanding employees to have an instrumental value to the organization but also aiming to fulfill employees' personal and social expectations and needs, i.e. need for equal career opportunity in the workplace (Kujala 2010; Shen & Zhu 2011; Hearn et al. 2015) and integrating work and family (Grover & Crooker 1995; Beauregard & Henry 2009; Hobson 2011), which can lead to positive outcomes such as, for example, employee commitment to the organization (Keenoy 1990; Wilson 1997). SR-HRM practices can be divided into two components consisting of HRM practices that are driven by labour law-related legal compliance (Rowan 2000) and employee-oriented HRM practices (Waring & Lewer 2004). The latter form is based on more individualized needs and competences of the organization's employees. The legal compliance forms the minimum level of responsibility by setting formal requirements which the organization has to follow, while the employee-oriented practices focus on employees' personal development and address their personal and family needs that are above and beyond the legal minimum (Shen & Zhu 2011; Kazlauskaitė et al. 2013). The latter practices are voluntary and expected from a well-respected and good employer. They are actions which advance social and humanistic good among employees beyond the immediate interests of the organization (Waldman et al. 2006, Jamali et al. 2015). Considering the main purpose

of this study, we will discuss of employee-oriented SR-HRM specifically from two perspectives: equal career opportunity and work-family integration.

Gender equality is understood here as men and women having equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities to participate and act in working life as well as advancing in career (Hearn et al. 2015: 13). Since women do have problems in attaining equality in working life globally (The Global Gender Gap 2015), attempts to reduce this problem need specific attention. Organization's SR-HRM practices, which can create opportunities for women, play an important role in this process (Kazlauskaitė et al. 2013; Hearn et al. 2015). In general, equality can be considered a human right in the workplace (Jamali et al. 2015) and a factor for societal development. It has been found that advancing gender equality can have profound benefits not just for women as personalities but also for organizations and societies in general (The Global Gender Gap Report 2015; Christiansen et al. 2016). A set of equal career opportunity practices provides an overall framework for responsibility and accountability; it can also be taken as an approach for highlighting the workplace norms and rules to the members of an organization to advance and ensure women's and men's equal treatment (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2014). Developing equal career opportunities requires more than ensuring that women are included in the organization's strategic documents and boards, it requires actions which aim to support women's career opportunities in practice (Jamali et al. 2015). According to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2014), organizations should have equal career opportunity objectives and practices in such HRM areas as recruitment, retention, promotion, training, and remuneration.

While in the past, work and family relationship was often considered a private concern, nowadays the relationship is understood as a business and social issue (Pitt-Catsouphes & Googins 2005; Lämsä et al. 2016). Thus, employers (as well as societies) are expected to take efforts to be responsive to employees' work-family relationship (Hobson 2011). According to Pitt-Catsouphes and Googins (2005), HRM for work-family initiatives is not only necessary for business reasons but also relevant to sustainable working life and the quality of life in general. Consequently, it is a sign of socially responsible behaviour of the employer. Since care responsibilities are still unequally distributed between men and women, with women often having a greater share of them and, thus, experiencing the double burden (Pina & Bengtson 1995; Gjerdingen et al. 2000; Hobson 2011, Gatrell et al. 2013), increased demand for work-family integration practices has been regarded as a response to working women particularly (Lambert 2000). These practices are viewed as necessary "to improve the goodness of fit between the lives of women and the workplace experience" (Newman & Mathews 1999: 35).

Work-family integration practices are broadly constructed as a set of practices which are designed to support employees to combine family responsibilities with employment and balance the conflicting demands of work, family, and personal time (Simkin & Hillage 1992; Newman & Mathews 1999; Roberts et al. 2004). A set of work-family integration HRM practices generally includes flextime, telecommuting, part-time employment, child care opportunities, etc. (Cayer 2003). The benefits of

these practices such as, for example, increased productivity, growth of sales, better profit were confirmed empirically by previous studies (e.g. Shepard et al. 1996; Perry-Smith & Blum 2000). In terms of employees' needs and, particularly in organizations where the majority of employees are women, these practices can reduce employees' stress (Rogers & Rodgers 1989), absenteeism, turnover intentions (Lee & Hong 2011), enhance job motivation and productivity (Perry-Smith & Blum 2000), and generally increase employees' satisfaction with the job, and quality of life (Goodstein 1994; Allen 2001; Cayer 2003; Vadivukkarasi & Ganesan 2015).

Effects of SR-HRM practices

In a number of studies, equal career opportunities and work-family integration have been suggested as antecedents of positive employee work outcomes (Johnston et al. 1993; Thomas & Ganster 1995; Perry-Smith & Blum 2000; Allen 2001; Jawahar & Hemmasi 2006; Lee & Hong 2011; Aryee et al. 2012; Lämsä & Piilola 2015). One theory that can explain this link is social exchange theory (Blau 1964). According to this theory, SR-HRM practices create a perceived obligation among employees to reciprocate organization's positive beneficial actions (Gerstner & Day 1997; Lamber 2000). Since SR-HRM practices are related to exchanges between employees and organization, women employees can be expected to generate a sense of commitment to the organization if they perceive high level of equal career opportunity and possibility of work-family integration, which may reduce their turnover intentions. This expectation can be particularly high in organizations where the majority of employees are women (Goodstein 1994; Ackers 2003).

Moderating role of supervisor gender

Prior studies have found that supervisor's support to employees with care responsibilities to other family members (e.g. children or ageing relatives) has a positive effect on employee outcomes as it reduces the stress raised by a conflict between different social roles (Plaisier et al. 2015). We draw on two theoretical frameworks while arguing for the moderating effect of the supervisor's gender on the relationship between SR-HRM practices and women's turnover intentions, namely, the social role theory (Eagly 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971).

According to the social role theory, women tend to express "communal" characteristics, including individualized concern and sympathy (Eagly et al. 2000; Carli & Eagly 2011), whereas men are likely to display "agentic" characteristics, such as control and competitiveness (Stuhlmacher & Walters 1999; Eagly et al. 2000). These gender-typed behaviours may be salient in businesses and may help male and female supervisors meet different types of challenges in workplace (Eagly & Carli 2003; Douglas 2012; Larrieta-Rubin de Celis et al. 2015). Consequently, central to the social role theory is the idea that the main reason for women and men to demonstrate different gender-specific behaviours and confirm gender stereotypes is that they act in accordance with their social roles, which are often segregated along gender lines (Eagly 1987). As such, women and men tend to behave in gender-typed ways because

the social roles that they perform are related to different expectations of and requirements for performing different skills and behaviours (Vogel 2003). For example, due to expectations concerning women's and men's social roles, women are more likely to show feminine behaviours, such as empathy, warmth and care (Eagly et al. 2000) and are more concerned with intimate interpersonal relationships than men (Christensen 1987; Carli & Eagly 2011), whereas men are more likely to demonstrate masculine characteristics, including control, competitiveness, and achievement-orientation (Stuhlmacher & Walters 1999; Eagly et al. 2000). Hence, it can be expected that when women employees face difficulties with career development and have to combine work and family responsibilities, female supervisors will be more likely to show their consideration to the employees who need their support and be more willing to apply the SR-HRM practices compared with male supervisors. As such, under the support of female supervisors, SR-HRM practices would exert a greater influence on employees' turnover intentions.

Based on the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971), individuals of the same gender are more understanding and give a helping hand to each other. The similarity-attraction paradigm suggests that demographic similarity has a positive impact on interpersonal interactions and work outcomes (Tsui, et al. 1992). Central to this approach is the idea that people are attracted to and prefer to interact with the similar others (Byrne 1971). Since gender is a key demographic characteristic, the gender composition of a work setting can be expected to have an impact on work outcomes (Peccei & Lee 2005). Individuals working with each other of the same gender tend to share many common beliefs and have many common life experiences, and therefore find interactions to be less stressful (Vecchio & Bullis 2001). The similarity-paradigm can also help explain the work outcomes that result from the demographic similarity of a dyad in the workplace, such as a sense of consideration and supportive behaviour toward employees of the same gender (Tsui et al. 1995; Foley et al. 2006). Therefore, it is highly possible for female supervisors to understand the challenges faced by women employees more deeply than male supervisors (Lämsä & Piilola 2015). As the chance that female supervisors may have experienced either unequal career opportunity or stressful family workload, it is reasonable that female supervisors with similar experience of a social role may be empathetic and willing to change the status quo by doing something actively to improve the circumstances of other women. This may contribute to the women employees' commitment to the organization and decrease their turnover intentions.

Taken together, the two theoretical frameworks – the social role theory and the similarity-attraction paradigm – offer a psychological account for the moderating effect of supervisor gender in the relationship between SR-HRM practices and women employees' turnover intentions, and why female supervisors may demonstrate a stronger effect on this relationship than male supervisors. Consequently, we make the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Supervisor gender moderates the negative relationship between equal career opportunity practices and women employees' turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 1b: The relationship is stronger for female supervisors than male

supervisors.

Hypothesis 2a: Supervisor gender moderates the negative relationship between work family integration practices and women employees' turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 2b: The relationship is stronger for female supervisors than male supervisors.

In sum, the theoretical model of the present study is summarized in Figure 1.
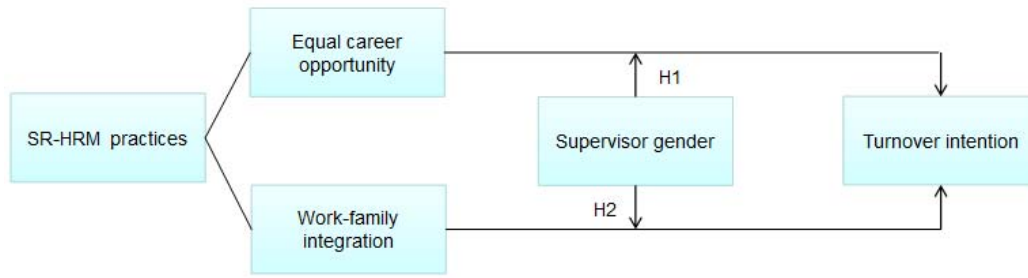
Insert Figure 1 here

Figure 1. Theoretical model of the present study

Method

Context of the study

The empirical study was conducted in Finland, where the overall labor market participation rate of women of 75% is above the EU-27 average of 69%; this indicates high involvement of women in the Finnish economy (Country Profile 2013). In general, Finland is often portrayed as a pioneer in gender equality, and indeed it ranks among the most equal societies in terms of gender globally (The Global Gender Gap Report 2015). However, it should be noted that Finnish society still has specific problems in gender equality in the working life: Finnish women face more obstacles in their career than men and lag behind men in salary (The Global Gender Gap Report 2015). Finnish women carry the main responsibility for household work and child care, thus, experiencing often the double burden (Pietiläinen 2013; Heikkinen et al. 2015).

Participants and procedure

The participants in this study were female employees from eight organizations representing both private and public sectors in Finland. All the organizations were participating in an EU-funded R/D project which aimed to increase women's opportunities in career and wellbeing in working life, which made the present research and cooperation with them meaningful. After successfully contacting the human resources representatives of these organizations, employees answered a questionnaire via an internet survey. A total of 212 participants completed and returned the whole questionnaire (response rate = 26%). The average age of the participants was 46, with an age range from 26 to 69 years old, and 70% had a bachelor and master degree.

Measures

Equal career opportunity practices. 5 items were generated to assess equal career opportunity practices. Specific ideas to this measurement came from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2014). Based on the previous research results concerning women's challenges in equality in working life, which show that the unequal treatments Finnish women face are mainly in recruitment, glass ceiling in career advancement, challenges in access to management and leadership development, and conflict between work and family (Pietiläinen 2013; Heikkinen et al. 2014; Lämsä & Savela 2014; Vuorinen-Lampila 2014; Hearn et al. 2015), we chose items in terms of recruitment, advancement, and training development. The items were rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicated more favourable perceptions. Sample items include, "Our organisation has a plan in place for promoting managerial careers for women", "Women and men have equal opportunities for career progression in our organization", "In our workplace, everyone is encouraged to apply for open positions, regardless of their gender", "Women and men are treated equally in recruitment situations in our workplace", and "Women and men have equal opportunities to participate in training and development in our organization." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .79.

Work-family integration practices. The respondents were given a list of six practices commonly applied in organizations (see Korabik et al. 2008; Beauregard & Henry 2009; Lee & Hong 2011; Aryee et al. 2012), which support work-family balance: flexible hours, telecommuting, working time bank, part-time work, taking family situation into account when making annual leave arrangements, and support for care from the employer (child care, elderly care). Similar items were also used by Allen (2001) in his study. All items are scored on a 5-point rating scale from 1 = strongly dissatisfied to 5 = strongly satisfied, and the total practices score was used in this study. The internal consistency (alpha) was .78.

Turnover intention. Turnover intention (the intention to leave or stay) was measured with a six-item scale adapted from the 15-item scale initially developed by Roodt (2004). The items were rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = every day. Examples of items included are: 'How often have you considered leaving your job?' and 'How often do you look forward to another day at work?' The internal consistency (alpha) was .67.

Supervisor gender. Female supervisors were coded as 1 and male supervisors as 2 in our model of regression analysis.

Control variables. Age and education were included as control variables in the regression analysis because of their potential relationships with the dependent variables (Allen 2001). Age was reported in years, and education was measured with one item with five categories ranging from 1 = lower secondary school to 5 = doctoral degree.

Results

Measurement model results

We conducted CFA analysis using AMOS to examine the distinctiveness of the multi-item variables in the study. Three latent constructs were involved in the analysis: equal career opportunity practices, work-family integration practices, and turnover intention. Results of comparison are presented in Table 1.

Insert table 1 here

Table 1

Comparison of measurement models for outcome variables

Model	Factors	χ^2	df	GFI	CFI	RMSR
Baseline model	Three factors: equal opportunity practices, work-family integration practices, and turnover intention	452.22	116	0.89	0.86	0.06
Model 1	Two factors: equal opportunity practices and work-family integration practices were combined into one factor, and turnover intention	709.95	118	0.60	0.51	0.20
Model 2	One factor: all factors were combined into one factor	959.02	119	0.50	0.31	0.21

As shown in Figure 1, the baseline three-factor model (χ^2 = 452.22, df = 116. GFI = 0.89, CFI = 0.86, RMSR = 0.06) fits the data better than Model 1 with two factors or Model 2 with the combined one factor. These results provide support for the hypothesized three-factor model, and therefore, the distinctiveness of the variables in the study.

Harman's One-Factor Test

In line with a number of recent organizational behaviour publications (e.g., Akremi et al. 2010; Liu et al. 2013; Greenbaum et al. 2015), we used Harman's One-Factor Test (Harman 1967) to address the issue of the same source bias (i.e., employee survey). To run this test, we followed the suggestions by Greenbaum et al. (2015) and entered all of the measured variables into an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using unrotated principle component analysis to determine the number of factors necessary to account for the variance in the variables. If a problematic amount of the same source bias is present, either a single factor will emerge from the EFA or one factor will account for the majority of the covariance among the variables. In this study, the results of the analysis revealed that 21.16% of the total variance was explained by one factor, which provides empirical evidence that common source bias is not an issue. Therefore, we can conclude that in this study it is unlikely that the same source bias is confounding our results.

Descriptive statistics and hypotheses testing

Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations for all the key variables. Correlational results indicate that equal career opportunity practices (r =

-.32, p < .01) and work-family integration practices (r = -.46, p < .01) were both negatively interrelated with women employees' turnover intentions.

Insert Table 2 here

Table 2
Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for study variables (N =212)

Variables	Range	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Equal opportunity practices	1-5	3.82	1.01					
2. Work-family integration practices	1-5	4.50	0.76	.20*				
3. Turnover intention	1-5	1.80	0.54	-.32**	-.46**			
4. Supervisor gender (1=female, 2=male)		0.67	0.09	-.09*	.02*	.02*		
5. Age		46	11.04	-.14*	-.07	-.14*	.15*	
6. Education		3	0.91	-.22**	-.17*	.13	.04	-.24**

*p<0.05, **p<0.01.

We ran the "PROCESS" SPSS Macro developed by Hayes (2013) to assess our model and hypotheses more directly. We set the number of model at 1 in the Macro to produce a report of the interactive effect in our sample, and set the number of bootstraps at 1,000, as suggested by Shrout and Bolger (2002), to ensure stable probability estimates. To make it possible for the analytical results (equations, regression coefficients, etc.) to be directly compared across studies conducted using the same measurement system, the effects in this study are expressed in an unstandardized metric, as recommended by Hayes (2013). The regression analysis results were presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Equal career opportunity practices $\times$ *supervisor gender.* Hypothesis 1a and 1b predict that supervisor gender moderates the negative relationship between equal career opportunity practices and women employees' turnover intentions so that female supervisors have a stronger impact on this relationship than that of male supervisors. Results in Table 3 show that the coefficient for the interactive effect was significantly positive (γ = .18, p < .05). To further understand the interactive effects, we plotted them as shown in Figure 2, for which high and low levels are depicted as one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively. The slope for the female supervisor group was statistically significantly negative (-.07, p < .05), whereas the slope for the male supervisors group decreased to a non-significant level (.10, n.s.). As predicted, the relationship between equal career opportunity practices and women's turnover intentions was stronger for female supervisors than for males. This provides support for Hypothesis 1a and 1b.

Insert Table 3 here

Table 3

Results of analysis of the moderating effect of supervisor gender on equal opportunity practices – turnover intention relationship

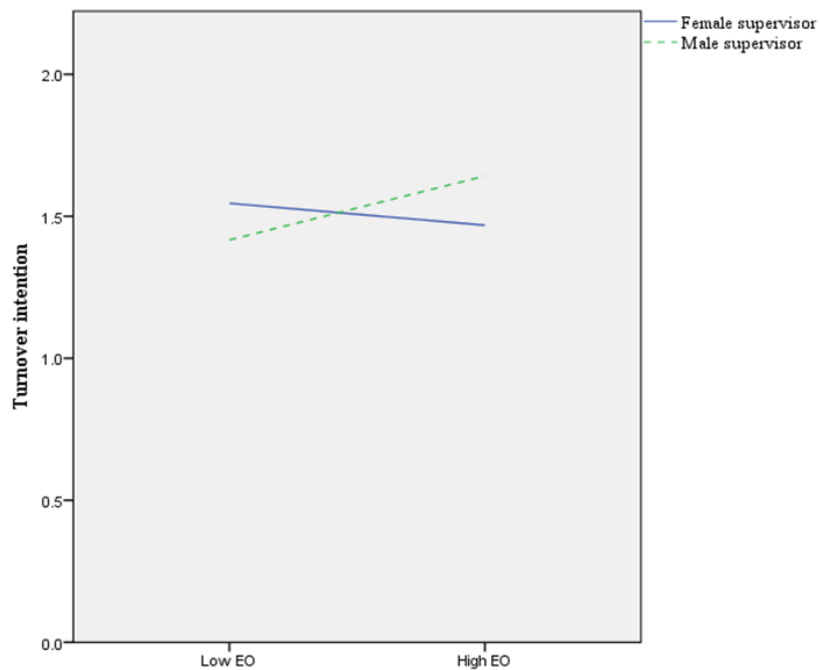| Variables	Relationship of equal opportunity practices and turnover intention	
	Coefficient (γ)	t / t df (206)
Control variables		
Age	-.03	-1.62
Education	.29	1.37
Predictor variable		
Equal opportunity practices (EO)	-.25*	-2.20
Moderator		
Supervisor Gender (SG)	-3.23*	-2.10
Interaction		
EO × SG	.18*	2.27
R²	.05	
Δ R² (due to interaction effect)	.03	

Insert Figure 2 here

Figure 2. Supervisor gender as a moderator of the equal opportunity practices - turnover intention relationship

Work-family integration practices × *supervisor gender.* Hypothesis 2a posits that

the negative relationship between work-family integration practices and women employees' turnover intentions is moderated by supervisor gender and hypothesis 2b posits that female supervisors have a stronger effect than male supervisors on this relationshp. Results in Table 4 show that the coefficient for this interactive effect was significantly positive ($\gamma = .23$, $p < .05$). Additionally, Figure 3 demonstrates the interactive effect on women employees' turnover intentions. The slope for female supervisors group was negative and significant (-.11, $p < .05$), whereas the slope for male supervisors group was not significant (.12, n.s.). Thus, the interactive effect of supervisor gender and work-family practices on women employees' turnover intentions in the predicted direction, and Hypothesis 2a and 2b are supported.

Insert Table 4 here
Insert Figure 3 here

Table 4

Results of analysis of the moderating effect of supervisor gender on work-family integration practices – turnover intention relationship

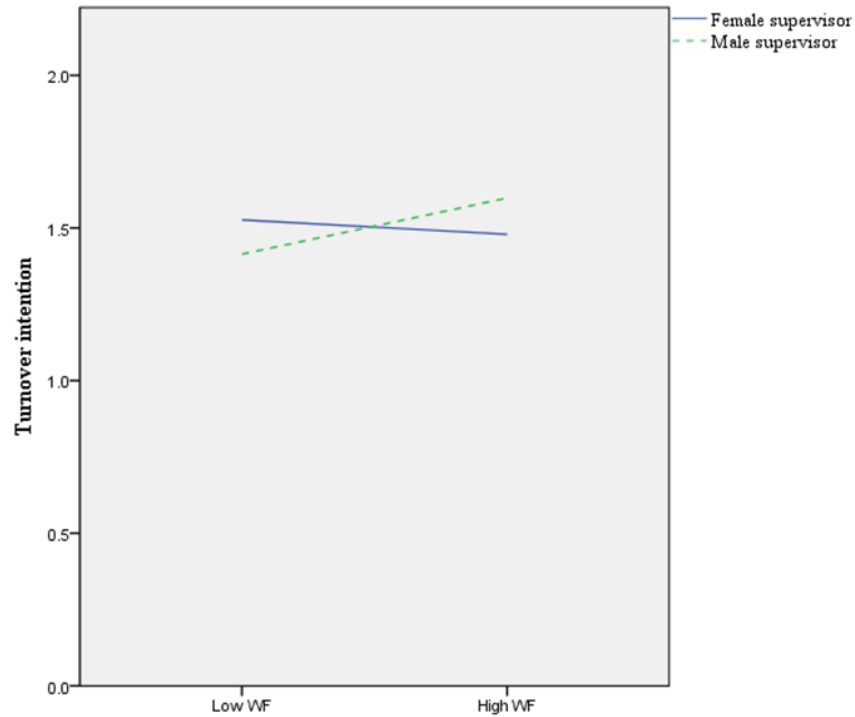| Variables	Relationship of work-family integration practices and turnover intention	
	Coefficient (γ)	t / t df (206)
Control variables		
Age	-.03	-1.73
Education	.24	1.17
Predictor variable		
Work-family practices (WF)	-.34*	-2.30
Moderator		
Supervisor Gender(SG)	-6.05*	-2.10
Interaction		
WF × SG	.23*	2.10
R^2		.05
ΔR^2 (due to interaction effect)		.02

Figure 3. Supervisor gender as a moderator of the work-family integration practices - turnover intention relationship

In sum, the moderating effect of supervisor gender on the relationships between SR-HRM practices such as equal career opportunity and work-family integration ones and women employees' turnover intentions are empirically confirmed. Specifically, the interactive effect of supervisor gender and work-family integration practices (γ = .23, p < .05) on women employees' turnover intention is stronger than that of supervisor gender and equal career opportunity practices (γ = .18, p < .05). Moreover, female supervisors' impact (-.07*; -.11*) on women employees' turnover intentions in the studied SR-HRM practices is more significant than that of male supervisors (.10; .12, n.s.).

Discussion

While career barriers for women have received much attention, the elaboration and investigation of SR-HRM practices that include gender roles' effect on women employees' work outcomes is still rare. This study focused on the topic.

Theoretical contributions

This study extends previous studies on gender equality in the workplace by focusing on the role of SR-HRM practices in women employees' turnover intentions. Consistent with prior research (Johnston et al. 1993; Thomas and Ganster 1995; Allen 2001; Aryee et al. 2012), this study found that a significant connection between SR-HRM practices and women employees' turnover intentions exists. However,

differently from those previous studies, the sample in our research consisted of women employees only. One reason for this is that our focus was centered on gender equality issue in work life, which is widely believed to be more tightly associated with women than men (The Global Gender Gap Report 2015). In the future, it would be fruitful to study also male samples and the mixture of female-male samples.

We agree with Ely and colleagues (2014) as well as Lämsä and Piilola (2015) who suggest that women are willing to have a professional career, specifically, in organizations which eliminate discrimination and advance their career by supporting work-family integration. So, the results of this study lend support to the arguments (e.g. Griffeth et al. 2000; Allen 2001; Lee & Hong 2011; Jiang et al. 2012; Ely et al. 2014; Lämsä & Piilola 2015) that women tend to have an intention to leave their jobs if they evaluate that equality and work-family integration are not valued and taken into consideration in the workplace. Additionally, our results are in line with Jyrkinen and McKie's (2012) and Hearn and colleagues' (2015) claims that problems in women's careers are not possible to explain by just referring to women's individual behaviour, but organizational factors such as HRM practices play an important role in this issue. In general, this study gives empirical evidence to the argument that links between HRM, CSR and employee outcomes exist, and socially responsible HRM can be effective in achieving employee-centered outcomes (Morgeson et al. 2013; Jamali et al. 2015). We suggest that future studies broaden their scope in terms of SR-HRM practices and employee outcomes compared to this study.

Based on the social role theory and similarity-attraction paradigm, we showed that supervisor's gender plays a role in the relationship between SR-HRM practices and women's turnover intentions: female supervisors seem to exert a more significant impact on this relationship. A reason for this finding may be that the female supervisors' own experiences (Lämsä & Piilola 2015) and gender role-specific feminine orientation (Carli & Eagly 2011) can contribute to dealing successfully with women employees' challenges in workplace. However, we do not think that male supervisors could not adopt gender-incongruent leadership behaviour when dealing with equality challenges among female employees. This would require that more fluid gender roles were developed and accepted in both work and family spheres. In the future, the other gender combinations in the supervisor-employee relationship than in this study would merit research. In general, our findings challenge the common view that "female leaders' conforming to their gender role can produce a failure to meet the requirements of their leader role" (Eagly & Johannesen-Schimidt 2001: 786). Moreover, according to the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne 1971), our findings lend support to Ragins's (1997) proposition that the lower the degree of dissimilarity, the more identification should be experienced by the parties and the higher the interpersonal comfort level and provision of support, particularly in the context of gender equality in the workplace in this study.

Finally, a significant negative relationship is particularly found between work-family integration practices and women employees' turnover intentions. It should be noted that, although the study context, Finland, represents the model of Nordic welfare society where the public system of family policies and parental

support are established (Pietiläinen 2013), the public support alone is not enough to solve women's challenges in work life. To decrease women employees' turnover intentions, organizational support such as a set of sound work-family practices is still worth to be considered seriously (Pitt-Catsouphes and Googins 2005; Hobson 2011).This calls for special attention to work-family integration from the viewpoint of an organization in future studies.

Practical implications

The present study suggests that it pays for organizations to invest in gender equality practices through a variety of SR-HRM practices. Especially, this study implies that the effect of work-family integration practices on the women employees' turnover intentions is stronger than that of equal career opportunity practices. Therefore, to retain women in the organization, a suitable set of SR-HRM practices should be developed. For example, time flexibility in work arrangements and child care practices might minimize women employees' stress and increase their perceptions of control over work time, and therefore benefit their stay in the employing organization (Thomas & Ganster 1995). We suggest that the practices like these need to be made part of the organizational strategy and goal setting (Hearn et al. 2015).

Additionally, we advise that management must justify the need and benefits of the practices and make them sufficiently clear to organization members. This can also be a way to achieve middle and especially immediate supervisors' approval and support, and through them, approval of the rest of the organization's members. Once management is fully committed, changes can be carried out through HRM practices, such as recruitment, development programmes and work-family integration (Gilbert et al. 1999). Moreover, we recommend that organizations explicitly include measurable objectives in their SR-HRM practices, and make these objectives as key performance indicators assigned to supervisors.

Limitations

The data used in our study were collected through self-report measures, which may raise questions of common method bias. However, our interest in employees' perceptions made self-report measures appropriate for this particular research (e.g. Levin & Cross 2004; Greenbaum et al. 2015). In addition, similar to other recent publications on organization behaviour studies (e.g. Walter et al. 2012; Loi et al. 2012), we employed procedural remedies in the research design such as assuring response anonymity and reminding our respondents that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions. Such procedures are known to reduce the threat of common method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Finally, the results from the Harman's One-Factor Test (Harman 1967) revealed that common method bias is not problematic in our data (Podsakoff & Organ 1986). Although self-reported data are not as limited as commonly expected (Spector 2006), future research would benefit from examining behaviourally-based outcomes rated by several sources and comparing them (e.g. supervisors, employees, HR statistics).

The cross-sectional design of this study can also be seen as a limitation. A

longitudinal research design would be more objective and reliable and would provide important knowledge of potential changes in gender roles. This is one of our future research aims. Finally, the limitation of the generalizability of our results in different societal contexts must be kept in mind. Therefore, future research should be carried out in other societal contexts to investigate the generalizability of the findings of this study.

Conclusion

It is concluded that it pays for organizations to develop and apply SR-HRM practices to support women employees' equal treatment at work and flexibility with family matters to reduce women's turnover intentions. In particular, work-family integration practices can be useful. Additionally, we suggest that, currently, female supervisors can be more effective than their male counterparts in decreasing women employees' turnover intentions with the help of the SR-HRM practices. In general, this study lends support to the recent ideas of leadership (see e.g. Eagly & Carli 2003; Carli & Eagly 2011; Lämsä & Piilola 2015) that leadership practices which take into consideration and care about the needs and expectations of employees can be valuable to employee outcomes.

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