

Influence of Employers on Employees' Family Decisions: Perspective of Employees of Russian Companies

Oksana Shubat^{1*} and Victor Latushkin¹

¹ Ural Federal University, School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship, Russian Federation

* Oksana Shubat, corresponding author. Email: o.m.shubat@urfu.ru

Submitted: 31 March 2025. Accepted: 18 August 2025. Published: 4 October 2025

Volume 34, 2026. pp. 615–632. <http://doi.org/10.25133/JPSSv342026.031>

Abstract

Addressing Russia's negative demographic trends requires the formulation of novel and more effective policy measures. One measure actively implemented in Russia in recent years involves engaging businesses in addressing demographic issues through corporate demographic policies. This study aims to assess the potential influence of employers on employees' family decisions by analyzing employees' perceptions of that influence. Our research is based on a survey conducted across 15 regions of Russia. The results indicate that the vast majority of employees acknowledge that companies have moral obligations and should provide targeted support to employees with children. We propose an index of employers' positive influence on employees' family decisions, which shows that employees are moderately optimistic about that influence. Differences in this index were identified and analyzed among employee groups. Directions for future research are also suggested. The contributions of this study are both theoretical and empirical in nature. While the theoretical contribution addresses the development of the scholarly debate on the theory of the corporation as a moral person, the empirical contribution comprises a set of findings that facilitate the development of more effective corporate demographic policies.

Keywords

Birth rate support; corporate demographic policy; corporate social responsibility; employee support; family-friendly policy

Introduction

Negative demographic trends and threats to demographic security are the primary challenges facing modern Russia. For example, since 2020, the country has been experiencing a population decline. As of January 1, 2020, the population of the Russian Federation was 147.9 million, and by January 1, 2025, it had fallen to 146.0 million (Unified Interagency Information Statistical System [UIISS], 2025a). In 2024 alone, the number of deaths exceeded the number of births by a factor of 1.5, and net migration was not able to compensate for this natural decrease (Rosstat, Federal State Statistics Service, 2025). The problem of falling fertility is particularly acute, as the total fertility rate has been well below the replacement level (approximately 2.14 children per woman) for many years. In 2023, the total fertility rate in the Russian Federation was 1.41 children per woman (UIISS, 2025b).

The negative demographic dynamics observed amid the state's continuous efforts to overcome them will exacerbate the current labor shortage in Russian companies (Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs [RSPP], 2025). This situation requires the government and the expert community to develop and implement new and more effective measures that can change it. One such measure, which has been implemented in Russia in recent years, involves businesses in addressing the country's demographic problems by establishing companies as active actors in demographic policy. This step can contribute to an increase in fertility among employees' families.

In Russia today, the necessity and possibility of business involvement in demographic issues are often discussed on various business platforms. For example, this subject was extensively discussed at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) (2023) as part of the session "Where there are people, there is business: strategic motivation for private investment in demography", as well as at the Eastern Economic Forum (2023) as part of the session "Sustainable development of the state and business – for those who look into the future." In April 2024, similar issues were discussed at the roundtable "Support for family, childhood, and maternity, employees with family responsibilities," organized by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP, 2024).

This issue has been actively discussed in the Russian media and among authorities at various levels. For example, in November 2023, the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (2023) held parliamentary hearings on "Actual Decisions on Fertility Assistance: Family Policy," where one of the main topics was successful corporate practices by Russian companies to support fertility among working families. Since 2023, Russia has been implementing the national Business Reputation Index, also known as the EPS Index, which assesses companies' social responsibility in three areas: the environment, personnel, and relations with the state (EPS, 2025). The EPS Index complements and extends ESG ratings by emphasizing companies' contributions to demographic development and social investment in the regions where they operate.

Although the idea of business participation in solving demographic problems has been actively promoted in Russian society, the actual practices of companies in this area remain limited. According to a nationwide telephone survey conducted by VCIOM-Sputnik, in recent years, 58% of Russians have encountered their management's unwillingness to accommodate the need to take a vacation on specific dates or to participate in an important family event,

with 28% experiencing such problems regularly (Russian Public Opinion Research Center [VCIOM], 2024).

Another critical and unresolved issue is the evaluation of the effectiveness of corporate measures in supporting and stimulating fertility. Owing to the specific nature of demographic trends and their inertia (Lutz & Scherbov, 2003), the influence of various factors on these trends cannot have an immediate effect. Sufficiently long demographic time series are necessary to obtain statistically reliable results and draw accurate conclusions regarding the impact of corporate policies on the country's fertility rate. Such data are not yet available from Russia's official statistics. There have been some cases of successful Russian corporate practices with quantitative assessments of their effectiveness in scientific and applied research (Vitik, 2012). Still, so far, there have been no robustly confirmed and statistically significant results that allow for further generalization. Clearly, a pool of such cases, with the results of large-scale surveys and polls of company employees, is necessary to conclude the effectiveness of corporate fertility support programs and their potential impact on employees' family decisions. The results of a nationwide survey on the time budgets of Russians (Rosstat, 2019) indirectly indicate such potential (Table 1).

Table 1: Time Spent by Russian Adults on Work and Child Care on Weekdays

	Time for work and related activities				Time for childcare and parenting			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	NCh	Ch	NCh	Ch	NCh	Ch	NCh	Ch
Daily time spent, hh:mm	5:31	9:03	4:04	5:39	0:03	0:41	0:10	2:34
Share of daily time, %	23.0	37.7	17.0	23.5	0.2	2.9	0.7	10.7

Note: NCh – having no children living together; Ch – having children living together; compiled by the authors from Rosstat, Federal State Statistics Service (2019)

A substantial share of the daily time budget of Russian men and women with children was related to work (37.7% and 23.5%, respectively). How and under what conditions workers spend this time is likely to affect other spheres of their lives, including childcare and parenting. Importantly, this type of social activity takes up dramatically less time for people in Russia: 2.9% of the daily time budget for men and 10.7% for women.

The purpose of our study is to assess the potential influence of employers on employees' family decisions. In our study, we rely on employees' assessments and analyze how respondents perceive this potential.

The three key objectives of this study were:

- 1) developing a toolkit for the comprehensive assessment of employers' potential to influence employees' family decisions;
- 2) applying the toolkit to quantify this potential;
- 3) examining significant variations in these assessments across different socioeconomic and demographic groups.

As this study is based on a survey conducted in several regions of Russia, its results have much greater generalizability than those of the individual successful corporate cases

presented in previous Russian research. Our study contributes to the development of the theoretical foundations of strategic management by providing new benchmarks for companies' strategic development. This study also creates an empirical basis and tools for evaluating the effectiveness of family-oriented corporate programs in terms of their impact on the country's demographic situation.

Theoretical and empirical background

The possibilities and prospects of considering business as an active actor in demographic policy are based on the concept of moral agency, also known as the theory of corporations as moral persons (Werhane & Freeman, 1998). This theory views corporations as entities that are morally responsible for their actions, much like individuals. The discussion of corporations' moral status dates back to the 1970s and is associated with the works of Ladd (1970) and French (1979). While Ladd (1970) denied the possibility of moral responsibility on the part of the corporation as a whole and its individual managers, French (1979) argued in contrast that corporations are moral agents and have certain rights and obligations in this regard.

Subsequently, the debate developed further, producing concepts that occupied an intermediate position between the two poles. However, no consensus has been reached on the moral status of a corporation (Mansell et al., 2019). For example, Danley (1980) denied the moral status of a corporation but believed in its presence among the managers of a company. Donaldson (1982) suggested that it was possible to consider a corporation as a moral agent, but only under certain conditions. Simultaneously, studies by Velasquez and Rönnegard showed the inappropriateness of attributing anthropomorphic characteristics to corporations (Rönnegard, 2015; Rönnegard & Velasquez, 2017; Velasquez, 1983, 2003). In contrast, Goodpaster (1991, 2007, 2022) has consistently developed the idea of a corporation as a moral agent with spiritual and social consciousness.

As a morally responsible entity, a company should respond to the significant demands of society and the strategic benchmarks for its development. One of the essential strategic benchmarks for modern Russia is population growth. The primary target indicator is the total fertility rate, which is expected to increase to 1.8 by 2036 (Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii No. 309, 2024). If we consider Russian companies as morally responsible entities that feel a sense of responsibility for supporting the achievement of such goals, they can introduce special measures of corporate social responsibility to support the well-being of employees' families and their fertility, thereby implementing family-friendly policies.

It is necessary to mention an additional theoretical framework that can substantiate the benefits and appeal of family-friendly corporate policies to employers. The neo-institutional approach, or new institutionalism, argues that organizations are shaped by their external environments and tend toward isomorphism with them (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). A stable interdependence exists between an organization and its surroundings; through continuous interaction, they mutually adapt to achieve structural alignment. From a neo-institutionalist perspective, an exclusive focus on economic efficiency is inadequate. This phenomenon occurs because organizations function within an institutional environment that prescribes specific "rules of the game," which constitute a complex of social, cultural, and political norms that attain institutionalized status. Although adherence to these fundamental rules may appear to contradict economic rationality, institutional isomorphism enables organizations to expand their resource base, enhance the legitimacy of their operations,

strengthen organizational resilience, and ensure their long-term survival. Moreover, the short-term economic costs associated with adapting to institutional requirements ultimately translate into a significant competitive advantage.

Studies conducted in different countries and based on various methodologies have shown that family-friendly policies have positive effects on employees, such as reduced parental stress due to the need to balance their roles as parents and employees (Yucel & Fan, 2023) and increased satisfaction with their professional lives (Bobbio et al., 2022; Ezra & Deckman, 1996). However, the level of satisfaction can vary significantly depending on employees' demographic characteristics (Kim & Wiggins, 2011). Other studies have found that the implementation of such policies has very different effects on employee satisfaction with work-family balance and job satisfaction within and across different groups of similarly situated employees (Saltzstein et al., 2001). Positive effects have also been shown for organizations that have implemented family-friendly policies, such as increased employee productivity (Kim & Wiggins, 2011), reduced employee turnover (Lee & Hong, 2011), increased employee loyalty (Bourhis & Mekkaoui, 2010), and increased attractiveness of the organization as an employer (Fore, 2019).

In Russian research discourse and public administration, business participation in solving demographic problems has been considered a special area of social responsibility – corporate demographic policy – which has been understood as a complete system of principles, norms, and measures to support employees with children (Rostovskaya et al., 2021; Tobysheva & Shubat, 2024). Researchers have substantiated the necessity and possibility of implementing such a policy and have developed the most effective tools for it (Ivanitsky & Shishkarev, 2024; Tonkikh et al., 2024). Russian authorities have established platforms where business representatives can share and disseminate corporate demographic policy practices.

For example, in October 2024, the Corporate Demographic Forum was held in Yekaterinburg, organized at the initiative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation (Press Center of the Plenipotentiary Envoy of the President of the Russian Federation to the Ural Federal District, 2024). Simultaneously, studies have noted the absence of a single, universal approach to the formation and implementation of family-friendly corporate policies, as well as to the assessment of the effectiveness of these policies as a whole and their individual measures (Shubat, 2022; Stillman & Bowen, 1985). Most scholars who have studied family-friendly policies agree that more systematic, qualitative, and quantitative research is needed to better understand their outcomes and consequences (Secret & Swanberg, 2016).

Data and methods

Our research is based on a survey aimed at studying measures to support employees' families, measures to stimulate fertility in employees' families, and, in general, corporate demographic policy measures implemented in organizations. The survey was conducted in 15 regions of Russia, representing diverse socioeconomic and demographic situations. The respondents were between 18 and 49 years of age and were employed at the time of the survey. The surveyed age group almost covered the reproductive age, defined in demographic statistics as the age range of 15 to 49 years. We deliberately excluded youth aged 15–17 from the sample, as only a small share of this age group is economically active in Russia. In the vast majority of

cases, young men and women of this age are students at various levels of the Russian education system.

Additionally, we assumed that, in most cases, young men and women of this age were not yet ready to make informed reproductive decisions. The survey was conducted in October 2024. A total of 2,520 respondents were surveyed. Region, sex, and parity were used as control variables in the sampling design, targeting the reproductive-age population. The distribution of the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Respondent, %
Sex	
Male	49.0
Female	51.0
Number of children	
No children	26.7
1 child	36.2
2 children	29.4
3 children	6.1
4 children and more	1.7
Marital status	
Registered marriage	54.8
Unregistered marriage	15.0
Widowed	0.9
Divorced	9.3
Single	20.0
Region	
Sverdlovsk Region	12.0
Chelyabinsk Region	9.6
Tyumen Region	4.5
Kurgan Region	1.9
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region	5.2
Vologda Region	3.8
Saint Petersburg	21.0
Murmansk Region	2.5
Arkhangelsk Region	3.4
Komi Republic	2.6
Novosibirsk Region	7.6
Irkutsk Region	6.3
Kemerovo Region	6.9
Krasnoyarsk Region	7.9
Omsk Region	4.8

We used online forms for the survey. To improve data integrity, we employed various techniques, including verifying survey completion times, evaluating the consistency of responses to logically related questions, analyzing responses to attention-check items, and assessing the linearity of table entries within questions.

For our research, we studied employees' perceptions of whether employers should provide special support for employees with children, such as special work schedules, payment for education, health programs, and recreation. We also looked for differences in these perceptions across groups of respondents defined by the following indicators:

- sociodemographic indicators (sex, age, marital status, number of children, educational attainment, and income);
- respondents' occupation;
- company size (large, medium, or small);
- region of residence;
- dwelling size.

To obtain a comprehensive view of the possible impact of the demographic policies implemented within an organization, we propose calculating *an index of the employer's positive influence on employees' family decisions*: the I_{PI} . This index is based on respondents' answers to the following two groups of questions. The first group of questions asked participants to rate their agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree):

- V1. If the workplace offers special support for employees with children, the decision to have a first child will be easier.
- V2. If the workplace offers special support for employees with multiple children, the decision to have a large family will be easier.
- V3. If the workplace offers special support for employees with children, the decision to have children at an earlier age will be easier.
- V4. If the workplace offers special support for employees with children, the decision to have children later in life will be easier.
- V5. It is an invasion of privacy for employers to support employees' families.
- V6. An employer's support for its employees' families is a solution to some of the employer's problems.
- V7. As this puts workers in an unequal position, employers should not favor employees with children.
- V8. Not all employees have the desire or ability to have children; therefore, the availability of company childcare policies is irrelevant.

The second group of questions asked participants to rate their perceptions of employers' influence on specific family decisions, using a Likert scale from -2 (has no impact) to +2 (has an impact):

- V9. Forming a family (getting married)
- V10. Having a first child
- V11. Having a second child
- V12. Having a third child and subsequent children

Therefore, in determining the index, the following events were considered "family decisions": having a first child; having a child at an earlier or later age; having a third or later child; starting a family (legal marriage); and having a large family. This covered both the timing and parity domains.

Because the variables included in the index were measured on different scales, we applied min-max normalization to calculate the index. This method linearly scales the data to predefined lower and upper bounds (Han et al., 2012). In our case, we used 0 and 1 for the lower and upper bounds, respectively. We applied the following formula to normalize the variables:

$$x'_i = \frac{x_i - x_{min}}{x_{max} - x_{min}}, \quad (1)$$

where x_{min} and x_{max} denote the minimum and maximum values, respectively, of the i_{th} feature. A multiplicative inverse was applied first to normalize the variables V5–V8, since increases in these variables indicate decreases in the employer's positive influence on employees' family decisions.

The integral index of the employer's positive influence on employees' family decisions was calculated as the arithmetic mean of the normalized values of variables V1 through V12. We used min-max normalization because the resulting range of values for the integral indicator, from 0 to 1, can be easily interpreted in terms of "weak-strong" influence. In addition, the obtained values can be compared across different groups of respondents and used to analyze the dynamics of the integral indicator, as well as to interpret it in terms of an increase or decrease in the level of positive influence.

We formulated several hypotheses for further analysis. Our study is exploratory research, since such research has not been conducted in Russia before, and corporate demographic policy remains an understudied phenomenon. Therefore, when formulating the hypotheses, we could not rely on previous research in this area. Thus, we formulated hypotheses for population subgroups based on known characteristics of socioeconomic and demographic development in Russian regions.

Our hypotheses were as follows:

- H1. Respondents in large cities rate the employer's ability to positively influence employees' family decisions more highly.
- H2. Respondents from large companies rate the employer's ability to positively influence employees' family decisions more highly.
- H3. Women rate the employer's ability to influence employees' family decisions more highly.
- H4. Married individuals rate the employer's ability to positively influence employees' family decisions more highly.
- H5. Respondents with children rate the employer's ability to positively influence employees' family decisions more highly.
- H6. If a spouse does not have a full-time job, respondents rate the employer's ability to positively influence employees' family decisions more highly.
- H7. Low-income respondents rate the employer's ability to positively influence employees' family decisions more highly.

To test these hypotheses, we employed parametric and nonparametric independent-samples tests, including the t-test combined with Levene's test for equality of variances, the Mann-Whitney U test, and the median test. These tests were also used to assess differences in other variables for which we did not have preliminary hypotheses, such as age, educational attainment, occupation, and region of residence. We used IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 23.0.

Our survey received ethical approval from the School of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship at Ural Federal University (Certificate No. 66-62/001/02-24, 09/05/2024).

Results

The survey revealed that an overwhelming majority of employees (82%) believed that employers should support employees with children in a special way, particularly by accommodating flexible work schedules and providing funding for training, health programs, and recreational activities. Therefore, we concluded that the majority of employees in Russian companies essentially endowed their employers with the features of a moral person.

A key finding was that there were no differences in responses among individuals living in different regions or settlements of varying population sizes. There were also no differences in the responses of employees at small, medium, and large companies.

There were some differences across groups of respondents defined by the following indicators:

- Sex. The proportion of women who believed that employers should support employees with children was slightly higher than that of men (84% vs. 79%).
- Marital status. Unmarried respondents were less likely to hold this opinion (73.7%), whereas widowed respondents were more likely to hold this opinion (87%).
- Parental status: Respondents with children were more likely to believe that employers should provide special support to employees with children (85% vs. 74% without children).
- Financial situation. The proportion was highest (88%) among those with a difficult financial situation (responding “do not have enough money to pay for necessities”).
- Educational attainment: The higher the respondents’ education level, the more they believed that employers should support employees with children (Table 3).

Table 3: Employees With Different Education Levels Believing That Employers Should Provide Special Support to Employees with Children

Education Level	Share of Employees
Incomplete secondary education (8–9 grades)	79.2%
General secondary education (11 grades)	80.9%
Specialized secondary education (vocational school)	81.5%
Higher education (bachelor’s degree and above)	82.6%
Academic degree	94.4%

- Occupation: The highest rate (93%) was found among respondents working in the military, law enforcement, and security sectors.

Next, based on the 12 variables, we calculated an index of the employer’s positive influence on employees’ family decisions (I_{PI}). Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the I_{PI} .

Table 4: I_{PI} Descriptive Statistics

Statistics		Value
Minimum		0
Maximum		1
Mean		0.583
Percentiles	10	0.333
	65	0.666

The I_{PI} ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a more positive influence of employers on employees' family decisions.

We propose the following scale for this index:

- [0.000, 0.333): Weak potential for a positive influence;
- [0.333, 0.666): Moderate potential for a positive influence;
- [0.666, 1.000]: Strong potential for a positive influence.

When assumptions about such a gradation cannot be made from previous research, we suggest using a standard mathematical technique: dividing the range of index values into three equal parts. In the course of further study, this gradation of the index can be adjusted and clarified as new cases emerge.

The values obtained for the index (Table 4) suggested that employees were, in general, moderately optimistic about the potential for such influence:

- The average index value of 0.583 fell within the moderate-influence range, but was closer to the strong-influence range.
- Only 10% of employees saw a weak potential for employers to positively influence family decisions.
- More than one-third of respondents (35%) had a very high opinion of the potential for such influence.

Importantly, even a small share (9.6%) of respondents who did not believe that employers should specifically support employees with children still recognized the potential for positive employer influence on employees' family decisions; the I_{PI} among these respondents was within the moderate-influence range (Table 5).

Table 5: I_{PI} Among Respondents with Diverse Views on Employer Obligation to Support Employees with Children

	Should the employer support employees with children in any special way?		
	Yes	No	No opinion
I_{PI}	0.606	0.442	0.514

We then used parametric and nonparametric tests to identify statistically significant differences in the I_{PI} across groups of respondents defined by sociodemographic indicators. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in the I_{PI} across the following indicators: age, sex, educational attainment, financial situation, occupation, company size, and dwelling size.

At the same time, statistically significant differences in the index values were found across groups of respondents defined by marital status, parental status, and number of children. The differences were as follows.

- *Marital status:* The highest potential of the employer's positive influence on employees' family decisions was perceived among married respondents, and the lowest potential was perceived among single respondents (Table 6). Statistically significant differences were confirmed only for these two groups. For married respondents, whether a spouse had a permanent job was not a significant factor in assessing the potential for a positive employer influence on employees' family decisions. These differences were not observed for either men or women.
- *Parental status:* Respondents with children assessed the potential of the employer's positive influence on employees' family decisions more highly (Table 6).
- *Number of children:* Within the group of respondents with children, a pattern emerged: the more children a respondent had, the higher the perceived potential for the employer to have a positive influence on employees' family decisions. Moreover, for women, this increase became more pronounced as the number of children increased (Table 6).

Table 6: I_{PI} Across Different Respondent Categories

Category	Value	I_{PI}		
Marital status	Single		0.560	
	In a registered marriage		0.590	
	In an unregistered marriage		0.584	
	Divorced		0.588	
	Widowed		0.560	
Parental status	Parents		0.594	
	Child-free individuals		0.552	
Number of Children		Overall	Men	Women
	1	0.583	0.584	0.582
	2	0.597	0.598	0.596
	3	0.623	0.644	0.608
	4	0.678	0.663	0.689
	5+	0.716	0.708	0.792

Hence, the analysis confirmed the hypotheses H3–H5. In contrast, H1, H2, and H6 were not supported, and H7 received only partial support.

Discussions

Our results highlight several key issues for discussion. First, the ongoing debate on the corporation's status as a moral agent warrants closer examination. Our observations demonstrate that employees of Russia-based companies perceive their employer as an entity that is, among other things, obligated to support workers' families and fertility, including families with three or more children. This implies that, in the Russian context, employees perceive the employer as assuming social obligations aligned with both prevailing societal demands and the state's strategic goals, thereby attributing a moral status to the corporation.

Thus, our findings advance the discourse on moral agency by offering empirical grounding for the theory of the corporation as a moral person. Furthermore, our analysis reveals that employees across a broad spectrum of companies consistently attribute moral traits to corporations. This suggests a degree of generalizability of the finding that companies in Russia function as moral persons.

Our results reveal that company size has no significant effect on the perception of corporate moral agency; employees from small, medium, and large companies uniformly expect employers to provide support for employees with children. This finding contributes to the ongoing discourse on the potential for corporate social responsibility (CSR) in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A common argument in the literature is that SMEs face limited CSR opportunities due to resource and skill constraints (Lepoutre & Heene, 2006; Perrini et al., 2007). Conversely, other studies have demonstrated that SMEs exhibit a higher degree of involvement in CSR activities (Sarbutts, 2003; Wickert et al., 2016). Research on CSR among SMEs in Russia has also highlighted the ad hoc nature and significant challenges inherent in its implementation (Mamaev, 2019). However, recent research has demonstrated the potential for small businesses to successfully implement CSR initiatives targeting demographic challenges (Shubat, 2024).

Our observations suggest that corporate support measures for employees' families and fertility intentions, particularly for families with three or more children—often referred to in the Russian context as corporate demographic policy (CDP)—have significant potential to positively impact the demographic situation. Even a small minority of employees, who do not believe their employers should implement such support measures, nevertheless provides a moderate appraisal of their potential demographic impact. Therefore, our analysis allows us to cautiously posit that the implementation of corporate demographic policies in Russia-based companies contributes positively to the country's demographic situation. This assumption finds a theoretical foundation in Merton's (1948) concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy. According to this concept, one person's or one group's expectations of the behavior of others can unintentionally influence the behavior expected of those others. Therefore, positive employee expectations regarding employers' moral obligation to provide various forms of support to employees' families can encourage companies to implement corporate demographic policies more enthusiastically.

The confirmed potential positive impact of the CDP on the country's demographic situation, as shown by our study, provides empirical support for more active efforts by the state and businesses to introduce the CDP in Russian companies. In addition, the observed pattern is that as respondents' parity increases, the index of the employer's positive influence on employees' family decisions also increases, strengthening this argument.

The results allow us to discuss how to complete the CDP with specific measures. Such a policy should be developed with special attention paid to the groups of employees who need it the most. Our research shows that widowed and low-income respondents have the highest percentages who believe that employers should support employees with children, and that women give higher ratings of employers' positive influence on employees' family decisions. These groups are disadvantaged and have a greater need for employer protection and support. Recent World Bank (2024) research on gender inequality has shown that, even in developed economies, women are a significantly disadvantaged group, enjoying less than two-thirds of men's rights when legal differences related to violence and childcare are considered. Women's disadvantages have been exacerbated by work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Numerous studies have demonstrated the existence of such

conflicts and their negative impacts on employees, employers, and overall business performance (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Lim & Kim, 2014). Corporate demographic policies are essential for reducing these conflicts.

Our study has another interesting finding: a positive correlation exists between educational attainment and respondents' views on whether employers should specifically support employees with children. The higher the level of education, the more likely employees are to hold this view. Simultaneously, lower-income respondents are more likely to hold this view. Thus, our results are somewhat at odds with the well-established concept of rates of return to education (Becker, 1964; Becker & Chiswick, 1966; Mincer, 1975), which posits that higher levels of education should be associated with higher wages—a relationship that our results do not support. Despite a large body of research confirming the effect of education on wages in many countries, studies in Russia have shown discouraging results.

Some authors have obtained empirical evidence of a positive but modest effect of education on wages in Russia (Arkhipova et al., 2017) and have noted that education is one of the key factors in wage differentiation at the macro level (Dekina & Goncharov, 2024). However, other studies have not confirmed a strong relationship between education and income (Antonenko, 2014). Different authors have shown that investments in education had an impact on the income of Russia's economically active population. Still, this impact was relatively weak and mediated by several other sociodemographic characteristics of the working-age population (Antonenko & Antonov, 2018). The results of our study likely reflect the lack of a relationship between education and income in Russia. However, addressing this issue necessitates further research and careful consideration and interpretation of any identified relationships.

A notable finding that warrants separate discussion is that the survey did not reveal any statistically significant differences in responses across different regions of Russia. This allows us to cautiously infer that the results of this study are representative of the country as a whole. As previously mentioned, by including 15 regions in our study, we aimed to capture the diversity of socioeconomic and demographic situations across the country and to encompass regions with significantly different levels of economic, social, and demographic development (Rosstat, 2024). To obtain a better sense of this diversity, consider these three high-contrast highlights: the total fertility rate in St. Petersburg at 1.257 versus the Tyumen Region at 1.716 in 2023; the 5.6% unemployment rate in the Arkhangelsk Region versus the national average at 3.2% and the Krasnoyarsk Region at 2% in 2023; and gross regional product per capita of over RUB 514,000 (USD 7,637) in the Omsk Region versus slightly more than RUB 4 million (USD 59,440) in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Region (almost eight times as large) in 2022.

Our research found no statistically significant differences in the responses of participants living in settlements with different population sizes. In both large and small cities, respondents were equally positive about employers' potential to influence employees' family decisions. In our opinion, this result supports the cautious assumption that these findings are typical for Russia.

Conclusions

This study has several significant findings. First, the study indicates that the overwhelming majority of employees in Russian companies recognize that corporations have certain moral

obligations and believe that employers should support employees with children, such as by arranging flexible work schedules and providing funding for training, medical programs, and recreation. Important indicators that differentiate such judgments are employees' sex, marital status, parental status, and financial situation. To obtain a comprehensive view of the possible effects of corporate demographic policies, we propose an index of employers' positive influence on employees' family decisions. The values of this index show that employees are moderately optimistic about the potential for such influence. We identify and describe several attributes associated with differences in this index. These include employees' marital status, parental status, the number of children, and, in part, employees' sex.

The contributions of this study are both theoretical and empirical in nature. Our theoretical contribution lies in advancing the scholarly debate on the moral status of corporations and on the theory of corporations as moral persons. Our findings provide robust evidence that supports this theoretical framework. Our findings provide robust evidence in support of this theoretical framework.

The empirical contribution of this study is the confirmation that corporate demographic policies can have a positive impact on Russia's demographic situation. The results also enable the development of more effective and targeted corporate demographic policies focused on employee groups who need them most and who value their potential impact on family decisions. Companies can use the index developed in this study to measure employers' positive influence on employees' family decisions and to conduct comparative studies tracking changes in employers' success and employees' expectations.

Our results are particularly relevant to managers of foreign companies operating in or considering entering the Russian market. Understanding specific national work culture and attitudes toward family, the employer, and work-life conflict is crucial for building effective relationships with employees.

We outline several promising areas for further research. First, we need to collect and analyze successful cases of corporate demographic policy implementation. An extensive collection of such cases is essential for identifying the most effective measures to reverse the country's negative demographic trends. The identified measures require a solid methodology for assessing their effectiveness, making this another promising research direction. Another fruitful research area is examining the reasons behind employers' reluctance to adopt corporate demographic policies, as employers are currently hesitant primarily to implement family-support measures for employees with children. Lastly, comparative analyses of corporate family-support practices in Russian and international contexts can contribute substantially to both the methodological and empirical foundations of corporate social responsibility research.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Russian Science Foundation under Grant No. 24-18-00854 (<https://rscf.ru/project/24-18-00854>).

References

- Antonenko, V. V. (2014). Dependence of income on the educational level of the economically active population of the Volgograd region: A statistical analysis. *National Interests: Priorities and Security*, 37, 31–38. <https://www.fin-izdat.com/journal/national/detail.php?ID=63479>
- Antonenko, V. V., & Antonov, G. V. (2018). A statistical model of dependence of income on educational level in modern-day Russia. *Regional Economics: Theory and Practice*, 12, 2349–2368. <https://doi.org/10.24891/re.16.12.2349>
- Arkhipova, M., Egorov, A., & Sirotin, V. (2017). Returns to schooling in Russia and Ukraine: Comparative analysis. *Applied Econometrics*, 47, 100–122. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/ris/apltrx/0326.html>
- Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. University of Chicago Press.
- Becker, G. S., & Chiswick, B. R. (1966). Education and the distribution of earnings. *The American Economic Review*, 56(1/2), 358–369. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1821299>
- Bobbio, A., Canova, L., & Manganelli, A. M. (2022). Organizational work-home culture and its relations with the work-family interface and employees' subjective well-being. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 17, 2933–2966. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-022-10048-w>
- Bourhis, A., & Mekkaoui, R. (2010). Beyond work-family balance: Are family-friendly organizations more attractive? *Relations Industrielles*, 65(1), 98–117. <https://doi.org/10.7202/039529ar>
- Danley, J. (1980). Corporate moral agency. *Bowling Green Studies in Applied Philosophy*, 2, 140–149. <https://doi.org/10.5840/bgstudies1980216>
- Dekina, M. P., & Goncharov, D. S. (2024). Obrazovanie kak klyuchevoy faktor vostrebovannosti na rossiyskom rynke truda [Education as a key factor of demand in the Russian labor market]. *St. Petersburg Sociology Today*, 23, 77–91. <https://doi.org/10.25990/socinstras.pss-23.2y4w-7883>
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147–160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095101>
- Donaldson, T. (1982). *Corporations and morality*. Prentice Hall.
- Eastern Economic Forum. (2023, September 11). *Sustainable development of the state and business: On those who look to the future*. <https://roscongress.org/en/sessions/eef-2023-ustoychivoe-razvitiye-gosudarstva-i-biznesa-pro-tekh-kto-smotrit-v-budushchee/translation/>
- EPS. (2025, March 15). *Reyting otvetstvennogo biznesa* [Rating of responsible business]. <https://xn----etbbhpf3axw8i.xn--p1ai/>
- Ezra, M., & Deckman, M. (1996). Balancing work and family responsibilities: Flextime and child care in the federal government. *Public Administration Review*, 56(2), 174–179. <https://doi.org/10.2307/977205>
- Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. (2023, November 9). Aktual'nye resheniya po podderzhke rozhdaemosti. Parlamentskie slushaniya [Actual decisions on fertility assistance: Parliamentary hearings]. <https://council.gov.ru/activity/activities/parliamentary/149964/>
- Fore, H. H. (2019, July 29). Family-friendly policies benefit all of us. Here are 4 ways to boost them. *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/07/4-ways-to-build-family-friendly-policies-parental-leave/>
- French, P. (1979). The corporation as a moral person. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 16(3), 207–215. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20009760?origin=JSTOR-pdf>
- Goodpaster, K. E. (1991). Business ethics and stakeholder analysis. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 1(1), 53–73. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3857592>
- Goodpaster, K. E. (2007). *Conscience and corporate culture*. Blackwell.
- Goodpaster, K. E. (2022). *Times of insight: conscience, corporations, and the common good*. Springer Nature.
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76–88. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1985.4277352>

- Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(1), 72–92. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.19379625>
- Han, J. W., Kamber, M., & Pei, J. (2012). *Data mining concepts and techniques* (3rd ed.). Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.
- Ivanitsky, V. L. & Shishkarev, S. N. (2024). *Korporativnyy demograficheskiy standart: luchshie praktiki otvetstvennogo biznesa* [Corporate demographic standard: best practices of responsible business]. DPK Press. <https://индемп.рф/static/files/korpstandart2024.pdf>
- Kim, J., & Wiggins, M. E. (2011). Family-friendly human resource policy: Is it still working in the public sector? *Public Administration Review*, 71(5), 728–739. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2011.02412.x>
- Ladd, J. (1970). Morality and the ideal of rationality in formal organizations. *Monist*, 54(4), 488–516. <https://doi.org/10.5840/monist197054433>
- Lee, S.-Y., & Hong, J. H. (2011). Does family-friendly policy matter? Testing its impact on turnover and performance. *Public Administration Review*, 71(6), 870–879. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2011.02416.x>
- Lepoutre, J., & Heene, A. (2006). Investigating the impact of firm size on small business social responsibility: A critical review. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 67(3), 257–273. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9183-5>
- Lim, V. K. G., & Kim, T.-Y. (2014). The long arm of the job: Parents' work-family conflict and youths' work centrality. *Applied Psychology*, 63(1), 151–167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2012.00527.x>
- Lutz, W., & Scherbov, S. (2003). *Future demographic change in Europe: The contribution of migration*. International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. <https://pure.iiasa.ac.at/id/eprint/7019/>
- Mamaev, A. I. (2019). Issledovaniya korporativnoy sotsial'noy otvetstvennosti v sub"yektakh malogo biznesa [Research of corporate social responsibility in small businesses]. *Russian Economics*, 2, Article 54. <https://www.e-rej.ru/publications/179/%D0%BC/>
- Mansell, S., Ferguson, J., Gindis, D., & Pasternak, A. (2019). Rethinking corporate agency in business, philosophy, and law. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 154, 893–899. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3895-1>
- Merton, R. K. (1948). The self-fulfilling prophecy. *The Antioch Review*, 8(2), 193–210. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4609267>
- Meyer, J., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340–363. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2778293>
- Mincer, J. (1975). Education, experience, and the distribution of earnings and employment: An overview. In *Education, Income, and Human Behavior* (pp. 71–94). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/system/files/chapters/c3693/c3693.pdf>
- Perrini, F., Russo, A., & Tencati, A. (2007). CSR strategies of SMEs and large firms. Evidence from Italy. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 74, 285–300. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9235-x>
- Press Center of the Plenipotentiary Envoy of the President of the Russian Federation to the Ural Federal District. (2024, October 24). V Yekaterinburge prokhodit Korporativnyy demograficheskiy forum UrFO [The Ural Federal District Corporate Demographic Forum is being held in Yekaterinburg]. <http://uralfo.gov.ru/press/events/7552/>
- Rönnegard, D. (2015). *The fallacy of corporate moral agency*. Springer Dordrecht. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9756-6>
- Rönnegard, D., & Velasquez, M. (2017). On (not) attributing moral responsibility to organizations. In E. W. Orts & S. N. Craig (Eds.), *The moral responsibility of firms* (pp. 123–142). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198738534.003.0008>
- Rosstat, Federal State Statistics Service. (2019, December 26). *Itogi vyborochnogo nablyudeniya: Ispol'zovanie sutochnogo fonda vremeni naseleniem* [The daily time budget: Survey results]. https://rosstat.gov.ru/itog_inspect
- Rosstat, Federal State Statistics Service. (2024, December 26). *Regiony Rossii. Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie pokazateli* [Russian regions: Socioeconomic indicators]. <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/210/document/13204>

- Rosstat, Federal State Statistics Service. (2025, March 25). *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii* [Socioeconomic situation in Russia]. https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/DOKLAD_2025.htm
- Rostovskaya, T., Shabunova, A., & Bagirova, A. (2021). The concept for corporate demographic policy of Russian enterprises in the framework of corporate social responsibility. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 14(5), 151–164. <https://doi.org/10.15838/esc.2021.5.77.9>
- Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM). (2024, March 25). *Semeynoe schast'e – v rukakh rabotodatel'ya?* [Family happiness – in the hands of the employer?]. <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/semeynoe-schaste-v-rukakh-rabotodatel'ja>
- Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP). (2024, April 1). *Kruglyy stol na temu: "Podderzhka sem'i, detstva, materinstva, rabotnikov s semeynymi obyazannostyami"* [Support of family, childhood, maternity, employees with family responsibilities: Round table]. <https://rutube.ru/video/5571d8a8ef30cb2e17b4af741402fa5b/?ysclid=m8l08plfug379395666>
- Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP). (2025, February 19). *Forum "Kadry": Strategii preodoleniya kadrovogo defitsita v rossiyskoy ekonomike* [Forum "Human resources": Strategies for overcoming the personnel shortage in the Russian economy]. <https://rspp.ru/events/news/forum-kadry-strategii-preodoleniya-kadrovogo-defitsita-v-rossiyskoy-ekonomike-67b5bb16dd8f1/>
- Saltzstein, A. L., Ting, Y., & Saltzstein, G. H. (2001). Work-family balance and job satisfaction: The impact of family-friendly policies on attitudes of federal government employees. *Public Administration Review*, 61(4), 452–467. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-3352.00049>
- Sarbutts, N. (2003). Can SMEs "do" CSR? A practitioner's view of the ways small- and medium-sized enterprises are able to manage reputation through corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Communication Management*, 7(4), 340–347. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13632540310807476>
- Secret, M., & Swanberg, J. (2016). Work-family experiences and the insights of municipal government employees: A case study. *Public Personnel Management*, 37(2), 199–221. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009102600803700205>
- Shubat, O. M. (2022). Rossiyskiy biznes i podderzhka rozhdaemosti: uspeшные korporativnye praktiki [Russian business and fertility support: Successful corporate practices]. In *Global challenges to demographic development* (pp. 339–351). Institute of Economics, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.17059/udf-2022-4-32>
- Shubat, O. M. (2024). Malyy biznes i korporativnaya grazhdanstvennost' v demograficheskoy sfere: est' li tochki soprikosnoveniya? [Small business and corporate citizenship in the demographic sphere: Are there common ground?]. In *Family and work* (pp. 464–468). Nizhny Novgorod State University named after N. I. Lobachevsky. <https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=75192899>
- St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF). (2023, June 15). *Where there are people, there is business: Strategic motivation for private investment in demography*. <https://forumspb.com/en/programme/business-programme/104236/>
- Stillman, F., & Bowen, G. L. (1985). Corporate support mechanisms for families: An exploratory study and agenda for research and evaluation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 8(4), 309–314. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0149-7189\(85\)90026-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0149-7189(85)90026-6)
- Tobysheva, A. A., & Shubat, O. M. (2024). Korporativnaya demograficheskaya politika: determinanty i praktiki [Corporate demographic policy: Determinants and practices]. *Human Progress*, 10(1), Article 6. <https://doi.org/10.34709/im.1101.6>
- Tonkikh, N. V., Chudinovskikh, M. V., & Begicheva, S. V. (2024). Integratsiya gibkikh instrumentov korporativnoy demograficheskoy politiki v sistemu upravleniya personalom [Integration of flexible corporate demographic policy tools into the personnel management system]. *Upravlenets / The Manager*, 15(5), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.29141/2218-5003-2024-15-5-6>
- Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii No. 309. (2024, May 7). *O natsional'nykh tselyakh razvitiya Rossiyskoy Federatsii na period do 2030 goda i na perspektivu do 2036 goda* [Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 309 on the national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period until 2030 and in the perspective until 2036]. <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/news/73986>
- Unified Interagency Information Statistical System (UIISS). (2025a, February 19). *Naselenie* [Population]. <https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31557>

- Unified Interagency Information Statistical System (UIISS). (2025b, March 10). *Summarnyy koeffitsient rozhdaemosti* [Total fertility rate]. <https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/31517>
- Velasquez, M. G. (1983). Why corporations are not morally responsible for anything they do. *Business and Professional Ethics Journal*, 2(3), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.5840/bpej19832349>
- Velasquez, M. G. (2003). Debunking corporate moral responsibility. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 13(4), 531–562. <https://doi.org/10.5840/beq200313436>
- Vitik, S. V. (2012). *Stimulirovanie reproduktivnogo truda na rossiyskikh predpriyatiyakh: mekhanizm i otsenka effektivnosti* [Stimulation of reproductive labor in Russian enterprises: Mechanism and effectiveness assessment] [Doctoral dissertation abstract, Ural Federal University]. <https://elar.urfu.ru/bitstream/10995/4325/2/urfu0977s.pdf>
- Werhane, P. H., & Freeman, R. E. (1998). *The Blackwell Encyclopedic Dictionary of Business Ethics*. Blackwell.
- Wickert, C., Scherer, A. G., & Spence, L. J. (2016). Walking and talking corporate social responsibility: Implications of firm size and organizational cost. *Journal of Management Studies*, 53(7), 1169–1196. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12209>
- World Bank. (2024). *Women, business and the law 2024*. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-2063-2>
- Yucel, D., & Fan, W. (2023). Workplace flexibility, work–family interface, and psychological distress: Differences by family caregiving obligations and gender. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 18, 1825–1847. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-023-10164-1>