

## Foreword

The importance of top executives for the success of their organizations is virtually undisputed for approximately three decades. For this reason, in the last years scientific papers in the area of management and market-oriented business management increasingly dealt with answering the question on what top executives' success depends. Within the scope of market-oriented business management mainly underlying circumstances (e.g. intensity of competition and market dynamics) as well as executives' demographic characteristics (e.g., age and tenure) were investigated. Thereby influencing variables on the level of attitudes and behaviors remained almost unregarded. Mrs. Eva-Maria Bauer closes this gap and pursues with her work the goal to provide a deeper understanding of top executives' psychology in order to explain organizations' success. In her work the author captures a rather broad management perspective. Although market-related magnitudes are considered in this work, it nevertheless is also relevant for research in the area of market-oriented business management. Together with psychological variables the author considers two phenomena which are deepened in her work:

- top executives' relationship to their occupation in a specific organization (called top executives' work relationship) as well as
- the balance top executives perceive between their work and family life (called top executives' work-family balance).

This work has as its goal to both theoretically and empirically investigate these two phenomena. Thus, it decisively contributes to the extension of the scientific state of knowledge in these areas. Former empirical works primarily carried out dependence analysis regarding top executives' relevance for organizations' success. In contrast, the author chooses a classification approach. For both investigated areas – top executives' work relationship and top executives' work-family balance – the author selects theoretically stringent and well-founded central variables in order to describe the respective phenomenon. The existent empirical literature multiplicatively proved differences between the occupations of diverse hierarchical levels. The present work explicitly highlights the differences within a population which is frequently implicitly categorized as relatively homogenous: the top executives in organizations.

At the beginning of her work, the author develops a systematic procedure for the development

conomic research, which often starts with an empirical part without in advance specifying extensive theoretical bases. Additionally, the author recommends an explorative qualitative study prior to a quantitative empirical taxonomy development in order to better permeate little-known and equally complex phenomena. In my opinion, the process of taxonomy development elaborated in this work should be trend-setting for future works which underlie classifications. Corresponding to this process, the author initially conducts a qualitative study and interviews over 40 top executives about facets of their work relationship as well as characteristics of their work-family balance. The interviews are analyzed by means of a very sophisticated procedure of content analysis which is established in the leading international management research. In the second step, the author successfully surveys around 220 top executives regarding their work relationship and work-family balance. This relatively large sample is remarkable because top executives are an extremely difficultly accessible target group in the context of empirical studies. The author nevertheless manages to generate this sample by means of a very sophisticated procedure, in which she offers the top executives an individualized profound report of the results in respect to their personal work-life balance.

Beyond that, in addition to the investigation of top executives, the self assessments of their life partners are also gathered. With her multi-methodological design as well as the dyadic quantitative study the author succeeds in generating a data basis, which to my knowledge, in this form, exists neither in national nor in international top management research.

On the basis of a comprehensive data set, the author develops two taxonomies concerning top executives' work relationship and work-family balance. Beyond that, she shows that top executives highly differ concerning their work relationship and their work-family balance. The results regarding the investigated variables related to these phenomena are interesting. On the basis of variance analysis the author shows that the top executives clearly differentiate in respect to their well-being and performance. Against the background of the frequently conducted debate on top executives' relevance for the success of their organizations, the results of this work are not only novel but also highly relevant for the economic management research.

The present work essentially extends the scientific state of knowledge involving two highly interesting phenomena – top executives' work relationship and work-family balance. In addition, for organizations' practical experiences interesting insights are generated. A broad diffusion in science and business practice is desirable for this thesis.