



Swiss Human Relations Barometer Spring Newsletter 2023

Overview

| | |
|--|---|
| Editorial..... | 1 |
| Are «job hoppers» trapped in hedonic treadmills? .2 | |
| Does error aversion promote learning and innovation? | 4 |
| Literature | 5 |
| News..... | 5 |

Editorial

In view of the severe shortage of skilled workers in Switzerland and the generally observed higher turnover intentions as a result of the pandemic («the great resignation»), the first article in our newsletter is particularly relevant. It shows how employees experience the start of a new job and which factors are relevant to maintaining the initial high level of high job satisfaction.

The second article deals with another central topic for companies: Learning from errors and innovation. This was also the focus of the Swiss HR Barometer 2022. An in-depth analysis of this data makes it clear that innovation can be promoted by dealing with errors in a positive way. When errors are perceived as threats, learning and innovation also take place, but at the cost of increased workload and turnover intentions among employees.

The Swiss HR Barometer is a joint project between ETH Zurich and the Universities of Lucerne and Zurich. The project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Since 2006, the Swiss HR Barometer analyzes how employees in Switzerland experience their work situation. By means of a representative, regularly conducted and differentiated survey of employees in Switzerland, organizational psychological basics for personnel policy are determined. We are pleased to be able to provide you with an in-depth insight into current personnel issues and successful personnel strategies in this newsletter.

Gudela Grote & Bruno Staffelbach, Editors

The Swiss HR Barometer is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation:



FONDS NATIONAL SUISSE
SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS
FONDO NAZIONALE SVIZZERO
SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Are «job hoppers» trapped in hedonic treadmills? Effects of career orientations «on newcomers' attitude trajectories»

Based on data from eight Swiss companies and the Swiss HR Barometer, Wiebke Doden, Julian Pfrombeck, and Gudela Grote conducted two studies to investigate how job satisfaction and turnover intention evolve when employees change employers.

Unsurprisingly, the job satisfaction of employees is lowest before quitting. Immediately after joining a new company, job satisfaction is high and the intention to quit is low. It is interesting to see how these job attitudes change over the course of a new hire and how these dynamics differ depending on the career orientation of the employees surveyed.

Traditional and New Career Orientations

Career orientations refer to employees' attitudes, needs, and values regarding their own careers. This includes, among other things, attitudes toward job security, hierarchical advancement and mobility. The study distinguishes between traditional and new career orientations. Employees with a new career orientation like to take charge of their own employability and career planning and, in comparison to employees with a traditional career orientation, change companies more often. Employees with a traditional career orientation, on the other hand, place a high value on job security. They are more loyal to their employers and are happy to leave career planning to the company.

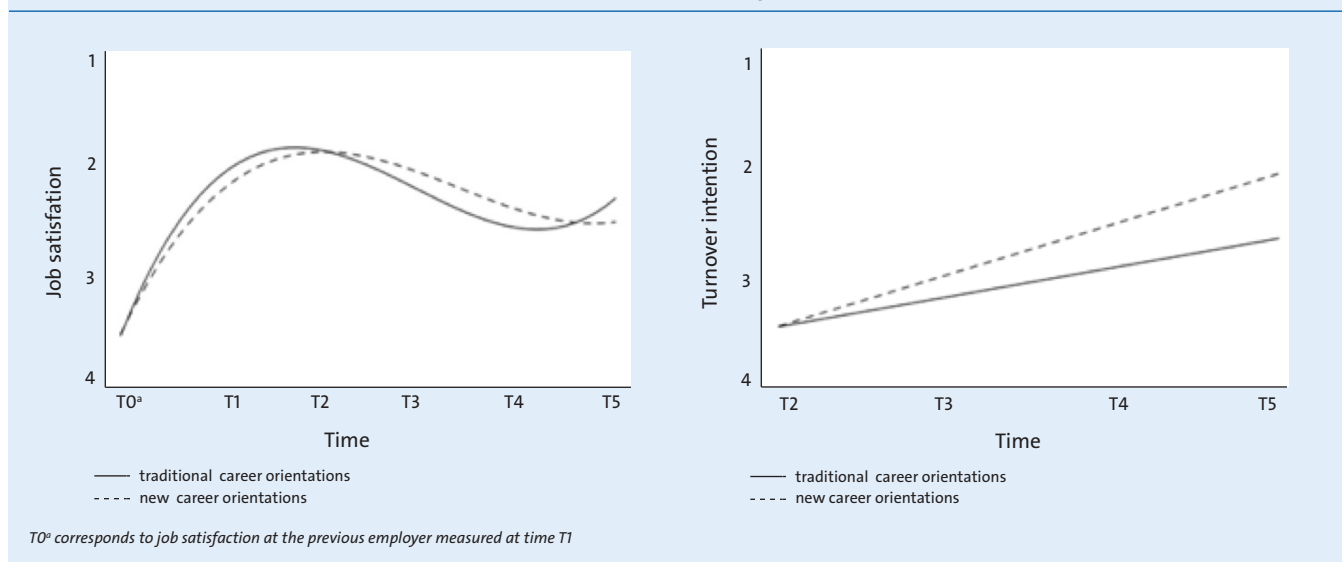
Work attitudes of newcomers

The first study by Doden et al. (2022) shows that employees with different career orientations differ in the first year of their new employment in terms of both the trajectory of their job satisfaction and their turnover intention (Figure 1). The turnover intention is lowest for all respondents immediately after joining the company and increases steadily over the first year of employment. However, the trend is steeper for employees with a new career orientation, so that after one year they show a significantly higher turnover intention than employees with a traditional career orientation. The course of job satisfaction looks different. Immediately before the termination, it is lowest for all respondents and highest in the first six weeks after the change of employer. After that, the job satisfaction curve of employees with a new career orientation slowly flattens out. For employees with a traditional career orientation, job satisfaction also declines after the first few weeks of a new entry, but slowly rises again after six months.

Work attitudes before and after changing employers

To support the robustness of the findings, Doden et al. (2022) conducted a second study. In this, participants were asked about their turnover intention and job satisfaction at three time points: once before and twice after an employer change. The results of the second study show only a slight increase in job satisfaction and a slight decrease in turnover intention at all three points in time for employees with traditional career orientations (Figure 2). For employees with new career orientations, this study again shows a more dynamic progression of work attitudes. Here, too, an initial increase in

Figure 1 Job satisfaction and turnover intention among newcomers with traditional and new career orientations - Study 1



job satisfaction is followed by a renewed decrease in job satisfaction over time, accompanied by an increase in the intention to quit.

Hedonic Adaptation in Job Hoppers

The results of both studies indicate that the work attitudes of employees with different career orientations differ during an employer change. Employees with a new career orientation adapt faster to new companies, but also disengage faster than employees with a traditional career orientation. Furthermore, the study supports theories of «hedonic adaptation». They state that individuals quickly return to the starting point of (job) satisfaction after a positive experience, in this case the new entry into the company. As mentioned, this was confirmed in the two studies for employees with a new career orientation (so-called «job hoppers»). This is not true for employees with traditional career orientation. According to Doden et al. (2022), this may be due to the fact that employees with a traditional career orientation hope for internal promotions or other socio-emotional benefits one year after a new hire, which they value and which increases their job satisfaction. A possible reason for frequent employer changes of employees with a new career orientation is that this increases their level of job satisfaction again, which leads them to enter so-called «hedonic treadmills».

Conclusions

Based on the results of the two studies, it can be concluded that companies ideally adapt their onboarding processes to the career orientations of their new employees. Employees with a traditional career orientation can be

shown development opportunities within the company, which signals an interest in a longer-term collaboration on the part of the company and increases the perceived job security of the employees. Through opportunities for further development, networking or project work, companies can also remain interesting for employees with a new career orientation for a longer period of time. Finally, through job crafting (i.e., a strategy of employees to positively influence their work experience, cf. Swiss HR Barometer 2014), employees with new career orientations can also specifically ensure that they stay with a company for a longer period of time and thus leave the hedonic treadmills.

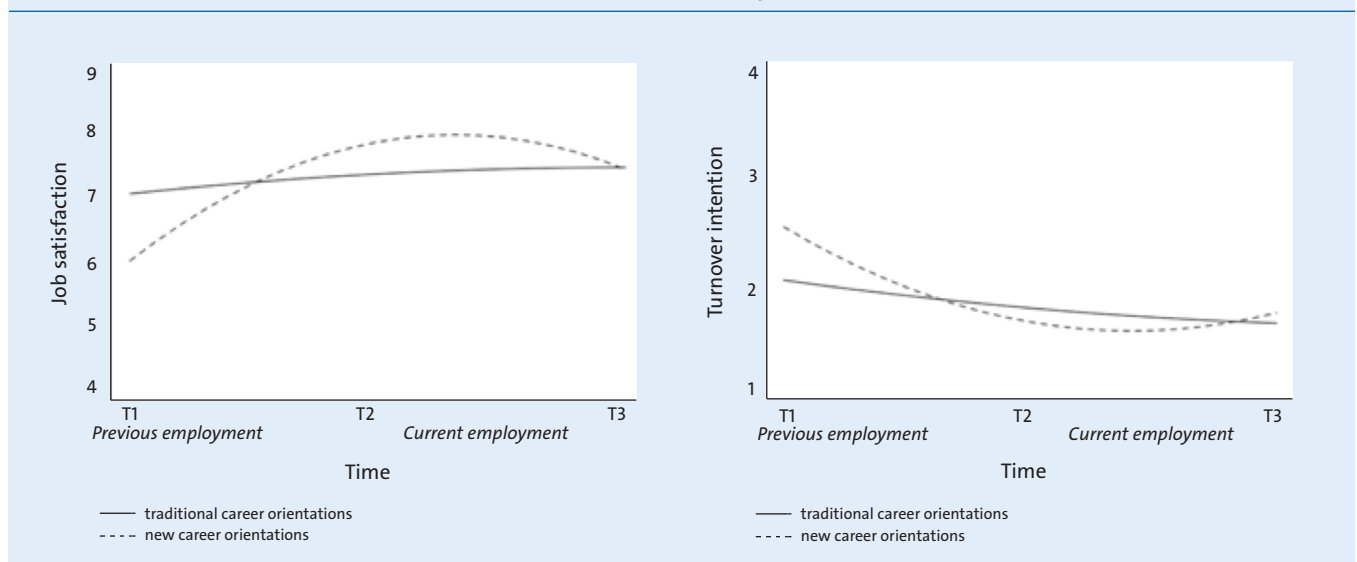
Delia Meyer

Source: Doden, W., Pfrombeck, J. & Grote, G. (2022). Are «job hoppers» trapped in hedonic treadmills? Effects of career orientations on newcomers' attitude trajectories. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2665>.

Does error aversion promote learning and innovation?

For years, Switzerland has been considered one of the most innovative countries in the world. To enable innovation, companies need a corresponding error culture so that employees receive appropriate support in the innovation process.

Figure 2 Job satisfaction and turnover intention of newcomers with traditional and new career orientations - Study 2



Based on the results of the Swiss Human Relations Barometer 2022, Delia Meyer, Lena Schneider and Anja Feierabend examined the relationship between error aversion, learning and innovation in more detail for the December issue of Personalschweiz. In the following, the central aspects of the article are summarized.

Innovation and error culture

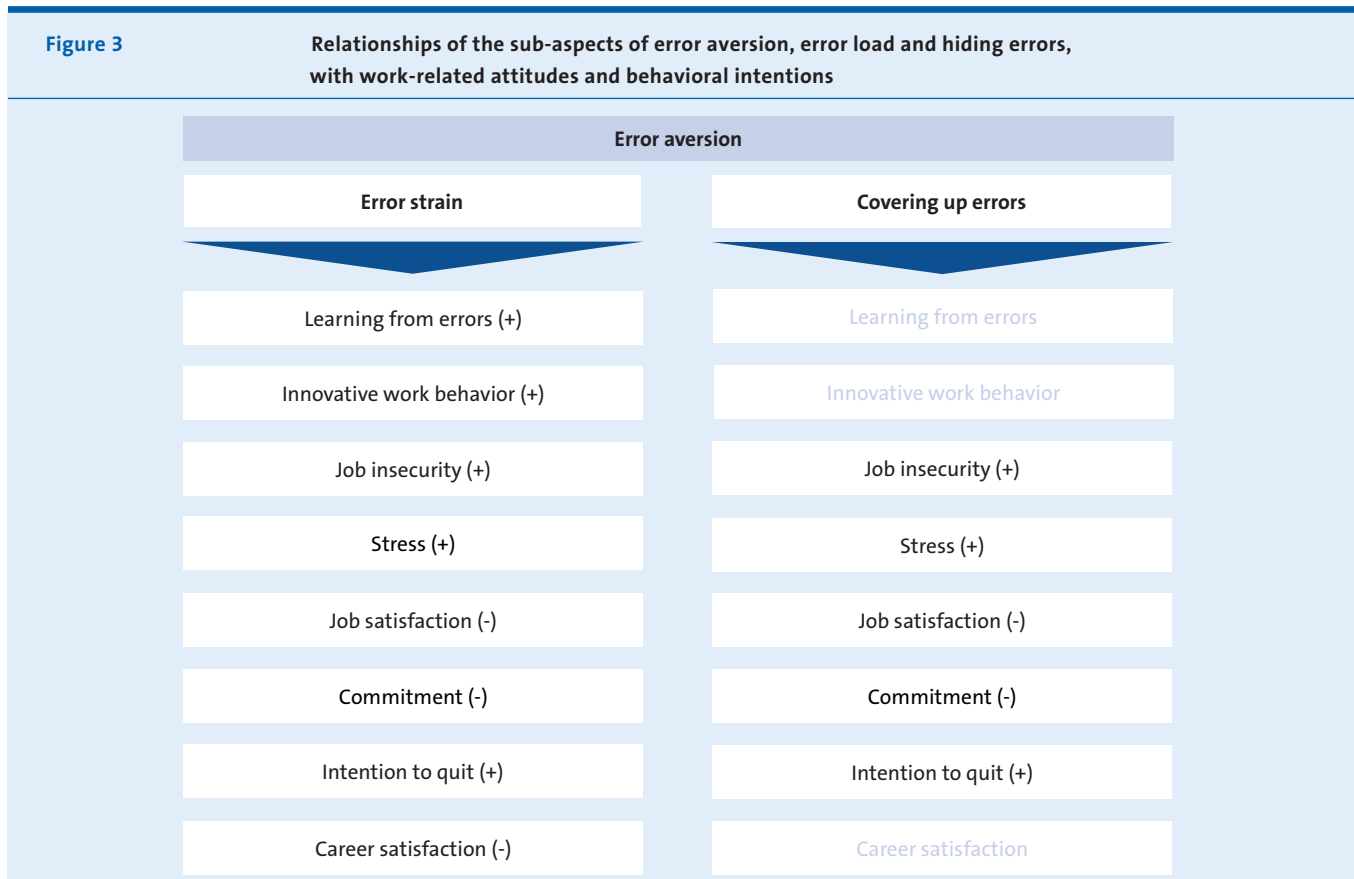
The learning and innovation behavior of employees is significantly influenced by the organizational culture, i.e. the lived norms, values and practices. The culture of innovation determines individual work behavior and the degree of support employees receive from supervisors or colleagues. According to the results of the Swiss HR Barometer 2022, more than half (57%) of the employees surveyed feel supported by their colleagues in the innovation process, which involves generating, promoting and implementing new ideas. Almost two-thirds (62%) feel supported by their supervisors.

Errors are also an important resource that can be used to create new and optimize existing products and processes. Employees can learn from mistakes and use the newly acquired knowledge for improvements and adjustments. However, this is only possible if the company's error culture allows it.

With regard to the error culture, a distinction can be made between error aversion and error management. If

error aversion prevails, errors are avoided as far as possible in the company. If they do occur, employees can often feel burdened by them and tend to hide the errors for fear of negative consequences. Error management describes the constructive handling of errors and includes communication in the team about errors, existing competencies in dealing with errors that have occurred, and the ability to reflect on and analyze reasons for the occurrence of errors. The results of the Swiss HR Barometer show that almost two-thirds (61%) of employees in Switzerland experience a constructive approach to mistakes and do not have to hide their mistakes out of fear. At the same time, however, the findings also indicate that both error management and error aversion can lead to employees learning from mistakes and being innovative at work. Therefore, in the context of further analyses, the sub-aspects of error aversion (error load and hiding errors) were considered individually. As shown in Figure 3, only the perceived error load leads to learning from mistakes. It can be assumed that the perceived stress caused by mistakes (i.e., error load) motivates employees to avoid mistakes in the future and therefore to learn from them and improve processes and products accordingly. Hiding mistakes has no influence on the innovative behavior of the employees.

Additionally, hiding mistakes prevents organizational learning and thus disrupts the innovation process in



two ways: on the one hand, at the individual level of the employee who made the mistake, and on the other hand, at the organizational level, since no exchange takes place and thus other employees cannot learn from the mistake either. However, this sharing of knowledge is a central aspect of constructive error management. The joint analysis and discussion of errors as well as the anticipation of possible further errors allow the emergence of a collective mindfulness towards errors. Companies that can deal effectively with errors experiment more often and are more likely to produce innovations.

Influence of error culture on work attitudes and behavior

A company's error culture is not only related to innovative behavior, but also to other key work attitudes and behavioral intentions. For example, dealing constructively with errors lowers employees' turnover intention, perceived stress, and perceived job insecurity. At the same time, good error management increases employee satisfaction and attachment to the employer. The picture is different for error aversion (Figure 3). An organizational culture of error aversion increases job insecurity, perceived stress and turnover intentions. It also decreases job satisfaction, commitment and career satisfaction.

Conclusion

If employees are supported in the innovation process by supervisors and work colleagues, this promotes innovative work behavior.

Constructive error management helps to learn from mistakes and to use them for improvements. If mistakes are perceived as a burden, this can also lead to individual learning from mistakes and innovative work behavior. However, this type of error culture increases employees' stress as well as their intention to quit and is therefore not conducive. Instead, the exchange about mistakes should be promoted, so that a common understanding can develop and the resource of mistakes can be used jointly for the emergence of new, innovative ideas in the company.

Lena Schneider

Source: Meyer, D.; Schneider, L. & Feierabend, A. (2022). Begünstigt Fehleraversion Lernen und Innovation? (2022). *personalSCHWEIZ*, (11), 34–36.

Literature

Doden, W., Pfrombeck, J. & Grote, G. (2022). Are «job hoppers» trapped in hedonic treadmills? Effects of ca-

reer orientations on newcomers' attitude trajectories. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2665>.

Meyer, D.; Schneider, L. & Feierabend, A. (2022). Begünstigt Fehleraversion Lernen und Innovation? (2022). *personalSCHWEIZ*, (11), 34–36.

News

Dr. Wiebke Doden, Dr. Julian Pfrombeck and Prof. Dr. Gudela Grote published the article «Are job hoppers trapped in hedonic treadmills? Effects of career orientations on newcomers' attitude trajectories.» <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2665>.

Delia Meyer, M.Sc. presented on «Do Turnover Intentions Equal Withdrawal? The Moderating Effect of Career Orientations» and Lena Schneider, M.Sc. on «Staying Employable When Being Close(r) to Retirement: The Importance of Job Autonomy for the Use of Action Regulation Strategies» at the EIASM Workshop on Strategic Human Resource Management in Minho (Portugal) in April 2022.

Delia Meyer, M.Sc. presented on «Turnover Intention, Psychological Contract Breach, and Creativity» at the EURAM Doctoral Colloquium in Winterthur in June 2022.

Lena Schneider, M.Sc. presented on «Staying Employable When Being Close(r) to Retirement: The Importance of Job Autonomy for the Use of Action Regulation Strategies» at the Swiss Society of Psychology Congress in Zurich and the DGPS Conference in Germany in September 2022.

Anja Feierabend, Ph.D., Delia Meyer, M.Sc., and Lena Schneider, M.Sc. published the article «From Employer to Employee Market» in the professional journal HR Today in October 2022. <http://www.hrbarometer.ch>

Dr. Anja Feierabend and Delia Meyer, M.Sc. reported in the magazine of the University of Lucerne «Cogito» about the topic «Innovation thanks to error culture». <http://www.hrbarometer.ch>

Delia Meyer, M.Sc. and Dr. Anja Feierabend reported on the Swiss HR Barometer 2022: Innovation and Failure at the networking evening of the Center for Human Resource Management at the University of Lucerne in November 2022.

Delia Meyer, M.Sc., Lena Schneider, M.Sc., and Dr. Anja Feierabend published the article «Does Failure Aversion Favor Learning and Innovation?» in November 2022 in the magazin PersonalSchweiz. <http://www.hrbarometer.ch>.

In 2022, a total of six Bachelor students at the University of Lucerne (Hena Dzafic, Adrienne Helfenstein, Jeffrey Kiefer, Caroline Meierhans, Bianca Schuler und Arapi Sivanantham) wrote their term thesis based on Swiss HR Barometer data.

Prof. Dr. Gudela Grote discussed the topic «Generation Z in the world of work» on Swiss Television in December 2022.

Publishing notes

The newsletter of the Swiss Human Relations Barometer is published twice in 2023. It provides information on current research projects based on the data of the HR Barometer. You can subscribe to the newsletter free of charge or download it from the website www.hrbarometer.ch.

Authors: Delia Meyer, M.Sc., Center for Human Resource Management, University of Lucerne; Lena Schneider, M.Sc., Professorship for Occupational and Organisational Psychology at ETH Zurich;

Editor: Dr. Anja Feierabend, Center for Human Resource Management, University of Lucerne;

Graphics and layout: Sara Ribeiro

Original language: German