

Work-Life Balance Policies: Organisational and Human Resource Responses

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Abstract

Work-life balance may not be of organisational importance as other areas in the current economic recession with a labour market abundant in skills. Flexibility contributes to employees work-life balance and the aim of this research is to identify organisational policy responses to work-life balance from external or external pressure.

A case study methodology was utilised from an interpretive perspective and qualitative data was collected via unstructured interviews conducted with two Human Resource managers from different organisations in the same sector. Primary data obtained through unstructured interviews gave the organisational perspective of the research topic and provided an opportunity to explore themes that emerged and probe them further. Secondary data was obtained from the literature, background information on the sector, examination of organisational documentation and theories connected to work-life balance such as social exchange and spillover theory.

Findings were analysed and the research found firstly that work-life balance policies were amended or drafted in response to external factors, such as legislation. Secondly, it was identified that internal pressure from employees experiencing spillover from family to work was accommodated through individual flexible agreements. The findings also identified the role of Human Resource manager as having diminished involvement in Work-life balance policy arrangements.

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed _____

Date _____

Student Number _____

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my daughters Marcella, Melissa and Helena who are a constant reminder of what life is all about and I hope I can provide you with the love and inspiration to succeed.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Fabián Armendáriz for his support and interaction during the research and especially for sharing his expertise on the reflective process of research which is something I have learnt so much from.

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List of Abbreviations

GFC	Global Financial Crisis
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
MNC	Multinational Companies
RBV	Resource Based View

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Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

“People are the lifeblood of organisations” Gunnigle, Heraty and Morley (2011)

1.1 Background to the Research

Goodstein (1994) discusses how historically organisations have always differed in how they responded to work and family issues, from the beginning of the 20th century some companies turned into a society with amenities such as housing provided by employers. The opposite is the case today with the approach to employees being that they are “to be pushed aside and excluded from business” (Goodstein, 1994, p. 354). So with these changes towards employees in the last 100 years, the economic recession of 2008, high unemployment and a labour market rich in skills this research is important because it will be interesting to see how and if organisations respond to employee pressure for work-life balance.

The phrase ‘work-life balance’ is often used in the media and in workplaces, and has become a common term indicating how an organisation looks after its employees, it can be defined as:

“Employees time management, inter-role conflict (role overload and interference) and care arrangements for dependents” (Gregory, Milner and Windebank, 2013, p. 3).

A large amount of research suggests that individuals may experience *conflict* between their work and family roles although it is recognised that both roles are interlinked (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Kanter, 1977). *Exchange theory* has been used to describe the relationship between employers and employees, with the focus on expectations and returns (Blau, 2009) whereas *spillover*, *scarcity* and *expansion theories* are used to explain some of the ways in which the work-life conflict manifests itself (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler and Wethington, 1989; Marks, 1977; Westman, 2001)

Legislative policies have been introduced nationally and on EU level in response to work-life balance such as parental leave and maternity leave. Some suggested work-life balance policies such as “flexibility in the timing, location or amount of work, direct provision of care giving and health benefits” (Ryan and Kossek, 2008, p. 295) have been introduced by employers to accommodate staff work-life balance. With

the changes in the global economy and the economic recession in Ireland, I wondered if work-life balance takes on a lesser importance for organisations and employees as surviving the recession and keeping your job has become the priority for many.

1.2 Research Problem

The “research problem is the specific problem or issue that is the focus of the research” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 112). In order to decide on a research problem I have reviewed the literature and looked at identifying gaps on areas already studied. The areas of work-life balance and Human Resource Management (HRM) are interlinked. Whilst there is a connection between work and life, what does the organisation do to fit into this balance? Or is it up to the employee to fit their life around their work? Is there conflict between the two areas or is it possible to facilitate both? What happens when employees experience pressure from either area, and what is the organisational response? The research problem is focused specifically the role of HRM in relation to employee work-life balance policies.

The problem I hope to solve is firstly, whether Human Resource (HR) policies relating to work-life balance are a response to internal pressure within an organisation to employee’s needs/demands, secondly, whether they are only determined by legislation or thirdly by the organisation itself in response to external pressure.

Following the research conducted for the literature review, I believe this area has not been looked into previously and from my own professional experience, with over 5 years in management in the voluntary sector, I have had direct experience of staff requests directly relating to combining work and family life. I have observed the spillover of pressure from family to work life and resulting conflict. I have often wondered if there is a real connection between work-life balance and HR policies and how have some organisations responded to get the balance right for the organisation and the employee.

1.3 Research Question

The research question at the core of this research is

How does the organisation amend/draft work-life balance policy?

The purpose of the research is to look into the area of work life balance policies and organisational responses. I aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify what work-life balance means to the organisation
- Do work-life balance policies fit into the organisational strategy?
- How does the organisation facilitate work-life balance
- What factors instigate the development of work-life balance policies?
- How does the organisation respond to pressure from employees in relation to work-life balance policies?
- How does the HR role fit into the work-life policy amendment/drafting?

1.4 Research Design

Research design is “a logical plan for getting from here to there” (Yin, 2009, p. 26). The plan adopted for the research design incorporated the research question components and the methods available to complete the research.

An interpretative approach was firstly adopted as this approach gave the opportunity to conduct inductive research, which provides data rich in quality and depth (Collis and Hussey, 2009), a positivist approach would have meant a deductive analysis which would not fit in with the research topic. A qualitative approach to data collection and analysis was chosen as this would provide in depth data from the personal perspective of participants, unlike a quantitative approach which is based on statistics and does not take the individual perspective on board. A case study approach was chosen utilising unstructured interviews as primary data, which were developed utilising the themes which developed from the secondary data such as the literature review. This data was analysed by utilising a

coding approach to identify themes and categorise data (Miles and Huberman, 1984)

1.5 Purpose of the Study

This rationale around this research is to understand whether HR policy development in relation to work-life balance are established/adapted from the employees or from an organisations perspective (internal or external pressure). Legislative regulations from the EU and nationally determine certain obligations pertaining to parental leave, maternity leave, etc. The purpose of this study is to examine, if given that there is spillover of work to home or vice versa, to find out if this has resulted in an organisational response in the form of a policy. It will also be interesting to see if internal/external pressures on organisations create policy changes/implementation and what form these pressures take.

Therefore my research will be successful if I have found that changes have taken place directly as a result of internal/external pressure towards HRM.

1.6 Importance of Study

This study is centred on two organisations in the pharmaceutical sector in Ireland, both are multinational companies (MNC), combined they represent approximately 800 employees of an estimated 25,000 workforce nationally see Appendix A and B. With organisations facing budget cuts and economic uncertainty, employees are working more hours than contracted, so where does work-life balance fit it? (Percival, 2014). The pharmaceutical sector has been seen as performing well during the GFC and therefore is of interest to see how this sector has responded to work-life balance pressures during this time (Gunnigle et al., 2011).

This research is of interest to employees who have their own experience of work-life balance, or are looking into becoming more informed about the area. It is also of interest to organisations looking at either improving work-life balance options for employees or reviewing their work-life balance policies. Academic literature is abundant in research on the area of work-life balance and many of the theories

emerged in the seventies and eighties, this highlights the importance and interest in the topic.

1.7 Structure of the Study

This study is in five chapters, the second chapter outlines the literature reviewed for the research including theories and recent research. Chapter three outlines the research design and methodology utilised and justification of methodology adopted. Chapter four will outline the findings of the research and discuss whether the objectives were met. Chapter Five is the final chapter and summarises the findings, revisits the research problem, outlines the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to review and analyse the main studies which are pertinent to the research problem (Collis & Hussey, 2009). A literature search can be defined as “a critical evaluation of the existing body of knowledge on a topic, which guides the research and demonstrates that relevant literature has been located and analysed” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 302). For this chapter I will firstly outline work-life balance and HRM, secondly I will outline the various theories utilised in the research area, thirdly I will identify and critique the themes emerging from the literature and lastly I will outline the theoretical framework for this research.

2.2 Work-life balance and Human Resource Management

A recent survey found that Irish workers are working six hours extra each week over their contracted hours (Percival, 2014) with this and the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in mind, where and how do work-life balance policies fit into the organisation? Flexible work policies are seen as a central instrument of balancing work and life (Glass and Estes, 1997) but how did this evolve?

Human Resource Management has been a part of Irish management since the early 1900's when the role was initially introduced as a “welfare officer” (Gunnigle, Heraty, and Morely, 2011, p.2). Welfare officers acted on behalf of the welfare of employees, and introduced voluntary schemes to provide better living and working conditions for factory employees, but in modern day, HR acts on behalf of employers (Gunnigle et al, 2011). A systematic approach to employees was developed by Taylor in the inter-war years, which in turn lead to the behavioural science approach which enhanced the role of HR (Gunnigle et al., 2011). Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Quinn-Mills and Walton, (1984) developed the ‘Human Capital Approach’, in that systems are positioned to cultivate this resource, which is seen as a resource based ‘soft’ HRM, unlike Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna (1984) who linked business strategy and HRM, which is associated with ‘hard’ HRM. Guest (1987) is generally the best known and referenced model of ‘hard-soft’, ‘tight-loose’ HRM and emphasises the importance of flexibility in the role of HR. With the foundation of HR in these models, the HR role became a part of business strategy in

Ireland from the 1980s and it was found that during the GFC a combination of Guest's (1987) 'hard-soft' practices were utilised by HR in Ireland (Roche, Teague, Coughlan and Fahy, 2011). Today HRM is defined as:

“A series of activities which: first enables working people and the organisation which uses their skills to agree about the objectives and nature of their working relationship and, secondly, ensures that the agreement is fulfilled” (Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2008, p. 14)

The term “family-friendly” is one we are all familiar with and this was used more in the past to describe how organisations supported those employees with family commitments (Murphy and Doherty, 2011). More recently the term “work-life balance” is used as it includes all employees, in a non-gendered way, not just those with family commitments and includes educational leave, child care and elder care schemes (Daverth, Hyde and Cassell, 2013; Lero, Richardson and Korabik, 2009).

Work-family balance can be defined as:

“the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional and behavioural demands of both paid work and family responsibilities” (Hill, Hawkins, Ferries and Weitzman, 2001, p. 50)

Another more recent definition states that work-life balance includes “employees time management, inter-role conflict (role overload and interference) and care arrangements for dependents” (Gregory, Milner and Windebank, 2013, p. 3). Whatever definition utilised, for this literature review terms such as *flexibility* and *work-family* will be used to describe work-life balance (Lero et al., 2009)

Early literature from Kanter (1977) on organisational history, suggests that not only does family influence work, but both are *integrated* in organisations that are family owned, such as large organisations or farms. Greenhaus and Beutell, (1985) suggest that there is a conflict between work and family, hence the term *work-family conflict* which is defined as “a norm of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus

and Beutell, 1985, p. 77). The option of flexitime is a suggestion to lessen the work-family conflict (Parayitam and Narender, 2008). The combination of an integrated influence and conflict as approaches to work and family, provides an interesting perspective on how some companies still endeavour to provide their staff with initiatives such as part-time work, job sharing, work from home, mobile working and flexitime as part of their commitment to work-life balance (Murphy and Doherty, 2011). But do employees gain from these initiatives?

Research conducted by Russell, O'Connell and McGinnity (2009) into the area of flexible working conditions lessening work-life conflict, found that if employees have a larger amount of flexible work policies it will result in reduced work pressure. They concluded that legislative conditions in Ireland were negligible and employer's policies were vital as a result (Russell et al., 2009).

A suggestion by Munn (2013) relating to the view that work-life is a "system in which each part of work and life is interdependent with the other parts of the system" (Munn, 2013, p. 403) suggests that employees, organisations and government are linked through work-life balance, work-life schemes and work-life arrangements and found that work-life balance policies clearly had an encouraging consequence for the employee and the organisation. Gunnigle et al., (2011) suggest that tension exists between both areas of work and life and most research is centred on this pressure which results in stress, this is supported by Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux and Brinley (2005) who in contrast also found emerging evidence of the support between work and family. So why is there so much focus on the negative consequences of work-life balance, and can theories used in relation to work-life balance research provide further evidence?

2. 3 Theories

2.3.1 Social Exchange

Blau (2009) refers to social exchange as "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do" (Blau, 2009, p.

91). Blau (2009) further explains that social exchange differs to economic exchange as it contains both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Therefore social exchange creates an act that is required to be returned, is based in largely on trust, and the idea of providing a benefit to another will develop a connection and authority in the future, but only if the benefit is given in response (Blau, 2009). As an employee – employer relationship is involved in social exchange, this theory is an example of how this relationship is enriched and how the employee may feel a sense of worth which is repaid through their work performance. Groups in social exchange, for example an employee group can put pressure on the employer (this could be for greater flexibility) and the employer will give in to this pressure in the exchange relationship (Blau, 2009). Yasbek (2004) explains this exchange framework as both the employer providing a favour in the form of work-life balance policies and the employees repaying the favour with more energy which results in escalated productivity.

2.3.2 Scarcity & Expansion

Scarcity theory (Marks, 1977) is based on energy and sees energy as a resource which is ‘spent’ and ‘drained’ then refilled daily, some get overload problems and others have varying levels of high and low energy. In addition, *Expansion theory* looks at the way in which some family activities can produce more energy “because of the sympathy therein” (Marks, 1977, p. 925). The suggestion that an accommodating and understanding environment will provide an individual with more energy (Marks, 1977, p. 925), could be inter related to scarcity theory in that one compensates another in the form of energy. This could be used to explain the variation in work-life balance.

2.3.3 Spillover & Crossover

Spillover theory, suggests that stress experienced in one area of life causes stress in the other area, this is supported by Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler and Wethington (1989), in their research into home to work spillover found a direct link between stress at home meaning stress at work (Westman, 2001). Research into spillover identified that generally employees found that family affected them at work (Crouter, 1984), yet Yasbek (2004) found that some work-life balance policies lessen negative spillover from employee lives resulting in output improvements which would support a case for work-life balance policies.

Westman (2001) refers to spillover also as *Crossover theory* and some evidence shows that work related stress will also cause stress at home (Williams and Alliger, 1994). This can be also be called *mood spillover* and research found that moods from both domains had an impact on each other (Ilies, Wilson and Wagner, 2009; Crouter, 1984) although Bolger et al., (2009) found that women were better at containing overloads than men, Williams and Alliger (1994) agreed that there was clear negative mood spillover but they found in contrast, a slight spillover of positive moods (Eby et al., 2005). Contrastingly Williams and Alliger, (1994) found that work affected family more than family affected work and found that juggling caused interference between the roles of employed parents. Williams, Suls, Alliger, Learner, and Wan, (1991) defined role juggling as “the interruption of one role by the demands of another” and thus finding the same as Westman (2001) and Bolger et al., (1989) that family intrudes on work. Thomas and Ganster (1995) use the term *work-family conflict* to explain spillover and explain the term as pressure from work to family (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). With opposing views on spillover, it is evident that spillover from one role to another is supported by the research yet there are contrasting findings.

Interestingly another theory with the opposite opinion is the *Segmentation model*, which sees work and family as two disconnected and unique fields which have no influence on each other (Kirrane and Buckley, 2004), although apart from this particular research I could not find other evidence to support this.

2.3.4 Psychological Contract

Work-life balance can be seen from the perspective of the psychological contract which is defined as “individuals beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding the terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organization” (Rousseau, 1995, p. 9). This perspective focusses primarily on the employees’ relationship with the employer and on the common expectations of fairness and equilibrium observed by the employee involving how the employee is dealt with by the employer and what the employee places into the work. Recent research asks that given psychological contracts are formed with employers (Holliday Wayne et al., 2013) this raises the question of what expectations employees have of employers in relation to work-life balance.

So with these theories in mind, it is obvious that there are various approaches to the area of work-life balance. Whether this area experiences conflict, scarcity, expansion, spillover, crossover or social exchange, there appears to be a broad connection between work and family life (Blau, 2009; Holliday Wayne, Casper, Matthews and Allen, 2013; Marks, 1977; Westman, 2001).

2.4 Organisational HR Policy

The approach to HR policy development varies from organisation to organisation and it is suggested that the approach is impacted by environmental factors which in turn influence the choice of business strategy and finally HR policy (Gunnigle et al., 2011). This framework can be used to trace the approach taken by organisations in the external environment (such as economic conditions), the internal environment (such as established HR practices) and finally HRM policy choice (such as the role of HR function) (Gunnigle et al., 2011) see Appendix A. Within this framework, Storey (1992) has outlined a model of HR types (see figure below) which labels the HR role into the following:

Levels:

Tactical/Strategic: HR role makes decisions or offers support at tactical or strategic level;

Interventionary/non-interventionary: How proactive the HR role is in the organisation;

Function:

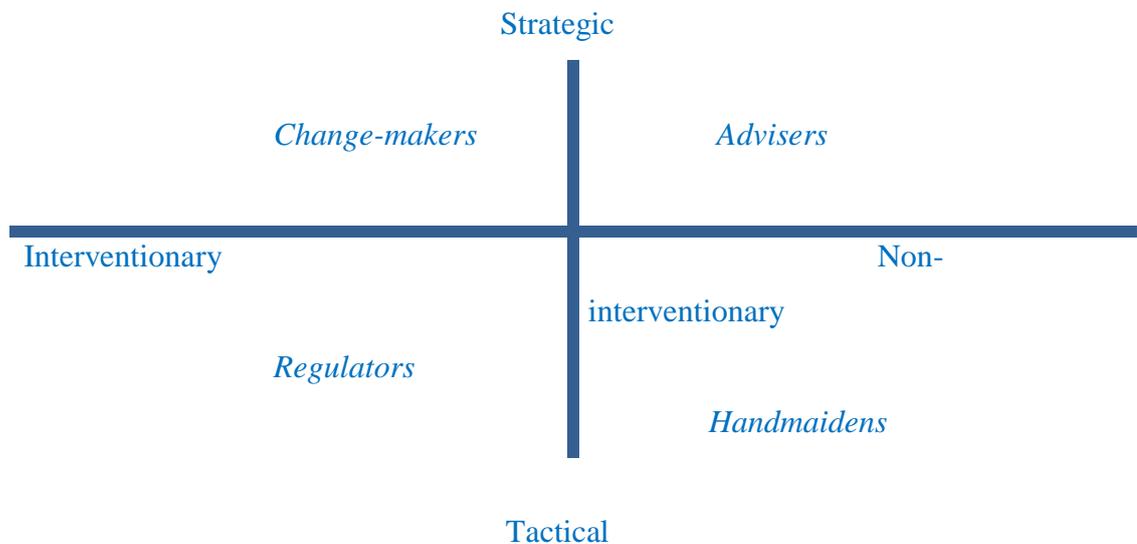
Advisers: a supportive consultancy approach to line and general management;

Handmaidens: reactive to needs of line managers for operational purposes, Storey (1992) suggests this role is found in organisations where HR role has been diminished;

Regulators: ensures the smooth running of the organisation, important at operational level but not at strategic level;

Change-makers: highest level of HR role, contains both 'soft' and 'hard' levels of HR, extremely interventionist and strategic;

Storey's matrix of HR Types



(Adapted from Gunnigle et al., 2011, p.40)

2.5 Organisational Policy

Within the resource based view of the firm (RBV) (Barney, 1991; Gunnigle et al., 2011) human resources can be seen as having intangible resources, which themselves are a source of competitive advantage (only if sustainable). Competitive advantage can be defined as “implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors” (Barney, 1991, p. 102). Perry-Smith and Blum (2000) found evidence of the link between work-life policy packages and competitive advantage, they argue that work-life policies represent support to those employees availing of them and they may feel they are receiving preferential favours, which cannot be simply replicated. Increasingly work-life balance policies are adopted as an essential component of organisational strategy and are seen as a “key source of competitive advantage in the recruitment marketplace” (Lero et al., 2009, p. 67) alongside competitive compensation bundles (Yasbek, 2004).

Organisations that had a larger variety of work-life policies had elevated operations and turnover (Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000). Glass and Estes (1997) reported that

two thirds of Fortune 500 companies had introduced some element of work-family procedures as a means to staying viable in the labour market. Lero et al, (2009) suggest that organisations acknowledge the challenges employees experience and are looking to merge work and non-work pursuits which has led to employers utilising their support for work-life balance as a means to draw and keep employees.

Atkinson's Flexible Firm model has had a strong influence on flexible working during the 1980s and 1990s (Maxwell, 2005; Gunnigle et al., 2011), this model is divided into two parts: core and peripheral employees, core meaning the full time permanent employees and peripheral meaning the flexible employees that can be downsized or increased rapidly, and is attributed to competitive pressures. The flexible firm provides the company with two sets of strategies and is attributed to the introduction of alternative working arrangements such as home-working and the introduction of non-standard contracts (Gunnigle et al., 2011).

Maxwell (2005) surmised that that managers play a key role in the introduction, development, and operating flexibility, an organisational benefit identified was reduced expenses for office space. Reduced absenteeism was found to be a direct consequence of introducing organisational flexibility (Arnott and Emmerson, 2001; Kandola and Fullerton, 1998; Yasbek, 2004) and improved work-life balance possibly lead to better self-confidence and health, greater productivity and better organisational commitment (Kandola and Fullerton, 1998; Yasbek, 2004; Marks, 1977).

So if family to work spillover weakens the organisation by “affecting absenteeism, productivity at work and turnover” (Glass and Estes, 1997, p. 296) and productivity loss, there are very few findings suggesting advantages from introducing work-life balance procedures (Yasbek, 2004). In response suggestions such as better *structures* for employees and organisational involvement could enable employees gain more control over work and non-work domains (Williams and Alligner, 1994). Meanwhile with the increase in work progressively being brought home, the consequence is blurring between “time and space boundaries” (Ilies et al., 2009, p. 99) organisations are looking at developing approaches and instruments which justify this connection, such as flexitime and child care arrangements (Paravitam, 2008). This blurring will

ultimately result in larger spillover although a mood restoration approach for employees has been suggested as a way of managing this (Ilies et al., 2009, p. 99).

The connection between *job satisfaction* and better moods at home was attributed to *flexible* work arrangements resulting in employee well-being (Ilies, Wilson and Wagner, 2009), in addition Fang and Lee (2007) established that flexible working hours increased output and policies relating to care, strengthened job fulfilment and self-esteem. Although Barry, Tiernan and Conlon, (2005) found that there were a restricted amount of flexible working arrangements for employees, employers did acknowledge the work-life balance advantages in relation to employee satisfaction, attraction and retention as well as increased efficiency, decreased hiring and firing, stronger branding and decreased absence (Barry et al., 2005; Lero, Richardson and Korabik, 2009; French and Daniels, 2006; Fang and Lee 2000; Glass and Estes 1997 ;Thomas and Ganster, 1995; Yasbek, 2004).

A work-life balance policy can be defined as:

“Any organizational programs or officially sanctioned practices designed to assist employees with the integration of paid work with other important life roles such as family, education or leisure” (Ryan and Kossek 2008, p. 295)

Yasbek, (2004) suggests that organisations struggle with the beneficial effects of work-life balance policies as costs are simpler to distinguish and calculate, but in their absence costs associated with work-life conflict will be carried by both the organisation from decreased output and the employee’s life outside work. Yasbek (2004) concludes that the business advantages for introducing work-life balance policies are both robust and growing.

2.6 Work-life Balance Policies and Role of HR

Budd and Mumford (2006) in their research into accessibility and availability of family-friendly work practices found that influences such as European Union legislation, growing number of aged in population and employee groups have led to the greater pressure for work-life balance policies. The presence of both HR and union representatives influenced apparent ease of access to family-friendly policies (Budd and Mumford, 2006), supervisor and organisational support are linked to work-life balance practices (Lero et al., 2009) and the presence of a HR representative who saw work-family matters as affecting organisational output if ignored, was connected to the availability of flexible work policies (Milliken et al., 1998). Managers decide who can avail of these policies (Drew and Daverth, 2009; Hill, Hawkins and Ferris, 2001), and although policies may be available and utilised, they may result in additional workloads for supervisors and employees, although some employees are unaware of what work-life balance policies are accessible to them (Drew and Daverth, 2009; Ryan and Kossek, 2008).

Implementing a single policy without other organisational supports will not aid the organisation (Glass and Estes, 1997; Ryan and Kossek, 2008), *trust* is essential in an organisation facilitating work-life balance policies (Drew and Daverth, 2009) and child care schemes were identified as work-family policy of value to an organisation and cost effective (Goodstein, 1994). Work-life balance policies can be theorised into two sections, structural *HR policy* and cultural *informal such as manager support* (Daverth, Hyde and Cassell, 2013; Thomas and Ganster, 1995).

The absence of work-life policies result in the spillover of negativity from home which affects productivity at work (Yasbek, 2004) and the introduction of work-life balance policies will reduce work-life conflict as they serve to balance these conflicts (Fang and Lee, 2007) along with providing noteworthy benefits in relation to employee's feelings and health (Thomas and Ganster, 1995) but policy adoption does not guarantee employee staffing, contentment or retention (Ryan and Kossek, 2008) So if there are benefits associated with the introduction of work-life balance policies, why are they not present in all organisations?

Research found that the HR role can provide support and increase to the possibility of entry to flexible arrangements but did not increase the use of these arrangements (Berg, Kossek, Misra and Belman, 2014) whereas Lero et al., (2009) states that supervisory support or absence of same will play a more important role in the uptake of work-life balance policies than the existence of these schemes. At the same time the HR representative's understanding of strategic matters was cited as an explanation of the inconsistency in organisational responses to work-life balance matters (Milliken et al., 1998) which fits into the RBV of the firm and the Human Capital Resources associated within, including managers in the firm and their awareness (Barney, 1991).

French and Daniels (2006) found that a lack of information available to employees on their legal rights had a direct consequence on a better quality of work-life balance but Lero et al., (2009) found that HR managers looked to implementing policies that are applicable to all employees. Lero, Richardson and Korabik (2009) found a link between larger organisational sectors such as pharmaceuticals and finance and widespread work-life policies (Goodstein, 1994; Barry et al., 2005) although Barry et al., (2005) research found large organisations introduced policies as a response to internal or individual pressure although their research was focused on child care arrangements.

2.7 Flexibility and its connection to work-life balance

Workplace flexibility such as “Flexitime, voluntary shifts to part-time work, job sharing and flexible leaves” (Goodstein, 1994, p. 354) are being used as a response to employees demands for work-life balance which are also linked to the strategic preference of the organisation (Barry et al., 2005). Flexitime can be defined as operating in a way that employees work core hours every week, that these may vary from a certain day or week once they are completed (Barry et al., 2005; Eldridge and Nisar, 2011). The term *flexplace* means flexibility in the location of work (Hill et al., 2001) broadly defined “as giving the employees varying degrees of control over where their work is done” (Hill et al., 2001, p. 51) this includes a *virtual office* where

the employer provides the means for employees to do their work from anywhere whenever they choose.

So with so many types of flexibility available what does this mean for employees? White, Hill, McGovern, Mill and Smeaton (2003) found that *flexibility* had a direct link to reducing negative spill-over for women, but Hill et al., (2001) found no connection between gender and flexibility as both responded at the same level. Eldridge and Nisar (2011) found that flexitime was a significant element of work-life balance bundle for all employees which was supported by Goodstein, (1994) who found that the amount of parents in an organisation had no connection to organisational responses. Support for work-life schemes is given by Munn (2009) who states that all parents should have access to flexibility. There was a direct link identified between flexible working and a healthy work-life balance which adds to the value of the policy (French and Daniels, 2006; HR Focus, 2009).

Research conducted in 2013 found that employees were looking to avail of 'mobile working' in order to obtain greater flexibility, and argued this would contribute to enhanced work-life balance for employees and an inclusive place of work (Burberry, 2013; Ryan and Kossek, 2008). In contradiction, flexitime organisations reported a higher level of stress and there was no connection between flexitime and work-life balance, instead they found a connection between flexitime policies and challenging work environments (Eldridge and Nisar, 2011). Other research indicates that employees have an advantageous work-life balance as a result of flexible working, are more content, healthy and in turn attract the best talent (Percival, 2014), yet the largest barrier for organisations to introduce flexible approaches was loss of control (Burberry, 2013).

A link between the increase of women in employment and the pressures of the issue of work-life balance was made by Barry et al., (2005) but earlier research did not find a connection (Milliken, Martins and Morgan, 1998). Although they found that work-life balance schemes in Ireland were mainly informal, they did find that flexible working arrangements were more prevalent in the public sector rather than the private sector (Barry et al., 2005). Identification of the negative contribution of commuting time on employee's work-life balance and the connection between

availing of certain work-life balance policies due to the possible damaging effect on career advancement was established (Barry et al., 2005; Glass and Estes, 1997). Interestingly Hill et al., (2001) connected flextime and the daily commute as contributing to employees reduced stress levels and work-life balance.

2.8 Recession and work-life balance

Cuts to public policy affected welfare and care arrangements during the recession which began in 2008, this raised the issue of work-life balance being something that is introduced when times are good and taken away when times were hard, and resulted in employees having difficulty balancing work and lives (Gregory, Milner and Windebank, 2013). Employees were also reluctant to utilise work-family policies during a recession (Milliken et al., 1998) and employers reluctant to adopt and promote same (Murphy and Doherty, 2011). Budget cuts implemented in organisations directly affect employees who compare their pay with their work input into a company and find that their inputs are higher in contrast to the rest of the market, this affects their work-life balance (Bhave, Glomb and Kramer, 2013) which is directly related to social exchange (Blau, 2009).

Globalisation and economic reform encourage employers to intensify output and exercise more control over costs and these goals are in opposition to employees efforts to obtain a greater work-life balance (Glass and Estes, 1997) so combined with economic uncertainty, employees working more hours than they did ten years ago and cuts to employee levels, should the organisation be concerned about employee work-life balance policies now and into the future? (Chalofsky and Cavallaro, 2013). During the recession the largest obstacle to the adoption of work-life balance was the economy, and at the same time with the abundance of labour available the “control will lie with the employer” (Murphy and Doherty, 2011, p. 271). Should employers look to fit strategies towards employees given that work and family are interdependent (Chalofsky and Cavallaro, 2013; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) and how far does the organisation need to go to support employees when resources are already strained?

2.9 Technology

Research undertaken in 2014 points towards Irish employees working six extra hours weekly than contracted and attributes this to technology and mobile working (Percival, 2014), Eldridge and Nisar, (2011) found that British employees were also working longer hours and looked towards flexitime as a solution, French and Daniels (2006) and Hill et al., (2001) also identified employees working longer hours, but identified that with technology employees could work longer without their work-life balance being affected.

Technology is attributed to the flexibility of working from home and can positively affect work-life balance (Hill et al., 2001) although Drew and Daverth (2009) link technology with increased workloads and stress, implementing flexplace saved employers money and made business sense (Hill et al., 2001), but can isolate the employee as they are not attached to the organisation (Ryan and Kossek, 2008). Some business would not introduce policies unless there of financial benefit and overall they found that flexibility “in timing and location of work decreases employees sense of stress at meeting the needs of work and family” (Hill et al., 2001, p. 56).

2.10 Conclusion

Conflicting evidence in relation to work-life balance policies originating in the variety of approaches adopted including gender, partner status, employee commitment, job satisfaction, mentoring, spousal support, supervisor support, parental life stages and work-family conflict (Darcy and McCarthy, 2007; Murphy and Doherty, 2011; Kirrane and Buckley 2004; deJanasz, Behson, Jonsen and Lankau, 2013). Also in the various research methods such as survey's, interviews and focus groups, inclusion or exclusion of theory has contributed to the conflicting evidence that was identified in the literature sourced for this literature review. For example Kirrane and Buckley, (2004) found that partner support contributed to the increase of experienced work-family conflict whereas (Holliday Wayne et al., 2013),

found that family support paid off in terms of promoting employee commitment. It was found by Lewis and Smithson (2001) that national responses to work-life balance differs and concluded that a sense of “entitlement to support for reconciling work and family varied among the participants in different national contexts” (Lewis and Smithson, 2001, p. 1456), so in relation to globalisation and the presence of Multinational Companies – does this research highlight the challenges for combining work-life balance and HRM role in a global context?

2.11 Theoretical Framework

The approach I have adopted to analyse my data is interpretive and will be outlined in the next chapter – Methodology. As an interpretive methodology utilises an inductive approach, a theoretical framework will not be defined before I commence my data analysis, this is called a grounded approach (Saunders et al., 2009). The grounded approach is not defined in advance and relationships between the data and research questions will be analysed as theory emerges from the data collection and analysis, this will be conducted in Chapter Four – Findings.

2.12 Summary

This chapter has outlined the area of work-life balance and HRM, theories related to the research problem, offered a critique for the themes which emerged from the literature and outlined the theoretical framework for the research to be conducted. The next chapter will outline the methodology adopted to collect and analyse the data.

Chapter Three
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction:

Having reviewed the literature from the previous chapter, I have identified themes which are relevant to the selection of research methodology. A methodology is “an approach to the process of the research, encompassing a body of methods” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 73). Research can be defined as “the systematic collection and interpretation of information with a clear purpose, to find things out” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 600). The objective of my research is to provide answers to my research question and the selection of methodology was linked to both this and my literature review. Firstly I will outline my research paradigm and the reasons for choosing an interpretivist approach to my research. I will outline the approaches of qualitative and quantitative, the reasons and rationale for choosing a qualitative approach and analysis utilising unstructured interviews as a data collection tool. Finally I will detail the limitations related to my research design and discuss the credibility of my research findings.

3.2 Research Paradigm

In order to investigate my research question I have identified a research paradigm to facilitate this. A research paradigm “is a framework that guides how research should be conducted, based on peoples philosophies and their assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 55). The research paradigm I have chosen for this dissertation is interpretive, interpretivism involves “an inductive process with a view to providing interpretive understanding of social phenomena within a particular context” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 55). This particular paradigm fits into the research problem which will investigate the relationship between the organisational responses to work-life balance policies.

At the opposite end of interpretivism is positivism which “involves a deductive process with a view to providing explanatory theories to understand social phenomena” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 56). Positivism lends itself to a subjective approach providing the research with a process based in logic or inference, this approach does not fit into my research objectives as I intend to utilise an inductive approach, which will provide a collective assertion from

examined cases, see table 1 below for approaches and characteristics of each paradigm (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Another reason for choosing interpretivism as a framework is the various methodologies which are used, for example Action Research, Grounded theory and Case Studies whereas in a positivist study the use of Surveys, Experimental and Cross-sectional studies are utilised (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Table 1: Approaches and Characteristics of Paradigms

Approaches	
<i>Positivism</i>	<i>Interpretivism</i>
Quantitative	Qualitative
Objective	Subjective
Scientific	Humanist
Traditionalist	Phenomenological
Characteristics	
Use large samples	Use small samples
Artificial location	Natural location
Concerned with hypothesis testing	Concerned with generating theories
Produce precise, objective, quantitative data	Produce ‘rich’, subjective, qualitative data
Produce results with high reliability but low validity	Produce findings with low reliability but high validity

(Adapted from Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 58 and 62)

3.2.1 Qualitative & Quantitative Research

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are broadly used in business research and distinguish the data collection and data analysis methods (Saunders et al., 2009). Qualitative data “are data in nominal form” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 63), and quantitative data “are data in numerical form” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 63).

In an interpretivist paradigm the data collected will be abundant in factors and differences and “quality and depth” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 64). Qualitative research is also referred to as an *Emotionalist Model* of research, which “prioritises the study of perceptions meanings and emotions” (Silverman, 2005, p. 10), these aspects of qualitative research fits in with my research question. For the purpose of my research a qualitative approach will enable me to clarify the thoughts and feelings of the interviewees, whereas a quantitative approach will only provide me with statistical data.

3.2.2 Case Study

With the above approaches and characteristics in mind, I have decided to use a case study approach to collect and analyse my data. A case study can be defined as:

“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p.18)

Positivism utilises methodologies such as *experimental study* or *survey* which provide structured and disconnection from the participant, a case study allows the researcher to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2009, p. 4) which will add to my findings, as I aim to gather data from the perspective of the themes involved from a personal point of view (Saunders, et al., 2009). Silverman (2005) advises that the researcher choose a method that is linked to what the research is investigating, therefore having established that the research is dependent on the respondents own experiences, whether personally or professionally, provides another reason to choose a case study approach.

A case study approach not only provides the option to produce answers to “the question ‘why’ as well as the ‘what’ and ‘how’” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 146) but also the option of utilising a number of data collection methods, it is also an approach many researchers have adopted in the area of work-life balance and

HRM for example Murphy and Doherty, (2011); Daverth, Hyde and Cassell, (2013) and Maxwell (2005).

Having chosen a single case as my approach this provides the opportunity to “analyse a phenomenon” (Saunders et al., 2009 p. 146) that is characteristic of the approach used in the area of work-life balance, which is appropriate to my research question. This approach of *explanatory case study* provides an opportunity to both question current theory and use it “to understand and explain what is happening” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p.82) and often contains interviews “where you want your interviewees to explain or build on their responses” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 324)

Other approaches I could choose in an interpretivist paradigm such as *Ethnography*, which is based on *participant observation* over a long period of time, but due to both time constraints and the fact that from the literature review there was no evidence of this approach being taken by other research, this was not chosen (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Another approach such as *Feminist* or *Gender* studies has been utilised as identified through my literature review (see Smithson and Stokoe 2005; Russell et al., 2009) but this approach from a gender perspective was not appropriate to my research question so this approach was not selected as a result.

3.3 Sample

A ‘population’ is a “defined body of people or objects under consideration for statistical purposes” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 62) or “the full set of cases from which a sample is taken” (Saunders et al, 2009, p. 212). A ‘sample’ is a “subset of a population chosen with the intention of carrying out research” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 62). With this in mind, the following outlines the approach I took to select my sample:

3.3.1 Self-selection

I used a method of *self-selection* to select my sample, this involves permitting each individual “to identify their desire to take part in the research” (Saunders et

al., 2009, p. 241). This process involved two steps, firstly I emailed colleagues/professionals who were actively working in the field of HR and invited them to participate in the research, a total of eight invitations were emailed see Appendix B. After one week I resent the invitation to those who had not responded as a reminder to them. I received three responses in total. Secondly, I arranged interviews with those who responded and agreed to participate in the research. I utilised this approach as it provided me with participants who have “feelings or opinions about the research question(s)” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 241) and by identifying those in the role of HR who were interested in work-life balance, this in turn fit into my research question.

From reviewing the literature, I established that the research is not dictated by sample size, as various sample sizes can be used, from the literature reviewed samples varied from sample of interviews with 13 senior managers (Murphy and Doherty, 2011) to 30 managers (Daverth, Hyde and Cassell, 2013). I decided to conduct my research by interviewing HR managers as I believe that they have first-hand knowledge and experience of developing and implementing work-life balance policies, as well as first-hand experience of employee interaction. Out of the three respondents, two were working within the same sector, pharmaceutical; I decided to select these two respondents as the research could possibly be reflective of the sector. Both respondents requested that their organisation remain confidential in my research report.

3.4 Setting

The ‘setting’ refers to where the research will be conducted, and for the purpose of this research the location will be in a natural setting, in other words in the employees workplace. I chose this setting for two reasons, one was to help the interviewee feel at ease during the interview as they were in a natural environment, second, I believe this natural location will provide the most accurate data as it is in a real-life context. I am aware that the setting of the interview may impact the data I gather and with this in mind I believe this natural location kept the interviewee focused on the organisational aspect of the interview (Saunders, et al., 2009)

3.5 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Two types of data were collected for this research, primary data “are data collected from an original source” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 23) which is an unstructured interview and secondary data “data collected from an existing source” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 23) which are literature, background information on the sector being researched and organisational policies.

Secondary Data

The secondary data collected for the literature review was conducted by firstly:

- Narrowing down the literature by utilising key words such as *work-life balance, human resources, policy*
- The geographical area of the research was relevant and narrowed down to include Europe and US
- The timeframe for searching the literature varied from the seminal works found to more recent literature in order to keep the literature as up to date as possible.

Strengths

The above process provided research relevant to the topic and similar in themes

Weakness

This method is time consuming and although some literature appeared similar in topic they were not relevant to the research question.

Primary Data

The themes identified from the secondary data, formed the direction of my unstructured interviews and served as a guide to identify themes as they arose during the interview that I could probe further see Appendix C. Probes would help to both guide and maintain interactions between myself and the interviewee as themes emerged throughout the interview and which will be beneficial in the analytical stage of the research (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

3.5.1. Pilot Study

A pilot survey was carried out in April 2014, this method was utilised to gather information on employee work-life balance and work-life conflict, see Appendix D. The online survey was administered to two organisations, one private and one public in order to gain a perspective on work-life balance, the response rate was 15% and 35% respectively. This provided me with data which needed to be explored further which formed the rationale of utilising an interview focusing on the organisational perspective of work-life balance.

3.5.2 Interview

Interviews are a widely utilised method of data collection in the area of social studies and in qualitative research, providing a key source of case study data which is sound and consistent (King, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009; Yin, 2009) see for example Murphy and Doherty (2011) and Daverth, Hyde and Cassell, (2013). An “interview is a method for collecting primary data” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 144) and the questions contained in the interview provided me with an opportunity to find out what the respondents “think or feel” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 144). The aim of this method of research is to observe the area from the view of the interviewee in order to comprehend how they have arrived at this specific viewpoint, whilst it acknowledges that people enjoy to converse about their work with concerned parties it is also a method that respondents agree to willingly (King, 2004). This method is an important part of an interpretivist study as it is involved in understanding connotations that the interviewee attributes to the topic (Saunders et al., 2009) which is what my research will focus on.

Unstructured Interview

In the selection of interview questions I used open-ended questions which would be used on a small sample (Silverman, 2005; Saunders et al., 2009). The ‘unstructured interview’ represents an interview based on “questions that have not been prepared beforehand but evolve during the course of the interview” (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p.144), to facilitate identifying themes connected with the secondary data I narrowed down these themes into sections and composed an unstructured interview from these themes, using open ended questions to enable

the interviewee to further detail their response (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Saunders et al., 2009).

The advantages of an unstructured interview were that I could probe themes further and draw out what the interviewees interpretation of the topic were, if I had used a focused interview I would not have had this flexibility as I would have to utilise “a certain set of questions derived from the case study protocol” (Yin, 2009 p. 107). Also the topics the interviewee brought up could be explored in an inductive way unlike a *self-report questionnaire* where the responses are generalised as to the question being asked. A disadvantage identified was that not all interviewees are easy to probe questions to. Although compared to the advantages of using a self-report questionnaire where the respondent cannot wander and the researcher controls the data, the disadvantage is that the data will be non-reflective and themes cannot be explored.

The research data was gathered performing unstructured interviews and access to organisational policies see Appendix E. I recorded the interviews with the interviewees consent and utilised a Dictaphone to collect the data and these recordings would be utilised to transcribe my interviews see Appendix F. Interviews were conducted on 26th of June, 2nd of July and 3rd of July 2014. Miles and Huberman (1994) acknowledge that identifying recurring features in the data may be difficult due to the varied approaches one can utilise, with this in mind I approached the process as per Miles and Huberman (1994) guidelines and utilised the following steps to analyse the interview data:

- Go through the data examining it for related themes, definite variations and similarities
- Separate these themes and variations which was done by cutting out the themes and grouping them together
- Compare the themes and variations with the literature reviewed along with the recognised theories and concepts
- Contrast those that are similar and different

Advantages

It clearly identifies themes from the research which the interviewee has given and works directly with the data.

Disadvantages

It is very time consuming and you need to see themes in the context they are said before making judgments as to what the interviewee meant by their response (Miles and Huberman, 1994; King, 2009). Also the interviewee is in control of the data unlike in a focused interview or self-report questionnaire (Yin, 2009).

3.6 Data Quality

3.6.1 Generalisability

Generalisability can also be referred to as “external validity” “whether your findings may be equally applicable to other research settings, such as other organisations” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 158). My case study research is conducted in two organisations, this is a small amount and generalisability will not be as high as in a case study of a large number of organisations. Although the sectors are the same in my research this shows that the research could be utilised to reflect this sector. In order to look at the credibility of my findings (Saunders et al., 2009) I have paid particular attention to reliability and validity:

3.6.2 Reliability

Saunders et al, 2009, (p. 156) states “reliability refers to the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings” and its objective is to reduce the inaccuracies and unfairness in a research study (Yin, 2009). The use of qualitative research utilising unstructured interviews will be unable to provide “statistical generalisations about the whole population” (Yin, 2009, p. 327) especially when the research is undertaken in a small setting as is frequently the situation in case study research (Yin, 2009). Data quality issues in relation to reliability in unstructured interviews are also taken into consideration in this research design (Saunders et al, 2009; Yin 2009) such as:

Participant error: this relates to how the interviewee feels the day of the interview in relation to the research topic or that other company matters are more important. Therefore I carefully arranged the interview at a time and date that suited the interviewee so as they were prepared in that space on the day.

Participant bias: this relates to the interviewee stating what the company wants them to say or what they feel I want to hear, to avoid this I have assured anonymity to all interviewees in order to enable them to speak freely.

Observer error: by utilising an unstructured approach to interviews I have avoided the possibility of asking the question in different ways in order to keep the interviews consistent. I have utilised my skills learnt throughout my professional career and was aware that my body language could influence the interviewee as well as the language I used.

Observer bias: It is an important part of the research to understand the interviewees “knowledge and experience” (Yin, 2009, p. 327) in order to deduce and interpret their knowledge from their perspective. In order to achieve as high a level of reliability as possible I have conducted the interviews in the same manner and used the techniques of clarifying, queried the interpretation of responses and themes were discussed from different viewpoints (Yin, 2009). In order to negotiate how to interpret the data in the same way for each interview, I utilised the approach outlined in my measures section which is recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994).

According to Saunders et al, 2009, they advise that reliability in unstructured interviews is difficult due to the very context of the interview being an active and flexible interaction utilised to fully investigate the theme which subsequently will result in the reproduction of the research being unrealistic “without undermining the strength of this type of research” (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 328). In an interpretivist approach it is believed that the actions of the researcher will affect the research (Collis and Hussey, 2009) although Miles and Huberman (1994) warn of keeping a distance to the research in a qualitative approach.

3.6.3 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which the research results precisely indicated the phenomena which is being examined (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009). In an interpretivist paradigm, the aim is to acquire complete entry to the information and ‘meaning’ of all aspects concerned in the phenomenon and as a result validity is elevated in this paradigm. In order to achieve this I have gained access to organisational policies and procedures which may form part of my secondary data collection. This data along with my primary data from unstructured interviews with HR managers will provide the information required to construct validity.

3.7 Research Ethics

In order to assure interviewees of confidentiality during the process of my research I outlined this in my invitation letter to participate see Appendix B, In addition I reaffirmed this before I began my interviews in order to reassure interviewees and alleviate any concerns they might have. I assured interviewees that the recordings would only identify them as a coded person (e.g. Interviewee A1) and that I held the key for the code along with their information. Any notes that were taken during the interview would also be kept in this way. Prior to commencing my interviews I acknowledged with interviewees that this subject can be a delicate issue and that it would be difficult to talk about without the assurance of confidentiality.

3.7 Limitations of Research Design

The research design provided me with an approach of an unstructured interview to collect my data, unfortunately one interviewee was particularly difficult to draw out and resulted in a very quick interview with data that was evident of the organisational approach and I felt the individuals’ perspective was not reflected in the interview even though I tried to probe further. However in the other interview the unstructured approach worked very well. An approach of having more than one interview would be beneficial in relation to the data as a lot of themes became apparent when transcribing the material and this could be probed further in a follow up interview.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methods and approaches I have taken in order to conduct my research. I have examined at the various steps involved in conducting the research and identified the limitations and ethical issues attached to the research along with the justification for choosing this method. The next chapter will outline the findings as a result of this methodological approach.

Chapter Four
FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Firstly I will outline the themes which emerged from the primary data as a result of the methodological approach of interpretivism. These themes will be individually analysed and in the final section of this chapter I will summarise the *overall analysis*.

4.2 Research Question recalled

The research question at the core of this research is:

How does the organisation amend/draft work-life balance policy?

Sample

The sample for this research is the HR manager in two organisations, both in the pharmaceutical sector. Together these managers represent over 800 employees and both have decided to participate in the research out of interest in the subject matter.

4.3 Themes

The themes identified from the research analysis of the unstructured interviews were grouped see Appendix G, to form the following headings:

- Work-life balance & Flexibility
- Technology
- Organisation
- Policy
- Spillover/Social Exchange
- Recession
- HR role

To display these themes I have utilised a diagram to show the relationship between the themes identified.

4.3.1 Work-life balance & Flexibility

Both interviewees were asked about work-life balance policies in their organisations:

Interviewee A2:

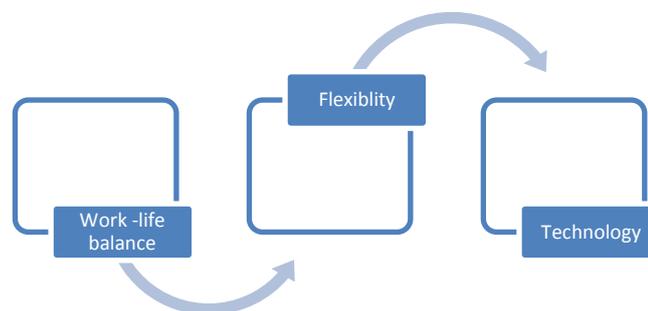
“No – no formal polices in place. Individual managers work with employees for work-life balance. Facilitating days off, appointments, special childcare arrangements etc.”

Interviewee A1:

“I can see there are benefits to work-life balance for the company, such as a more engaged worker”

“sure, what I mean is technology has helped me balance my work and home life”

There has been a link established between flexibility and reducing spillover (White et al., 2003) so in response to work-life balance these organisations are offering flexibility. It is interesting to see the connection between work-life balance, flexibility and technology in this context. In order to look into the theme further I explored technology with both interviewees.



4.3.2 Technology

The theme technology was explored further :

Interviewee A1:

“sure, what I mean is technology has helped me balance my work and home life because the modern technology allows me to work from home, I can only do this with a good broadband and decent laptop. I can sign into the work

network, respond to emails and access IT systems when required, attend web ex meeting and so on. The technology also helps us to monitor time keeping with the use of time management systems therefore encouraging flexitime. Managers can track their employees' hours and monitor and manage any employee who is abusing the system, it also helps the company track hours worked and ensure no one is working too many crazy hours"

"Well its often a good thing because it means that you can work from anywhere with technology so you have a bit of flexibility around your hours for that"

Percival (2014) states that research points to technology and mobile working as contributing to the increase in working hours. Drew and Daverth (2009) also found that ICT added to manager's stress and workloads whereas it can positively affect work-life balance as with interviewee A1 (Hill et al., 2001). Interviewee A2 had a different perspective:

Interviewee A2:

"technology has allowed for greater flexibility but can also mean that the employee is constantly on line / taking calls"

Recent research undertaken has found that Irish employees are working extra hours directly as a result of technology and mobile working (Percival, 2014) which is proven in this sector too. The connection between technology and increased hours was also identified by the interviewees, interviewee A1 said:

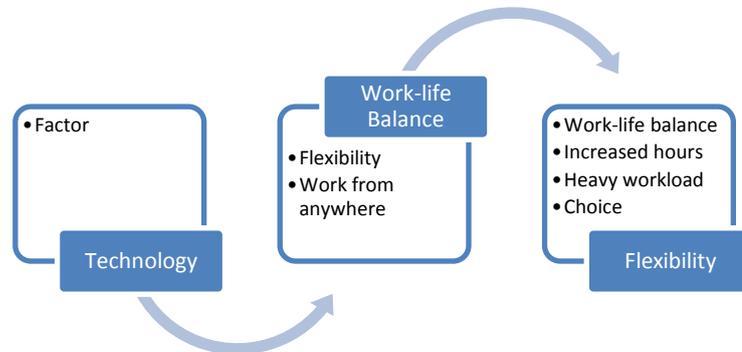
"It's also an advantage that when I've a heavy workload I can choose to go home on time and work additional hours from home if needed, rather than being tied to the desk for additional hours"

Interviewee A2:

"Technology more a factor than ever before. Employers can take advantage of employees that are accessible out of office hours"

“I would be one of those that do more than my contracted hours on a weekly basis”

It was interesting that both interviewees acknowledged that technology had been a factor in working longer hours, but interviewee A1 saw this as being positively related to work-life balance as the extra hours were done from home.



4.3.3 Organisation

The organisational stance on work-life balance and policy implementation emerged from the interviews as:

Interviewee A1:

“I did notice that it wasn’t really talked about – I mean publicised to staff and I think this was because they didn’t want everyone taking leave at the same time”

“this will happen here but historically we have followed the UKs lead on policies”

“well I suppose a lot of our policies are driven from our head office in the US”

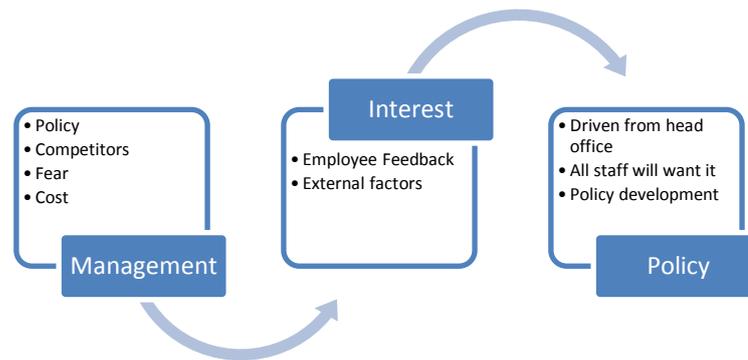
Interviewee A2:

“Management – senior managers can impact on HR policy development depending on what they have an interest in”

“Fear that all employees want flexible working arrangements and possibly the cost involved”

“Employee feedback – linked to competitors. Employees bringing in ideas based on previous employment”

The influence of a manager who sees work-family matters as important has a connection to the flexible work policies as found by Milliken et al., (1998). Burberry, (2013) found a loss of control as a barrier to companies introducing flexible approaches, as the interviewee states the fear from the organisation will hinder more flexible arrangements.



4.3.4 Policy

The development or amendment of HR policies in relation to work-life balance was discussed with the following opinions:

Interviewee A1:

“Well I’ve noticed that any change in the law will change our policies, for example with the parental leave, when that came in we had to change our policies to reflect these options for parents on the site”

“Any flexibility or change in arrangement is only temporary with that individual employee, it does not change our normal policies but we detail an agreement with the individual employee to outline the temporary changes, I mean we have an unwritten policy around flexibility so all the staff know”

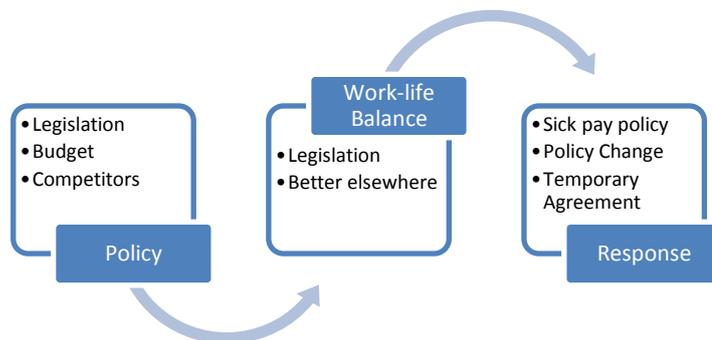
Interviewee A2:

“Legal – for example parental leave. Number of weeks increased which impacted on the parental leave policy that was in place”

“Budget Requirements – for example budget changes affected our sick pay policy”

“Competitors – What competitors are doing or not doing can impact on HR policy. For example an organisation may not offer paternity leave or flexi work arrangements but competitor is. May force you to look at policies to ensure you are an attractive employer”

Hill et al., (2001) found that the availability of flexibility depends on the individual manager, from the interview data above this seems to be the case in this sector too. Maxwell (2005) found that managers play a key role developing and implementing work-life balance policies. Budd and Mumford (2006) highlighted the influence of EU legislation and the link to managers who decide who can avail of these policies is well documented (Drew and Daverth, 2009; Hill, Hawkins and Ferris, 2001). The link between HR and strategy was given as an explanation of the inconsistent approach taken by organisations in response to work-life balance matters and this research shows that with the role of HR in a non-interventionary level, the strategy is not linked to the HR role.



4.3.5 Spillover & Social Exchange

The exchange relationship emerged from the data, as outlined by Blau(2009) social exchange refers to a favour and within the organisation the arrangements around work-life balance bring about returns for the company as outlined below:

Interviewee A1:

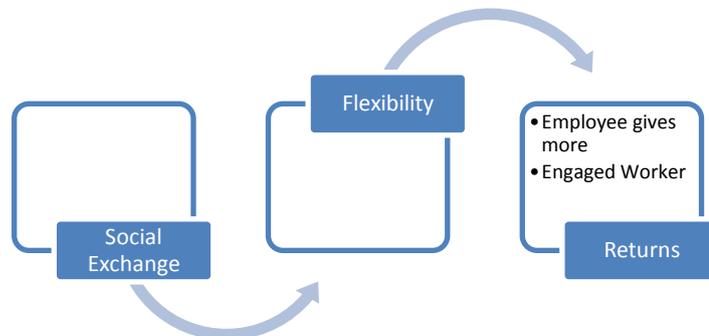
“I can see there are benefits to work-life balance for the company, such as a more engaged worker”

“Flexibility definitely keeps working parents engaged in the workplace”

Interviewee A2:

“The company have the potential to gain from introducing work life balance policies. Employees appreciate that the employer can facilitate them and tend to give more”

Both these statements refer to the social exchange theory (Blau, 2009) and the response by both organisations to the pressures experienced by employee’s show that the exchange relationship results in greater flexibility. This proves that the segmentation model (Kirrane and Buckley, 2004) does not refer to the organisations in this research as work and family are clearly connected. The structures adopted by the two organisations in this research points to the findings of Williams and Alligner (1994) who suggested better structures as a response to enable employees to gain more control over work and non-work domains.



Spillover:

Spillover related to stress experienced in one area causing stress in another area (Crouter, 1984) and this aspect has been well researched in the area of work-life balance so it was interesting to see if HR managers had any experience of it first-hand:

Interviewee A1:

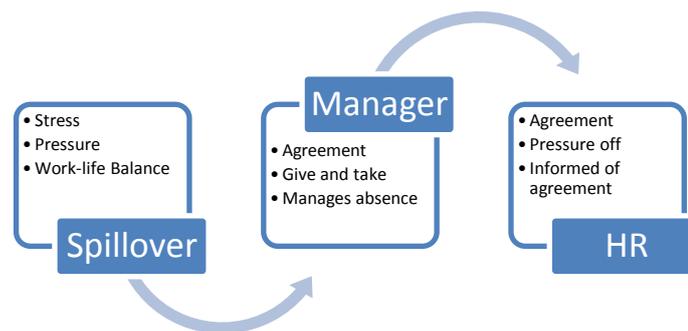
“Yes we have experienced this, I’ll give you an example, we had an employee not too long ago who had a very ill parent. They discussed what was going on with their manager and the manager, myself HR and the employee came to an agreement to manage the employees absence so they could be at home

more. It is about give and take. The pressure was off the employee from work perspective, this ensures the employee can give more when at work as they know they are being cared for”

Interviewee A2:

“Yes – it can be hard for employees to juggle work and home pressures”

This spillover is evident in the interviews and the statements of the interviewees above, they both identified it and acknowledged that it had an effect on employees. Whereas suggestions that both areas are disconnected is not proven here it is interesting to see what the response to the pressure from the sector is.



4.3.6 Recession

The economic recession has hit business hard, but some sectors have escaped relatively unscathed for example in the pharmaceutical industry (Gunnigle et al., 2011). Therefore it was interesting that this aspect of work-life balance was a theme during the interviews. Both interviewees had a different perspective:

Interviewee A2:

“Financial pressures”

“Worry about losing job – maybe not as likely to look at flexible working arrangements if they are in fear of job loss”

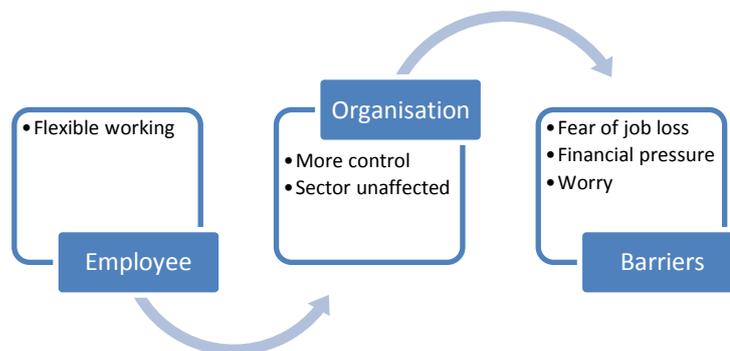
Interviewee A1:

“Well I noticed that during the boom as we all like to call it, employees out on maternity leave all availed of the extra 18 weeks unpaid and added on the parental leave also but recently I have noticed that employees do not take all

the unpaid maternity leave, it's as if they can't afford the extra time at home whereas they could before"

"From my perspective nothing else has changed during the recession because staff did not experience pay cuts like they have in other sectors, we were lucky in that respect so otherwise they were all still on the same wages and hours and weren't worried about losing their job either as this sector seems to be recession proof or something"

This sector seems to have a mixed approach to the effect of the recession, from an employees perspective it seems that a reluctance to avail of flexible working and unpaid parental leave for fear of job loss or financial reasons seems to be the apparent effects. Suggestions that the control is in the hands of the employer during the recession is an aspect that could be placed here as the economy not only effects the introduction of work-life balance policies but also is the leading barrier to implementation (Murphy and Doherty, 2011).



4.3.7 HR Role

When asked about the role of HR in relation to the drafting and amending of work-life balance policies and procedures the following responses were made:

Interviewee A1:

"Instead of it being from a HR perspective. Once we get informed of the agreement between management and staff then we keep a record of it"

"The way we operate with flexibility is that each manager must approve the flexibility and manage it"

Interviewee A2:

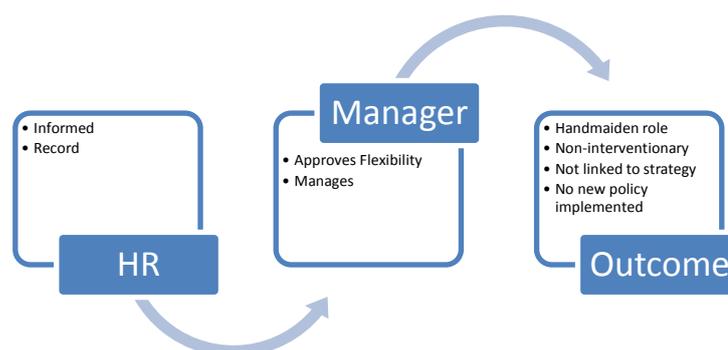
“Individual managers work with employees for work-life balance facilitating days off, appointments, special childcare arrangements etc.”

These statements describe the role HR has in relation to work-life balance policies and shows that the HR role is not involved any amendment of policies or drafting of agreements as this is done by the *individual manager*. The HR role is not involved in the work-life balance area and as described by interviewee A1:

“this works better for both staff and the organisation instead of it being from a HR perspective”

The individual manager perspective on managing work-life balance matters shows that it works in this sector as both organisations utilise it. Berg et al., (2014) found that a HR role can provide support and increase the possibility of entry to flexible arrangements but does not increase the use of them. Interestingly this approach means that the HR role does not deal directly with the work-life balance policies or agreements.

The common theme that emerged was that the HR role is not hands on in relation to work-life balance policies but is informed of the agreement which is made between the manager and the employee. Given Storey (1992) outlined HR types it is interesting to see the approach of the two HR managers in this research, that they have a non-interventionary approach and are either advisers or handmaidens – both found in organisations where the role of HR is diminished or put into the hands of line managers.



4.4 Overall Analysis

With the above findings in mind, the following is an overall analysis of the findings:

4.4.1 Work-life Balance

Objectives:

Identify what work-life balance means to the organisation

What factors instigate the development of work-life balance policies?

From the qualitative data collected through the interviews, the area of work-life balance was seen as *flexibility* and *technology* from the perspective of the interviewees. They both agreed that these factors increased the sense of work-life balance for themselves and for the organisation. These tie in with Glass and Estes (1997) who found that flexible work policies are seen as a central instrument of balancing work and life, so by providing this flexibility the organisation is seen as accommodating work-life balance. Seen with the perspective from Kanter (1977) that family and work are both integrated in organisations and that this can produce work-family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), it has been found that flexibility has lessened work-family conflict (Parayitam and Narendar, 2008). With the addition of technology this has been seen as to facilitate work-life balance for the interviewees and in a social exchange framework (Blau, 2009) the apparent increase in working hours due to technology is seen possible as the 'discretionary effort' (Yasbek, 2004, p. 19) from the employees perspective.

4.4.2 Policy

Objectives:

Do work-life balance policies fit into the organisational strategy?

How does the HR role fit into the work-life policy amendment/drafting?

The evidence of policy development within the organisation shows that the HR role is in a non-interventionary role with any changes or agreements being made and HR informed of the agreement. As HR can take on various roles in the organisation from operating at strategic level (change-makers) to non-

interventionary (advisers), the way in which HR in this sector operated was observed and recorded. With the absence of HR involvement in changes to policy or policy development as a result of agreements, the fact that managers made the agreements with employees and informed HR of the agreement, the role of HR is thus a handmaiden (Storey, 1992). The external factors relating to legislation and competitors had an impact on policy development within the organisation, along with economic factors which is an area well documented in HR policy (Gunnigle et al., 2011). Evidence of the RBV of the firm involved in the organisational response to spillover on behalf of employees was found as it made arrangements to accommodate staff which in turn provided the organisation with more engaged workers, which in turn added to their competitive advantage (Barney, 1992; Bolger et al., 1989).

4.4.3 Organisation

Objectives:

How does the organisation facilitate work-life balance?

How does the organisation respond to pressure from employees in relation to work-life balance policies?

The organisations involved in this research contain over 800 employees. With so many employees the variety of work options available to them was flexible. With the research highlighting the importance of the psychological contract for employee relationships with their employer the organisational response to pressure from employee's lives in the form of spillover is addressed by individual agreements. In this way the psychological contract is still intact in the workplace and will offer the employee the opportunity to remain engaged (Rousseau, 1995). This in turn impacts on the social exchange relationship between the employer and employee, where the employer provides the employee with flexibility in return for more commitment which is proven here (Blau, 2009). The influence of spillover on employees provided the organisation with the opportunity to provide agreements which will reduce spillover and in turn resulted in output improvements (Yasbek, 2004).

Overall Findings

The literature has already identified that managers had an involvement and say in who could avail of the work-life balance policies (Drew and Daverth, 2009; Hill, Hawkins and Ferris, 2001) which is the case in the research conducted here. A combination of HR and line manager could be interpreted as both being a structural and cultural support in the organisation allowing employees ease of access to work-life balance arrangements (Daverth, Hyde and Cassell, 2013).

The fact that specific work-life balance policies did not exist in the organisations researched, does not necessarily mean that employees experience more spillover from family to work, this is due to the fact that the evidence from the findings shows that the organisation was able to accommodate flexibility to individual employees. The link between flexible working and a healthy work-life balance was found by French and Daniels, (2006) which would add value to the arrangements in this research.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how organisational work-life balance policies are amended or drafted. The various aspects of the topic have been analysed from each perspective of the objectives and it was found that organisational responses to work-life balance policy are completed with individual employees with the assistance of their line managers. HR was subsequently advised of the arrangement which was recorded in the employees file.

The next chapter will outline the summary of findings, their implications, limitations of the research project and further research avenues.

Chapter Five
CONCLUSION

5.1 Research Question Recalled

The research problem was outlined as the organisational response to employee work-life balance and where they both fit in within an organisation. I was particularly interested in the perspective of HR Managers, their experience of the topic and organisational work-life balance policies. The question I posed was:

How does the organisation amend/draft the work-life balance policy?

5.2 Summary of Findings

What I found out in relation to my research objectives was that work-life balance means flexibility to employees. In the sector I conducted my research, the HR managers were in a non-interventionary role within the organisation and therefore not involved in the overall strategy of the organisations (Storey, 1992). Work-life balance was facilitated by line managers by making individual arrangements as a response to pressure from employees. The link between spillover from home to work was established as both managers recognised that employees have made individual arrangements with their managers as a result of this. Any work-life balance policies such as parental leave were amended or drafted as a response to legislation, although it was acknowledged that external pressures such as competitors or economic conditions could impact policy no evidence was found.

5.3 Implications of findings

The findings are relevant to the current role of HR within organisations and reflect the changing role of HR from 1980s until 2014. The GFC has put pressure on organisations across sectors and along with cuts to staff HR has been reduced, this has resulted in many HR tasks being handed over to the line manager as a result along with organisations focusing on essential matters such as budgets and output in a labour market abundant with skills. The research highlights the changes in HR and the ever increasing evidence of the line manager's role in HR matters, the fact that evidence of the lack of strategic involvement of HR in the organisations suggests that the role is becoming less important and utilised in a different way than before.

5.4 Limitations

Accessing two organisations that represent approximately 800 out of a total of 25,000 employees in the pharmaceutical industry does not provide evidence supporting all organisations in the sector. It is useful only to the two organisations involved. On reflection the study highlighted the difficulty of completing research representing a sector and whilst I originally planned to complete a survey for the research I feel that the interviews gave me access to the personal side of the organisation which I hoped to access, see Appendix H. My perceptions of what evidence I would find were not substantiated and on reflection I found that my own experience in a small organisation would mean more interaction with staff than in the larger organisations involved here, although these experiences lead me on this research path to begin with. The response rate for my study was only 3 out of 8, and on reflection a larger response rate would have led to a more varied research analysis.

5.6 Further Research

Further research into the area of work-life balance policies in the private sector would be useful for comparison purposes, this research was only limited to one sector. This research was focused on the organisational responses to work-life balance policy but through the research process other factors emerged such as the HR role, technology and flexibility, all of which warrant further research in respect of the effects on work-life balance for employees. An added aspect to research could be the strategic perspective of the organisation as highlighted throughout this study.

5.7 Concluding Thoughts

This research highlights how organisations are responding to work-life balance pressure from employees. The research is not representative of the pharmaceutical sector as a whole but attempts to portray a section of the private sector that has not been affected by the recession as many others in the private sector. It provides an opportunity to gauge how one sector responds to employees needs for flexibility in their lives and in turn represents a supportive structure for employees along with the decreased role of HR. memo appendix

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APPENDIX A

HRM Policy Choice: context and variation

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT				
Social/Economic Conditions	Technology	Labour Market	Product Market	Legislation and Public Policy
INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT				
Org. Size and Structure	Management Values/Ideology	Competitive Strategy	Workforce Characteristics	Established HR Practices
HRM POLICY CHOICE				
Work System	Employment Relations	Reward System	Recruitment/Internal flow practices	Role of HR Function

(Adapted from Gunnigle et al., 2011 p. 32)

APPENDIX B

Maria Peate Sorensen
National College of Ireland
maria.peatesorensen@student.ncirl.ie

DATE

Re: Dissertation Interview Invitation

Dear XXXX,

My name is Maria Peate Sorensen and I am a student at the National College of Ireland, Business department. I am studying a BA (hons) in Human Resource Management and as part of this degree program, I am required to complete a dissertation under the supervision of my supervisor, Fabian Armendariz. I have chosen to research the area of Work-Life Balance in relation to human resource management.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project in the area of “work-life balance” and Human Resource Management in particular. The purpose of the interview will be to gain an understanding of how organisations respond to work-life balance – for example policy development.

There are no potential risks attached to participating in this research and all information gathered will remain confidential. The interview will take between 30 and 45 minutes and can be arranged at a time and place to suit you.

If your organisation is happy to participate in the survey, I will require a copy of your organisation’s work-life balance policies and the number of employees employed in the organisation.

Thank you for your consideration, your help would be greatly appreciated in my research. If you require any further information please email me on:
maria.peatesorensen@student@ncirl.ie

Yours sincerely,

Maria Peate Sorensen

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

- 1) Start by thanking the interviewee for agreeing to participate
- 2) Go over the following points:
 - Company and identify anonymous as requested
 - Area of research: work-life balance policies – organisational perspective
 - Ask if they need clarification
- 3) Start with a comment about the workplace (just to put them at ease)
- 4) Explain what an unstructured interview is:
 - Questions very brief
 - Say whatever comes into your head as this is the basis of the research
 - Make sure they understand
- 5) What is your capacity in the organisation?
- 6) How many employees are there?
- 7) Can you think of any factors that have had an impact on HR policy development in your organisation? Expand
- 8) In your position during the recession – noticed any changes?
- 9) Employee spillover – employee’s stress from family life affects work life or vice versa, any experience of this?
- 10) If so what are the results?
- 11) Anything you would like to say about work-life balance?
- 12) Anything to add?

APPENDIX D

Contains: Main Results; Questionnaire; Letter of invitation;

Overall Findings:

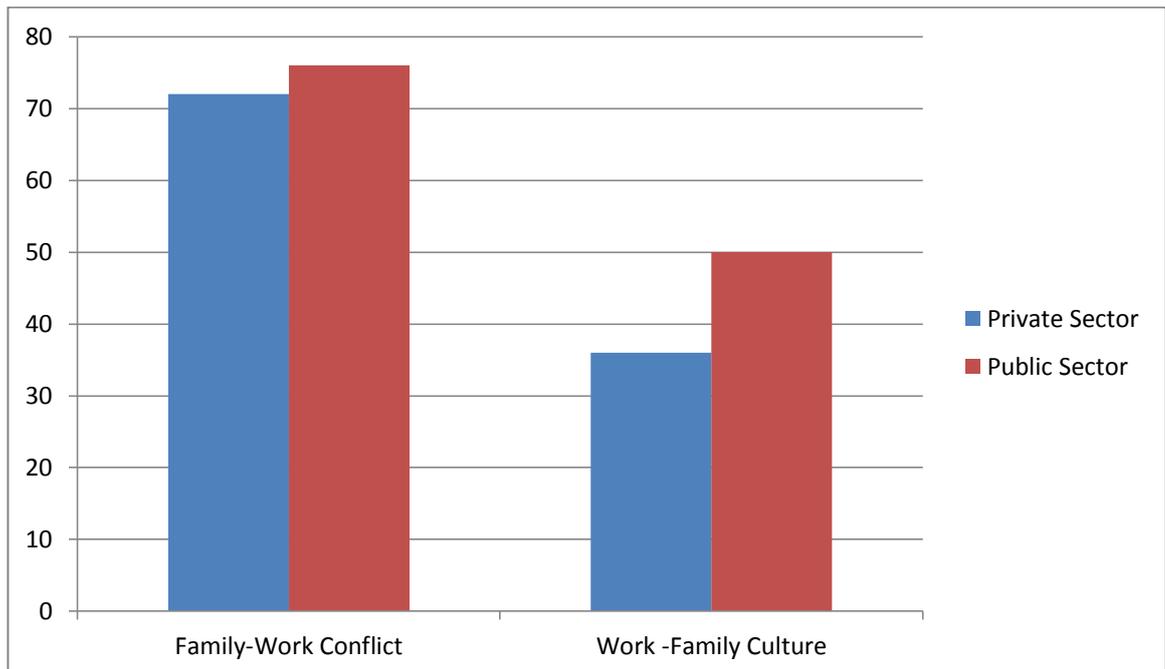
Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict Scale

Family-Work Conflict Scale (FWC)

1. The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.
2. I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.
3. Things I wasn't to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.
4. My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks and working overtime.
5. Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties

Work-Family Culture Scale (WFCS)

10. To get ahead at this organization, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week, whether at the workplace or at home. (R)
4. Employees are often expected to take work home at night and/or on weekends. (R)
6. Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their families. (R)
11. To be viewed favourably by top management, employees in this organization must constantly put their jobs ahead of their families or personal lives. (R)



The two areas of Family-Work Conflict and Work-Family Culture highlighted the biggest differences – both percentages above are the degree to which both sectors disagreed with the level of conflict and culture regarding family-work and work-family conflict/culture. This highlights that both sectors do not have the level of conflict anticipated with their organisation. This could either be due to two things, 1) the level of support for work-life balance in the organisation is high or 2) the amount

of work-life balance policies available to staff have an effect on the levels found. By analysing the work-life balance policies in both organisations there was a larger amount in the public sector (by 30%) and this highlighted that the amount of work-life balance policies did not reflect the amount of conflict experienced by staff. In order to investigate further I decided to interview HR to investigate this further.

PILOT SURVEY, QUESTIONS AND SCALES

Source: Allen, N.J. and Meyer, J.P. (1996) Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment to the Organisation: An examination of Construct Validity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 49 (0043) pp. 252-279

Affective Commitment Scale Items (ACS)

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization
I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own
I think I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one
I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization (R)
I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization (R)
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (R)

Continuance commitment scale items (CCS)

I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up (R)
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now
It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now (R)
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization
One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here

Normative commitment scale items (NCS)

I think that people these days move from company to company too often
I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (R)
Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (R)
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain
If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization
I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization
Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers
I do not think that wanting to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore

(R= reversed keyed items)

7 point scale 1=strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3= slightly disagree; 4= neither agree nor disagree; 5= slightly agree; 6= moderately agree; 7= strongly agree;

Work/Nonwork Interference and Enhancement Measure (WNIEM)

Source: Fisher, G.G., Bulger, C.A., and Smith, C.S. (2009)

I come home from work too tired to do things I would like to do.

My job makes it difficult to maintain the kind of personal life I would like.

My personal life suffers because of my work.

I have to miss out on important personal activities due to the amount of time I spend doing work.

My personal life drains me out of the energy I need to do my job.

I would devote more time to work if it weren't for everything I have going on in my personal life.

I am too tired to be effective at work because of things I have going on in my personal life.

When I'm at work I worry about thing I need to do outside work.

I have difficulty getting my work done because I am preoccupied with personal matters at work.

My job gives me energy to pursue activities outside of work that are important to me.

Because of my job I am in a better mood at home.

The things I do at work help me deal with personal and practical issues at home.

I am in a better mood at work because of everything I have going for me in my ersonal life.

My personal life gives me the energy to do my job.

My personal life helps me relax and feel ready for the next day's work.

5 point scale = Respondents to the 17-item Work/Nonwork Interference and Enhancement measure indicate the frequency with which they have felt a particular way during the last 3 months using a 5-point scale: 1(not at all, 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often) and 5 (almost all of the time).

Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict Scale

Source: Netemeyer, R.G., Boles, J.S., and McMurrian, R. (1996) Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. *Journal of applied Psychology* Vol. 81 (4) pp. 400-410

WFC Scale includes 5 items: rated on a 7-point "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" response scale.

Work-family Conflict Scale (WFC)

1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life
2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities.
3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties.
5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.

Family-Work Conflict Scale (FWC)

6. The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.
7. I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.
8. Things I wasn't to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.
9. My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks and working overtime.
10. Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties

Work Family Culture Scale

Source: Thompson, C.A. Beauvais, L.L., and Lyness, K.S. (1999). When work-family benefits are not enough: The influence of work-family culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment, and work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 54(3)

Test format: Respondents indicate the extent to which each item characterizes their current organization using a 7-point scale ranging from 2 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

Work-Family Culture Scale (WFCS)

8. In general, managers in this organization are quite accommodating of family related needs.
5. Higher management in this organization encourages supervisors to be sensitive to employees' family and personal concerns.
16. Middle managers and executives in this organization are sympathetic toward employees' child care responsibilities.
2. In the event of a conflict managers are understanding when employees have to put their family first.
20. In this organization employees are encouraged to strike a balance between their work and family lives.
18. Middle managers and executives in this organization are sympathetic toward employees' elder care responsibilities
17. This organization is supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for family reasons.
3. In this organization it is generally okay to talk about one's family at work.
1. In this organization employees can easily balance their work and family lives.
15. This organization encourages employees to set limits on where work stops and home life begins.
14. In this organization it is very hard to leave during the workday to take care of personal or family matters. (R)
13. Many employees are resentful when men in this organization take extended leave to care for newborn or adopted children. (R)
9. Many employees are resentful when women take extended leave to care for newborn or adopted children. (R)
12. In this organization employees who participate in available work-family programs (e.g., job sharing, part-time work) are viewed as less serious about their careers than those who do not participate in these programs. (R)
7. To turn down a promotion or transfer for family-related reasons will seriously hurt one's career progress in this organization. (R)
19. In this organization employees who use flexitime are less likely to advance their careers than those who do not use flexitime. (R)

10. To get ahead at this organization, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week, whether at the workplace or at home. (R)
4. Employees are often expected to take work home at night and/or on weekends. (R)
6. Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their families. (R)
11. To be viewed favourably by top management, employees in this organization must constantly put their jobs ahead of their families or personal lives. (R)

Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction

Source: Thompson, E.R., and Phua, F.T.T. (2012) A Brief Index of Affective job Satisfaction. *Group and Organization Management*, Vol 37(3) pp. 275-307

Test format: utilizes a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, to 5 = Strongly agree.

Thinking specifically about your current job, do you agree with the following?

1. I find real enjoyment in my job.
2. I like my job better than the average person.
3. Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.
4. I feel fairly well satisfied with my job.

Maria Peate Sorensen
National College of Ireland
maria.peatesorensen@student.ncirl.ie
DATE

Re: Dissertation Survey Invitation for XXX

Dear xxxx,

My name is Maria Peate Sorensen and I am a student at the National College of Ireland, Business department. I am studying a BA (hons) in Human Resource Management and as part of this degree program, I am required to complete a dissertation under the supervision of my supervisor, Fabian Armendariz. I have chosen to research the area of Work-Life Balance in relation to human resource management.

Your organisation is invited to participate in a research project entitled “Work-Life Balance“. The purpose of this survey is to measure the levels of employee: affective commitment, work/non-work interference, work-family conflict, work family culture and job satisfaction. This information will provide an analysis of the level of work-life balance currently perceived by employees in the organisation.

I have developed the survey containing questions regarding employees perception of Work-life balance, these questions have been tested and measured to ensure their validity. My aim is to provide an analysis of work-life balance in relation to the number of work-life balance policies across a number of organisations. I am interested in researching whether there is a link between the number of work-life balance policies and levels of work-life balance perceived by employees.

There are no potential risks attached to participating in this research, and all information gathered will remain confidential. It will take approximately 15 minutes for employees to complete the survey. Responses to the survey will be in aggregate form to protect the identity of the respondents.

If your organisation is happy to participate in the survey, I will require a copy of your organisation’s work-life balance policies and the number of employees employed in the organisation (across all levels) in order to collate the information required for analysis. The survey is available to complete online and I can provide the link to the survey for distribution to employees.

Thank you for your consideration, your help would be greatly appreciated in my research. If you require any further information please email me on:
maria.peatesorensen@student.ncirl.ie

Yours sincerely,

Maria Peate Sorensen

APPENDIX E

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines how the Company manages absences from work for reasons other than annual leave. The following types of leave are covered in this document:

- Sick Leave
- Compassionate Leave/Bereavement Leave
- Public Duties
- Jury Service
- Maternity Leave
- Adoptive Leave
- Parental Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Family Leave/"Force Majeure" Leave
- Carers' Leave
- Other Leave
- Time off In Lieu
- Flexible Working

SICK LEAVE

It is a condition of employment with the Company that all employees satisfy their obligation under their contract of employment to attend work. Consistent regular attendance at work is required, and all employees will be held accountable for such.

If employees are unable to report for work due to illness they should personally notify their manager preferably before, but not more than one hour after, the scheduled start of the working day, and indicate the reason for and likely duration of their absence. In situations where the manager is not available they must leave a message with HR and a phone number at which you can be contacted. Communicating absences by text messages is not permitted at any time. It is not acceptable to leave a message with a colleague.

On each further day of absence, the employee should continue to telephone his / her Line Manager on a daily basis to keep him / her informed on the progress of the illness. Daily follow-up phone-calls are not required in the case where employee has a doctor's certificate which confirms dates that he / she will be unfit for work and employee has advised his / her Line Manager of these dates.

Please note that the Company proactively manages absences. Regular short term and/or repeated absences are disruptive and costly. The Disciplinary Procedure will be applied where there is abuse of sickness absence procedure including patterns of absenteeism. Return to Work interviews may be held with employees on their return to work following each occasion of absence. Records of interviews will be maintained by HR and filed in HR files.

Requirement for Medical Certification

Each employee must produce a medical certificate for periods of sick leave of more than 2 days, stating the nature of the illness, and subsequent certificates are required to be sent at weekly intervals thereafter. Failure to provide a medical certificate in support of your absence or failure to notify the Company of the reason for your absence as soon as is practicable, may result in the absence being treated as unauthorised and any sick pay entitlement for the period will be withheld.

Managers must forward on all medical certificates to HR in a timely manner.

Return to Work

Employees have a responsibility to ensure their return to work at the earliest date possible commensurate with good health and safety. Before returning to work from a sick leave absence of three days or more, an employee may be required to provide a certificate of Fitness to Work from their medical practitioner, confirming that he or she can safely return to work.

On return to work after an absence, you must report directly to your manager at the start of that working day. Managers will meet with each employee on their return to further understand the nature of the absence, its implications and update the employee on their job priorities. Return to Work interviews (XXXX) may be held by HR and/or Line Managers with employees on their return to work following each occasion of absence.

The Company reserves the right to have staff members examined by its own Medical Advisor at the Company's expense.

Illness during Annual Leave

When a period of medically certified illness occurs during an employee's annual leave, this period will not be deemed to be part of his/her annual leave. The manager must be notified immediately and production of a medical certificate is required.

Failure to Follow Sick Leave Procedures

Where an individual fails to comply with the sick leave procedures or has an unsatisfactory absence record, he/she will be invited to a meeting with their manager. Where abuses of the sick leave policy have been committed, the Company reserves the right to initiate disciplinary proceedings, up to and including dismissal.

Company Sick Pay Scheme If Relevant

Please refer to your contract of employment for entitlements to paid sick leave. If you are entitled to payment of Sickness Benefit from the Department of Social Protection (dependant on meeting certain PRSI conditions), it is the responsibility of the employee to claim this payment. If you have received payment from the Company for sick leave, the employee must reimburse the Company for any statutory sick benefit that you receive. Sickness Benefit is normally paid from the 4th day of the claim, which is made directly at a local Social Welfare office by the employee within 7 days of becoming ill. Please note that any sick pay (as per individual employment contracts) is a discretionary benefit and the Company may refuse or terminate the benefit when any of the following occur:

- There is found to be abuse of the sick pay scheme
- The sickness, injury or length of absence is attributable to negligence, or misconduct, alcohol or drugs
- The absence is not genuinely attributable to the sickness or injury of the employee
- The illness or injury was sustained in another employment
- The reporting/certification requirements are not met

Medical Appointments

The Company reserves the right to request that an employee attend the Company's Medical Advisor in the event that there is a question over the employee's fitness to work at any stage

throughout the employee's employment with the Company.

With regard to personal appointments, wherever possible routine doctor, hospital, dentist, optician or other necessary medical appointments should be arranged outside working hours. If this is not possible every attempt should be made for the appointment to be at the beginning or end of your working day. Advance notification of such appointments should always be given, except in emergency situations. Managers have the right to ask for proof of attendance at such appointments.

Recurring or Long Term Absence

Regular short-term absences from work cause disruption for you, your colleagues and the client. In these circumstances, your manager will ask you about your absence and the impact that frequent absences are having on your work and on your team. If your manager is dissatisfied with your explanation and has reasonable belief that you have not been unwell, sickness payment may be withheld and the Disciplinary Procedure will be applied on the basis of unacceptable conduct. If it is shown that you are abusing the sickness absence procedure, this could be regarded as gross misconduct and the appropriate sanctions, as stated in the Disciplinary Procedure, could be applied.

Where you have a record of recurring or long term absence, the Company reserve the right to request that you attend the Company Doctor for an independent medical examination. The cost of this medical examination will be borne by the Company.

The Company has a Permanent Health Insurance Scheme (PHI) in place for eligible employees. The HR department has further details on the scheme. Payment of any benefit under this scheme is subject to the insurers accepting a claim following their review of all medical details provided to their medical referee.

In the cases of long term absence, the Company reserves the right to termination of employment where necessary. In such cases, the employee will be advised that termination is being considered and will be afforded every opportunity to discuss the situation.

COMPASSIONATE/BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

If you have an emergency at home that affects your partner, child, sibling, parent or grandparent you may be entitled to compassionate leave. This leave is usually unpaid but the company may at its sole discretion grant it as paid leave, depending on the situation.

Employees will be entitled to bereavement leave to make arrangements or attend funeral services following the death of a family member or relatives of work colleagues. At the Company's discretion, additional paid leave up to a maximum of 3 days may be granted in the event of the death of a close relative.

In the case of the death of immediate in-laws one day's paid leave may be granted. Requests for compassionate leave should be made to your manager using XXXX Leave Application Form who will, if necessary, consult with the HR department before granting any requests.

PUBLIC DUTIES

At you manager's discretion you may be given time off to undertake certain public duties. If you become involved you should discuss the matter with your Line Manager. You will be expected to establish, by agreement, a pattern for the absences from work required by the duties. The Company may, at its discretion, grant paid leave for some or all of the absence.

JURY SERVICE

If you are summoned for jury service you should bring the matter to the attention of your Manager as soon as possible as there may be a business need to seek permission for attendance to be deferred. A copy of the Court notification must be provided to the Company. You will be given paid leave whilst on jury service but any salary related expenses paid by the state will be deducted. You are required to keep a record of payments received. An employee who attends the Court on the specified date(s) but is not required as a Juror / Witness or where they have concluded their involvement in the Court during the day must return to work after attending at the court. Employees must keep their Manager informed of progress on a regular basis for the duration of this leave.

MATERNITY LEAVE

Any female employee expecting a baby is entitled to a continuous period of maternity leave around the time of birth of the child. The employee is entitled to 26 weeks maternity leave. You will maintain all of your employee rights, other than remuneration, during the 26-week period, including the entitlement to annual leave and public holidays.

Once the pregnancy is confirmed, you are required to advise the Company in writing as soon as possible and at least 4 weeks before the commencement of her maternity leave (XXXX). This notice must be accompanied by a Doctor's Certificate stating the expected date of birth. Of the 26-week period, at least 2 weeks must be taken before the expected date of birth, and at least 4 weeks after the birth.

You may also choose to take additional maternity leave at the end of the 26-week period, if you so wish. You are entitled to up to 16 weeks additional maternity leave as of 1st March 2007. You should apply in writing for this leave at least 4 weeks before the approved maternity leave expires or before you go on maternity leave.

Employment Rights

You will maintain all of your employee rights, other than remuneration, during the additional maternity leave, including the entitlement to annual leave and public holidays. If you decide not to return to work, then any outstanding holiday pay will be paid to you in your final salary payment. If applicable, your entitlement to Private Medical Insurance and/or a company car/car allowance will continue during your maternity leave. If you are a contributing member of the Pension Plan, the Company will match any voluntary pension contributions you make up to a maximum amount stated in your employment contract, of your normal pay.

During any period of additional maternity leave most of your entitlement to benefits is suspended, however you will continue to accrue holiday and public holiday entitlement. However, your employment contract continues and some contractual rights and obligations remain in force. You are advised to check your particular circumstances with HR.

Maternity Benefit

An employee who is on maternity leave is normally entitled to payment from the Department of Social Protection for the 26 weeks maternity leave, depending on meeting certain PRSI eligibility criteria. Social Welfare benefits are not payable during the optional additional 16 weeks maternity leave. You should apply for Maternity Benefit 6 weeks before you intend to go on maternity leave. You are responsible for pursuing your own claim for Maternity Benefit.

The HR Department will confirm in writing the maternity leave dates and any other entitlements prior to the commencement of the maternity leave.

Returning to Work

You must provide the Company with at least 4 weeks' notice of your intention to return to work and planned date of return. When maternity leave ends, the employee will be entitled to return to her usual job so far as it is reasonably practical. However, if this is not possible the employee will be offered suitable alternative work. You may forfeit your right to maternity leave if you do not provide written notice of your intention to return to work after maternity leave or additional maternity leave. This notice must be submitted no later than four weeks before the date on which you intend to return to work and must specify this date. Clearly it would help us to know your intentions as soon as possible, particularly if you decide that you do not wish to return.

If you decide not to return to work you should let your manager and HR know of your decision to resign in writing.

Time off for Breastfeeding

Under the new legislation there is a provision for limited time off to facilitate breast-feeding mothers. Notification of your intention to continue breastfeeding after returning to work must be given at least four weeks before your return to work. Contact HR for further information.

Antenatal and Postnatal Care

An employee is entitled to paid leave for antenatal and postnatal care. An employee will receive paid time off for any antenatal medical appointments before the birth and postnatal medical appointments for the first 14 weeks following the birth. An employee must give the Company two week's written notice of any appointment and must be able to produce a certificate/record that the visit took place. The Company requests that where possible, the appointments are at the beginning or at the end of the working day. If the appointment finishes during the working day, the employee is expected to return to work.

ADOPTIVE LEAVE

The Company will provide time off to employees who have adopted a child. From 1st March 2007, adopting mothers, sole male adopters and adopting fathers where the adopting mother is deceased before or during the period of adoptive leave, are entitled to 24 weeks adoptive leave from the date of placement and up to an additional 16 weeks leave at the end of this 24 week period. The arrangements and notification periods for adoptive leave are the same as for maternity leave (see above).

An adopting mother or sole male adopter must notify the Company, in writing, of his/her intention to take adoptive leave no later than 4 weeks before the expected date of placement. The Company will require a certificate of placement, or a declaration of eligibility and suitability, as soon as is reasonably practicable. In foreign adoption cases, some of the additional adoptive leave may be taken before the placement of the child. In such cases, the employee must notify the Company in writing 4 weeks before the leave is due to begin.

An employee will maintain all of his/her employee rights, other than remuneration, during the 24-week adoptive leave period and during the additional adoptive leave of up to 16 weeks, including the entitlement to annual leave and public holidays. An employee who is on adoptive leave is normally entitled to payment from the Department of Social Protection, depending on meeting certain eligibility criteria.

Employees are entitled to take paid time off during working hours to attend adoption preparation classes and pre-adoption meetings with social workers / health board officials required during the pre-adoption process.

Subject to the agreement of the Company, the adopting parent has the right to terminate additional adoptive leave in the event of illness, thereby allowing the parent to transfer onto sick leave. Request of termination by the employee and acceptance in writing by the employer must be in writing.

Before adoptive leave ends, the employee must provide 4 weeks notice of the intended date of return, and will be entitled to return to his/her usual job so far as reasonably practicable. However, if this is not possible, the employee will be offered suitable alternative work. If the placement of an adopted child is terminated after a period of less than 24 weeks, the employee must notify their manager within 7 days. A date of return to work will be notified to the employee, not later than the date of return after the period of adoptive leave or additional leave.

PARENTAL LEAVE

The Company will provide parental leave to facilitate parents who require periods of short-term unpaid leave to take care of a child under 8 years of age, or older in specific circumstances.

Any full-time employee, who is a natural or adoptive parent, or in *loco parentis*, and has completed one year’s continuous service, is entitled to 14 weeks unpaid leave per child, to enable him/her to take care of his/her child. All parents of children under eight years of age are eligible, as are parents of a disabled child under 16 years, and there is an extension if a child under 8 is adopted and is within 2 years of an adoption order.

The 14-week entitlement may be taken as follows:

<i>PARENTAL LEAVE BREAKDOWN OPTION</i>	<i>AGREEMENT REQUIRED</i>
A continuous block of 14 working weeks	Once Parental Leave is approved in principal by Acuman Facilities Management Ltd., employee may select this option.
Two separate periods of a minimum of 6 weeks.	Once Parental Leave is approved in principal, employee may select this option. If leave is taken this way, there must be at least 10 weeks between each separate period.
Other breakdown options	If neither of the above options is taken, the employee may request alternative breakdowns with his / her Line Manager e.g. working part-time / one week on / one week of etc. Agreement from Line Manager is required in this case.

Where an employee has less than 1 year’s service and more than 3 months continuous service, and the child is about to go beyond the specified age limit, the parental leave entitlement is one week’s unpaid leave for each month of continuous employment. Any period of probation, training or apprenticeship will be suspended while an employee is on parental leave, and will be completed on the employee’s return.

All employment rights will be protected while on parental leave other than the right to remuneration. Annual leave and public holiday entitlements accrue while an employee is on parental leave. There is no Social Welfare support during periods of parental leave but an employee can apply for PRSI credits for any period of parental leave.

In the event of sickness of the parent which causes him / her to be unable to care for the child, parental leave may be suspended for the duration of sickness, either by postponing the start of leave or by suspending it while it is in progress. Your Line Manager will request a medical cert.

Please note that the Company may postpone the leave for up to 6 months where serious business disruption would arise.

PATERNITY LEAVE

All fathers, regardless of length of service, may, at the Company's discretion, be granted 2 days paid holiday at or around the period of the birth. These 2 days are in addition to your entitlement under the Parental Leave scheme outlined in this policy.

Requests for paternity leave should be made to your manager using the Leave Application Form who will, if necessary, consult with the HR department before granting any request. Please give your manager as much notice as possible prior to taking the leave.

FAMILY LEAVE/"FORCE MAJEURE" LEAVE

Employees are entitled to take paid time off where, for urgent family reasons owing to a major injury or illness of an immediate family member, your immediate presence at the place where the person is located is indispensable, in order for you to care for him / her. An immediate family member is a child / adoptive child / person to whom you are in loco parentis; person with whom you are in a relationship of domestic dependency, defined as where one reasonably relies on the other to make arrangements for the provision of care; spouse / partner, siblings, parents, grandparents.

You will be entitled to a maximum of 3 days paid leave in any 12 month period, or 5 days in any 36 month period. Part days are counted as full days for the purpose of maximum number of days which can be taken.

By definition, prior notice to Line Manager is not possible in the case of Force Majeure leave, though on the day of leave you should inform your manager verbally by telephone. As soon as possible following your leave, you should give written notice to your Line Manager stating that you took Force Majeure leave, the date(s) it was taken and a statement of fact regarding the leave. The Line Manager should forward this notification (XXXX) to the HR Manager.

Additional unpaid time off to deal with emergencies involving a dependant will be considered. Before leaving work to cope with such an emergency, you must obtain the approval of your manager and agree with him / her the duration of leave, possible payroll implications and how regularly you should keep in touch with your Line Manager. Details of the situations, which warrant such time off can be obtained from the HR Department.

Where Family Leave is found to be used for reasons other than those stated, employees may be subject to the application of the Disciplinary Procedure.

CARERS' LEAVE

Carer's leave allows employees to take temporary unpaid leave from employment for the purpose of providing full-time care and attention to a person requiring it. Employees with 1 year's continuous service may be entitled to leave from employment to care for a relevant person for a period of up to 104 weeks. Under this policy, the Company retains the right to refuse requests for periods of less than 13 weeks and in such circumstances will provide the employee with an explanation.

The Company will require receipt of a written decision from a Deciding Officer of the Department of Social Protection before approving a period of carer's leave. This written decision must deem the person for whom the employee has applied for carer's leave, to be a relevant person in need of full-time care and attention.

The employee must provide the Company with a minimum of 6 weeks notice when requesting a period of carer's leave (this may be waived in exceptional/emergency circumstances). The Company will prepare a confirmation document, which must be signed by the employee, ideally 2 weeks before the commencement date.

All employment rights are protected while an employee is on carer's leave, except the right to remuneration. An employee maintains the right to annual leave and public holidays' entitlements solely for the first 13 weeks from the date of commencement of carer's leave.

OTHER LEAVE

At its discretion the Company will sympathetically consider requests for unpaid leave.

TIME OFF IN LIEU

Time off in Lieu may be given in return for work outside of normal hours with the prior approval of your manager. All Time off in Lieu must be requested using the Leave Application form. All Time off in Lieu Requests must be approved by your manager using the Leave Application form. Please refer to your Contract of Employment for your entitlements to Time Off in Lieu. Please note that no Time Off in Lieu may be carried forward into another calendar year.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

All Employees are responsible for complying with this policy.

Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that all absence applications are completed and authorised using the correct form. Managers are responsible for ensuring that HR receives all absence requests and associated documentation (medical certs, appointment records, etc.) in a timely manner.

The HR Department are responsible for filing all absence requests. The HR Department are responsible for providing company/business unit absence reports when requested.

RECORDS

All records from this procedure must be stored in the HR Department.

PART-TIME WORKING

The Company is committed to the equal treatment of all employees and will therefore provide equal terms and conditions of employment to part-time employees, on a pro-rata basis, comparable with those offered to full-time employees. Requests for part-time working will be considered, and facilitated where feasible in line with business requirements. The Company will provide information on the availability of full-time and part-time positions which may enable employees to transfer from full-time to part-time work and vice versa.

The Company defines a part-time employee as an employee whose normal hours of work are less than the number of hours of work in the Company, namely 37.5 hours per week. A part-time employee will have his/her agreed contractual hours outlined in their contract of employment, and the following conditions:

Remuneration benefits will be pro-rated to those of an equivalent full-time employee, based on the number of contracted hours of a part-time employee.

Salary increases will be administered similar to full-time employees, on a pro-rated basis.

Part-time employees will have their annual leave entitlement calculated under the Company's holiday policy, on a pro rata basis.

Part-time employees who work a minimum of 40 hours during the 5 weeks preceding a public holiday will qualify for public holiday benefit. Where the employee's normal weekly hours require them to work on the day in which the public holiday falls, they will receive a normal day's pay. Part-time employees who are not due to work on the public holiday are entitled to the benefit of 1/5th of their normal weekly pay, or the equivalent in time off, to be agreed with their manager

Part-time employees will have full access to relevant training and development programmes. Training and development requirements will be assessed in the normal manner. Requests to return to full-time work will be accommodated where possible. However there is no automatic right to return to full time employment. If a part-time employee wishes to return to full-time employment, they must do so by applying for any other full-time positions advertised internally by the usual process or otherwise by request.

At all times, the Company reserves the right to revert the position to full-time where it deems fit, i.e., the arrangement no longer meets the business needs. Three months' notice will be given to the employees.

HOMEWORKING

Homeworking (defined as working away from the Company's premises) should homeworking be needed by an employee, then this temporary arrangement must be approved by the Manager in advance.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

The right to request flexible working is available to all employees male and female. Please refer to XXXX for detailed information on how to request this flexible working and the procedures that will be followed to review the request.

The right to request flexible working is available to all employees, male and female, who meet certain qualifying criteria. Only employees are entitled to make a request.

Eligible employees have the legal right to ensure that the company takes their request for flexible working arrangements seriously. The Company acknowledges the importance for employees in achieving a balance between the work and family commitments and will endeavour to grant requests where possible.

The Company reserves the right not to agree to the request where one or more of these criteria indicate that, in the current circumstances, the job under consideration can only be carried out effectively on its present basis.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible to request flexible working you must:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with the company at the date the application is made
- be the mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent of a child under the age of 17 (or under 18 in the case of a disabled child) or be married to, or the partner of, such a person (a partner is someone of the same or opposite sex who lives in an enduring family relationship with the child and the mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent of the child, but is not a relative of the mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent)
- have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing and be making the application to enable you to care for the child
- other circumstances that require flexibility

Contents of Your Request

You may request a variation of your employment contract in respect of, for example:

- the hours you are required to work
- the times when you are required to work
- changes to your hours of work
- part-time working
- job-sharing
- working term-time only
- working shifts
- where you are required to work (as between your home and places of business of the company)

Procedure

Your application must be submitted to your line manager and must:

- be made in writing and state that it is such an application
- state whether a previous application has been made by you to the company and, if so, when
- specify the change applied for and the date on which it is proposed that the change should become effective
- explain what effect, if any, you think making the change applied for would have on the company and how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with
- explain how you meet the conditions
- be signed and dated

An application is made when it is received. If transmitted by electronic means, this is the day of transmission. If posted, this is the day it would be delivered in the ordinary course of post.

Within 28 days of receiving your application for flexible working, your manager may either:

- agree to all the changes and notify you accordingly in writing; or
- arrange a meeting with you to discuss the application and how it might best be accommodated or to consider alternative options

RECORDS

All records from this procedure must be stored in the HR Department.

APPENDIX F

Transcribed Interview

Interview One

Interviewee: A1

Interviewer: MS

Job Title: HR Manager

Conducted on site

Date: Wednesday 2nd of July 2014 at 3pm

MS: Good afternoon, can I say thank you for agreeing to participate in my research and for inviting me to your workplace to conduct the interview

AI: Sure that's no problem, happy to help

MS: Just to go over a few things, as I explained to you in our phone call, your company and your identities will remain anonymous as requested, so as you can talk freely to me. Also like I outlined in my invitation letter last week, I am conducting research into the area of work-life balance policies from the organisations perspective, in that what I mean is that it is from the HR representatives perspective, and that's you, any questions to that or do I need to clarify anything before we get started?

AI: No I think that clarifies everything for me, thanks.

MS: It seems busy here?

AI: Yes, it's a hectic environment and we have a lot of staff in the same space. This both works for us and sometimes not, what I mean is that it can get very noisy out there and staff sometimes move into a meeting room to get some peace and quiet to think. I'm lucky cause I have my own office so I'm not in the middle of the chaos (laughs)

MS: I just want to explain to you that I am conducting an unstructured interview which means that my questions will be very brief, basically I want you to tell me

whatever comes into your head when I ask the question, as this information will be the basis of my research , is that ok?

AI: Oh, that's interesting, I don't think I've ever had an interview like that – but then again it's not a job interview which is very different (laugh) Never mind me I'm just a bit nervous.

MS: That's understandable, especially when I'm recording what you are saying that might be putting you on edge, but what I would like you to do is to try and forget all about the recorder and think of this as a conversation instead.

AI: Ok – nods head

MS: What is your capacity in the organisation?

AI: I am a HR Manager I'm based here in on the premises over in that office (points towards an office across the hallway) I have worked here for 15 years and began as a HR administrator and worked my way up. I really like it here, it's a big company but we get along well too.

MS: How many employees are there?

AI: There are approximately 255 that combines those who work in the plant and those here in the offices. We are part of a multinational company so there are thousands of employees worldwide. We manufacture pharmaceuticals and have a varied skillset of staff but turnover isn't that high since the recession started, I think people are staying put instead of moving around like they did before.

MS: So in your experience can you think of any factors that have had an impact on HR policy development in your organisation?

AI: Well I've noticed that any change in the law will change our policies, for example with the parental leave, when that came in we had to change our policies to reflect these options for parents on the site. Then any amendments that have been made since, like for example that law came in in the 90s and I think it was amended in 2006 or 2007 so we had to change our policy whether the directors liked it or not it was the law and we had to abide by it so we did. I did notice that it wasn't really talked about – I mean publicised to staff and I think this was because they didn't want everyone taking leave at the same time. It's different to maternity leave, even though we have had to amend that policy too with legislation, that only affects a minority of our staff. But I saw recently that they are bringing in legislation in the UK that allows all full time employees to be entitled to have flexible working and that not just for parents, I'm not sure if this will happen here but historically we have followed the UKs lead on policies so I wouldn't be surprised if this came in here.

MS: You mentioned flexibility, can you expand on this?

AI: Well its often a good thing because it means that you can work from anywhere with technology so you have a bit of flexibility around your hours for that. For example by using my laptop I can work from anywhere so this is an advantage. It's also an advantage that when I've a heavy workload I can choose to go home on time and work additional hours from home if needed, rather than being tied to the desk for additional hours. The downside to this is that it's possible I don't put enough pressure on myself during the working day because I know I can always complete things at home you know? I probably should be more selfish with my time during the day so that I can get other tasks completed for example sometimes I attend meetings that take away from my time on that particular day but perhaps I should ask to have these pushed to a day that suits me better? I don't know, it's just a habit I have now so it works for me (laugh)I mean in my position I have the flexibility on a local basis to work from home on occasion if needed or come in later and this helps compensate for the longer out of contract hours.

We have a lot of flexibility on our site, and a number of colleagues avail of flexi time, working from home when appropriate but that's not allowed every week cause then they would never come into work! (laugh) but working from home is more the exception rather than the norm here and this flexibility definitely keeps working parents engaged in the workplace. Staff employees that have this flexibility are supplied with laptops and need to be available if required. The only disadvantage I can think of is that not all employees have this flexibility because it depends on your role so some employees possibly see this as not fair but then again this is not something we have discussed locally. The way we operate with flexibility is that each manager must approve the flexibility and manage it themselves this works better for both staff and the organisation instead of it being from a HR perspective. Once we get informed of the agreement between management and staff then we keep a record of it.

staff are allowed to work a flexible working week here, for example they can work their hours and leave early if needed and if the manager is ok with this. They are supposed to be on site 5 days Monday to Friday between the hours of 10 till 2 however, management do offer flexibility and once it's not abused this works well. At exit interviews which we perform with staff this is something the company gets a lot of praise on, especially for parents, this flexibility has allowed them time off to go to the doctor, dentist, school plays and such without having to use up all their holidays on them. Its working very well here and there's no one looking to change this, you know none of the employees are looking to change this so

it's must be working ok. Yeah so I suppose flexibility is a good thing and works for us here and for me.

MS: Can you think of anything to add?

AI: Hmmm well I suppose a lot of our policies are driven from our head office in the US. They tell the business units to implement policies locally and dictate the terms for example we had one recently that was about how to handle charitable contribution requests and how to handle them locally. It sometimes seems crazy that they are looking to implement policies when they are operating under a very different structure in a different jurisdiction, but it makes the work interesting and leads to lots of discussions within management on how to organise this internally.

MS: You mentioned technology in relation to flexibility, can you expand on this?

AI: yeah, sure, what I mean is technology has helped me balance my work and home life because the modern technology allows me to work from home, I can only do this with a good broadband and decent laptop. I can sign into the work network, respond to emails and access IT systems when required, attend web ex meeting and so on. The technology also helps us to monitor time keeping with the use of time management systems therefore encouraging flexitime. Managers can tract their employees' hours and monitor and manage any employee who is abusing the system, it also helps the company track hours worked and ensure no one is working too many crazy hours.

MS: you mention working crazy hours, have you noticed an increase in hours being worked by staff and would you say that the technology you mentioned has any connection to this?

AI: Yes, I would agree with that, I have seen it here first hand employees working longer than they are contracted to do. I mostly see it with the hourly employees cause they are paid for their shifts and unless here is overtime offered they cannot work over their hours, the hourly employees are operators and craft persons and their terms, but if they are asked to work overtime then they get paid, but their contracts can either be 39 or 42 hour week which are long enough but still I see many of them working extra hours regularly. On the other hand I see the staff employees, like myself contracted to work 37 and a half hours a week and a small minority might do 40 hours, some would come up to working around 6 extra

hours a week but there's so much to be done that sometimes you have to stay on, only they don't get paid overtime or anything, that time is just not figured in anywhere so you don't get paid for it. I sometimes wonder why they do it, you know, what's their motivation for staying on when sometimes you don't even get a thanks. But like I said before, we all get on well together and I think when something comes up we all pull together to get the job done and that's great to see when you are part of a team. I mean for example if you use me then I probably only take half the lunch hour I'm entitled to and regularly work at least half an hour every day over my hours and in addition to this I usually end up logging on at home and completing tasks or chasing answers in other time zones for example. Using what I did yesterday was I started work 15mins early and I shortened my unpaid lunch break by half an hour and I worked 40 minutes later at the desk (laugh) then when I got home I had to log onto my laptop to complete a report and finish other tasks. I think I started at 7pm and worked until half nine but I would could into this some stoppages to handle family situations but all in all I'd say I worked at least an hour and forty-five minutes at home on top of my long day. So yes I'd say I'm one of many who do this.

MS: In your position within HR during the recession, have you noticed any changes?

A1: Well I noticed that during the boom as we all like to call it, employees out on maternity leave all availed of the extra 18 weeks unpaid and added on the parental leave also but recently I have noticed that employees do not take all the unpaid maternity leave, it's as if they can't afford the extra time at home whereas they could before. For the company it means that people aren't out as long so cover can be organised for a shorter period but I feel that they are back to work so soon after the birth that they haven't really had a chance to enjoy the maternity leave like they could before. From my perspective nothing else has changed during the recession because staff did not experience pay cuts like they have in other sectors, we were lucky in that respect so otherwise they were all still on the same wages and hours and weren't worried about losing their job either as this sector seems to be recession proof or something so it's been good compared to other businesses that have closed and such, which must be very stressful for everyone involved. Yes we were very lucky.

MS: You talked about flexibility, technology and longer working hours, I wonder in your experience has there ever been a case of employee spillover – by this I mean where an employees' stress from family life affects work life or vice versa?

A1: Yes we have experienced this, I'll give you an example, we had an employee not too long ago who had a very ill parent. They discussed what was going on with their manager and the manager, myself HR and the employee came to an agreement to manage the employees absence so they could be a home more. It is about give and take. The pressure

was off the employee from work perspective; this ensures the employee can give more when at work as they know they are being cared for.

MS: So just to clarify, are you saying that as a result of the spillover, the company responded by offering more flexibility and you observed an employee who could give more when they were in work?

AI: Yeah that's exactly what I mean, the employee was more engaged in the work when they were here because they could be at home when they needed to be, it worked both ways and we were happy and so was he. I mean its only a temporary solution but we try to approach each individual case and see how we can work together to facilitate what we can within reason of course.

MS: and was there a change in policy as a result?

AI: No, any flexibility or change in arrangement is only temporary with that individual employee, it does not change our normal policies but we detail a new procedure with the individual employee to outline the temporary changes, I mean we have an unwritten policy around flexibility so all the staff know.

MS: is there anything you would like to add?

AI: well I think in my capacity as HR I believe nearly all employees experience some type of conflict between work and family life. I mean the school holiday is a stressful time when both parents are working. They try to enrol their children in summer camps both then they need different hours at work. In a manufacturing facility, we cannot change the hours of work for all employees and so this can cause conflict both at home and with fellow employees – especially with those employees who can work flexi and those who cannot.

MS: Is there anything you would like to add about work-life balance?

AI: I can see there are benefits to work-life balance for the company, such as a more engaged worker, but in my experience my advice is always agree upfront the rules or guidelines around the new arrangement. I mean some employees are never content and break their manager's hearts by constantly looking to change their working times. What the individual employee forgets is that a manager has to look after all employees in their department and sometimes need to say 'no'. this does not always go down well so I would recommend that you need – a proactive manager who is not afraid of change or trying something different; a system to track and maintain hours worked; a procedure in place

stating the new arrangements with regular meetings to ensure manager and employee are achieving the goals and objectives set;

MS: Thank you so much for taking part in this interview and for giving me your time

AI: No problem, I've enjoyed it, thanks.

APPENDIX G

Data Analysis Table

	Interview A1	Interview A2
No of Staff	255	560
HR Role	Arrangements made with line/immediate manager and HR advised of arrangement and keep record of it	Individual managers work with staff facilitating days off for appointments, childcare etc. HR advised of this
Flexibility	<p>Most staff can avail of flexible working week, depending on position in company</p> <p>Hours cannot be changed for all employees</p> <p>Flexible working means you are supplied with a laptop and need to be available if required</p> <p>Sometimes employees are told no to flexibility, especially if they are constantly looking for it</p>	Flexibility arranged with individual managers no formal policies in place
Flexible Firm	<p>Change to work-life balance policies not publicised by company, afraid everyone will want it</p> <p>Firm follows US or UK lead on policies</p>	<p>Senior managers can impact HR policy development depending on if they have an interest in it</p> <p>There is a fear that all employees would want flexible working arrangements and the cost to the company</p> <p>The employee feedback is lined to the competitors, employees can bring ideas from prior employment</p>
Technology	<p>Good thing – can work from anywhere so flexibility around hours of work</p> <p>Can work extra hours at home but leave office on time</p> <p>Given me greater balance in work and family life I can work from home,</p> <p>Company can monitor time keeping , track hours, no one works crazy hours</p> <p>Regularly work over</p>	<p>Employer takes advantage of employees out of hours through technology</p> <p>Has allowed for greater flexibility but also employee is constantly online</p> <p>Work over contracted hours regularly and other departments too</p>

	contracted hours	
Work-Life balance policies	Change in law will affect policies e.g. parental leave; Employee more engaged when flexibility offered and agreed. Unwritten policy See each individual case	Legal – for example parental leave Budget requirements can change our sick pay policy Competitors – what they do can impact our HR policy, e.g. organisation may not offer parental leave or flexi work but competitor does, may force you to look at it so as to retain attractive employer image
Recession	During boom maternity leave followed by parental leave, but now back in work after maternity leave No pay cuts or job losses here – sector recession proof	Financial pressures for staff increased Worry about job losses and maybe not as likely to look for flexible working arrangements if in fear of losing job
Social exchange	Benefits to work-life balance for company, more engaged worker, flexibility definitely keeps working parents engaged in the workplace	Positive for the company to have the potential to gain from introducing work life balance policies Employees appreciate that the employer can facilitate them and tend to give more
Spillover	Taking the pressure off the employee is beneficial to the company and they give more when in work as a result. Company response 3 ways employee, HR and manager	Its hard for employees to juggle work and home pressures Plenty of examples of pressure from home to work, company response is to make arrangement with the employee

APPENDIX H

To:
From: Maria
CC:
Date: 2/7/2014
Re: Research Interview

Comments: As a follow on from meeting my supervisor he recommended keeping a memo of the interviews, my own thoughts on the process.

I had read a lot about completing unstructured interviews and meeting up in a place convenient for the interviewee, making them feel at ease during the interview and how to phrase questions so I felt well prepared for the interview today. This was my second interview out of three so I felt I was getting somewhere.

We had agreed to meet up in the interviewees workplace for two reasons – one was that it was convenient for the interviewee and second it would help the interviewee stay focused or obtain any information relevant to the interview.

There was already an agreement in place that the organization would remain anonymous for the research which was fine.

I noticed when I arrived that I was brought through a large open plan section with offices leading from the open section, there were a lot of staff working away there and it was quite loud, some made eye contact with me and I smiled back appropriately.

Al was very welcoming and led me to a meeting room with a large desk and 6 chairs, it was a comfortable setting and very business like. I felt that it was a stressful environment to work in but maybe that had to do with the open plan.

During the interview the interviewee made good eye contact and the body language was very open, I have had a lot of experience interacting with people so I felt I could read if someone was not being honest with me, I felt the interview went well whilst acknowledging that the topic is very personal to the interviewees

experience. After the interview I was lead outside and I had a few minutes in my car to reflect on the experience which lasted only 30 minutes.

My thoughts were of how the research involves real people and that their views can be very different to what I originally thought myself, I felt that there was still some research I needed to do after the interview and wondered how I would get the time to write it all up. I hoped that the interviewee got something out of the experience and

My thoughts were of how I managed to research this topic, my previous workplace and the people I had interacted with in relation to various aspects of work-life balance. I found that because I had worked in a smaller organization I had more involvement in personal aspects of the matter unlike the distanced approach in this organisation, I felt it was a really useful experience for me on a personal and professional level.