



HOME RENAISSANCE FOUNDATION
RENEWING THE CULTURE OF THE HOME

Home Renaissance Foundation

Working Papers

Number 30

A Study of Work-Life balance Benefits in the Irish Hotel Sector

By Dr. Kathleen Farrell

March 2011

A Study of work-life balance benefits in the Irish hotel sector
By Dr. Kathleen Farrell, Dublin Institute of Technology

Introduction:

“The topic of work-life has evolved into one of the most significant business issues of the 21st century” (Harrington and Ladge, 2009). We have seen a move from work-life balance being considered a women’s issue to one of a workforce management issue.

At both EU and national government level there is a broad consensus about the importance of work-life balance. According to (www.iffd.org, p. 5)

Article 30 of the Platform for Action or the Beijing Declaration (1995) acknowledges that “women make a great contribution to the well-being of families and the development of society, the importance of which is not yet recognised or given due consideration”, and it continues “ it is necessary to recognise the social importance of motherhood and the function of both parents in the family and the upbringing of the children, which requires both (women and men) and society as a whole to share responsibility. Motherhood, being a parent and women’s role in procreation should not be a reason for discrimination nor should it restrict women’s full participation in society. It is also necessary to recognise the important role women play in many countries in caring for other members of the family.

According to Poelmans (2001) the origin of the work/family research domain can be situated in the late nineteen seventies, with seminal works of Renshaw (1976), Kanter (1977) and Pleck (1977). Furthermore, Kanter (1977) observes that early in the twentieth century, corporations tended to take over the functions of the family by turning workplaces into independent institutions. Later, establishments tried to separate work from family. However, more recently, perceptions of work and family have changed and they are now regarded as interdependent and complimentary (Werbel and Walter, 2002). Furthermore, the evidence from the workplace shows that it is no longer possible to manage most businesses on the assumption that it is the employers’ responsibility to provide work and the employees to manage their lives outside the workplace. It is now recognised that flexibility is an essential part of the labour market supply/demand equation. Employers require flexibility to satisfy uneven demand for labour, shift working and changing production needs. Employees also need flexibility as a means of holding their position in the labour market, while pursuing other lifestyle choices. These include family life, education and leisure activities (Kanter, 1977; Fisher, 2000; Saltzein and Yuan Ting, 2001).

In research conducted by the Irish Management Institute, O’Connor (2003) found that achieving a work-life balance was ranked as the number one personal challenge facing Irish managers. Research conducted in Ireland by Clinch et al. (2002) found that Irish people attached high importance to family relationships.

Emerging significance of work-life balance

Harrington and Ladge (2009, p. 149-150) identify different components of a work-life culture:

- The diversity and inclusion perspective which includes for example management and employee diversity training programmes and succession planning systems among others.
- The health and wellness perspective whereby many organisations perceive work-life balance initiatives as a way of extending their employee health and wellness programmes.

- The talent management perspective whereby organisations take a more integrated approach to HR and see work-life balance as an important factor in making an organisation an “employer of choice”.
- The employee relations perspective encompass programmes that help create a better work environment and work-life integration and can include employee communications, conflict resolution and avoidance.
- The corporate citizenship perspective or corporate social responsibility is based on the belief that an organisation should be a responsible employer and contribute to the community.
- The total rewards perspective whereby work-life balance programmes are viewed as a major non-monetary component of the total rewards package.
- The cultural change perspective is founded on the idea that the organisation should adapt to the ever changing external environment in addition to the changing needs and demographics of its workforce.

As regards the hospitality industry, in a survey, “The 50 best companies to work for in Ireland in 2003”, three hotel groups and one catering company were ranked. This report also contains fifteen top ten tables, and at least one hospitality group features in all but two of these. There is limited research to show that people have moved from careers with traditional hours to the hospitality/catering sector in order to achieve greater work-life balance (Berta, 2000, 2002; McLaughlin and Cullen, 2003). Although evidence varies about the availability of work-life balance arrangements, it could be argued that there is a convergence of opinion that supports the fact that the question of work-life balance should be on the human resource agenda for the future.

Crompton, Lewis and Lyonette (2007) raise the question what is to be done between paid employment and family life. How do families adjust to these changing circumstances? How is the work of caring to be accomplished given that it can be no more automatically assumed that it will be undertaken unpaid within the family? Global trends and the invasiveness of paid work are tending to crowd out other activities and values. This is linked to the changing nature of paid work including advances in technology, workplace redesign, growing intensification of work and the role of management in promoting increased efficiency and productivity (Gambles, Lewis and Rapoport, 2007). According to Burke and Cooper (2008) the International Labour Organisation (ILO) investigated working patterns in various countries and found that one fifth, over 600 million worldwide, worked excessively long hours based on a maximum 48 hour work week. The ILO concluded that there are benefits for working shorter hours such as health and family enhancement, less accidents and mistakes in the workplace and an increase in the productivity and efficiency of employees.

There is agreement that working women have to manage the dearth of time within the family (Maher et al. 2008). According to Baxter (2002: 419) “Women (still) do about two thirds of the childcare tasks, at least three quarters of the routine everyday indoor housework tasks, and spend about three times as many hours as men on the latter”. Hook (2006) in his study of unpaid work in 20 countries noticed an increase in the time men spent on domestic work and childcare. Families with children need to provide for them financially and to dedicate time to their upbringing. This demands time as their care requirements are time consuming involving looking after them physically as well as the housework involved such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and tidying up (Craig and Bittman, 2008). The “day-to-day functionality of the family unit” is influenced by the stress and

tension that is associated with work-family conflict (Quick et al. 2004 p.427). Home demands can be broadly divided in two, "one physical or material and the other interpersonal". The physical or material aspect has to do with the housework involved in maintaining the home. Those with financial means often get external help for cooking, cleaning and laundry. This allows the husband and wife more time to devote to the interpersonal aspects of home life. It is more challenging for families who have to cater for both aspects (Quick et al., 2004, p. 429).

Heretofore, it was mainly mothers who took care of this extra work in the home and fathers earned money. However as women have moved into the workforce families are more time poor (Jacobs and Gerson, 2004). While men are doing more domestic work it is not in keeping with the amount of time spent by women working outside the home (Fisher et al., 2007). There is evidence to support the view that the bulk of unpaid work falls to women and hence we see a rise in various forms of work flexibility and work-life balance programmes being availed of by both women and men, but particularly women. In a study conducted in Australia, under two governments, it was found that both preferred work-family balance initiatives to be objects of negotiation between employers and employees and/or between couples in the family rather than to be pursued at national policy level (Craig et al., 2010). This is in keeping with the perspective of the US, UK and Canada (O' Connor et al. 1999) while in countries such as Denmark, France, Finland and Sweden the upbringing of children is viewed in terms of social responsibility and the State subsidises childcare and pre-school education for children (Fagnani and Boyer, 2007; Neyer, 2006).

Employer Costs

Furthermore, according to Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004, pp. 8-11), there are problems with work-life balance. "Employers are concerned with the bottom line. A major issue is the cost of family-friendly/work-life balance policies and their effect on profits (Emmott and Hutchinson, 1998). In cases of high unemployment, some companies can get employees to accept working conditions that are not compatible with their family care responsibilities. Another factor of interest is the fear of labour unions. Many firms are afraid that unions will take advantage of family-friendly/work-life balance policies and claim them as basic rights for all employees. There are challenges regarding the creation of a positive company culture. Organisations vary in their level of benefits but they are important in "attracting and maintaining a talented workforce" (Dulebohn et al. 2009, p. 97).

The adoption and diffusion of work family benefits

Why do some employers offer benefits which represent considerable costs while others do not. On the one hand organisational theory suggests that institutional pressures dictate which types of organisations are more or less likely to adopt non-mandated benefit programmes (Dulebohn et al., 2009) Various organisational characteristics have been studied in relation to work family benefits provision. Dulebohn et al. 2009 claim that work family adoption is more prevalent among organisations such as the public sector which has a greater diffusion of benefits and among larger organisations (Goodstein, 1994; Osterman, 1995). The following argument leading to hypothesis 1 is made by Dulebohn et al. 2009, p 98. In relation to the basic premise of organisational theory that behaviour at the organisation level is shape by social norms and pressures Oliver (1991, p. 175) argues that institutional environments exert a potent conforming influence on organisations. Goodstein (1994, p.376) tested this hypothesis using the adoption of work family benefits as his focal dependent variable. He found that the level of adoption of work family benefits was related to its conformity to institutional pressures implying the more widespread an institutional practice the higher the probability that the organisation will adopt it. In keeping with a strategic choice

perspective Goodstein (1994) found that organisations were more likely to provide work family programmes when there was a perceived benefit. He demonstrated that the presence of women in an establishment and the level of unemployed women in an industry group, were differentially related to the provision of work-family programmes. Regarding family-friendly policies, particularly in the hospitality industry, there is limited research showing that they have very positive effects but a lack of empirical evidence (Fredriksen-Goldsen and Scharlach, 2001; McLaughlin and Cullen, 2003). In addition, some authors have questioned whether it is really in the best interest of businesses to be truly family-friendly. Family initiatives at work are usually aimed at increasing work time and productivity. Improving the quality of employees' lives is not a primary concern (Fredriksen-Goldsen and Scharlach, 2001). Do family-friendly policies increase productivity for the employer or do they increase the quality of life for the employee? In a similar vein, it was found by some authors that most work and family policies actually give priority to work and not to family life (Gramm and Schnell, 2001; Fredrikson-Goldsen and Scharlach, 2001).

Goodstein's (1994) study is in keeping with previous research which showed that certain kinds of work family benefits are more prevalent than others (e.g. parental leave versus flexible work arrangements). Similarly, it fits with Osterman's 1995 conclusion that employers do not necessarily adopt a uniform set of work family benefits, but instead adopt those benefits that are in some degree relevant to their workforce. It is necessary for the employer to provide assistance with childcare to counteract absenteeism and tardiness at work. Economic theory suggests that businesses will introduce work-family benefits if they increase profits. The literature does document benefits to the firm from the introduction of work-family policies such as aids recruitment and retention of employees (Dex and Scheibl (1999), increases productivity and efficiency (McCampbell, 1996), reduces stress and sick leave (Financial Management, 2001), increases organisational commitment (Grover and Crooker, 1995, Eaton, 2003) and source of competitive advantage (Allen, 2001, Foster, 2001). According to Guthrie and Roth (1999) family-friendly policies will be adopted if demand among the workforce is adequate.

Together the research evidence leads us to propose that:

H1A (Hypothesis 1A) Employers adopt work family benefits strategically in order to support the particular needs of their workforce

H1B (Hypothesis 1B) Employers adopt work life balance programmes in response to the needs of the organisation

The institutional environment influences how an organisation adapts to various factors (Guthrie and Roth, 1999, Kelly and Dobbin, 1999). Trade unions are examples of institutions that can have an effect on the workplace and the availability of family-friendly policies. According to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (2000) work-family benefits aids recruitment and retention of employees. Trade unions can also negotiate family-friendly policies (Budd and Mumford, 2006). Furthermore union membership can positively enhance levels of perceived accessibility of family-friendly policies (Budd and Mumford, 2006). This leads to the proposal that

H2 (Hypothesis 2) There will be more work-family policies in unionised hotels than in non-unionised hotels

In a study undertaken in Cyprus, issues and factors relating to human resource management were considered to be the principal means of improving productivity (Kilic and Okumus, 2005). People are a central resource to the effective operation of the industry. Another institutional aspect from a management perspective influencing accessibility of family-friendly policies in a positive manner is the human resource representative (Budd and Mumford, 2006). Osterman (1995) makes the point that the human resource (HR) department or the personnel function is an important lever for institutional pressures. Having a HR department implies a formalisation of work practices. In view of the increasing recognition of the importance of human resource management in the organisation and its link to organisational performance, it could be assumed that there would be more flexible work practices in an organisation which has a HR manager.

Size of Organisation

Not all hotels are equally obliged to conform to expectations in terms of standard and HR apart from what is legally binding. Larger organisations are more open to public scrutiny, are more obliged to comply than small organisations and are more responsive to work-family issues (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram and Simons, 1995).

According to Ingram and Simons (1995), in a study of Washington State organisations, they found that larger organisations are more responsive to work/family issues and the hypothesis that the proportion of female employees increases responsiveness is not supported, but the hypothesis that female managers increase responsiveness is supported (Goodstein, 1994; Poelmans et al., 2003).

In addition, Milliken et al., (1998) in a survey of 1,000 HR executives throughout the US found that, where the results focused on manufacturing, finance, insurance and real estate and health care, respondents were more likely to come from large firms. Also, they were more likely to work for service firms than for manufacturing firms. The same could be said to apply to hotels with a higher star rating where 5* represents the optimum in standards and 1* the minimum. Therefore we hypothesise that

H3A (Hypothesis 3A) Hotels with a HR manager are more responsive to work-life balance issues

H3B (Hypothesis 3B) Hotels with a higher star rating are more responsive to work-life balance issues

The literature emphasises mainly process-related factors which may influence the impact of organisational policies and practices with regard to improving employees' well being and performance. Some authors found that the support of management is key for bringing about management change. Perceptions of a supportive work/family culture were related to employee's use of work/family benefits. By failing to provide a more balanced work/family life for employees, organisations are contributing to tensions in employees' personal lives. This in turn affects the quality of their work. Managerial support on a daily basis may be the most important cultural variable on employees' decisions to use family-friendly programmes. In addition, firms with work-life balance policies also had a higher level of commitment, less turnover of staff and reduced work/family conflict (Milne, 1999; Thompson et al., 1999; Poelmans and Sahibzada, 2004). Nord et al. (2002) concluded that work-life balance policies may be perceived, initially, as being very idealistic; however, on a practical level, their successful implementation will depend on training in human resources and on the adaptation of new procedures and processes for those in charge of

firms. Also, Forret and de Janasz (2005) found that mentors play a significant role in developing perceptions of an organisation's culture for work/family balance.

Some researchers have found that some larger organisations are under greater pressure to conform to institutional demands. Others have found that organisational responsiveness to work family issues is determined by both the institutional environment and demands for work family programmes. The literature also highlights the fact that there are some contradictions between the policies HR managers claim to exist and the policies employees perceive to exist (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram and Simons, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999; Poelmans et al., 2003). The literature seems to suggest that there is a link between a positive organisational culture and support for work-life balance policies.

H4 (Hypothesis 4) A positive organisational culture in the organisation does lead to an uptake of work-life balance policies.

Family Firm

The literature referring to family firms in the economy is well documented (Habbershon et al., 2003; Villalonga and Amit, 2006; F.W. Kellermans, Eddleston, Barnett & Pearson, 2008; Casillas and Moreno, 2010). Despite the increasing development of large establishments, the role of the family business in the economy is assuming greater importance. Research conducted by Westhead and Cowling (1997) showed that family companies are more likely to emphasise non-financial objectives than non-family companies. Their aim is not just to maximise profit. There is a potential conflict between financial and non-financial objectives. Addressing family considerations is considered very important.

Performance in the family firm versus the non-family firm is a subject of debate. Family firms are inclined to outperform non-family firms (Anderson and Reeb, 2003). Research done by Root and Wooten (2008, p. 495, 496) point to the importance of organisational culture, support among middle management, informal policies and work relationships in reducing work-family conflict. In the research we see how the organisational culture i.e. a family plant plays an important role in how parents organise their work schedules in order to be available for their childrens' extracurricular activities. According to Ten Brummelhuis and Van Der Lippe (2010) a positive family-friendly organisational culture led to higher work performance among parents. Adams et al. (1996) found that the business context affects the ethical choices made by members of the organisation. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H5 (Hypothesis 5) Family owned hotels will be more responsive to work-life balance than the non-family owned hotels e.g. company owned hotels, international hotel groups etc.

Work-life balance is a pertinent issue which needs addressing in the present climate.

The aim of this research was (a) to study the work-life balance practices in the Irish hotel industry and (b) to observe the influence of HR, unions, family firm, star rating and organisational culture on these work-life balance practices.

There is a dearth of research in relation to various aspects of tourism research (Yoo and Weber, 2005). Further, Van Scotter and Culligan (2003) have pointed to the need for more hospitality research. In addition, there is a need to research the small establishment as Irish industry is mainly made up of small businesses (Okumus 2002). Also, the literature highlighted a lack of human

resource research in Ireland and insufficient research in the non-unionised sector (Bird et al. 2002; Hoque 2000).

Services make a contribution of approximately 63% of value added in the economy and employ two thirds of the workforce (Forfas 2008). In 2006 foreign exchange earnings from tourism was €4.7 billion and according to Failte Ireland Tourism Business and Employment Survey 2006, the estimated number employed in tourism and hospitality-related services was just over 249,000 (www.cso.ie).

Methodology:

Context of Study

A survey of hotels in Ireland (n=470) was conducted in all star categories. They were as follows: 5* (n=23), 4* (n=54), 3* (n=181), 2* (n=107), 1* (n=33) and unclassified (n=72). The response rate of 177 included 5* (n=17), 4* (n= 49), 3* (n= 84), 2* (n= 18), 1* (n= 1) and unclassified (n=8). It was a postal survey and the response rate was 38%. This is considered to be within the norm for a postal questionnaire, considering that Murphy (1997, p.56) claims that initial response rates from postal surveys are usually around 20%.

Data set

A structured direct survey among employers was selected as the approach most appropriate in order to provide broad coverage of work-life balance in Irish hotels. A stratified sample design was chosen in relation to star rating and geographical spread. Because hotels provide a broad range of facilities, they are classified from 1* to 5* categories in increasing order of quality and service and there are also some unclassified hotels. The key respondent for the survey was the HR manager and the general manager in the case of hotels not having a HR manager. Qualitative interviews with leading Irish hotel industry spokespersons were used to clarify and confirm aspects of the research setting.

Question Type

The survey was made up of forced choice questions. Likert-style rating scales were also used. In addition, semantic differential formats were used in some cases. Ranking formats were also used. The questions on work-life balance issues were taken from a survey conducted by the Industrial Statistics Unit, Trinity College Dublin in 2002 (Industrial Statistics Unit, 2002).

Methodological procedure

A pilot test was conducted among HR managers to ensure validity and reliability. A variety of statistical techniques such as frequencies, cross tabulations and correlations were used. In response to the literature and the pilot survey, a complete range of responses were listed wherever possible (De Vaus 1993).

Results and Discussion

Availability of Flexible Working Time Arrangements

Flexible working hours vary greatly within the industry. This study focused on the more typical arrangements. The question of whether these working arrangements promote family-friendly/work-life balance depends on whose perspective is being adopted. It can happen in some instances that

they are introduced to benefit both employer and employee. In others, they may only have a positive effect for the employer. Approximately one third of all employers have up to a quarter of their staff on annualised hours arrangements. Taking the example of annualised hours, it can be seen that they may provide the employer with the means to avoid costly overtime hours at peak times, by dividing out the work over twelve months. For the employee, this may not be very suitable when long hours have to be worked, in spite of the fact that shorter hours can be worked at other times. The degree to which working practices prove to be flexible will depend upon the varying circumstances of both employers and employees. However, it can be said that each of the working practices listed (Table 1) provides some flexibility in relation to the number of hours worked. Also, they have the potential to contribute to work-life balance.

Table 1: Working Arrangements According to Employers (N=177)

	<i>Yes percentage</i>
Hotels have permanent employees	97
Hotels have permanent part-time employees	85
Hotels have casual employees	68
Hotels have contract labour	14
Hotels have fixed-term contracts	20
Hotels have temporary employees	29
Hotels have trainees	53

Permanent part-time and casual working time are dominant working arrangements for hotels (Table 1). The practice of casual work can be driven by changes in demand and the need for efficiency.

Leave Arrangements

This section outlines the extent to which employers are aware of statutory regulations. It also addresses the other forms of leave that employees may require. Among the facilities available, apart from the statutory entitlements, are career breaks, bereavement leave and study/exam leave (Table 2). Leave options are frequently a very crucial element in the balancing of work and family life.

Table 2: Employers' Perspective on the Availability of Different Leave Arrangements for Employees (N=177)

	Not available	Available to all staff	Available to full-time staff only
Paternity leave	19	53	29
Compassionate leave	6	74	20
Career breaks	43	33	24
Bereavement leave	5	81	14
Study/exam leave	14	64	22
Parental leave	17	66	17
Carer leave	39	52	9
Adoptive leave	31	57	12
Maternity leave	5	76	19
Emergency leave	12	76	13

Availability of Organisational Supports for Family-Friendly/Work-Life Balance

The provision of organisational supports is important in helping to achieve family-friendly/work-life balance. There may be a number of reasons why employers provide entitlements that go beyond the statutory minimum, e.g. economic reasons and to enhance their reputation as a good employer. According to Dulebohn et al., (2009, p. 97) organizational supports are important “ in attracting and maintaining a talented workforce”.

Table 3 shows the composite figure for work-life balance supports according to employers. The figures were recoded for statistical purposes, i.e. cross-tabulations. Figures range from hotels with no supports, one support and up to six supports. The supports are employee assistance programmes, pre-retirement advice and support, staff counselling service, stress management courses, continuing professional development, and career planning and guidance. Approximately one third of hotels have no supports. This could be an indication of a lack of awareness on the part of management of the importance of work-life balance supports. On the other hand, there may be lack of demand for these supports from employees. This may be due to lack of knowledge on the part of employees regarding what is available. Also, employers may not be providing work-life balance supports due to lack of demand. These findings could be a reflection of poor communication as well as of a need for management training regarding employee requirements for work-life balance supports.

Table 3 : Composite Number of Work-life Balance Supports According to Employers (N=177)

Work-life Balance Supports	Percentage Yes
No supports	38
1.00	14

2.00	25
3.00	12
4.00	5
5.00	5
6.00	1
Total	100

Table 4 shows that the majority of employers rank work-life balance as important to their hotel.

Table 4: Support for Family-friendly/Work-life Balance Issues

Support for family-friendly/work-life balance issues (Employers' perspective) N=177	
	Percentage
Yes	67
Importance of family-friendly/work-life balance issues for the hotel (Employers' perspective) N=100	
	Percentage
Irrelevant	-
Not important	4
Important	55
Very important	37
No views	4

In relation to the hypothesis that employers adopt work family programmes in order to support the needs of their workforce, a majority of employers agreed that people work best when they can balance their work and the other aspects of their lives . Work-life balance is a very important issue in this century (Harrington and Ladge, 2009). The findings confirm the literature that employees work best when there is a balance between work and non-work life. This confirms Werbel and Walter's (2002) findings that work and family are interdependent and complimentary. At the same time according to employers, the employers' first responsibility has to be to ensure that the organisation achieves its goals and as Table 5 shows this is the most important principle identified by employers for family-friendly-work-life balance.. It is clear that employers are concerned about the "bottom line" as reflected in the findings of Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004).

Table 5: The Most Important Principle Identified by Employers' for Family- Friendly/Work-Life Balance (n=100)

	Percentage
Everybody should be able to balance home and work- life in the way they want	17
The employers' first responsibility has to be to ensure that the organisation achieves its goals	31
Employees must not expect to change their working pattern if it results in disrupting business	1
It is not the employers' responsibility to help people balance their work and the other aspects of their lives	2
People work best when they can balance their work and the other aspects of their lives	49
Policies that help some staff balance work and other interests are often unfair to other employees	-

According to employers, childcare was mentioned as the primary reason given by employees for requesting family-friendly work arrangements (Table 6). Some research has shown that the introduction of childcare is the family-friendly practice that has produced the most positive impact. According to employers, the vast majority of all employees took up working time arrangements to combine work with the care of other people. This reflects the increasing number of people with caring responsibilities. The number of older people needing care is increasing. More time for educational or vocational training, a source of supplementary income, more leisure time and health reasons, were other factors mentioned for availing of family-friendly/work-life balance policies. The fact that family needs were the primary reason given for availing of work-life balance programmes reflects the importance given by Irish people to family relationships (Clinch et al., 2002). Also working parents have to manage the dearth of time within the family (Maher et al., 2008). It seems that employers are becoming increasingly concerned about the well-being of their staff and know that employees work best when they have work-life balance.

Table 6: Reasons why Employees Take up Working Time Arrangements According to Employers (N=177)

	Percentage Yes
To combine work with the care of children or dependents	80
To have more leisure time	30
To have more time for educational or vocational training	49

For health reasons	21
Employees could not find a full-time job	19
Working hours were reduced in order to avoid redundancies	6
A source of supplementary income	46
For reasons of sociability	15

In relation to employers, who agree that the first responsibility has to be to ensure that the organisation achieves its goal, 50 per cent say working time practices were introduced because of labour cost savings. This figure was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, approximately the same proportion of general managers, owners and HR managers agree that employees must not expect to change their working pattern if it results in disrupting business. This figure was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.1$). The findings here reflect the fact that employers are concerned about productivity and profit considerations. Any development of work-life balance programmes clearly has to fit in with overall financial targets.

According to employers, labour cost savings, family-friendly/work-life balance issues, improved productivity and employee demand were the primary reasons given for introducing working time arrangements (Table 7). This reflects findings by Gambles, Lewis and Rapoport, (2007). Employers identified labour cost savings and improved productivity as the main benefit of family-friendly/work-life balance arrangements.

Table 7: Employers' Reasons for Introducing Working Time Arrangements (N=175)

	Percentage Yes
Labour cost savings	49
Work-life balance issues	43
To improve productivity	42
Employee demand	39
Difficulty in finding full-time staff	34
To reduce the number of full-time employees	23
To improve reputation	20
Changes in organisational design	15

Regarding whether having a HR manager on the management team would result in more work-life balance programmes was found not to be significant. This in in contrast to other findings (Osterman, 1995; Kilic and Okumus, 2005; Budd and Mumford, 2006). This may be due to the fact that many

Irish hotels are small businesses and would not have a dedicated HR manager. Also while awareness and knowledge of the relevance of work-life balance is growing, it takes some time for this to become best practice. One positive way being promoted in Ireland is “Work-life Balance Day” which takes place in March each year.

In relation to whether hotels with a higher star rating are more responsive to work-family issues it was found that family owned hotels in the higher star category were more responsive i.e. having more work-life balance supports and the finding was significant ($p < 0.05$). More work-life balance supports were found in family owned hotels in the higher star category. This reflects the literature that work-life balance would be more prevalent in the larger higher star hotel (Ingram and Simons, 1995; Milliken et al., 1998) and that in some cases family businesses can outperform non-family owned businesses (Anderson and Reeb, 2003; Ten Brummelhuis and Van Der Lippe, 2010).

In relation to unionisation and work-life balance issues no relationship was found. Despite some evidence that trade union membership can positively affect the availability of work-life balance programmes (Budd and Mumford, 2006) this study showed that trade unions had no effect on work-life balance programmes. This may be due to the fact that only one third of hotels in the study were unionised and an interview with a trade union official reflected that more work needed to be done by unions to increase membership and to play a more active role in the workplace.

In relation to whether a positive organisational culture does lead to an uptake of work-family policies the finding was found to be significant (Table 8). This reflects the fact that perceptions of a supportive work-family culture were found to be related to employee’s use of work-family benefits (Milne, 1999; Thompson et al., 1999; Poelmans and Sahibzada, 2004.).

Table 8: Pearson Correlations of Work-life Balance Supports and Importance Attached to Work-life Balance Issues

	Employee WLB supports available	Work-life balance is very important	Work beyond official hours to keep up with my workload
Employee work- life balance (WLB) supports available	1	-.218**	-.016
Work-life balance is a very important issue in this hotel	-.218**	1	.082
Work beyond official hours to keep up with my workload	-.016	.082	1

** P <=.01

Conclusion

The human resource domain has an important role to play in determining where flexibility can make the optimum contribution. The question is, can the organisation afford to be inflexible? The traditional organisation of work is under scrutiny. There is a change in emphasis from a consideration of just work factors to work-life balance, which looks at the overall need of employees. It is important to promote the mutual benefits of flexibility for the employee and the employer.

There are inherent costs involved in being a flexible employer. However, where this opportunity is lacking, the costs may be much higher. The overall cost of replacing an employee involves recruitment, selection, training and some temporary cover. It may make more business sense to accommodate the employee's work demands, rather than lose all that talent and skills.

Flexible work policies need to be integrated into the overall strategic plan for the organisation. There must be a sense of commitment starting with top management and working its way down to operational level. As highlighted by the findings, these flexible policies need to be compatible with overall business aims, e.g. profitability.

As the literature shows, management support is necessary for effective work-life balance programmes. This needs to be reflected in a positive organisational culture. This would ensure that those applying for flexible work arrangements would not be viewed as less committed to their work than others. There is a perception that dedicated employees work long hours. It is necessary to sell the benefits of work flexibility to the workforce.

The workplace must be responsive to employee needs. Quality of working life is an important issue. The availability of working time flexibility can be an important motivator for people taking up employment and staying in the labour market. The labour force is becoming more diverse. Flexible working arrangements are becoming an increasingly important aspect of quality of working life for many employees.

In order to obtain optimal return on staff it is important to understand the interplay between work and family. Employees do not leave family problems at home. Managers need to acknowledge that there are work-life balance issues that affect the quality of work. There is a need to train managers, to be aware of this added dimension in the employment relationship.

It is interesting to notice that there are more work-life balance programmes in the family firm in the higher star category. This could be an area for further research.

Work-life balance policies are an important way for an organisation to reflect concern for ethical values. An organisation that promotes its employees' welfare through flexible programmes will enhance its reputation with both its employees and the local community. Such an image could benefit its recruitment and retention policies considerably.

References

Adams, JS, Taschian, A and Shore, TH (1996) Ethics in Family and Non-Family Owned Firms: An Exploratory Study, *Family Business Review*, 9(2), 157-159.

Allen, TD (2001) Family Supportive Work Environments: The Role of Organisational Perceptions, *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 58(3), 414-435.

Anderson, R and Reeb, D (2003) Founding Family Ownership and Firm Performance :Evidence from the S&P 500, *Journal of Finance* , 58, 1301-1328.

Baxter, J (2002) Patterns of Change and Stability in the Gender Division of Household Labour in Australia, 1996-1997, *Journal of Sociology*, 38(4), 399-424.

Berta, D. (2002). Salt Creek Restaurant Shows Workers that Family Matters, *Nations Restaurant News*, 36(16), cited in A McLaughlin and J Cullen (2003) *Managers and Work-Life Balance; The Case of the Irish Hospitality Industry*, Irish Management Institute, Dublin.

Berta, D. (2000) Schuler's Restaurant Develops Child Care Centre for its Employees, *Nations Restaurant News*, 34(42), cited in A McLaughlin and J Cullen (2003) *Managers and Work-Life Balance; The Case of the Irish Hospitality Industry*, Irish Management Institute, Dublin.

Bird, E, Lynch, PA and Ingram, A (2002) Gender and Employment Flexibility within Hotel Front Offices, *The Service Industries Journal*, 22(3), 99-116.

Budd, JW and Mumford, KA (2006) Family-Friendly Work Practices in Britain: Availability and Perceived Accessibility, *Human Resource Management*, 45(1), 23-42.

Burke, RJ Cooper, CL (2008) *The Long Work Hours Culture Causes Consequences and Choices*, Emerald Group Publishing Ltd, Howard House, UK.

Casillas, J C, & Moreno, AM (2010) The Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and Growth: The Moderating Effect of Family Involvement, *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 22(3), 265-291.

Clinch, P, Convery, F and Walsh, B (2002) *After the Celtic Tiger: The Challenges Ahead*, O'Brien Press, Dublin.

Craig, L, Mullan, K, and Blaxland, M. (2010) Parenthood, Policy and Work-family Time in Australia 1992-2006, *Work Employment Society*, 24(27). 27-45.

Craig, L and Bittman, M (2008) The effect of Children's on Adults' Time Use: An Analysis of the Incremental Time Costs of Children in Australia, *Femenist Economics*, 14(2), 57-85.

Crompton, R Lewis, S and Lyonette, C (2007) *Women, Men, Work and Family in Europe*, Palgrave MacMillan, NY.

De Vaus, DA (1993) *Surveys in Social Research*, 3rd ed, Allen and Unwin, Australia.

Dex, S and Scheibl, F (1999) Business Performance and Family-Friendly Policies, *Journal of General Management*, 24(4), 1-21.

Dulebohn, JH Molloy, JC Pichler, SM and Murray, B (2009) Employee Benefits: Literature Review and Emerging Issues, *Human Resource Management Review*, 19, 86-103.

Eaton, SC (2003) If You Can Use Them: Flexibility Policies, Organisational Commitment and

Perceived Performance, *Industrial Relations*, 42 (2), 145-167.

Emmott, M and Hutchinson, S (1998) Employment Flexibility, Threat or Promise, in P Sparrow and M Marchington (eds) 1998, *HRM, the New Agenda*, London, Pitman, 229-244.

Fagnani, J and Boyer, D (2007). "France" in P. Moss and M. Korintus (eds) *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research*, 200-206, Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, London.

Financial Management (CIMA) (2001) Work-Life Stress Costs Millions, June, 46-50.

Fisher, H (2000) *Investing in People: Family Friendly Work Arrangements in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises: Work-Life Balance in the New Millenium*, The Equality Authority, Dublin.

Fisher, K Egerton, M Gershuny, J and Robinson, J (2007) Gender Convergence in the American Heritage Time Use Study (AHTUS), *Social Indicators Research*, 82(1) 1-33.

Forfas (2008) *Catching the Wave A Services Strategy for Ireland*, Report of the Services Strategy Group, Forfas, Dublin.

Forret, M and de Janasz, S (2005) Perceptions of an Organisation's Culture for Work and Family, *Career Development International*, 10(6/7), 478-492.

Foster, V (2001) *Creating a Work-Life Balance: A Good Practice Guide for the Hospitality Industry*, Hotel and Catering International Management Association and Department of Trade and Industry, London

Fredriksen-Goldsen, KL and Scharlach, AE (2001) *Families and Work, New Directions in the 21st Century*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Gambles, R, Lewis, S, and Rapoport, R (2007) Evolution and Approaches to Equitable Divisions of Paid Work and Care in 3 European Countries: A Multi-level Challenge, in Crompton, R Lewis, S and Lyonette, C (2007) *Women, Men, Work and Family in Europe*, Palgrave MacMillan, NY.

Goodstein, JD (1994) Institutional Pressures and Strategic Responsiveness: Employer Involvement in Work/Family Issues, *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(2), 350-382.

Gramm, CL and Schnell, JF (2001) The Use of Flexible Staffing Arrangements in Core Production Jobs, *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*, 54(2), 245-258

Grover, SL and Croker, KJ (1995) Who Appreciates Family-Responsive Human Resource Policies: The Impact of Family-Friendly Policies on the Organisational Attachment of Parents and Non-parents, *Personnel Psychology*, 48(2), 271-88, cited in SC. Eaton (2003) If You Can Use Them: Flexibility Policies, Organisational Commitment and Perceived Performance, *Industrial Relations*, 42(2), 145-167.

Guthrie, D, and Roth, LM (1999) The State, Courts and Maternity Policies in US Organisations: Specifying Institutional Arrangements, *American Sociological Review*, 64, 41-63.

Habbarshon, TG, Williams, M, and MacMillan, IC (2003) A Unified Systems Perspective of Family Firm Performance, *Journal of Business Venturing*, 18, 451-465.

Harrington, B and Ladge, JJ (2009) Present Dynamics and Future Directions for Organisations, *Organisational Dynamics*, 338(2), 148-157.

Hook, J (2006) Care in Context: Men's Unpaid Work in 20 Countries, 1965-2003, *American Sociological Review*, 71(4), pp. 639-660.

Hoque, K (2000) *Human Resource Management in the Hotel Industry; Strategy Innovation and Performance*, Routledge, London and New York.

<http://www.iffd.org/~iffd/paginas/nuriatxt.html>

Industrial Statistics Unit (2002) *Off the Treadmill: Achieving Work-life Balance*, Report of Family/Friendly Framework Committee, Trinity College, Institute of Public Administration, Dublin.

Ingram, P and Simons, T (1995) Institutional and Resource Dependence Determinants of Responsiveness to Work-family Issues, *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5). 1466-1482.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (2000) Promoting Family-Friendly/Work-Life Balance ICTU Statement, Peter Cassells, General Statement in *An Introduction to Family-Friendly Work Arrangements* (2000), Equality Authority, Dublin.

Jacobs, J and Gerson, K (2004) *The Time Divide: Work, Family and Gender Inequality*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Kanter, R. (1977). *Work and Family in the United State: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy*, Sage, New York.

Kellermanns, F, Eddleston, KA, Barnett, T, and Pearson, A (2008) An Exploratory Study of Family Member Characteristics and Involvement: Effects on Entrepreneurial Behavior in the Family Firm, *Family Business Review*, 21(1) 14

Kelly, E and Dobbin, F (1999) Civil Rights Law at Work: Sex Discrimination and the Rise of Maternity Leave Policies, *American Journal of Sociology*, 105, 455-492.

Kilic, H. and Okumus, F (2005) Factors Influencing Productivity in Small Island Hotels: Evidence from Northern Cyprus, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(4), 315-331.

Lewis, S Gambles, R and Rapoport, R (2007) The Constraints of a Work-life Balance Approach: an International Perspective., *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(3), 360-373.

Maher, JM. Lindsay, J Franzway, S (2008) Time, Caring Labour and Social Policy: Understanding the Family Time Economy in Contemporary Families, *Work, Employment and Society*, 22, 547-558.

McCampbell, AS (1996) Benefits Achieved Through Alternative Work Schedules, *Human Resource Planning*, 19(3), 30-37.

McLaughlin, A and Cullen, J (2003) *Managers and Work Life Balance: The Case of the Irish Hospitality Industry*, Irish Management Institute, Dublin.

Milliken, FJ, Martins, L.L and Morgan, H (1998) Explaining Organisational Responsiveness to Work-Family Issues: The Role of Human Resource Executives as Issue Interpreters, *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(5), 580-592.

Milne, JL (1999) Managers Play Key Role in Work-life Balance, *The Canadian Manager*, 24(4), cited in A McLaughlin and J Cullen (2003.) *Managers and Work-Life balance; The Case of the Irish Hospitality Industry*, Irish Management Institute, Dublin.

Murphy, M (1997) Conducting Survey Research: A Practical Guide in Brannick, T. and Roche, W.K. (1997) *Business Research Methods*, Oak Tree Press, Dublin, 31-61.

Neyer, G (2006) *Family Policies and Fertility in Europe: Fertility Policies at the Intersection of Gender Policies, Employment Policies and Care Policies*, Rostock: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research.

Nord, WR, Fox, S, Phoenix, A and Viano, K (2002) Real-World Reactions to Work Life Balance Programs: Lessons for Effective Implementation, *Organisational Dynamics*, 30(3), 223-238.

O'Connor, M (2003) *Top Challenges for Managers*, IMI Centre for Management Research, Dublin.

O'Connor, J, Orloff, A and Shaver, S (1999) *States, Markets, Families*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Okumus, F (2002) Can Hospitality Researchers Contribute to the Strategic Management Literature?, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 21(2), 105-110.

Oliver, C. (1991) Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes, *Academy of Management Review*, 16(1), 145-179.

Osterman, P (1995) Work Family Programs and the Employment Relationship, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(4), 1-19.

Pleck, JH (1977) The Work Family Role System, *Social Problems*, 24, 417-427.

Poelmans, SAY (2001) A Multi-level, Multi-method Study of Work-family Conflict: A Managerial Perspective", Doctoral Dissertation, PhD in Management, IESE Business School, University of Navarra, Barcelona.

Poelmans, SAY and Sahibzada, K (2004) A Multi-Level Model for Studying the Context and Impact of Work-Family Policies and Culture in Organisations, European Academy of Management Conference, May, St. Andrews, Scotland.

Poelmans, SAY, Chinchilla, N and Cardona, P. (2003) The Adoption of Family/Friendly HRM Policies: Competing for Scarce Resources in the Labour Market, *International Journal of Manpower*, 24(2), 128-147.

Quick, JD, Henley, AB, Quick, JC.(2004) The Balancing Act-At Work and at Home, *Organisational Dynamics*, 33(4), 426-438.

Renshaw (1976) An Exploration of the Dynamics of the Overlapping Worlds of Work and Family, *Family Process* 15, 143-157.

Root, LS and Wooten, LP (2008) Time Out for Family: Shift Work, Fathers, and Sports, *Human Resource Management*, 47(3), 481-499.

Saltzein, AL and Yuan Ting, G (2001) Work Family Balance and Job Satisfaction: The Impact of Family Friendly Policies on Attitudes to Federal Government Employees, *Public Administration Review*, 64(4), 452-467.

Thompson, CA, Beauvais, LL and Lyness, KS (1999) When Work Family Benefits Are Not Enough: The Influence of Work Family Culture on Benefit Utilization, Organisational Attachment and Work Family/Conflict, *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 54(3) 392-415.

Thorntwaite, L and Sheldon, P (2004) Employee Self-rostering for Work-Family Balance", *Employee Relations*, 26(3), 238-254.

Ten Brummelhuis, L.L, and Van Der Lippe, T (2010) Effective Work-Life Balance Support for Various Household Structures, *Human Resource Management* , 49(2), 173-193.

Van Scotter, JR and Culligan, PE (2003) The Value of Theoretical Research and Applied Research for the Hospitality Industry, *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 44(2), 14-27.

Villalonga, B and Amit, R (2006) How do Family Ownership, Control and Management affect Firm Value? *Journal of Financial Economics*, 80(2), pp. 385-417.

Werbel, J & Walter, MH (2002) Changing Views of Work and Family Roles: A Symbiotic Perspective, *Human Resource Management Review*, 12, 293-298.

Westhead, P and Cowling, M (1997) Performance Contrasts Between Family and Non-family Unquoted Companies in the UK,, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 3(1), 30-52.

www.cso.ie [accessed 10-8-'09]

Yoo, JE and Weber, K (2005) Progress in Convention Tourism Research, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 29(2). 194-222.