

Highly skilled workers more likely to have control over their working day

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People in high-skilled jobs and supervisory roles are more likely to enjoy control over their working hours, new research from a University of Kent expert in work-life balance shows.

The European-wide study, which looked at the issue of workers'

'[schedule control](#)', i.e flexitime and complete autonomy over their work schedules, found that, in general, disadvantaged labour market groups are the least likely to have [access](#) to these family-friendly arrangements.

Dr Heejung Chung, of the University's School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, also found that where employers offer [schedule](#) control it is more likely to be because of performance or work intensity considerations, rather than as a needs-driven provision.

The study also examined the relationship between national level policies and company provision of schedule control. When workers had access to very long leave entitlements, employers did not generally appear to feel any need to provide occupational family-friendly schedule arrangements, even for their high-skilled staff.

On the other hand, countries where there were generous public childcare provision were where workers were most likely to have access to family-friendly schedule arrangements, especially for high-skilled staff.

The research, entitled National-Level Family Policies and Access to Schedule Control in a European Comparative Perspective: Crowding Out or In, and for Whom? examined schedule policies using data from 27 European countries.

Overall, Dr Chung found that on average across the 27 European countries, only 22% of all workers have access to schedule control.

In Scandinavian countries, along with the Netherlands, workers are more likely to have access to schedule control, with more than 40% benefitting. In countries such as Austria, Germany and Belgium, followed by Estonia, Slovenia and then the UK, at least one in five workers enjoy access.

The study found that there was clear correlation between higher skill and education levels and access to schedule control. In fact, one step change upwards in the skill hierarchy increased the chance of accessing schedule control by around 1.5 times.

Examining other control variables, older workers—most likely with more experience - those in supervisory roles, and those with supportive managers are more likely to have access to schedule control.

Those working in job posts that are predominately held by men are less likely to have access to schedule control compared to posts where men and women are equally represented. However, working in posts where women are prevalent is far worse.

The study also found that having a partner, working hours, having an open-ended contract, working in companies with employee representatives, and the gender of one's boss are all not significant in explaining workers' access to schedule [control](#).

Entitled National-Level Family Policies and Workers' Access to Schedule Control in a European Comparative Perspective: Crowding Out or In, and for Whom? Is published in the *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*.

More information: Heejung Chung, National-Level Family Policies and workers' Access to Schedule Control in a European Comparative Perspective: Crowding Out or In, and for Whom?, *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* (2017). [DOI: 10.1080/13876988.2017.1353745](https://doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2017.1353745)

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