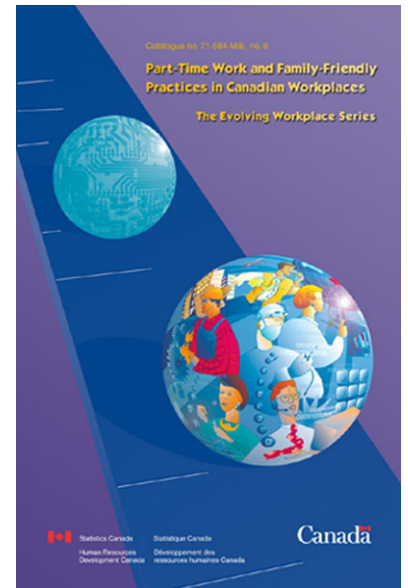




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The Evolving Workplace Series

Part-time work and family-friendly practices in canadian workplaces



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The Evolving Workplace Series

Part-time work and family-friendly practices in canadian workplaces

Derrick Comfort, Karen Johnson, David Wallace
Human Resources Development Canada

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Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

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Foreword

This document provides data from the new Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) conducted by Statistics Canada with the support of Human Resources Development Canada. The survey consists of two components: (1) a workplace survey on the adoption of technologies, organizational change, training and other human resource practices, business strategies, and labour turnover in workplaces; and (2) a survey of employees within these same workplaces covering wages, hours of work, job type, human capital, use of technologies and training. The result is a rich new source of linked information on workplaces and their employees.

Why have a linked workplace and employee survey?

Advanced economies are constantly evolving. There is a general sense that the pace of change has accelerated in recent years, and that we are moving in new directions. This evolution is captured in phrases such as “the knowledge-based economy” or “the learning organization”. Central to these notions is the role of technology, particularly information technology. The implementation of these technologies is thought to have substantial impact on both firms and their workers. Likely related to these technological and environmental changes, many firms have undertaken significant organizational changes and have implemented new human resource practices. Globalization and increasing international competition also contribute to the sense of change.

In this environment, greater attention is being paid to the management and development of human resources within firms. Education and training are increasingly seen as an important investment for improved prosperity—both for firms and individual workers.

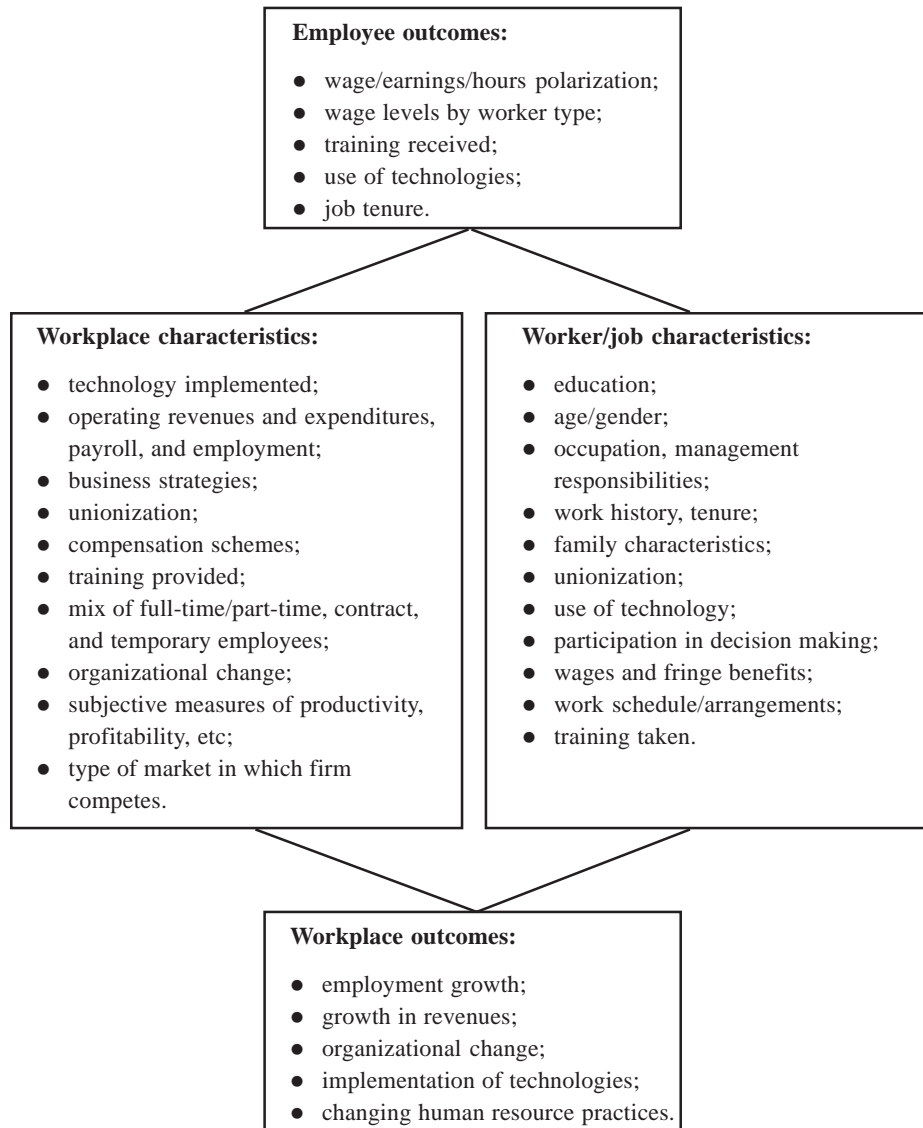
Thanks to earlier surveys, researchers have a good understanding of workers' outcomes regarding wages and wage inequality, job stability and layoffs, training, job creation, and unemployment. What is missing on the employees' side is the ability to link these changes to events taking place in firms. Such a connection is necessary if we hope to understand the association between labour market changes and pressures stemming from global competition, technological change, and the drive to improve human capital. Thus, one primary goal of WES is to establish a link between events occurring in workplaces and the outcomes for workers. The advantage of a linked survey is depicted in the figure which displays the main content blocks in the two surveys.

The second goal of the survey is to develop a better understanding of what is indeed occurring in companies in an era of substantial change. Just how many companies have implemented new information technologies? On what scale? What kind of training is associated with these events? What type of organizational change is occurring in firms? These are the kinds of issues addressed in the WES.

This report aims to give those interested in the determinants of employer-sponsored training some useful insights from the initial survey, as well as stimulating their interest in the possibilities provided by these new data.

Those interested in the methodology should go to our website at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/survey/business/workplace/workplace.htm>.

Link between the workplace survey content, employee survey content, and outcomes



Introduction

Today's workplaces are evolving rapidly. Globalization, increased competitive pressures, and the proliferation of computer technologies are just some of the factors driving changes in the nature of work and placing upward pressures on employee skills and training needs (Betcherman, McMullen, Leckie, and Caron, 1996). In the face of these trends, there is growing awareness among policy makers that investment in the skills and talents of Canadians will be central to developing a labour force equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow (Statistics Canada/Human Resources Development Canada, 2001).

But in the "new economy" it may not be enough to focus solely on the supply of skills. Equally important will be the extent to which workplaces foster and support employee development and provide opportunities for skills utilization. Workplaces provide the day-to-day context within which skills acquisition is embedded: it is at the level of the individual establishment that the need for training is identified and the conditions are established for the development and support of skills. Responsive policy, therefore, must be formulated with an awareness of the "enabling conditions" (Lowe, 2001) within workplaces for the development of skills and employee uptake.

Training is a two-way street. Employers extend the opportunities for training and enrichment, but employees must feel able and willing to participate. A critical "enabling condition" for skills development, therefore, is a work environment that minimizes constraints on employees' participation. Individuals' career decisions are shaped not only by

economic and professional choices, but also by competing pressures and commitments in the non-work domain. Family responsibilities have been found to affect employees' willingness to accept greater job responsibilities and to seek promotions (Greenhaus, 1988). Recent research by Clifton (1997) indicates that employees who experience difficulties blending home and job are less likely to participate in training. The same research shows that employer support for the integration of home and work responsibilities increases participation.

This report examines two human resource practices with the potential to facilitate the harmonization of work and family: part-time work and the provision of "family-friendly" work arrangements, such as flextime, telework, childcare and eldercare services. Part-time work, by definition, allows employees to reduce the time spent in paid work, thereby freeing time to devote to family and other personal pursuits. Flexible work arrangements, such as telework and flextime, allow employees to reorganize work time or place so as to better suit their personal needs. The provision of services, such as childcare and eldercare, can reduce stresses and everyday distractions by helping employees with caregiving responsibilities find and keep quality care arrangements.

Proponents argue that family-friendly practices can pay off for both employers and employees. There is evidence that family-supportive benefits may enhance commitment to the employer who provides such options, promoting greater tenure and, in turn, greater incentive for employers to continue to make human capital investments in their workers (Evans, 2001). Family-friendly benefits create the culture of employee support needed to encourage individual investments of time and energy in training and career development. Benefits thereby accrue both to organizations and to individual employees over time. Because of their

association with employee motivation and commitment, family-friendly work arrangements also have been viewed as agents for enhancing productivity (Eaton, 2001).

To date, our knowledge of the availability and effects of part-time work and family-friendly practices in Canadian workplaces has been limited by reliance on rather disparate surveys, such as Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey and Survey of Work Arrangements, and various ad hoc employer surveys, such as those conducted periodically by the Conference Board of Canada (see, for example, Bachmann, 2000). The Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) covers both employers and their employees on a broad range of issues related to changing workplace environments and so provide a unique opportunity to explore jointly the perspectives of organizations and employees:

- The employer survey data provide, for the first time, a nationally representative sample of Canadian establishments to gauge the extent to which part-time work and flexible work arrangements are offered, their incidence by establishment-level factors such as industry and company size, and organizations' motivations for relying on part-timers.
- Employee data tell us who participates in part-time and flexible work options; and linkages to the employer survey allow us to look at training outcomes, productivity factors and organizational strategies associated with the use of the various arrangements.
- WES follows sampled establishments for a minimum of four years and employees for two years, and therefore will allow us to observe changes over time.

This report, an overview of one year's data, is intended to provide an indication of the distribution of part-time work and flexible work arrangements in Canadian workplaces and a description of the career development and productivity measures associated with some of these practices. Outcomes over time have not been observed, nor have we controlled for the influence of other factors. Only with the benefit of longitudinal data and multivariate methods will we be able to make more conclusive statements about the incremental effects of part-time work and family-supportive practices on training outcomes, employee behaviours and attitudes, and establishment performance.

1. Part-time Work

Over the past two decades, growth in part-time employment has outpaced growth in the full-time workforce by a ratio of three to one (Statistics Canada, 1997). In 1999, 2.7 million employees worked part time, representing nearly 20% of the labour force (Marshall, 2000). Although some of the increase can be attributed to a shift in employment toward industries that have traditionally had high rates of part-time work, a more important factor has been an upward trend across all industries. Moreover, the expansion in part-time employment is not unique to Canada, but is a phenomenon evident in most Western nations (Zeytinoglu, 1999; McRae and Kohler, 1995; Tilly, 1996).

The inclusion of part-time work in a discussion of “family-friendly” practices may meet with some skepticism. Much of the growth in part-time employment has been attributed to employer demand. For many organizations, the shift to a global, service-based economy has generated the need to find new ways of redistributing work to accommodate extended operating hours and periods of fluctuating business demand (Schellenberg, 1997). Part-timers may provide a source of “just-in-time” labour during peaks in business activity. Reliance on part-timers also may have inherent labour cost advantages, given that part-time employees generally earn lower wages and receive fewer non-wage benefits than full-timers (Economic Council of Canada, 1990).

Evidence remains, however, that supply factors also play a role in the continued high rate of part-time employment, as employees seek reduced work hours as a strategy for blending their work and non-work

lives (Higgins et al., 2000). Although a substantial proportion of employees work part time because they cannot find full-time jobs, labour force survey data indicate that the majority of part-timers in Canada (73%) claim they work part time by choice (Marshall, 2000). Voluntary part-time employment is especially high among youth entering the labour market or attending school, and among women aged 25-54. In fact, for the past 30 years, women have consistently represented 70% of the part-time workforce (Statistics Canada, 2000). For women, family responsibilities are one of the most frequently cited reasons for choosing part-time hours; and indeed, research suggests that part-time hours are associated with reduced work-life stress and perceptions of a better balance between work and family life (Fast and Frederick, 1996; Higgins et al., 2000; Lero and Johnson, 1994; Marshall, 2000).

Whether part-time workers gain flexibility at the expense of job quality remains a topic of some debate (Schellenberg, 1997; Kahne, 1992; Krahn, 1992). Although part-time work has traditionally been associated with low-pay, low-skill jobs, growing recognition of the heterogeneity within the part-time category suggests that this characterization may be too simplistic. Not all part-time jobs are the same. For example, relatively high rates of part-time work can be found in industries ranging from health and education to accommodation and food services (Marshall, 2000). Such diversity implies considerable variability within the category of part-time work and differences in terms of remuneration, work environment, and access to training and promotional opportunities.

This chapter presents an overview of the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) data in order to explore some of the above issues and to provide a clearer picture of part-time work today. It examines part-time work from the perspective of both employer and the employee. The first section

presents data on the characteristics of workplaces that employ part-time workers and employers' potential rationale for doing so. Next, data are presented to profile employees who work part time.¹ In recognition of the heterogeneity within the category of part-timers, employee data are presented separately for women and men, and emphasis is placed on family characteristics and occupational and industrial differences. Tables provide data on full-time workers for comparison. The chapter concludes with an exploration of factors that may signal the quality of work life for part-timers, including both traditional indicators, such as wage and non-wage benefits, and work context factors, such as connection with training and promotional paths.

What types of workplaces hire part-time workers?

Table 1.1 shows how part-time work varies according to workplace characteristics. Over half of establishments (57%) report having at least one part-time employee on staff (column 1). Table 1.1 also provides corresponding data from the employee survey to reflect the rate of part-time employment² according to each of the establishment characteristics. Overall, women's rate of part-time work is nearly triple that of men's (22%, as compared to under 8% among men).

Establishment-level data (column 1) indicate that the use of part-timers rises with company size, with 91% of large establishments with 1000 or more employees reporting part-timers on staff. When employees are used as the unit of analysis, however, (columns 2 and 3), the proportion

¹ For the purposes of this analysis, part-time workers are defined as employees who normally work under 30 hours per week.

² The term "part-time rate" is used to refer to the share of employees within each establishment category who work part time. For example, Table 1.1 indicates that in large establishments (1000+ employees), 21% of female employees work part time, as compared to 9% of their male counterparts.

of workers on part-time schedules assumes a U shape as establishment size increases. The highest rate of part-time employment occurs in very small establishments (less than 10 employees), dips for medium size establishments (100-500 employees), and then increases again for the largest establishments (1000+ employees).

Industry data reveal the extensive use of part-time workers in the service sector. Three-quarters of establishments in retail and commercial services report part-timers on staff, as compared to only 30% to 50% of establishments in manufacturing, construction, transportation and storage (column 1). Employee data mirror this pattern. In respect to the part-time rate within industries (columns 2 and 3), the rate of part-time employment is again high in retail, and low in manufacturing. Gender differences prevail across all industries, with women's rates of part-time work generally double those of men. Most notable are the industries in which men's rates are *high* relative to their rates in other industries: real estate (13%), education and health services (16%), and again, retail (20%). Although high rates of part-time work in retail might be expected among the large proportion of young men (age 15-24) who work entry-level part-time jobs while attending school, the high rates in health and real estate are surprising. Jobs in these industries call for higher levels of education and skills than one would expect youth to have. Whether men's part-time rates in these industries reflect a different demographic (e.g., older men seeking pre-retirement strategies) remains to be explored.

Finally, this analysis suggests that the presence of a union or collective agreement appears to be unrelated to the use of part-timers (roughly 57% of establishments report that they employ part-timers, irrespective of the presence of a union; see column 1).

Why do organizations employ part-timers?

There are no direct questions in the employer survey on reasons for hiring part-time employees. In order to get an indication of employers' motivation, we rely on indirect evidence. Indicators of employer intent were built from four survey items that asked: (1) Is using more part-time, temporary or contract workers important to your overall business strategy? (2) Is labour cost reduction important to your business strategy? (3) Did your workplace experience an organizational change last year involving greater reliance on part-time workers? and (4) Was cost reduction an objective of the most significant change you experienced last year?

Table 1.2 presents results for this series of indicators. As expected, organizations that reported increased reliance on part-timers as a deliberate strategy were much more likely to report that they used part-timers (92% had part-timers on staff) than establishments that did not have such a strategy (53%; column 1). Cost reduction efforts also appeared to be related to the use of part-timers. Sixty-two percent of establishments for whom a labour-cost reduction strategy was important employed part-timers, as compared to 49% among those for whom it was not. Similarly, 63% of establishments that experienced a change aimed at cost reduction used part-timers, compared to 56% of those that did not.

Columns 2 and 3 present employee data to show the actual rates of part-time work by organizational indicator. Not surprisingly, the part-time rate is higher in organizations who report a recent change involving greater use of part-timers (women have a part-time rate of 24% and men have a rate of 9% in such organizations, as compared to 18% and 6% respectively in organizations that have not experienced such a change). The rate of part-time work in establishments which reported that part-timers were important to overall strategy also was slightly higher than in

establishments which did not. Cost reduction strategies had effects on part-time rates that were contrary to what might be expected: the rate of part-time work was somewhat *lower* in organizations with cost reduction objectives. Again, these data reveal only the direction of association. Factors other than organizational strategy (e.g., establishment size, industry) may account for the lower part-time rates among establishments with cost reduction strategies.

What types of employees work part time?

In order to explore the heterogeneity within the category of part-time workers, we now take a closer look at the demographic and occupational profile of part-timers. (For comparative purposes, tables in this section also show data for full-time employees.)

Demographic and family characteristics. Table 1.3 compares women and men who work part time, by age, educational attainment and family status. The age profile of part-time workers reflects women's tendency to work part time throughout the life cycle, whereas for men, part-time work is associated with youth and labour market entry. Women part-timers are roughly equally distributed across all age categories from 15 to 54, peaking in the prime childrearing years of 35-44 (27% of women part-timers are in this age category). Men part-timers are more highly concentrated in the 15-24 year age group (32%).

These considerable differences in age distribution are reflected in the educational and family characteristics of women and men who work part time. Women who work part time are nearly twice as likely as their male counterparts to have completed university or college (39% of women versus 25% of men). Two thirds of women part-timers are married or

living with a partner, as compared to half of men; and 38% have children under 16, as compared to only 26% of men.

Job characteristics. Table 1.4 compares women and men who work part time by characteristics of their jobs. Both women (28%) and men (21%) are somewhat concentrated in marketing/sales occupations. Rather stereotypical occupational patterns emerge in other areas, though. Men part-timers are considerably more likely than women to work in technical/trades occupations (36% vs. 25%) or as production workers without trade or certification (19% vs. 9%). Women are more likely than men to work in clerical/administrative fields (16% vs. 6% of men). As expected, given their age and higher educational attainment, women are somewhat more likely than men to occupy managerial and professional positions (22% vs. 18%). It should be noted, however, that only 2% of men and 5% of women part-timers are managers, suggesting the incompatibility of part-time hours with management roles.

Organizational tenure data reflect the gender differences observed in the age distribution of part-time workers. Consistent with their relative youth, men part-timers are concentrated at the lower tenure levels (62% have less than five years with their current employers, compared with 55% of women). Women part-timers have a greater concentration at mid-to high-tenure levels (39% of women have been with their current employers for 5 to 19 years, compared with 28% of men). The large proportion of women at higher tenure levels suggests that these women may represent a group of employees with considerable firm-specific knowledge and experience.

Gender differences also emerge in the employment terms of part-time workers. Three quarters of women part-timers report that their jobs are permanent, as compared to only two thirds of their male counterparts;

this finding again suggests that the nature of the part-time work experience for women may be quite different from that for men.

Workplace characteristics. The section on workplaces which hire part-time workers examined the *rate* of part-time employment by various establishment characteristics. Table 1.5 uses the same characteristics to look at the *distribution* of part-time employment. This analysis allows us to determine the location of part-time employees in the labour market.

Consistent with Table 1.1— which linked high part-time rates with smaller establishments—Table 1.5 shows that the largest share of part-time workers is found in establishments with fewer than 50 employees. In spite of the finding in Table 1.1 that 90% of large establishments with over 1000 employees employ at least some part-timers, these establishments account for a relatively small share of part-time employment (14% of women and 15% of men), as shown in Table 1.5.

Two service industries account for the large majority of part-timers. Roughly 75% of part-timers work either in retail and commercial services or in education and health areas. Men part-timers (50%) are heavily concentrated in the retail/commercial sector, consistent with the youth and lower educational attainment of men who work part time. Women, conversely, are evenly distributed between the retail/commercial sector (41%) and education/health industries (38%). The vast difference between the retail sector and health and education industries in terms of skills, educational requirements, and work conditions underscores the variability among part-time workers in terms of human capital and job quality.

Although the rates of part-time employment seemed only weakly related to union presence (Table 1.1), when we look at part-time employees as a group (Table 1.5), we can see that the majority are indeed working in

non-unionized environments. Again though, there is no gender effect, with 67% of women part-timers working in establishments in which there is no union presence, as compared to 66% of their male counterparts.

What are part-time jobs like?

Table 1.6 presents a number of analyses from the WES dataset to attempt to gauge the nature of work in the part-time sector. It looks first at traditional indicators of the quality of part-time work—wages and non-wage benefits. It then moves to some of the “softer” indicators, including job satisfaction, access to training and promotional opportunities, and the level of supervisory responsibility associated with part-time work. Research indicates that even within occupational categories, opportunities for enrichment and advancement are often reserved for a core of full-time employees, and that part-timers may not have access to the same range of career opportunities (Evans, 2001). The following analysis allows a preliminary look at some of these indicators of the quality of part-time work.

Compensation and non-wage benefits. Table 1.6 supports the notion of somewhat low wages in the part-time work world, with roughly one third of part-time workers earning less than \$9 per hour. Consistent with their youth and lack of labour market experience, men are especially likely to be at the lower end of the wage scale: 56% of men part-timers earn under \$12 per hour, as compared to 46% of women. Men surpass women at the high end of the scale, however—11% of men part-timers earn \$30 or more, as compared to 8% of women. Like the age distribution, this pattern may be indicative of a group of older men with considerable work experience for whom part-time work represents a transition to retirement. On the other hand, the pattern may simply reflect the gender wage gap

that exists across the labour force, wherein women are especially under-represented at the highest earnings levels (Statistics Canada, 2000).

Data on non-wage benefits attest to the very low level of access to pension and health-related benefits among part-time workers. Women report higher access than men across most benefit types, but even among women, no more than one quarter report coverage for any of the benefits examined.³

Job satisfaction. An interesting finding in Table 1.6 is the extremely high level of job satisfaction among part-timers. Nearly 90% of part-time workers (90% of women and 86% of men) were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. This level of job satisfaction was as high as that reported by full-timers. It is difficult to comment on this finding without further analysis. Recent research from the Canadian Policy Research Networks, however, indicates that full-time/part-time status may be a poor predictor of job satisfaction and that organizational work context factors may be stronger predictors of employee attitudes than labour market location per se (Lowe and Schellenberg, 2001). Similarly, literature on job satisfaction indicates that workers compare themselves to workers with similar attributes in judging job quality (Feldman, 1990). This model implies that part-timers may use other part-timers—not their full-time peers—as their frames of reference, and hence, judge their situations to be adequate. The finding of high satisfaction, at least among women, is also consistent with work-family research which indicates that women part-timers report not only high levels of job satisfaction (Evans, 2001), but also high levels of life satisfaction and satisfaction with work-family balance as compared

³ It should be noted that the WES item capturing benefits coverage asked respondents to report only those benefit options in which they participated. It is possible that some employees who had access to benefits through their employers had opted out due to coverage through a spouse or partner.

to their full-time counterparts (Barker, 1993; Higgins et al., 2000; Lero and Johnson, 1994).

As expected, however, given their low wages and limited benefits coverage, part-timers were much less satisfied with their pay and benefits (72% of women and 76% of men reported satisfaction in this area) than they were with their jobs in general.

Training. Research on workplace training suggests that “those who have, get.” Employers make training decisions based on expected return on the investment, and expected return is greatest for employees who already have high levels of education and experience (Betcherman et al., 1998). This would suggest that young part-timers with low levels of skill and education would be less likely to receive training. Training rates would be higher among part-timers with greater tenure and existing high levels of human capital investment. Table 1.6 provides support for this notion. The rate of employer-sponsored classroom training among women part-timers is nearly 50% higher than that of their male counterparts (28% versus 19% among men). This is consistent with their higher educational attainment, higher organizational tenure, and greater representation in health and education fields where high quality jobs might be found. The observed higher rate of training among women, however, tells only a partial story. In order to better understand skills development among women and men in the part-time sector, further research is needed on the duration of training episodes and subject area.

Connections with promotional paths. A further indicator of job quality is the ability to advance in return for strong performance or the development of job-related skills and experience. But research indicates that one of the risks of part-time work is being viewed by peers and superiors as uncommitted, and being cut “out of the loop” (Higgins et al., 2000). Hence,

part-timers may find themselves out of contention for promotional opportunities. Table 1.6 appears to support this notion. Only 17% of part-timers had received a promotion at any time since being with their current employer. The finding that women were no more likely than men to report having been promoted is particularly discouraging, given their comparatively high levels of education and job-related training, and the fact that 45% had been with their employers for more than five years. Determining whether part-timers are “shut out” or “opt out” of promotional tracks will be an interesting area for future research.

Supervisory responsibilities. Finally, the WES employee survey contains an item asking respondents whether or not they supervise others on the job. Consistent with the findings that very few part-time employees hold managerial positions or report a history of promotions, few part-timers oversee the work of others. Women part-timers (19%) are more likely than men (12%) to report having responsibility for the work of at least one employee. Although this finding is consistent with women’s greater age, tenure, and educational attainment, further analysis is required to determine both the types of supervisory responsibility associated with the job and the span of control held by part-timers in supervisory positions.

Summary

This overview underscores the heterogeneity within the part-time work world. It reminds us that the traditional labour market “category” of part-time workers comprises two very distinct sub-categories: young men entering the labour market, and women working part time at points throughout the life cycle as a means of supplementing family income or blending work with the care of home and family. Accordingly, women who work part time show remarkably different profiles than men in terms of human capital acquisition. They are twice as likely as their male

counterparts to have a post-secondary education, are more likely to occupy managerial/professional positions, have higher earnings, and potentially possess a good deal of establishment-specific knowledge as witnessed in their higher training rates and greater organizational tenure.

These data suggest that part-time professional women, having chosen life paths other than continuous full-time employment, may represent a labour market segment with considerable untapped or under-utilized⁴ human capital. The employer data, however, indicate that the extent to which establishments may be willing or able to invest in their development may be limited by the prevalence of part-time work in small establishments (which may have fewer resources to support training efforts) and the observed association between cost-savings objectives and reliance on part-timers.

The data also support the notion that whatever flexibility women gain through part-time work may bear costs in terms of job quality. In spite of their age, education and tenure, fewer than one in five women part-timers report that they supervise the work of others or have ever received a promotion. Even fewer (5%) are classified as managers. And, like their male counterparts, they report low wages and low access to non-wage benefits, in spite of being more likely than part-time men to hold permanent jobs.

Since the WES survey does not directly ask respondents about the advantages of part-time work, nor does it contain items on the perceived

⁴ It may also be possible that women have optimally allocated their time between the competing demands of their work and family lives given the choices available to them. However, the authors are suggesting that establishments that offer a range of family-friendly benefits may be able to tap into a skilled labour pool—consisting predominantly of women—who may have chosen to work full time had these benefits been available.

ability to integrate work and family, we cannot say with certainty that there is a “trade-off” of job quality in return for the flexibility of part-time work. The next section of the report, therefore, retains the full-time/part-time distinction to look at a number of family-supportive practices that can more directly tap workplace flexibility: flextime, telework and the provision of childcare and eldercare benefits.

Table 1.1
Establishments employing part-time workers and employees working part-time by establishment characteristics, 1998-1999

Establishment characteristics	Percentage of establishments employing part-time workers	Percentage of employees working part time	
		Women	Men
Overall	57.2	22.2	7.6
Size			
Fewer than 10 employees	52.9	28.1	10.4
10-49 employees	68.3	20.4	7.4
50-99 employees	74.2	26.8	8.9
100-499 employees	72.1	17.1	5.0
500-599 employees	85.6	21.0	6.3
1000 or more employees	90.9	21.0	8.7
Industry sector			
Forestry, mining	37.6	7.4	–
Labour intensive tertiary manufacturing	50.5	5.1	1.3
Primary product manufacturing	42.8	5.3	–
Secondary product manufacturing	37.7	1.5	1.7
Capital intensive tertiary manufacturing	40.6	2.6	1.1
Construction	31.4	22.8	0.9
Transportation/storage, warehousing, wholesale trade	40.6	11.9	3.1
Communications and other utilities	52.6	11.5	2.1
Retail trade and commercial services	75.7	32.5	19.6
Finance and insurance	60.2	13.0	5.0
Real estate, rental, leasing operations	44.4	24.3	12.9
Business services	42.0	13.9	5.8
Education and health care	67.3	26.8	16.0
Information and cultural industries	63.8	15.4	6.0
Collective bargaining coverage			
No employees covered	57.2	22.7	8.0
At least one employee covered	57.4	21.2	7.0

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 6,322

– Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 1.2

Establishments employing part-time workers and employees working part time by indicators of employer intent, 1998-1999

Indicators of employer intent	Percentage of establishments employing part-time workers	Percentage of employees working part time	
		Women	Men
Overall	57.2	22.2	7.6
Strategy: Using more part-time, temporary or contract workers			
Establishments reporting this factor was important to general business strategy	92.0	28.9	12.5
Establishments that did not see it as important	53.4	20.7	7.0
Strategy: Labour cost reduction			
Establishments reporting this factor was important to general business strategy	61.9	21.5	7.6
Establishments that did not see it as important	48.5	29.0	5.9
Organizational change: Greater reliance on part-time workers			
Establishments that reported a recent change involving greater reliance on part-timers	66.0	24.4	9.3
Establishments that did not report such a change	64.0	18.4	6.4
Organizational change: Cost reduction			
Establishments that reported a significant change aimed at cost reduction	62.9	18.4	6.0
Establishments that did not report such a change	56.4	22.6	6.3

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 6,322.

Table 1.3**Profile of part- and full-time employees by demographic and family characteristics, 1998-1999**

Employee characteristics	Part-time (%)		Full-time (%)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	100	100	100	100
Age				
15-24 years	20.0	31.7	8.3	7.0
25-34 years	18.6	18.7	24.5	24.6
35-44 years	26.6	20.4	32.2	34.1
45-54 years	23.2	17.2	26.9	24.3
55-64 years	10.6	8.6	7.5	9.0
65 years and older	1.0	3.5	0.6	1.0
Education level (highest attained)				
< High school	16.7	24.2	10.5	14.7
High school diploma	22.9	21.8	24.5	25.2
Trade/vocational certification	4.6	6.6	6.2	13.0
Some post-secondary	16.5	22.9	15.6	13.3
College diploma	25.6	12.2	24.9	16.3
University degree	13.7	12.4	18.3	17.6
Family status				
With spouses	63.6	48.7	66.8	74.4
With children under 16 years	37.8	26.1	34.6	46.3
Lone parents	8.2	1.7	9.6	5.6
No spouse, no children under 16 ¹ years	28.2	49.6	23.6	20.0

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 23,540.

¹ Includes both employees with no children and employees with only children aged 16 or over.

Table 1.4

Profile of part- and full-time employees by job characteristics, 1998-1999

Job characteristics	Part-time (%)		Full-time (%)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	100	100	100	100
Occupation				
Manager	5.0	1.6	13.2	20.5
Professional	17.1	16.3	18.6	13.6
Technical/Trades	24.5	36.0	31.8	49.7
Marketing/Sales	28.4	20.8	8.1	2.4
Clerical/Administrative	15.9	6.3	22.2	6.5
Production workers with no trade/certification	9.0	18.9	6.0	7.3
Organizational tenure (years)				
Less than 1 year	8.0	9.4	3.4	4.0
1-4 years	47.2	52.8	39.1	36.7
5-9 years	20.7	16.2	21.4	21.3
10-19 years	18.6	11.8	25.3	22.3
20 or more years	5.6	9.8	10.9	15.7
Terms of employment				
Permanent	75.9	62.8	93.5	93.7
Non-permanent	24.1	37.2	6.5	6.3
Collective bargaining coverage				
Yes	28.0	31.4	26.2	29.2
No	72.0	68.6	73.8	70.8

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 23,540.

Table 1.5
Profile of part- and full-time employees by establishment characteristics, 1998-1999

Establishment characteristics	Part-time (%)		Full-time (%)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Overall	100	100	100	100
Size				
Fewer than 10 employees	27.3	21.7	19.9	15.6
10 to 49 employees	25.2	30.4	28.1	31.5
50 to 99 employees	12.6	13.3	9.9	11.2
100 to 499 employees	15.0	13.7	20.8	21.4
500 to 999 employees	6.2	5.9	6.6	7.3
1000 or more employees	13.7	15.0	14.7	13.0
Industry sector				
Forestry, mining	0.2	–	0.7	3.1
Labour intensive tertiary manufacturing	1.0	0.9	5.1	5.4
Primary product manufacturing	0.3	–	1.6	6.8
Secondary product manufacturing	0.1	1.1	2.7	5.1
Capital intensive tertiary manufacturing	0.3	1.2	3.5	8.8
Construction	1.4	0.8	1.3	7.2
Transportation/storage, wholesale trade communications and other utilities	3.5	5.9	7.4	15.1
Communications and other utilities	0.8	0.8	1.8	3.2
Retail trade and commercial services	41.3	50.2	24.4	17.1
Finance and insurance	3.8	1.8	7.2	2.9
Real estate, rental, leasing operations	1.8	2.9	1.6	1.6
Business services	5.8	7.1	10.2	9.5
Education and health care	37.8	23.8	29.4	10.4
Information and cultural industries	2.0	2.9	3.1	3.8
Collective bargaining coverage				
No employees covered	66.9	65.7	64.9	62.2
At least one employee covered	33.1	34.4	35.1	37.8

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the employee sample = 23,540.
– Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 1.6
Profile of part- and full-time employees by indicators of quality of work life, 1998-1999

Indicators	Part-time (%)		Full-time (%)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Hourly wage				
Less than \$9	29.4	33.4	16.0	7.0
\$9 to 11.99	16.8	22.6	17.6	12.2
\$12 to 15.99	21.7	16.1	23.0	18.2
\$16 to 19.99	10.0	5.8	16.6	18.2
\$20 to 29.99	13.9	11.5	18.8	28.0
\$30 or more	8.3	10.7	8.1	16.5
Non-wage benefits				
Life/disability	23.6	19.8	60.4	67.6
Supplemental medical	18.8	20.8	56.0	64.9
Dental care	19.7	14.2	55.3	63.3
Employer pension plan	20.4	15.3	40.2	45.5
Group RRSP	4.9	5.3	18.2	22.6
Job satisfaction				
Satisfied or very satisfied with job (all aspects)	89.9	86.1	89.2	89.6
Satisfied or very satisfied with pay and benefits	71.7	75.8	70.9	71.7
Participation in training¹				
Employer-sponsored classroom training	27.7	18.5	39.7	38.2
On-the-job training	31.4	29.3	31.3	28.3
Non-employer-sponsored training	12.3	10.7	9.7	7.6
Have received a promotion²	16.9	16.7	40.7	44.0
Have supervisory responsibility on the job³	19.1	12.4	35.4	47.7

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 23,540.

¹ In 12 months preceding the survey.

² At any time since working with the current employer.

³ Responsible for supervising at least one employee.

2. “Family-friendly” Practices

Women’s increased and sustained labour force participation means that many employees are coping with workplace change in the context of growing pressures from the home domain and the need to redistribute the unpaid household and caring work traditionally assumed by women. Today’s employees have a wide range of commitments outside of the workplace, including not only the care of dependent family members, but also volunteer pursuits, education, and personal development.

Recognition of these realities has prompted some organizations to re-examine traditional human resource (HR) policies designed at a time when women in the labour force were a relative minority, and employees could leave personal and family issues at home. Family-friendly work practices, such as childcare and eldercare services, flextime, and telework, have been portrayed as “win-win” arrangements that can help today’s employees obtain a better blend between their work and non-work lives while providing organizations with a means of recruiting, retaining and motivating their work force (Bachmann, 2000; Schwartz, 1994).

Although both women and men face challenges in reconciling their personal lives with their paid work, the balance of the evidence suggests greater stresses for women, who irrespective of their labour force participation, retain primary responsibility in the family for the care of home and children (Johnson, Lero and Rooney, 2001; Statistics Canada, 1999). Given that family-supportive options should be most attractive to employees who most need the support, one might expect a gender-based

sorting effect whereby women report disproportionately high rates of participation in flexible work arrangements.

But existing literature on family-friendly arrangements suggests this may not be the case. The extent to which employees are able to avail themselves of flexible arrangements depends not only on personal preference but also on the availability of such options within workplaces. Organizations may be constrained by such factors as the operational feasibility of the arrangement, its cost, and union demands. For these reasons, benefits such as childcare and eldercare, with considerable start up and operating costs, have been associated with larger employers who can achieve economies of scale and to a lesser extent, with unionized environments where benefits packages have been negotiated for employees (Evans, 2001). Options are further constrained by the type of work the employee performs and the degree to which the job is compatible with the desired work option. Flexible practices that stretch the boundaries of time and place, such as flextime and telework, are more common among professionals and managers who work fairly independently and who can parcel up the job to be done at a different time or location (Akyeampong and Nadwodny, 2001; Lipsett and Reesor, 1997). Front-line employees in service or manufacturing do not have such portable tasks, and therefore, have been connected with lower levels of access to flextime and telework (Evans, 2001). Access to family-friendly work arrangements, therefore, is a matter of achieving a match between the work arrangement and other aspects of the job.

Whether access to flexible work arrangements is driven by the nature of the work or by the nature of the worker has been a recurring theme in the literature. Do family-friendly benefits “come with the job,” or do employees gravitate toward employers who can offer them the flexibility

they need? Although the answer to this question requires multivariate analysis beyond the scope of this report, the descriptive data presented in this chapter are organized around this theme. The chapter begins with a look at the availability of family-friendly work arrangements by characteristics of the employee, including such factors as gender, age, education, the type of work the employee does, and his or her family circumstances. Next, data are presented to examine the availability of family-friendly arrangements by characteristics of the employing organization. In order to examine the advantages of flexible work from the employer's perspective, the chapter concludes with a descriptive analysis that links flextime with a number of productivity and job quality measures available from the WES, including employee satisfaction, wages and work hours, work absences, and training rates.

The chapter focuses on four family-friendly HR practices for which information is available from the WES employee dataset:

- **Flextime:** a work arrangement wherein employees work a certain number of core hours, but can vary start and stop times provided a full complement of hours is worked. Flextime data presented in this report reflect the proportion of employees who reported on the WES that they participated in a flextime arrangement.
- **Telework:** a work-at-home arrangement wherein employees work at least some of their regularly scheduled hours at home and for pay. Telework data presented in this report are based on the proportion of employees who reported that they participated in a telework arrangement.
- **Childcare services:** a variety of childcare support services, including information and referral services, assistance with external suppliers, or on-site centres. For the purposes of this

report, childcare services were defined as “available” if employees indicated that their employer offered the service. In this case, then, access does not imply actual participation.

- **Eldercare services:** a variety of eldercare support services, including information and referral services, assistance with external suppliers, or on-site centres. For the purposes of this report, eldercare services were defined as “available” if employees indicated that their employer offered the service. Again, access does not imply actual participation in these services.

What kinds of employees have access to family-friendly work arrangements?

- a) *Demographic and family characteristics.* Tables 2.1 and 2.2 explore workplace flexibility by presenting data on access⁵ to family-friendly work arrangements by selected employee demographic and family characteristics. Table 2.1 indicates that flextime is by far the most prevalent work arrangement, available to over one third of employees. Conversely, telework was reported by only roughly 5% of employees; childcare services, by 6%; and access to eldercare services was particularly rare, reported by 4% of employees.

Overall, the demographic data presented in Table 2.1 argue strongly *against* a sorting effect driven by employee needs:

⁵ For ease in expression, the terms “access” and “availability” are used interchangeably throughout the text of this report. Readers are reminded that childcare and eldercare benefit data reflect the proportion of employees who reported that these services were offered by their employers (irrespective of whether the employees used the service). Telework and flextime data reflect the proportion of employees who reported they actually participated in a telework and flextime arrangement.

- Gender differences in access to flextime were pronounced—but were in the direction *opposite* to that which might have been expected under a sorting hypothesis. Women reported lower flextime participation rates than men (44% of men reported a flextime arrangement, as compared to only 36% of women).
- Age data also showed two unexpected patterns of access to family-friendly arrangements. First, access to flextime was highest among youth⁶ of both sexes (aged 15 to 24), not women of child-rearing age. This contradicts both the notion of sorting and the notion that flexible benefits are extended to employees with high levels of human capital (in which case one would expect access to increase with age and, accordingly, work experience). The opposite pattern of results observed in the WES data suggests that schedule flexibility might be more a characteristic of the entry-level jobs in which youth are concentrated. Second, access to childcare services showed a slight upward trend with age, peaking at the 45 to 64 age groups. This pattern indicates that childcare services may be most available to employees in age ranges least likely to have need for them. Again, this pattern is suggestive of formal childcare services being a function of organization or industry factors (for example, in instances where large or unionized industries show older age structures), rather than employee demands.
- Education data indicated that university and college graduates had considerably greater access to family-friendly work

⁶ The exception is among employees 65+. Access to flextime spikes dramatically for both women and men in this age group. Whether this phenomenon reflects a strategy for pre-retirement transition or for post-retirement labour force re-entry would be an interesting topic for future research.

arrangements than employees with lower levels of education, and this trend held across all four work arrangements. Access did not increase linearly with years of education, however, but dipped for those with intermediate levels of education: employees with trade and vocational certification had comparatively lower levels of access. This pattern too suggests links to occupation and industry, rather than employee demand.

Table 2.2 further explores family-friendly work arrangements by examining access as a function of employees' marital and parental status. A sorting effect would be evident in high participation rates among employees with children, and would be expected to be more pronounced for those with greatest need—women and lone parents. The following observations provide some support, albeit weak, for a sorting effect with respect to participation in family-friendly practices. The stronger relationship is apparent in the beneficial effect of part-time work on women's workplace flexibility.

- Access to telework, childcare, and eldercare services does appear to increase slightly for full-time women and men in two-parent couples with children under the age of 16. However, since the overall participation rates are so very low for these options (averaging 2%-6%), the increase represents only a one or two percentage-point difference, so few conclusions can be drawn. Lone parents show no consistent pattern.
- Access to flextime shows virtually no relationship to employees' family demands.
- Disaggregating the flextime and telework data by full- and part-time status reveals an interesting association with gender. For women, part-time work is associated with *increased* access to a

flextime or telework schedule. For men, part-time work is unrelated to flexibility in work time or place. This finding provides some support for the claim that part-time work facilitates work-family integration for women. Whether women move into part-time employment in order to obtain needed flexibility, or whether flexibility is inherent in the nature of part-time jobs available to women remains to be tested.

b) Job characteristics. Table 2.3 shows clear links between characteristics of the job and access to family-friendly work arrangements. Occupation data indicate that managers and professionals had a higher level of access to all four work arrangements than did employees in virtually all other occupations.⁷ Access to childcare services was especially high among professionals (13% of professional women and 12% of professional men reported access to childcare services, as compared to only 4% to 6% of employees in most other occupational groups). It should be noted, however, that even within managerial/professional groups, women had a lower rate of access to flextime and telework than did men. Wage data for telework, childcare and eldercare services mirror the occupational data, with an upward trend in access as hourly earnings increase. The exception is flextime, where women show a bimodal distribution with access peaking in the lowest and highest earnings categories. Men's access to flextime appears unrelated to their earnings.

Data on organizational tenure were examined in order to explore the possibility that organizations offer family-friendly arrangements to valued

⁷ Wage data for telework, childcare and eldercare services mirror the occupational data, with an upward trend in access as hourly earnings increase (Table 2.6).

employees with long years of service. The data do not support this notion. No consistent relationship was found between years of service and access to family-friendly work arrangements. Instead, the prevailing pattern was again gender-linked. Within tenure categories, women showed a generally lower level of access to family-friendly arrangements than men. This pattern of results, however, should not be interpreted as evidence against the notion that long-standing employees may have greater access to flexibility, since competing explanatory factors such as industry, occupation, and establishment size have not been taken into account.

Data on collective bargaining coverage show two patterns: one for flextime and telework and the other for care services. Increased access to flextime and telework is associated with non-unionized environments. Access to childcare and eldercare services is associated with union settings. This pattern of findings is consistent with research that suggests that flextime and telework options may be extended to employees on an informal basis in a variety of work settings. Conversely, formal childcare and eldercare services are normally part of a comprehensive HR package more typical of large unionized workplaces.

No relationship was apparent between access to family-friendly work arrangements and terms of employment (permanent versus non-permanent status).

What types of organizations offer family-friendly work arrangements?

Table 2.4 examines rates of access to family-friendly practices by characteristics of the employing organization. These data provide further evidence that family-friendly work arrangements are more strongly linked to characteristics of the establishment than to those of the employee. The following trends are observed:

- Establishment size appears to be strongly related to access. Flextime and telework are most available to employees working in small workplaces: for example, roughly 40% of women and fully half of men (53%) working in establishments with fewer than 10 employees report a flextime schedule. These rates fall to roughly 30% and 40% respectively among employees in large establishments employing 1000 or more. Conversely, childcare and eldercare services appear most available to employees in large establishments: childcare services were reported by roughly 25% of women and men in establishments with 1000 or more employees, as compared to under 5% among those in establishments with fewer than 500.
- Unionization was associated with lower levels of access to flextime and telework, and higher levels of access to childcare and eldercare services.
- Industry data for flextime and telework illustrate the “match” that is needed between a flexible work arrangement and the type of work that is performed. For example, telework was rare among employees in manufacturing and retail industries, sectors in which work processes or the need for customer contact demand that employees be on site. Conversely, telework was most prevalent among employees in business services, real estate and insurance operations, industries in which the work may be more portable or performed with remote technology. Industry data on childcare and eldercare services suggest links to establishment size. Access was greatest among employees in education, health, finance and insurance, industries normally associated with larger establishments and/or unionized environments.

- Gender differences in access within industries also suggest that the nature of the work that is performed may affect the feasibility of some flexible arrangements. Although across all industries men's rate of access to flextime is higher than women's, there is a sizable gender gap in industries such as finance, insurance, education and health services. This pattern suggests that, within industry, women and men may be engaged in different types of work that are not equally amenable to schedule flexibility.

Are family-friendly work arrangements associated with productivity-related activities?

So far, we have examined the incidence of various family-supportive work practices and examined whether differential access exists either by characteristics of the establishment or by characteristics of the employee. Our findings indicate that establishment- or industry-level factors appear to be much more strongly related to the incidence of flexible work arrangements than are the family needs of employees. This prompts the question: Why do employers offer family-friendly work arrangements at all?

The “business case” for family-friendly HR practices maintains that employees who have difficulties managing their work and non-work lives may experience productivity losses that can cost organizations in terms of decreased employee satisfaction, increased absences and turnover, employee reluctance to engage in training and development, and reduced output due to everyday distractions (Clifton, 1997; Capelli, Constantine, and Chadwick, 2000; Duxbury, Higgins and Johnson, 1999). The argument follows that work environments that support employees in the integration of work and family can help to alleviate work-life stresses, which in turn

contribute to productivity gains. But, in spite of a growing body of research linking work-life conflict to productivity losses (for a review, see Johnson et al., 1997), there is much less evidence of the establishment-level gains associated with the introduction of family-friendly arrangements.

The objective of this section of the chapter is to look at some of these productivity claims to see if there is descriptive evidence supporting the “win-win” argument for flexible work arrangements. We select one work arrangement for study: flextime. We choose this particular practice not only to ease interpretation but also because flextime is the most widely used practice and allows adequate sub-sample size on the variables of interest. Since some of the proposed beneficial effects of family-friendly arrangements (such as turnover) require longitudinal methodology and cannot be assessed from a single year’s data, we have selected four productivity-related outcomes that are amenable to cross-sectional analysis: employee satisfaction, wages and work time, days absent, and training rates. Because we have shown access to family-friendly work arrangements to be strongly related to the type of work performed, we control for occupation by tabulating data separately for each occupational group.

Is flextime related to employee satisfaction?

Although direct relationships between employee satisfaction and job performance have not been empirically demonstrated, job satisfaction does show clear negative relationships to absence and turnover (Robbins, 1993). A satisfied workforce, therefore, may be valuable to employers for its indirect mitigating effect on employee withdrawal behaviours that *do* pose threats to the bottom line. Job satisfaction is a multi-faceted construct, but a significant determinant of satisfaction is a work environment that

employees perceive as personally supportive. In this context, the provision of family-supportive benefits can be seen as a mechanism for fostering a culture of employee support that can serve to enhance satisfaction.

The WES contains two single-item measures of employee satisfaction. The first is a global measure asking how satisfied respondents are with “all aspects” of their jobs. The second asks directly about satisfaction with pay and benefits.

Table 2.5 examines these outcomes by gender, occupation and access to flextime. The data for overall job satisfaction suggest a positive association with flextime for virtually all occupational groups, with a somewhat greater and more consistent effect among women.

Table 2.5 also indicates that, for the most part, flextime is associated with higher levels of satisfaction with pay and benefits. While there is reason to believe that an employee on flextime might be more satisfied with their jobs in general, the reason an employee might also be more satisfied with their compensation is less apparent. Glass and Riley (1998), however, argue that the value employees put on a wage is linked to job conditions. In different environments, employees may not value money equivalently: earning x dollars in a stressful environment may be worth a lot less than earning x dollars in a supportive environment. Even in the absence of an actual pay increase, then, pay satisfaction may increase under more favourable job conditions. It is also possible, however, that good pay and flextime go hand in hand—that employers who pay employees well are also more likely to support employees in terms of flexibility; hence employees on flextime are more satisfied with their earnings *because* they in fact earn more. The next section looks at this issue by controlling for wage.

Is flextime related to wages?

The above data prompted the question as to whether employees on flextime might have higher wages than those who are not. This finding would be consistent with the argument that employers with a strong employee focus tend to support their employees through “bundling” a comprehensive set of HR practices (Osterman, 1995) including training investments, employee involvement, supportive work environments—and good pay. However, the opposite case might also be made; employers may extract a wage premium in return for flexibility.⁸ Although the costs associated with the implementation of flextime are low as compared to more formal arrangements (e.g., establishing a childcare centre), case studies suggest that there may be at least nominal set-up and administration costs to ensure coverage throughout the business day (Evans, 2001). Since establishments can incur costs, it may be that they recover them through lower wages.⁹

In order to explore these possibilities, Table 2.6 examines wages by sex, occupation and access to flextime. Because access to flextime is greater among managerial/professional categories—where wages are generally high—this analysis allows us to control for occupation to examine the connection between wages and flexibility *within* occupational groups. These data reveal no discernible relationships. Within occupation, flex timers do not systematically report higher wages. Nor do we see an

⁸ Daniel and Sofer (1998) find that in strongly unionized sectors, there is a positive relationship between wages and good working conditions whereas in weakly unionized sectors, there is a negative relationship between wages and good working conditions.

⁹ Gariety and Shaffer (2001) test the hypothesis that flextime may be associated with two competing wage effects: a positive wage differential arising from increased worker productivity and a compensating negative wage differential arising from workers’ preference for flextime. Their results are similar to the findings of Johnson and Provan (1995), which find a positive wage differential for women but not for men.

effect by gender: women do not appear to be systematically trading higher wages for jobs with more flexibility. Hence, we cannot find evidence to support the notion that women's reservation wage is influenced by the availability of family-friendly practices.¹⁰

However, another way that employees might “pay” for a more flexible work environment is directly through labour supply: they may be putting in more hours at work. Table 2.7 looks at work hours by sex, occupation and access to flextime. Flextime does seem to be linked to longer work weeks. Flextime was associated with increases in the proportion of employees working 50+ hours for almost every occupation and for both women and men (with the sole exceptions of female production workers and clerical/administration). Increases in work hours were not insubstantial. In some occupational categories, the percentage of employees working 50+ hours doubled or even tripled in the presence of a flextime arrangement.

Is flextime related to work absences?

The relationship between work absences and family responsibilities has been well documented. Labour force survey data indicate that the presence of preschool age children in particular exerts a strong influence on absences for personal and family responsibilities, especially for women. Full-time employed women with preschoolers miss an average of 4 days per year due to family responsibilities, as compared to 2 days among their male counterparts (Akyeampong, 2001). This estimate is likely conservative, as it does not include time off for personal illness, and

¹⁰ Glass and Riley (1998) suggest that it is the reservation wage of parents that should vary with access to various family-friendly practices. However, as we have seen, family structure appears to be only weakly related to participation rates.

research shows that parents sometimes claim their own sick days in order to see to the needs of their children. One recent study estimates that total work time lost due to work-family conflict costs Canadian employers over \$2 billion per year (Duxbury et al., 1999).

Flextime's potential to help employees blend their personal lives with their paid work is apparent. It can allow employees to schedule their workday to accommodate a caregiver's hours or to attend school functions or medical appointments with no worktime penalty. However, like other productivity measures, it is easier to demonstrate that work-life conflict *increases* absences than it is to demonstrate that an intervention (i.e., flextime) *decreases* absences. The nature of the relationship is highly dependent on the type of absence measure used. Using data from the Survey of Work Arrangements, Lipsett and Reesor (1997), for example, found no difference in the incidence of absence¹¹ between flex timers and non-flex timers. However, using a measure of duration of absence, they detected a 15 percentage-point reduction in time lost among flex timers. Well controlled experimental studies have also linked flex time to reductions in work absences (for a review, see Pierce et al., 1989).

The WES allows us to look only at incidence. The survey does not contain a separate item for time lost for personal or family reasons, so our analysis is limited to sick days only. Table 2.8 shows the number of paid sick days employees reported having taken in the 12 months prior to the

¹¹ The Lipsett analysis included workers who were absent due to personal illness and those who were absent due to personal reasons (i.e., caring for children/elders and other personal and family responsibilities).

survey¹² cross-tabulated by access to flextime. Occupation is again controlled for by tabulating data separately by occupational category. What we are looking for in this table is a shift in the distribution of absences toward fewer sick days under a flextime schedule. For example, under conditions of flextime, we would expect a greater proportion of employees to report no or few absences and a smaller proportion to report upward of five days.

The data presented in Table 2.8 tend to support the notion that flextime may be associated with a reduction in sick days. The relationship is especially strong for women. Women on flextime are considerably more likely than those without flextime to have taken no sick days at all in the year prior to the survey. This is the case for all occupations, with the exception of marketing and sales. Accordingly, women on flextime are much less likely than women without to report five or more days due to illness. Men also show a tendency toward fewer sick days under flextime conditions, but the relationship appears weaker and less consistent.

Although this analysis is suggestive of an association between flextime and reduced work absences, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Work absences are highly related to other factors, including not only gender and occupation (which are controlled for in Table 2.8), but also the age of the employee and, not least, the employee's actual state of health. Employee health data are essential control variables, but are seldom available from workforce surveys. Further analysis using multivariate methods is needed to determine whether or not flextime is significantly related to work absences.

¹² Work by Akyeampong (2001) indicates that access to paid sick time is one of the largest determinants of absence rates. In order to control for this confounding element, respondents who reported that their employers did not offer paid sick days were excluded from analysis.

Is flextime linked to training?

A question of considerable policy relevance is the extent to which a flexible work environment promotes employee participation in training and development. The underlying assumption is that employees who are experiencing high levels of stress or conflict on the job may be less inclined to invest their energies in updating their skills or acquiring new ones. Accordingly, family-friendly practices that can reduce conflict may have a favourable effect on employees' willingness to participate.

There is little research that has examined training outcomes in connection with work-family factors. That which exists suggests that non-work factors, such as the responsibility for childcare, can significantly reduce training participation intentions among women (Clifton, 1997). Perceived organizational support for work-family issues is associated with an increase in the intention to train.

Table 2.9 compares flex timers to non-flex timers in terms of the incidence of classroom training. In general, this table shows strong positive associations between training and flextime for women. The only exception is among women in clerical and administrative jobs, for whom there is no effect. This finding is worth noting, as clerical occupations account for such a large proportion of the jobs held by women. There is no clear relationship between flextime and training among men.

Although the finding of a positive association between flextime and training for women is consistent with the Clifton results, further analysis is required to control for the influence of other factors. There is good evidence that family-friendly work practices tend to be characteristic of organizations which integrate human resources into their strategic planning and thus offer a host of high-support, high-involvement practices, including

training investments (Evans, 2001; Osterman, 1995). Both flextime and training, therefore, may be the outcomes of a third unobserved factor—the importance of people to an organization’s competitive strategy.

Summary

This chapter has examined family-friendly practices from the perspective of both the employer and employee. Combined, the data strongly suggest that access to flexible work arrangements is a function of the type of work performed, not a response to employee need. In terms of occupation, access to family-supportive practices was generally highest among well-educated employees in managerial/professional jobs. Incidence by establishment-level factors was dependent on the type of benefit under study. Formal care services were a feature of large establishments in unionized environments, and were especially prevalent in the education, health, and finance industries. Flextime and telework were more typical of small establishments in non-unionized settings. Flextime in particular appeared to be widely available in low-skill occupations in retail and commercial industries, suggesting that, in spite of the poor wages normally associated with this sector, there may be some advantage for employees in terms of flexibility.

Conversely, employees’ personal and family characteristics showed virtually no relationship to participation in flexible arrangements. We saw little or no increase in participation rates either for mothers in two-parent families or for lone parents. In fact, women generally had lower participation rates than men, and this held within occupation and industry. This finding suggests that even within occupations, women may perform tasks that are less amenable to flexible time or place. The nature of women’s paid work, then, may serve as a constraint on their flexibility.

This finding, combined with the low participation rates seen among lower-skilled workers in general, suggests that those most in need of flexibility may be least likely to find it. This raises questions about the ability of these workers to avail themselves of developmental opportunities in the workplace and to maintain their labour force attachment over the long term.

The chapter ended with a descriptive overview of some of the productivity factors that have been associated with access to flexible work arrangements. These analyses suggested that flextime was related to increased job satisfaction, increased satisfaction with pay and benefits, a reduction in paid sick days, and higher participation rates in work-related training. All of these relationships appeared stronger for women. Flextime also was associated with increases in the number of hours worked, but was unrelated to wages when occupation was controlled for. In spite of this very favourable pattern of findings, readers are again reminded that these analyses are descriptive only. The apparent positive effects of flextime on productivity outcomes remain to be tested analytically. Both access to flextime and productivity may themselves be a function of other unobserved factors.

Table 2.1
Employee participation/access rates to family-friendly work arrangements by employee characteristics, 1998-1999

Employee characteristics	Percentage of employees with:				Percentage of employees reporting availability ¹ of:			
	Flextime arrangement		Telework arrangement		Childcare services		Eldercare services	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Overall	36.1	43.5	4.9	5.3	6.1	6.0	3.6	3.5
Age								
15-24 years	41.1	50.4	1.6	1.4	2.1	2.8	0.5	1.3
25-34 years	36.7	44.1	3.6	4.5	5.1	6.9	3.8	2.9
35-44 years	36.2	44.0	7.6	5.4	7.0	5.4	4.4	2.3
45-54 years	31.5	41.9	4.2	7.2	7.7	6.2	3.9	5.9
55-64 years	39.4	36.0	5.0	6.1	6.7	9.3	3.7	5.6
65 or more years	58.1	57.3	9.8	1.5	—	1.3	—	—
Education level (highest attained)								
Less than high school	34.9	35.8	2.0	2.1	2.8	4.5	1.5	3.2
High school diploma	35.5	47.2	4.3	5.2	5.1	4.9	3.3	3.2
Trade/vocational certification	35.2	38.5	1.9	2.0	2.1	3.5	1.7	3.3
Some post-secondary	34.9	44.1	4.1	3.9	4.1	5.1	2.5	2.7
College diploma	36.8	42.0	5.9	6.2	5.9	6.8	3.4	3.7
University degree	37.9	49.7	8.3	10.9	13.3	10.8	7.8	4.5

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 23,540.

¹ Indicates percentage of employees who reported that their employers offered the service. Child/elder care services include all forms of assistance, including resource and referral as well as on-site facilities.

— Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 2.2**Employee participation/access rates to family-friendly work arrangements by full-time/part-time status and family characteristics, 1998-1999**

Family characteristics	Percentage of employees with:				Percentage of employees reporting availability ¹ of:			
	Flextime arrangement		Telework arrangement		Childcare services		Eldercare services	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Women	34.7	40.8	4.8	5.5	6.1	4.6	3.5	2.1
With spouses	34.0	42.9	5.0	7.1	6.7	4.6	4.4	2.4
With children under 16 years	34.6	41.1	6.7	8.9	7.7	4.8	4.3	2.2
Lone parents	34.8	29.1	5.4	3.4	6.1	5.0	6.7	–
No spouse, no children under 16 ² years	36.5	39.0	5.5	2.6	5.9	4.5	3.0	–
Men	43.6	42.4	5.5	3.0	6.6	5.3	4.1	2.7
With spouses	43.0	44.9	6.5	4.6	6.5	9.0	3.4	4.1
With children under 16 years	41.6	45.5	6.2	4.2	7.0	11.9	2.7	–
Lone parents	42.1	60.2	4.3	–	7.3	–	1.7	–
No spouse, no children under 16 years	46.2	39.3	3.0	1.5	4.3	1.5	4.2	1.3

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the employee sample = 23,540.

¹ Indicates percentage of employees who reported that their employers offered the service. Childcare/eldercare services include all forms of assistance, including resource and referral as well as on-site facilities.

² Includes both employees with no children and employees with only children aged 16 or over.

– Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 2.3

Employee participation/access rates to family-friendly work arrangements by job characteristics, 1998-1999

Job characteristics	Percentage of employees with:				Percentage of employees reporting availability ¹ of:			
	Flextime arrangement		Telework arrangement		Childcare services		Eldercare services	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Overall	36.0	43.5	4.9	5.3	6.1	6.0	3.6	3.5
Occupation								
Manager	49.5	58.7	8.6	11.1	6.0	4.1	3.3	2.4
Professional	36.6	52.8	8.1	11.2	12.5	11.9	6.0	5.1
Technical/Trades	33.6	38.7	4.7	3.0	5.8	4.8	4.4	3.2
Marketing/Sales	41.0	50.5	1.4*	1.6	–	**	–	0.7
Clerical/Administrative	27.8	26.0	4.0	1.0	5.2	6.0	2.7	4.2
Production workers with no trade/certification	38.5	31.9	–	0.3	2.3	10.7	3.0	5.4
Organizational tenure								
Less than 1 year	34.1	43.3	6.2	6.1	5.6	1.3	3.2	0.5
1-4 years	33.6	46.1	4.5	6.1	3.9	5.2	2.2	2.8
5-9 years	39.5	46.5	4.9	5.2	4.5	5.9	3.4	2.2
10-19 years	35.7	41.1	5.8	5.0	8.5	6.2	5.7	3.8
20 or more years	27.8	36.4	4.0	3.4	13.3	9.3	5.5	7.1
Terms of employment								
Permanent	35.9	42.6	4.6	5.4	6.1	6.0	3.8	3.6
Non-permanent	36.9	53.6	8.0	3.8	6.5	4.9	2.3	2.1
Collective bargaining coverage								
No	38.3	48.1	6.1	6.3	4.5	3.7	3.3	2.5
Yes	29.9	32.5	1.8	2.8	10.7	11.5	4.5	5.7

Table 2.3**Employee participation/access rates to family-friendly work arrangements by job characteristics, 1998-1999 – concluded**

Job characteristics	Percentage of employees with:				Percentage of employees reporting availability ¹ of:			
	Flextime arrangement		Telework arrangement		Childcare services		Eldercare services	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Hourly wage								
Under \$9	41.0	40.1	3.1	1.7	2.8	1.9	0.3	1.8
\$9 to 11.99	32.0	42.5	1.8	2.3	2.8	2.2	1.5	1.6
\$12 to 15.99	34.4	40.0	4.8	3.1	4.6	4.5	4.0	1.8
\$16 to 19.99	29.7	41.0	3.2	4.7	6.2	5.1	2.8	3.3
\$20 to 29.99	41.9	42.9	8.1	6.1	10.9	10.1	8.2	5.3
\$30 or more	36.9	53.8	12.8	11.3	14.6	7.2	6.9	4.7

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the employee sample = 23,540.

¹ Indicates percentage of employees who reported that their employers offered the service. Childcare/eldercare services include all forms of assistance, including resource and referral as well as on-site facilities.

* Indicates that the Coefficient of Variation (CV), a measure of data reliability, is greater than 16% and less than 35%. The reliability of the estimate declines as the CV increases.

** Estimates are not shown due to high sampling variability.

– Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 2.4
Employee participation/access rates to family-friendly work arrangements by establishment characteristics, 1998-1999

Establishments characteristics	Percentage of employees with:				Percentage of employees reporting availability ¹ of:			
	Flextime arrangement		Telework arrangement		Childcare services		Eldercare services	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Overall	36.0	43.5	4.9	5.3	6.1	6.0	3.6	2.8
Size								
Fewer than 10 employees	42.3	52.5	7.4	6.2	1.6	1.0	0.7	0.6
10 to 49 employees	34.5	47.7	4.2	5.3	2.7	2.1	2.1	1.1
50 to 99 employees	40.5	38.7	4.6	4.4	3.2	2.5	5.2	1.9
100 to 499 employees	34.2	37.0	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.3	5.5	3.9
500 to 999 employees	33.7	38.9	4.5	5.5	9.1	11.7	4.4	8.2
1000 or more employees	29.9	39.4	4.2	6.5	23.0	24.0	7.0	10.5
Industry sector								
Forestry, mining	45.3	39.1	7.3	2.1	7.2	3.3	16.2	2.4
Labour intensive tertiary manufacturing	24.7	32.0	2.5	2.9	1.3	2.1	–	1.3
Primary product manufacturing	21.7	29.7	3.7	1.6	–	3.6	–	3.1
Secondary product manufacturing	29.0	38.1	3.2	2.3	2.9	2.7	2.8	1.9
Capital intensive tertiary manufacturing	25.9	38.6	3.1	3.0	3.5	12.3	–	7.8
Construction	49.6	46.9	16.1	4.3	–	1.8	–	0.6
Transportation/storage, wholesale trade communications and other utilities	33.6	40.2	8.8	7.7	4.0	5.2	4.5	4.8
Communications and other utilities	35.4	33.4	0.9	**	**	**	3.6	1.0
Retail trade and commercial services	42.0	51.0	1.8	2.6	1.2	2.3	0.8	1.0
Finance and insurance	27.0	47.9	7.0	13.1	5.8	3.9	10.9	4.3
Real estate, rental, leasing operations	39.4	45.1	8.0	4.9	2.3	2.2	–	5.3
Business services	45.2	53.0	9.6	8.6	2.5	3.8	2.8	2.8
Education and health care	32.8	44.6	5.3	8.9	13.9	17.3	5.2	6.4

Table 2.4
Employee participation/access rates to family-friendly work arrangements by establishment characteristics, 1998-1999 –
concluded

Establishments characteristics	Percentage of employees with:				Percentage of employees reporting availability ¹ of:			
	Flextime arrangement		Telework arrangement		Childcare services		Eldercare services	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Collective bargaining coverage								
No employees covered	38.4	48.1	6.0	6.0	3.2	2.8	2.7	1.9
At least one employee covered	31.5	35.8	2.9	4.0	11.6	11.3	5.3	6.1

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the employee sample = 23,540.

¹ Indicates percentage of employees who reported that their employers offered the service. Childcare/eldercare services include all forms of assistance, including resource and referral as well as on-site facilities.

* Indicates that the Coefficient of Variation (CV), a measure of data reliability, is greater than 16% and less than 35%. The reliability of the estimate declines as the CV increases.

** Estimates are not shown due to high sampling variability.

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Table 2.5
Employee satisfaction by sex, occupation and access to flextime, 1998-1999

	Percentage of employees reporting they were:			
	Very satisfied with the job		Very satisfied with pay and benefits	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Occupation				
Managers				
With access to flextime	50.3	51.6	30.1	28.7
Without access to flextime	43.1	37.9	25.0	21.5
Professionals				
With access to flextime	37.5	42.2	20.2	21.9
Without access to flextime	31.5	41.1	15.3	17.4
Technical/Trades				
With access to flextime	39.5	35.2	15.6	19.1
Without access to flextime	29.0	29.9	17.1	17.4
Marketing /Sales				
With access to flextime	28.7	23.2	14.5	18.2
Without access to flextime	27.6	28.4	11.0	18.4
Clerical/Administration				
With access to flextime	43.8	32.7	25.1	14.9
Without access to flextime	33.9	27.9	18.4	16.8
Production workers				
With access to flextime	37.5	36.4	8.9	32.1
Without access to flextime	23.7	24.7	16.6	24.1

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 23,540.

Table 2.6
Hourly wage by sex, occupation and access to flextime, 1998-1999

	Hourly Wage											
	Women						Men					
	Less than \$9	\$ 9-11	\$ 12-15	\$ 16-19	\$ 20-29	\$ 30 or more	Less than \$9	\$ 9-11	\$ 12-15	\$ 16-19	\$ 20-29	\$ 30 or more
Occupation												
Managers												
With access to flextime	15.5	9.9	23.6	8.8	21.3	20.9	2.9	7.2	15.6	18.3	22.5	33.6
Without access to flextime	10.0	15.9	12.8	19.1	15.5	26.7	5.5	5.4	11.5	16.0	21.8	39.9
Professionals												
With access to flextime	1.8	3.5	13.1	14.9	51.0	15.7	1.6	2.9	7.0	12.3	39.8	36.4
Without access to flextime	2.1	5.5	10.8	17.3	44.1	20.2	1.7	3.6	10.9	12.6	42.0	29.3
Technical/Trades												
With access to flextime	20.5	15.7	25.6	15.3	18.4	4.6	9.5	14.3	20.4	18.8	27.9	9.2
Without access to flextime	16.2	20.1	26.7	19.9	12.9	4.3	7.5	15.1	21.0	19.5	29.4	7.5
Marketing/Sales												
With access to flextime	53.6	25.9	6.9	5.6	6.6	1.4 *	28.2	41.1	14.4	3.9	6.5	6.0
Without access to flextime	56.8	22.6	12.8	3.6	2.4	1.9	44.5	17.6	17.6	15.9	–	–
Clerical/Administration												
With access to flextime	15.0	22.3	31.9	17.9	9.7	3.2	14.9	29.7	22.8	16.4	14.1	2.2
Without access to flextime	10.1	21.2	36.0	19.8	8.7	1.3	12.8	22.4	24.7	26.2	12.6	1.4
Production workers												
With access to flextime	40.5	21.3	31.1	4.8	–	–	23.1	20.8	18.2	8.2	16.2	13.5
Without access to flextime	33.1	23.0	29.4	7.5	5.6	1.5	21.1	15.9	25.5	12.3	23.9	3.9

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the sample = 23,540.

* Indicates that the Coefficient of Variation (CV), a measure of data reliability, is greater than 16% and less than 35%. The reliability of the estimate declines as the CV increases.

– Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 2.7
Hours worked by sex, occupation, and access to flexitime, 1998-1999

	Percentage of employees working:							
	Women				Men			
	0 to 29 hrs/wk	30 to 39 hrs/wk	40 to 49 hrs/wk	50+ hrs/wk	0 to 29 hrs/wk	30 to 39 hrs/wk	40 to 49 hrs/wk	50+ hrs/wk
Occupation								
Managers								
With access to flexitime	13.8 *	32.4	45.2	8.7	0.92	18.0	55.2	26.0
Without access to flexitime	5.8	43.9	45.5	4.8	0.3	31.1	53.4	15.2
Professionals								
With access to flexitime	20.1	50.2	24.8	5.0	5.7	41.2	43.1	10.0
Without access to flexitime	21.2	53.3	22.6	2.9	12.7	42.5	40.2	4.7
Technical/Trades								
With access to flexitime	20.9	38.0	35.6	5.5	7.3	17.4	65.2	10.1
Without access to flexitime	16.6	41.2	41.2	1.1	4.6	18.1	69.9	7.4
Marketing /Sales								
With access to flexitime	51.0	27.2	15.4	6.4	39.7	24.8	27.5	8.0
Without access to flexitime	49.2	31.1	–	–	44.8	21.3	26.2	7.7
Clerical/Administration								
With access to flexitime	24.9	45.4	28.8	1.0	8.8	30.3	57.3	3.5
Without access to flexitime	14.0	53.6	31.4	1.1	6.9	37.4	54.2	1.5
Production workers								
With access to flexitime	28.6	34.0	36.6	0.8	16.6	35.9	43.7	3.8
Without access to flexitime	30.6	32.5	36.1	0.8	18.3	12.7	67.5	1.5

Note: Table shows average paid hours per week excluding overtime. Total number of unweighted observations in the employee sample = 23,540.

* Indicates that the Coefficient of Variation (CV), a measure of data reliability, is greater than 16% and less than 35%. The reliability of the estimate declines as the CV increases.

– Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 2.8
Number of paid sick days taken by sex, occupation and access to flexitime, 1998-1999

	Percentage of employees reporting having taken paid sick days ¹ :							
	Women				Men			
	0 days	Less than 3 days	3 to 4 days	5 or more days	0 days	Less than 3 days	3 to 4 days	5 or more days
Occupation								
Managers								
With access to flexitime	50.9	24.8	11.0	13.4	64.6	21.0	7.4	0.7
Without access to flexitime	45.6	25.6	20.5	13.3	52.2	34.5	8.9	0.4
Professionals								
With access to flexitime	39.3	26.1	18.4	16.2	46.9	23.4	14.9	14.7
Without access to flexitime	32.9	25.9	16.5	24.7	45.7	29.2	11.0	14.1
Technical/Trades								
With access to flexitime	53.0	17.3	14.8	14.9	62.7	16.4	11.0	9.9
Without access to flexitime	47.7	19.2	13.0	20.0	63.3	12.5	10.0	14.2
Marketing/Sales								
With access to flexitime	63.1	8.5	10.3	18.1	64.9	5.3	–	–
Without access to flexitime	68.9	8.1	9.2	13.7	78.9	14.2	–	–
Clerical/Administration								
With access to flexitime	47.3	22.8	10.0	19.8	53.2	14.4	28.6	3.7
Without access to flexitime	38.1	24.4	13.8	23.7	57.1	12.9	14.9	15.2
Production workers								
With access to flexitime	69.2	10.3	15.3	5.3	75.5	15.0	5.4	4.1
Without access to flexitime	60.4	6.3	8.2	25.1	70.9	9.7	7.2	12.2

¹ Total number of unweighted observations in the employee sub-sample considered in the table = 16,577.

– Shows that data has been suppressed to protect respondent confidentiality.

Table 2.9

Employee participation in classroom training by sex, occupation, and access to flextime, 1998-1999

	Percentage reporting classroom training in the 12 months preceding the survey	
	Women	Men
Occupation		
Managers		
With access to flextime	50.2	42.8
Without access to flextime	42.6	42.9
Professionals		
With access to flextime	61.4	51.7
Without access to flextime	52.8	49.2
Technical/Trades		
With access to flextime	38.4	33.7
Without access to flextime	33.4	35.2
Marketing /Sales		
With access to flextime	24.0	29.7
Without access to flextime	13.9	31.8
Clerical/Administration		
With access to flextime	33.1	28.2
Without access to flextime	33.5	27.5
Production workers (no certification)		
With access to flextime	35.6	18.6
Without access to flextime	20.0	23.0

Note: Total number of unweighted observations in the employee sample = 23,540.

3. Conclusion

This report has provided an overview of the incidence and distribution of part-time work and family-friendly practices in Canadian workplaces. The findings suggest that many organizations may still have a way to go in fostering climates that promote the integration of work and family. Although upward of a third of Canadian employees reported flextime schedules, access to other family-friendly work arrangements was extremely low. Access was consistently linked to establishment characteristics such as industry and company size, and was virtually unrelated to employees' personal or family characteristics.

Women had lower participation rates in flexible work arrangements than did men, and this held within occupation and industry. This finding suggests that even within occupations, women may perform tasks that are less amenable to flexible time or place. Although part-time work appeared to increase flextime and telework participation rates for women, more research is needed to determine whether the flexibility afforded through part-time work comes at the expense of earnings, benefits, training and promotional opportunities. These questions are of particular policy interest, as women part-timers may represent a source of untapped human capital as suggested in their high levels of education, tenure, and job-specific knowledge.

As a descriptive analysis, this report provides a good indication of the prevalence of the various work arrangements according to characteristics of establishments and employees. However, this type of analysis is only suggestive of the processes underlying the observed

beneficial effects of family-friendly practices on productivity and establishments' rationale for offering part-time and flexible work arrangements to their employees. Multivariate analyses are required to more precisely specify factors contributing to employers' decisions to implement practices, employees' decisions to participate, and the outcomes of participation. The analysis prompts a number of questions for future research:

- What reasons do women and men give for working part time? Are those who work part time for family reasons more likely than other part-timers to report access to family-friendly practices?
- How is the age of children related to parents' participation in family-friendly practices? Are parents of preschoolers more likely to report the presence of a childcare centre in their workplace? Do parents of school age children lean more toward flextime schedules?
- What business needs motivate establishments to provide family-friendly practices? Are establishments whose employees show high participation rates more likely to have HR development as a strategic objective? Are they more likely to have centralized HR functions? What are their primary markets? Is innovation, time to market, or improved customer service a priority?
- Are there barriers to establishments' introduction of family-friendly practices?
- How is the availability of family-friendly practices related to other "high commitment" HR practices? Do establishments which offer family-friendly benefits also tend to invest in training? Do they rely on team-based structures or employee involvement?

The WES database provides researchers with an opportunity to look at part-time and flexible work in a richer context. To date, we have not had national level data on the organizational factors associated with these work arrangements. The ability to connect family-friendly practices to business strategy is an important first step in identifying the conditions associated with flexible work and for exploring the work-family “business case.”

Appendix A

Extract from WES questionnaires

A1.1 Employer questionnaire: extract from training and development section

This section covers the nature and extent of workplace training. It is meant to include all types of training intended to develop your employees' skills and/or knowledge through a structured format (Question 14(a)) or on-the-job training (Question 16(c)) whether it takes place inside or outside the location.

14 a) *Between April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999, did this workplace pay for or provide any of the following types of classroom job-related training?*

Classroom training includes:

- all training activities which have a predetermined format, including a predefined objective;
- specific content;
- progress may be monitored and/or evaluated.

⁰¹ No classroom training → Go to Question 16(a)

⁰² Orientation for new employees

⁰³ Managerial/supervisory training

⁰⁴ Professional training

⁰⁵ Apprenticeship training

⁰⁶ Sales and marketing training

- 07 Computers/hardware
- 08 Computer/software
- 09 Other office and non-office equipment
- 10 Group decision-making or problem-solving
- 11 Team-building, leadership, communication
- 12 Occupational health and safety, environmental protection
- 13 Literacy and numeracy
- 14 Other training, specify _____

14 b) Please estimate the number of employees who received classroom training between *April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999*. (Include full-time, part-time, permanent and temporary employees.)

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16 c) Between *April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999*, did this workplace pay for or provide any of the following types of on-the-job training?

- 01 No on-the-job training → Go to Question 17.
- 02 Orientation for new employees
- 03 Managerial/supervisory training
- 04 Professional training
- 05 Apprenticeship training
- 06 Sales and marketing training
- 07 Computers/hardware
- 08 Computers/software
- 09 Other office and non-office equipment
- 10 Group decision-making or problem-solving

- ¹¹ Team-building, leadership, communication
- ¹² Occupational health and safety, environmental protection
- ¹³ Literacy or numeracy
- ¹⁴ Other training, specify _____

16 d) Please estimate the number of employees who received on-the-job training between *April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999*. (Include full-time, part-time, permanent and temporary employees.)

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A1.2 Employee questionnaire: extract from training and development section

The next few questions deal with job-related training provided or paid by your employer.

25. In the past twelve months, have you received any classroom training related to your job?

- ¹ Yes → Go to Question 25(a)
- ³ No → Go to Question 25(d)

Classroom training includes:

- All training activities which have a predetermined format, including a predefined objective
- Specific content
- Progress may be monitored and/or evaluated.

25 d) In the past twelve months, have you received any informal training related to your job (that is on-the-job training)?

- ¹ Yes
- ³ No → Go to Question 26

Appendix B

Definition of variables used

Innovation: The location introduced, between April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999, new products/services, improved products/services, new processes or improved processes.

Largest sales market: Market accounting for the greatest (%) revenue from sales from among the following markets: local, rest of Canada, international.

Location covered by a collective agreement: A location in which at least one employee is covered by a collective agreement.

Location subject to the Act: A location in Quebec with a payroll equal to or greater than \$250,000.

Number of competitors: Number of firms that offer products and services in direct competition with those of the establishment in the largest sales market.

Payroll: Total gross remuneration at this location for all employees between April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999, divided by the size of the location.

Percentage of non-standard workers: Number of non-permanent workers and/or part-time workers during the last pay period in March 1999, divided by the size of the location.

Percentage of workers by occupation: Number of workers in a given occupation, divided by the total number of employees in the location.

Percentage of workers trained: Number of workers trained, divided by the size of the location.

Percentage of vacant positions: Number of vacant positions, divided by the sum of the size of the location and vacant positions.

Price level: Price level of the establishment's products and services in relation to those of the main competitors in the largest sales market.

Size of the location: Number of persons employed in the location during the last pay period in March 1999.

Training agreements: The agreement with the largest bargaining unit defines how educational studies and training will be dealt with.

Training supported by the employer: Training that is provided, funded or assisted by the location.

Turnover rate: Total number of hires and permanent departures between April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999, divided by the average size of the location during this period.

Use of technology: Installation of important new software or computer-run or computer-assisted technology between April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999.

Use of government grants or programs: The establishment benefited from government training programs or training grants.

Appendix C

Cluster analysis

In order to take into account links existing between support for training and business strategies, we built binary variables indicating the type of strategies adopted by the location (or by the firm to which the location belongs). Locations were required to indicate in the WES the relative importance, on a scale of one to six, of 15 business strategies related to research and development, human resources, product quality and cost reduction.

A number of these strategies can be complementary. For that reason, we used a cluster analysis (cf. Arthur, 1992; Ichniowski, 1990). This analysis divides the locations into several groups so that locations in the same group are as similar as possible and locations between each of the groups are as dissimilar as possible. The objective in this case was to divide the locations into separate groups based on the importance attributed to the 15 strategies. To this end, the FASTCLUS procedure was used in SAS. This procedure assigned a location to a group so that the variation within the group (measured by the square of the Euclidean distance from the group mean) was kept to a minimum and the distance between the groups (i.e., the distance between the mean of the groups) was maximized.

Each of the business strategies variables was standardized to a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. This method required the number of desired groups to be specified. We ultimately decided on the analysis with five groups as it provided a good basis for explanation and interesting

characteristics.¹³ The name given to each of the groups reflects the importance attributed to the various business strategies: “Cost reduction strategies only,” “All strategies except research and development,” “All strategies,” “Strategies related to research and development only,” and “No strategy”.

¹³ The results of this analysis are available on request.

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