Working more, working less, working differently

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Abstract

This research analyses Work–Life Balance (WLB) practices in different companies to identify their consequences for two dimensions of work organisation: (1) working hours and (2) work design.

We developed a contextualised, qualitative investigation of seven companies which is distinct in two aspects. On one hand, it involves organisations of different sizes operating in different industries and employees of different profiles, at both the operational and managerial levels. On the other hand, it considers organisational practices that have been designed and implemented as WLB practices and practices that were designed to respond to other organizational requirements, different from WLB purposes, but which have had consequences on work–life balance for employees.

The research resulted in an analytical framework built on two dimensions: (1) number of working hours and (2) work design.

The results of our work emphasise the importance of time worked, as opposed to the emphasis in previous literature on organisational supportive culture; and the need to develop awareness about the unexpected effects of some WLB measures on the number of hours effectively worked.

Keywords

Work-life balance, Hours worked, Work organization design.
Introduction

The past few decades have seen growing public awareness of the need to strike a better Work-Life Balance (henceforth, WLB). It has been claimed that ways of organising the private and reproductive domain have changed radically, with women entering the labour market and families adopting new and varied forms (Bailyn et al., 2001; Appelbaum et al., 2005; McGinnity and Whelan, 2009; Obeso et al., 2004; Obeso, 2006; OECD, 2011). As a result, the male as breadwinner is no longer the only social model. Yet work organization has not kept pace with social changes and organizations are still based on ‘the ideal worker’ and maintaining gender-based structures (Acker, 1992, 2011; Mescher et al., 2010).

WLB, work-life conflict, work and life integration, work and life conciliation are some of the terms used to reveal the conflicting speeds and directions of change in organising the productive and reproductive domains and—in some cases—the desire for dialogue among these domains. Underlying them is the need to overcome gender inequality in both spheres and in social and political life.

In the 1990s, organizations (chiefly major corporations and multinationals) began developing WLB programmes (Appelbaum et al., 2005; Kossek, 1989; Straub, 2007). Since then the advantages as well as the disadvantages and discrimination experienced by some employees who access these measures have been researched, as well as the type of programmes that try to enhance WLB (Brough and O’Driscoll, 2010). Boundaries of work and life have been critically researched by several authors (Brough and Kalliath, 2009; Tietze and Muson, 2005; Warhurst et al., 2008).

WLB practices have been implemented through human resources policies mainly in the following areas (Harrington and James, 2006): (1) provision of employees services such as health centre, onsite childcare, (2) provision of employee benefits such as a paid parental leave (3) job restructuring such as part-time jobs and (4) organisational development initiatives such as supportive leadership development.

Although the impact of WLB practices on employees has been extensively researched, some scholars point out that this research has mainly focused on specific groups of employees (Lambert and Haley-Lock, 2004; Collins, 2007). Qualitative research that is inclusive of different profiles of organizations and employees is still scarce.

Our research aims at filling this gap in the extensive WLB literature. In order to do so, first we look to previous research on work–life balance measures related to work
organisation; we then explain why a qualitative methodology is used and describe the
design of the fieldwork. Third, we analyse the impact of WLB practices in terms of number
of hours worked and work design. Fourth, we draw conclusions and, finally, we
summarise the contributions of this research and propose future lines of investigation.

Researching work-life balance

Research on WLB policies has advanced considerably in the past two decades. Although
pioneering research started in the 1960s (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1965), it is since 1990
that interest in WLB has grown most and developed multiple perspectives. This variety
and complementarity of approaches has resulted in rich discussions in several directions.
One of these directions is the influence of new ways of working and organising work—
also called job redesign—on WLB.

In the past 20 years, change in work organization has been driven mainly by new
technologies (especially IT) and by phenomena related to global competition. One of the
consequences has been the adaptation of production processes to market requirements
and deregulation processes (Major and Germano, 2006; Lewis et al., 2007). These new
ways of working, also conceptualised as flexible work practices (Fleetwood, 2007), have
had an impact on WLB through new arrangements of time and space dimensions of
work: part-time work; tele-working; working shifts.

While some authors suggest that IT innovation could contribute to some benefits
for WLB (Peters and Van der Lippe, 2007), others have pointed out its drawbacks: work
intensification and stress (Kelliher and Anderson, 2010), the risk of more demanding
organizational standards (Peters and Van der Lippe, 2007), the conflicting demands of
industrial and household production (Tietze and Musson, 2005), adverse consequences
for the other members of the family (Sullivan and Smithson, 2007), the worse career
prospects than those working full-time in the organization’s premises (Gatrell and Cooper
2007), or the maintenance of the fundamental temporal organisation of work (Moen,
2011).

The changes of work organisation with increasingly demanding workloads and long
working hours have also had an impact on WLB. The effects of these measures are
related to those mentioned above.

In another direction, some scholars have pointed out the concentration of research on
specific type of workers and industries, while others point to the dearth of studies on
especially low-wage workers (Collins, 2007; Lambert and Haley-Lock, 2004; Lautsch and Scully, 2007; Warren, Fox & Pascall, 2009) or white-collar employees (Lewis et al., 2007). Analytical frameworks that consider different types of workers and industries have not been fully developed.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to theoretical advancement on WLB by (1) examining the consequences of WLB in new work arrangements and (2) building a framework that can be applied to different profiles of employees and organisations.

Methodology

As WLB measures are embedded in organisational settings, organisational contextual elements are important. This consideration led us to choose a qualitative approach using the case study research strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Stake, 1994, 2000). Following Eisehardt’s approach, a multiple case study design should facilitate drawing theory from cases selected in different industries and profiles.

Our case design and selection was guided by the claim of Eisenhardt and Graebners (2007:27) for choosing polar case. We wanted to select cases with potential polar interventions, from ‘doing nothing’ to those that have a complete and documented WLB programme. At the same time, we considered the intrinsic interest of each case and followed Stake’s (1994) approach on choosing a case for what one can learn from it. While we understand cases as ‘bounded systems’ (Hammersley and Gomm, 2000), each of them interesting in itself, the fact that the different organisational interventions in the different cases develop in a common context — subject to similar legislation and governmental action — and in a similar time period (from 2000 to 2011) should allow for cross-case comparison and pattern identification (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

Case selection was made to include cases: (1) of different numbers of employees; (2) from different geographical and social settings (metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas); (3) with different kinds of workers and industries; (4) with different ownership models (family, multinational, and privately-owned and in few hands); (5) at different stages of development. We also sought to include both explicit, well-established WLB practices and the ‘informal’ or non-specific agreements found in some companies. Seven cases were selected to develop this research. The objective was to obtain a variety of
situations and provide our data with richness (Stake, 1994) and polarity (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

We started collecting data in 2006 with three companies¹, Prefabrication Company, Kinder Company and Pharma Company. In 2009, we added 4 more cases, Courier Company, Networking Organisation, Derma Clinic, and Carpet Company. Data were gathered using interviews, meetings, document analysis and site/ethnographic observation. We interviewed owners, managers and employees. We also brought owners and managers of the companies together to discuss the results of the research on three occasions (3rd December 2009; 16th June 2010; 11th May 2011) and video-recorded the gatherings. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Altogether, the data gathering resulted in 35 interviews, 2 video-recorded meetings of managers of the different companies, site visits and practices documentation. Taken together, our research retrospectively covers 6 years of following these companies.

We chose a definition of WLB as broad as possible in order to be inclusive of different initiatives. Brough and O’Driscoll (2010:281) propose the term ‘work-life balance’ to ‘encompass negative and positive associations relating to an individual’s work and non-work roles, including family but also other salient areas of engagement (e.g., sporting, recreational, community)’.

Regarding analysis and theory development, clearly one cannot generalise, in the statistical sense, from just one or several case studies (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Yet, case studies allow for what some scholars call ‘naturalistic generalisation’ (Lincoln and Guba, 2000), and theory development (Eisenhart, 1989, 2007). We find our approach in line with Stake’s (1982) description of naturalistic generalisation and close to the one described more recently by Watson and Watson (2012:685) as ‘thoroughly grounded’ theorising, which ‘also leads to generalizations—theories, in effect—about “how things work” in the setting being studied’.

We analysed data in two steps. First, we considered each case as a unit in itself (Stake, 1994, 2000), with its own logic, a complete ‘story’: ‘the naturalistic researcher will present the data in a more, rather than less, natural form’ (Stake, 1984:4). Therefore, a complete, narrative ‘story’ of each case was written as part of the research process, of which we present here a brief synthesis. This allowed for a more holistic understanding of the organisational contextual factors (Czarniawska, 2011; Stake, 1994). Second, resulting from within-case and cross-case analysis and iteration of theory-data, we identified

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¹ The names of companies and of those interviewed have been changed to protect their anonymity.
practices and patterns related to time and work organisation which were common or different in the cases (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) organisation.

After writing the cases, our data analysis procedures took into account Eisenhardt’s (1989, 2007) recommendations regarding the need for systematic comparison of cases. We first listed the interventions. We then looked for both common and different patterns. We did so guided by questions that arose from our analysis of the literature, following the iterative process between data and theory as suggested by Eisenhardt (1989:533). Through an inductive process, we identified practices, categorised them and developed an analytical framework, using literature to refine our findings (Appendix 1 provides further details of these measures and the companies in which they appear).

The different WLB interventions: a synthesis of each case

The first step of the analysis was to obtain a complete story of each case. Here we present an extract of each one:

The family-owned company Prefabrication narrates how the difficulties in finding metalworkers for a factory in an area with low unemployment forced the company in 1997 to make major changes in its work organisation and re-think production processes so that they could be condensed into short, stable, fixed four-hour shifts (8.55 a.m. to 12.55 p.m.; 12.55 p.m. to 4.55 p.m.; 5.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.). Employees are assigned to the same shift, which is chosen when they enter the company. This entailed the company altering its working hours and hiring workers—mainly women of different profiles—70% of whom had never been formally employed before.

The multinational Pharma Company developed a a top-down project, starting in 2003, when the general manager of Pharma Company in Spain set up a project team—with senior management support—to establish a WLB strategy in the company, with different policies and practices related to changes of work organisation and employee benefits and services (see Appendix 1). After the enactment of the Spanish Equality Act in 2007, the company added new worker benefits in order to maintain its recognition as a ‘pioneering’ company in the WLB field. The project continues to the present. However, after initial success, internal audits in 2010 indicated that the programme was no longer meeting employees’ expectations.
The small-sized Kinder company was set up by three entrepreneurs who identified a business opportunity related to WLB issues. The business consists of building and managing nursery schools. At the time (2001), when public nursery schools were insufficient to meet increasing demand, private initiatives were welcomed, even though they were more expensive for parents and had to meet the legal standards applicable to all 0-3 schools. The Kinder Company sites its nursery schools in business areas offering opening hours to suit the working hours of nearby enterprises. Firms pay part of the nursery school fees as an employee benefit and as part of a WLB organisation’s policy.

Courier Company is a family firm that has won several awards for its WLB measures. Since 1997, the firm has set up a range of WLB measures with the participation of employees. One of Courier Company’s measures most valued by staff is its 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. shift, which is very unusual in the context of Spain. The key to this success seems to be the company’s compressed work week and flexible working hours. This policy is respected and encouraged at all levels. It involves adjusting the behaviour of those managers (often incomers) who are inclined not to respect or encourage flexitime arrangements. Like Pharma Company, after the enactment of the Spanish Equality Act, Courier Company added new worker benefits in order to maintain its recognition.

Carpet Company is a small-sized enterprise that designs rugs and accessories for the home. It was set up in 1987 by a woman designer. The enterprise currently exports its products around the world. In the beginning, only women worked in the company. Today they make up 70% of the firm’s 22 employees. The company is run by the founder and her daughter. Strong, progressive assumption of gender identity went hand in hand with the founder’s taking on the roles of entrepreneur and designer. The willingness to work long hours in building up the business and a strong commitment to gender equality gives rise to ad hoc solutions in dealing with WLB issues.

Networking Organisation is a network of Catalan women created in the last decade. Its aims are to narrow the digital divide between women and men and put women in contact with one another with a view to fostering their participation and presence over the Internet. In an organisation founded on strong feminist and social convictions, WLB is considered to be thoroughly ‘embedded’ and reflected in the flexibility given to staff through ‘freelancing’ and ‘working by objectives’ arrangements—both facilitated by intensive ICT use.

Finally, Derma Clinic is a small dermatology clinic founded in 2008 by three women entrepreneurs from the healthcare and consulting industries. The company provides an
innovative approach to skin problems due to its focus on diverse specialties and disciplines. Its patients range from the newborn to the elderly. The entrepreneurs manage this recently founded firm without either an explicit discourse or policies on WLB. However, they express strong awareness of gender inequality and WLB needs in terms of the unwritten business and social norms/practices that hinder women in pursuing careers in the health sector. The use of time in the business community is seen as generating both inefficiency and inequality.

Together, these seven cases allow analysing interventions in WLB in three large companies (one of them a multinational corporation and two family companies) and four small and medium sized enterprises. They present reasonable albeit non-statistical variety (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Lincoln and Guba, 2000) and represent a range of WLB interventions.

Impact of WLB practices on work organization: on time and work design

The second step of the analysis was to cross-analyse the seven cases in order to identify patterns in relation to time and work design.

The analysis of the cases revealed that ‘hours worked’ and ‘work design’ were distinctive and recurrent issues.

Working hours in WLB practices

‘Time’ appeared repeatedly in interviews and a first analysis of the data revealed that many of the ‘interventions’ implemented are related to ‘time organization’. Concern with time (length, structure) and the awareness of ‘difference’ in comparison to other countries are common threads.

In Courier: ‘[…] The idea is that working hours run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and not a second longer. […]. In other words, it is a question of working less but better’. (Susan, Human Resources Director)

In Derma: ‘Above all, there’s the question of working hours. I believe the issue often hinders women from reaching management positions. Basically, the problem is these long, unwritten working hours that managers are expected to work. It’s not a question of getting women to work them but rather of ensuring men don’t have to work neither. (All agree). […] I think we should fight the battle over working hours.’ (Julia, co-founder)
In Pharma: ‘I believe rising generations will be unwilling to work these hours — Thank God! We […] led the whole flexible working hours thing, shorter work days in the summer, we have a lot of flexibility, tele-working, the office gym and so on. […] This year we carried out an opinion survey, […] and the worst-rated item was precisely work-life balance. That is despite the fact that we have a lot of things to be grateful for and people are general happy— it’s a bit perverse, really.’ (Ann, Responsible of WLB project in Pharma)

In Courier: ‘[…] If we kept all of the thirty measures currently in place except for the short working day, we would have a revolution on our hands. By contrast, if we were to keep the condensed working day (finishing at 16h) and flexitime and ditch everything else, staff might whine a little at first but the fuss would blow over within three months’. (Susan)

In Networking Organisation: ‘Obviously the wider debate is if we want a richer, more productive world of work we need to take WLB into account. We want a fairer share out of home duties and that resonates with reasonable working hours for both men and women in general […] Other countries have different work cultures and this issue is something Spain still has to come to grips with’. (Mary, co-founder of the company)

Some of the measures implemented require employees to work more hours. Others have no effect on the amount of time worked. And others result in employees’ working less in real terms (measured in hours of effective work). In other words, the organisational intervention results in an effective change in worked time. This led to the identification of the first generalization.

(1) Employees work more, less or the same amount of time as before the intervention, not always according to what was expected or anticipated before implementation of the measure.

Work design in WLB practices

Some WLB cases in our data led to changes in work design, in the specific actions developed to accomplish a task. Often these changes in the way work was done were reported as being linked to concerns about increasing productivity; or they resulted, perhaps unintentionally, in increased productivity.

Some of the interventions to cut working hours and provide flexibility involve working differently: ‘We work hard from 8a.m. to 4 p.m.[…] In other words, one should work less but better. People who work extra hours [beyond 4 p.m.] soon get the message. We say,
“Don’t you have a home to go to?” And things like that. They soon take the hint’. (Susan, Courier Company)

In Networked company, flexibility it is the ‘usual way of working’. It can also be found in ad hoc agreements in Derma and Carpet. For Kinder Company, it is the basis of time flexibility services that it gives to parents. Some interventions provide flexibility in ‘where work is done’. This the case of Courier, where manages at board level are authorised to work from home three out of 5 days. This is also the case in Pharma, where this practice started slowly in 2003 and today is widespread.

The measures for optimising time use and cutting out low added-value tasks in Pharma Company also led to changing working patterns and increased efficiency. This means rethinking even minor tasks (‘do we really need to do that?’) as expressed in the motto ‘make it simple or stop doing it’ posted on walls in the workplace.

Optimising time also involves rules for common use of time:

‘(in meetings) We want people to be punctual, […], the agenda has to be sent several hours earlier and you have to arrive well-briefed […]. These are general rules. But you cannot call a meeting for any time you like—there are strict limits’ (Ann, Project Champion, Pharma Company).

In the case of Prefabrication Company, the short 4-hour shifts—besides being related to time—have required a re-engineering process which has involved productivity gains for the company.

These considerations resulted in the second generalization related to work organisation:

(2) Some interventions involve changes in the way work is organised; that is, the alteration of work in ways other than length of time worked.

The following figure frames the interventions under two dimensions—those affecting ‘working time’ and those affecting ‘rethinking work’:

Figure 1 about here
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(1) Working Time: After the intervention, are employees working more, the same, or less?

This dimension locates WLB interventions as a function of the amount of effective work (hours) done after the intervention compared with the work done before the intervention. On the left side (- hours), we place measures that reduced time worked (e.g., part-time work, cuts in the working day, family leave). On the right side (+ hours), we place measures that increased the time actually worked. For example, tele-work, which provides flexibility, may involve an increase in the time worked as it was identified in Pharma. In between, there are measures aimed at working the agreed time—which is made easier by cutting absenteeism and reducing the job interference caused by personal and family life. As shown in Figure 1, WLB measures can result in more hours worked, despite being presented and accepted as a benefit: even if intended to allow employees to work less or as agreed, they may still end up working more actual time than before the intervention.

(2) Work design: After the intervention, work is done in the same way through the same set of tasks, using the same technology. Some interventions involve or require changing ways of organising or doing work. Changes in work organisation and in designing jobs may boost efficiency and thus workers’ free time. This is the case of measures leading to a re-thinking of the working day, teamwork, individual work, or greater freedom and responsibility in carrying out tasks. Working differently may mean working more, the same or less, depending on the measures’ goals and their implementation.

Conclusions

In line with the findings of Claessens (2007); Kelliher and Anderson (2010); European Commission (2010); Peters and van der Lippe (2007); Steiber (2009) Tietze and Musson (2005) and Warhust et al. (2008), the research revealed ‘time’ as a distinctive and recurrent issue.

Additionally, the findings above reveal that WLB interventions may have unexpected and contradictory results, some of them positive (such as productivity gains and time savings) and some of them negative (such as work overload and long working hours). Kelly and Moen (2007) also highlight the limitations of some WLB practices as well as the unexpected consequences of some WLB. However, while acknowledging the exploration of the benefits of schedule control that Kelly and Moen advocate, we argue that progress
in WLB may be undermined unless limits to working hours, together with work design, are considered.

Even in the most reputable companies, some interventions may have unexpected and adverse effects which employees accept for various reasons (including the perception that they are well off compared with workers in other companies in the same sector). This result is in line with the finding of Hammer et al. (2005) that employees may express perceptions of being looked after by the company and report increased job satisfaction while unaware of the consequences of long hours of work (European Commission, 2010; Tucker and Folkard, 2012) or, if aware, willing to pay the price when making their decisions.

The analysis revealed that there are profound differences among WLB practices and even in ways of approaching work. This allows us to highlight the potential dysfunctions of measures designed to make WLB more effective. Measures initially created to facilitate WLB might unintentionally result in increased work and stress. These results are consistent with the critical analyses found in the WLB literature, mentioned above, especially with those that highlight the differences in measures adopted regarding different profiles of employees and organisations.

As mentioned above, interviewees expressed concern about working time being a ‘distinctive’ issue in Spain as differentiated from other countries, with longer hours, thus interfering with social activities, being part of the culture. Actually, there is debate on whether Spain should adapt to European schedules (Comisión Nacional para la Racionalización de los Horarios Españoles y ARHOE: http://www.horariosenespana.es/; Ara és l’hora: Iniciativa per a la Reforma Horaria http://www.reformahoraria.cat/; Yardley, 2014). However, there is less debate about the length of work and effective working time. The research here highlights that concern about time has several aspects—not only schedules, but also length and productivity—and suggests that debates and policies focusing on only one of those may fail to address the complexity of this issue.

Contributions and future research

The research presented makes the following contributions. First, it fosters awareness of the consequences of the measures implemented, and, in that sense, it helps anticipate
undesirable side effects. Second, it fosters awareness about the potential of WLB interventions to improve productivity. Third, it promotes consideration of which kinds of interventions are most appropriate for the needs of different profiles of workers. Finally, it suggests the need for research on rethinking work design to investigate how jobs and tasks can from the inception include both productivity and WLB requirements. Attempts to achieve a better WLB would require placing it at the core of work design studies, such as those undertaken by Parker et al. (2001), and echoing Fleetwood’s (2011) suggestion, integrating views from different disciplines.

Finally, the results also suggest that WLB projects are linked and embedded in the design of the production process, work organisation and job definition. In these cases, WLB may remain ‘embedded’ in the company structure and culture, helping the firm go through difficult times without renouncing WLB. In this respect, there is a need to delve deeper into the sustainability of the measures in different contexts and economic cycles.
References


**Figure 1: Work More / Work Less / Rethinking Work**

- **From Working as Agreed**
  - **Working Less (- hours)**
    - WLB interventions involve slight rethinking of work
      - Result in *reduction* in work (from slight to major reduction) and/or time related to work activities (mobility)
      - *Prototypical intervention*: work reorganization at Courier
  - **Working More (+ hours)**
    - WLB interventions involve substantial rethinking of work
      - Result in *increase* in work (from slight to major increase) and/or time related to work activities (mobility)
      - *Prototypical intervention*: short shifts at Prefabrication Company

- **To Rethinking Work**
  - WLB interventions involve substantial rethinking of work
    - Result in *reduction* in work (from slight to major reduction) and/or time related to work activities (mobility)
    - *Prototypical intervention*: Teleworking at Pharma.
  - WLB interventions involve slight rethinking of work
    - Result in *increase* in work (from slight to major increase) and/or time related to work activities (mobility)
    - *Prototypical intervention*: flexibility and regulation of common time at Pharma.
### APPENDIX 1: WLB interventions by company

**Prefabrication Company:** 250 staff  
- Three four-hour shifts, with the morning and afternoon shifts ending five minutes before the hour to enable women to pick up their children from school at 1.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m.  
- Redesign of production processes (iii)

**Pharma Company:** 2,156 staff at the Spanish subsidiary  
- Optimising time use and eliminating low added-value tasks: Recommendations regarding respect for others’ time (time management, e-mail, meetings, video conferences)  
- Staff development and fostering changes in working habits to facilitate WLB (casual attire on Fridays, on-line mini-training (three levels, the first lasting one minute)  
- Fostering a flexible setting that facilitates WLB (*Club Trèvol:* strengthening interaction between staff through social activities, sport, tele-working, flexitime)  
- Providing WLB resources (health and social care), take-away meals, family car for salesmen, massage sessions, yoga classes.  
- Extending 3/2007 Act, to provide gender equality regarding leave.

**Courier Company:** 700 staff and 1,350 franchises  
- Concentrated working hours (8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.) with a 38-hour working week.  
- Labour flexibility (options of choosing the work timetable where justified, tele-working, flexible clocking on and off, annual holidays, half-day holiday on birthdays). - A week’s extra holiday after ten years on the job.  
- Family support (extension of leave to care for nursing infants; time for medical check-ups for children under 18, up to a maximum of 12 hours a year; nursery school vouchers; two days’ extra holiday for marriage; time off to care for children or the elderly; freedom to leave in the event of family emergencies; flexi-leave days and short holidays).  
- Leisure facilities (couches, gymnasium, library, free parking, canteen)  
- Consultancy and advice to franchisees on WLB policies  
- Leave when school classes are not in session (days off can be requested in return for a pro rata cut in wages)
### Kinder Company: 29 employees and 227 children in 3 centres
- Close to business districts (close to work versus close to home)
- Opening hours from 7.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. with nursery education from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., and childcare provided outside these times. Parents can go to the school at midday to take part in activities with their children.
- Two-tier fee structure, depending on whether the child attends for more than six hours per day or less. Children may stay for up to eight hours at a stretch by pre-arrangement and ten in exceptional circumstances.
- Possibility of companies co-funding nursery school fees for their staff

### Networking Organisation: 8 employees and 5 members of the Board of Directors
Job design based on the following:
- Flexibility (tele-work for networked staff)
- Management by objectives
- Use of ICT as key work tool

### Derma Clinic: 14 employees
Compliance with the legislation and ad hoc measures

### Carpet Company: 20 employees
Compliance with the legislation and ad hoc measures