Examining organisational characteristics of SMEs that offer work-life balance practices

Stacey Jenkins
School of Management and Marketing, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia
Email: Stacey.Jenkins1@det.nsw.edu.au

Dr. Ramudu Bhanugopan
School of Management and Marketing, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia
Email: bramudu@csu.edu.au

Dr. Pamela Mathews
School of Management and Marketing, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia
Email: pmathews@csu.edu.au
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This study explores work-life balance (WLB) practices in Australian small and medium enterprises drawing on survey responses from 219 firms. It seeks to identify the organizational characteristics associated with the adoption of four groups of WLB practices using a causal model. Of three models tested, the final model supports a conceptual framework that is inclusive of four domains: flexible work options, leave programs, support benefits, and care arrangements. The findings also suggest that organizational characteristics viz. industry type and geographic location impact on WLB practices. Implications for theory and practice are discussed and suggestions for future research are presented.

Keywords: human resource practices; work-life balance; small and medium enterprises; Australia
In Europe, a study by the Boston Consulting Group and EAPM (2007) ranked work-life balance (WLB) as one of the top three challenges facing human resources. Much research around the topic has emerged in the last decade (e.g. Jack, Hyman and Osborne 2006; Maxwell, Rankine, Bell and MacVicar 2007; Barrett and Mayson 2007; Malik, McKie, Beattie and Hogg 2010; O’Driscoll et al. 2011; Cegarra-Leiva et al. 2012a). However, WLB warrants further research relevant to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Lavoie 2004; O’Driscoll et al. 2011; Cegarra-Leiva et al. 2012a). As Poelmans, Kalliath and Brough (2008) stated, ‘WLB is not a fad, but the logical consequence of dramatic and irreversible changes taking place globally in terms of demographic shifts, the intensification of work and the fragmentation of time’ (p. 229). They define work-life balance as the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities (p. 326).

According to Cegarra-Leiva, Sánchez-Vidal and Cegarra-Navarro (2012b) ‘the availability of WLB practices is related to company size and needs to be examined in the national context in which such practices are offered’ (p. 93). A number of definitions of SMEs have been constructed by various government and ‘official’ sources (Senderovitz 2009). Most commonly SMEs have been defined according to their number of employees but the intervals vary considerably (Senderovitz 2009). Senderovitz (2009) argued that the SME definition used for a particular context should be the result of a deliberate and well grounded choice. He suggested that for a quantitative study with a large data set, a quantitative definition may be the best option. Furthermore, he considered the official quantitative definition of a specific region would be most suitable for a study investigating SMEs and entrepreneurship policies in that regional area. Hence, in this study the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2005) definition of SMEs was used which specifies that small business are those with 1-19 employees and medium sized businesses have 20-200 employees.

Addressing WLB issues in the context of SMEs is especially important given that SMEs make a significant contribution to the world economy and are a major source of employment. SMEs have been reported to account for over 95% of all firms, 60-70% of the total employment, and generate a large share of new jobs in OECD economies (OECD, 2005). Within Australia, as at June
2009, 99% of the 2 051 085 actively trading businesses were SMEs (Clark, Eaton, Lind, Pye and Bateman 2011). Lavoie (2004) observed that more research was required concerning WLB of SMEs employees, particularly research which adopted quantitative techniques and analyzed the issues in different countries. This paper attempts to go some way to filling this research gap by asking the research questions:

**Question 1a:** What are the WLB practices being used by Australian SME’s?

**Question 1b:** Of the WLB practices offered by SMEs, can they be grouped into any specific classifications?

**Question 2:** Are there any organizational characteristics which affect the WLB practices offered by Australian SMEs?

The next section of this paper reviews the literature from which the hypotheses were developed. The research methodology is then outlined. Subsequently the results of the factor analysis and structural equation models are presented. The discussion of the results and the implications for academics and recommendations for practitioners then follow. Finally the conclusions of the study are outlined.

**Theoretical background**

*Work-life balance practices*

There is vast array of WLB practices that a company can seek to implement to address WLB issues (Parliament of Australia, 2006). However, as noted by Polemans and Beham (2008) there is not a widespread approach to the classification of these practices. For example, Bardoel, Tharenou and Moss (1998) identify 100 different work-family practices in Australia, based on previous studies. Pitt-Catsouphes, Mirvis and Litchfield (1995) used a measure of 36 specific work-family practices to measure total work-family responsiveness. Morgan and Milliken (1992) also identified a diverse range of family supportive practices and sought to construct subscales of their overall work-family responsiveness measure. Others have also identified three to five factors, classifications or categories (e.g. Morgan and Milliken 1992; Lobel and Kossek 1996; Wood 1999; Glass and Finley 2002;
While the studies on WLB practices are restricted to small sample sizes (e.g. Baroel et al. 1998; Blair-Loy and Wharton 2002), samples of workers (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995), or specifically targeted at large companies, evidence exists of WLB practices in SMEs which fall within three to five factors (Cegarra-Leiva et al 2012a). For example, offsite working, carers arrangements, flexi-work schedule, and alternative work arrangements (Yuile et al. 2012). The scope of these practices has then been used as an indicator of employer WLB responsiveness (see Pitt-Catsaouphes, Mirvis and Litchfield, 1995). However, no large-scale empirical quantitative study specifically related to Australian SME adoption of WLB practices was found which measures the nomological networks of such latent factors. According to Cronbach and Meehl (1955) in order to develop a nomological network you need to first, provide a theoretical framework of what will be measured; second, develop a framework of how this can be done; and third, specify the linkages between the two frameworks. This research, therefore, will attempt to fill this gap by ascertaining the extent to which diverse kinds of Australian SMEs use WLB practices, to determine the overall WLB responsiveness of the SMEs and evaluate which theories best explain their use. Hence, this leads to the following hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 1*: The nomological networks of latent factors of WLB responsiveness are optimal extrapolative predictors.

**Theoretical perspectives applied to work-life balance practices in SMEs**

Wood (1999) identifies five key empirical papers on family-friendly management. Four are from the organizational adaptation perspective (Morgan and Milliken 1992; Goodstein 1994, 1995; Ingram and Simons 1995), and a fifth tests high commitment theory (Osterman 1995). Wood (1999) and Felstead et al. (2002) both test their hypotheses against four theoretical perspectives which attempt to explain the determinants related to the adoption of work-life practices. These are (i) institutional theory; (ii) adaptation theory; (iii) high commitment theory; and (iv) situational theory. Each differs
from the predictive characteristics they identify (Felstead et al. 2002). Abbott and De Cieri (2008) draw upon complementary theoretical bases of strategic choice theory, stakeholder theory and the resource-based view of the firm. They advocate the use of multiple theoretical perspectives for future research. This current study examines the adoption by Australian SMEs of WLB practices through institutional theory, strategic choice theory and stakeholder theory. It should be noted that none of the theories considered in this paper include a full set of variables that may affect management decisions rather each theory provides new insights for why management within SMEs offer WLB practices.

**Institutional theory** was built around the rationale that organizations conform to normative pressures. However, organizational conformity varies in degree (Di Maggio and Powell 1983; Scott, 1987; Oliver 1991;) owing to the tension between competitive and institutional pressures (Boon, Paauwe, Boselie and Hartog 2009). ‘Organizations compete not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness’ (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983, p. 150). The views of various stakeholders regarding an organization’s legitimacy affect its probability of survival. Stakeholders may include representatives from government, trade unions, professional associations, works councils and employees. For example, a lack of ‘institutional fit’ with the environment may result in increased risks of industrial action (Boon et al. 2009). Meyer and Rowan (1977) also contended that according to the institutional perspective organizational practices like human resources management are shaped by the institutional context.

According to Goodstein (1994) and Ingram and Simons (1995), due to their public profile, larger organizations may experience institutional pressure to offer socially legitimate conditions such as work-family practices. Bardoel (2003), Bardoel et al. (1998) and Wood (1999) corroborate this view that the size of an organization co-exists with intentional choices made by managers regarding decisions to provide or not to provide work-family policies. According to Abbott and DeCieri (2008) such decisions regarding WLB can be related to *strategic choice theory*. This theory discusses how strategies of organizations are sets of strategic decisions made by power holders within organizations with resulting streams of action (Child 1972).
Dex and Scheibl (2001) found, however, that whilst SMEs were less likely than larger organizations to have devised their WLB practices as a package of measures they were more likely to have made incremental and ad hoc additions to their arrangements as needs arose and there ‘were clear cases of institutional pressures being the motivator’ such as new regulations and laws and union involvement. Hence, given this study focuses solely on SMEs, as opposed to larger organizations, this study will test the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2**: There is no significant relationship between organizational employee size and the adoption of WLB practices.

It has also been argued that a company’s location may affect the provision of WLB practices. Based on institutional theory, Millikens, Martin and Morgan (1998) postulated that organizations were more likely to offer WLB practices because of the need to compete for staff in their geographical regions and because they were able to observe other organizations more closely. Location could also impact WLB practice provision because of state legislatures creating coercive pressures towards responsiveness (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 1987; Barringer and Milkovich 1998; Millikens et al. 1998).

Abbott and DeCieri (2008) contended that, in accordance with *stakeholder theory* (Freeman 1984), interest groups can influence policy, procedures and business directions and have a ‘stake’ in the actions of the organization. Governments are in a particularly influential position because they legislate on employment conditions. Abbott and DeCieri noted that due to ongoing legislative developments in Australia, WLB issues have become a topic of considerable national attention. Rules of employment are not uniform over the whole of Australia. There are six states and two territories allowed to pass laws that are not specifically covered by the Commonwealth (although legislation passed by the territories may be overruled by the Commonwealth). Hence, the following hypothesis is posited:

**Hypothesis 3**: There is a significant difference among SMEs located in different geographic regions and the adoption of WLB practices.
Barringer and Milkovich (1998) suggested that in accordance with institutional theory as WLB practices become more prevalent, that businesses were more likely to perceive them as standard. Hence businesses tend to comply with competitors in their industry and adopt their employment conditions. Building on past empirical research (Morgan and Milliken 1992; Goodstein 1994, 1995; Ingram and Simons 1995; Millikens et al. 1998; Felstead et al. 2002), this study tests whether there are differences across industries in regard to Australian SMEs offering WLB practices.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference across industries in the adoption of WLB practices.

External coercive pressures have also been identified as affecting how an organization behaves (Di Maggio and Powell 1983; Scott 1987). Abbott and De Cieri (2008) noted that workers unions were an example of a stakeholder that held such influencing power over organizations regarding their decision to offer WLB practices. For example, Barringer and Milkovich (1999) postulated that unions exerted pressure to bring about flexible working conditions. Additionally, in June 2003 the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) applied to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission for a Work and Family Test Case in support of establishing new work family standards in industrial awards (Burrows 2003). Felstead et al. (2002) predicted the greater the unionization of the workplace, the more likely the option to work at home would be offered. Morgan and Milliken (1992), however, found no significant relationship between the offering of family friendly practices and the percentage of the workforce that was unionized. But, Hoque and Noon (2004) concluded that equal opportunity policies were more likely to be adopted by unionized organizations. Hence, the following hypothesis is tested:

Hypothesis 5: The larger the unionization of the workforce in the SMEs the more likely they are to offer WLB practices.

Methodology

Sampling design and data collection method

A Dun and Bradstreet database file was used to identify 2000 suitable SMEs within Australia. Osterman (1995) argued that, for creating a national sample, a Dun and Bradstreet file was the only
practical choice. Weisner and Innes (2010) also used a Dun and Bradstreet database in their Australian HRM study. The following criteria were used for the selection of SMEs: all ABS industry categories were represented; companies had between 1 and 200 employees; the name and address for the chief executive officer or managing director were available; and each Australian state and territory were represented.

Response rate

Of the 2000 questionnaires sent, 557 were returned to sender due to recipients not being at the provided address or the business being closed. From the remaining 1443 possible respondents, 219 useable questionnaires were returned yielding a response rate of 15%. The overall response rate is similar to a study by Milliken et al. (1998), who obtained a response rate of 18% (n = 175) from surveying a random sample of 1000 human resource executives regarding work-family policies.

In this case a response rate of 15% is considered to be satisfactory as it provides a substantial sample size in absolute terms to yield reliable statistical results. For structural equation modelling (SEM) using LISREL software the sample size can affect the statistical test by either making it insensitive (i.e. for small samples) or overly sensitive (i.e. for too large samples) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham 2006). A sample size of more than 100 respondents is sufficient for SEM (Jackson, Chow & Leitch 1997). When the sample size exceeds 400, however, Hair et al. (2006) suggest that the researcher should examine all significant results to ensure they have practical significance due to the increased statistical power from the sample size. Thus the sample size of 219 businesses was considered appropriate for the SEM procedure adopted.

Measures

To facilitate the reliable and valid measurement of various concepts, numerous multi-item measurement scales were employed. These scales were derived from previous studies and/or developed from related literature and suitably adapted. Similar to previous research (e.g. Milliken et al. 1998), a wide range of WLB practices were included in this study to measure the dependent variable, WLB responsiveness. As postulated earlier this approach is necessary due to the variation
in the suitability of practices when trying to ascertain how best to help an employee with WLB issues. For this study the availability of 37 WLB practices within organizations was measured (derived from practices identified by Pitt-Catsouphes et al. (1995); Bardoel et al. (1998); Mulvenna (1999); Konrad and Mangel (2000); Bardoel (2003)). Similar to the studies conducted by Bardoel (2003) and Pitt-Catsouphes et al. (1995), respondents were asked to estimate the extent to which their organization provided each practice on five-point Likert-type scales (1 = not at all, 2 = being considered, 3 = offered informally or on ad hoc basis, 4 = available to less than half of the workforce and 5 = available to more than half of the workforce). The independent variables (presented in Table 1) comprised the size of the business, location, industry type and unionization of the workplace.

[Insert Table 1 near here]

Results

In order to determine the underlying dimension of WLB responsiveness, factors based on the latent root orientation (eigenvalue), total variance explained, and correlation matrix were determined using SPSS 20. Furthermore, given the indeterminate nature of the factor structure, this study employed Principal Component Analysis (PCA) as a well-established technique for dimensionality reduction using varimax rotation to extract factors. Cronbach alpha coefficients were also employed to determine the reliability of the instrument (Cronbach, 1951). The Cronbach Alpha score for WLB responsiveness was 0.86, exceeding the recommended value of 0.70 (Nunnally 1978). The sample was first assessed for its suitability for factor analysis. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was highly significant (p < .001) and the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value of 0.750 exceeded the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser 1970), which supported the factorability of the correlation matrix.

A number of WLB practices being used by Australian SMEs were identified. These are listed in Table 2. The three most widely offered WLB practice by SMEs was telephone access, bereavement leave and flexible annual leave. PCA indicated that the responses to the questionnaire items measuring work-life responsiveness loaded onto four factors (see Table 2), which exceeded
eigenvalues of 2, explaining 36.3 per cent of the variance. These four factors exceeded the criterion value obtained from Parallel Analysis (Watkins 2000). Using Catell’s (1966) scree test, we decided to retain a four-factor solution. The four significant factors, namely flexible work options (α = 0.83), leave programs (α = 0.76), support benefits (α = 0.67), and care arrangements (α = 0.53), emerged from the analysis, showing high factor loading and correlation values. Whilst the fourth factor which is care arrangements has a low Cronbach alpha, according to Nunnally (1978), for any hypothesized measure of a construct, the modest reliabilities of 0.60 or 0.50 are acceptable. Furthermore, these factors were analogous to previous literature. For example, Yuile et al. (2012) identify four factors; flexible work schedules (α = 0.60), offsite work arrangements (α = 0.81), alternative work arrangements (α = 0.83), and care arrangements (α = 0.72). Hence all were maintained.

[Insert Table 2 near here]

Having found the valid factor structure for WLB responsiveness, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to further investigate the structure of the factors. Data were processed and analyzed using LISREL 8.80. Absolute fit indices determined how well the model fitted the sample data and which model represented the superior fit (see Hooper, Coughian & Mullen 2008).

Given the poor fit of data for $M_1$ and $M_2$, the modification indices values were evaluated to uncover the $M_1$ and $M_2$ misfit. This analysis suggested that removing one item in each of the four sub-scales that showed the lowest coefficient values (work at home programs from sub-scale one; carer’s leave from sub-scale two; re-entry scheme from sub-scale three, and childcare referral system from sub-scale four) would result in a significantly improved model. For the first sub-scale (flexible work options), five items remained (flexi-time, telecommuting, part time work, shorter work days, and flexible start and finish times). For the second sub-scale (leave programs) two items remained (paid maternity leave and paid paternity leave). For the third sub-scale (support benefits) two items remained (employee assistance program and life skills program). For the final sub-scale (care arrangements) two items remained (on-site breast feeding area and childcare on or near site). Based on the overall GFI statistics, the four-factor model $M_3$ for WLB responsiveness yields satisfactory fit.
statistics (chi-square $\chi^2 = 68.91$, P-value = 0.00158, df = 38, GFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.87, NNFI = 0.90, and IFI = 0.93, Relative Fit Index (RFI) = 0.81, Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) = 0.061 Standardized RMR (SRMR) = 0.052, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.91 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.061). Table 3 displays the results ($\beta$, Standardized Loadings, t values) for the three models and Table 4 shows the GFI statistics for the three models, and the iteration process used to achieve the final good fit model for the WLB responsiveness construct. Three structural models were tested to examine the path covariance; the best fit model can be seen in Figure 1. These results therefore supported Hypothesis 1.

[Insert Figure 1 and Tables 3 and 4 near here]

To examine the impact of the institutional, strategic choice and stakeholder theory factors on SMEs responsiveness to WLB issues, a standard regression analysis was performed involving the four latent factor scores and the predictor variables. The four latent factors were: flexible work options, leave programs, support benefits, and care arrangements. The organizational factors represented organization size, location of business, industry type, and unionization of the workplace. Table 5 shows that flexible work options were significantly related to the location of the business ($\beta = -0.182$, $p < 0.00$) and type of industry ($\beta = 0.187$, $p < 0.00$) (the adjusted $R^2$ was 0.197). These results supported hypotheses 3 and 4. No significant relationship was found between organizational size, or the unionization of the workplace, and the adoption of WLB practices thus hypotheses 2 was supported but hypothesis 5 was rejected.

[Insert Table 5 near here]

MANOVA was performed to ascertain which locations (geographic regions) and industries were more likely to offer the flexible work options. Results of Tukey multiple comparisons on location showed that for flexible work options the mean scores for metropolitan Western Australia and non metropolitan New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia ($p = 0.000$) were significant. For all industries except rental, hiring and real estate services the mean scores for
flexible work options were also found to be significant ($p = 0.000$). Hence hypotheses 3 and 4 were again supported.

**Discussion and conclusion**

This study aimed to determine if SMEs varied in the extent to which they offered WLB practices based on factors associated with institutional, strategic choice and stakeholder theory. A number of WLB practices being used by Australian SMEs were identified, mostly commonly telephone access, bereavement leave and flexible annual leave were available. Hence, this research extends existing knowledge on what WLB practices are offered specifically by SMEs. Results of the exploratory factor analysis of WLB practices supported four distinctive factors: flexible work options; leave programs; support benefits; and care arrangements which supports past research (Morgan and Milliken 1992; Lobel and Kossek 1996; Glass and Finley 2002; Arthur 2003; Arthur and Cook 2003; Yuile et al. 2012). The CFA results showed support for a parsimonious four-factor model (flexible work options, leave programs, support benefits and care arrangements).

Interestingly, in this study it was found there was evidence to indicate that within SME’s the size of the business was not related to whether the businesses had practices conducive to WLB. This finding supports previous research conducted by Curran and Stanworth (1979a; 1979b; 1981a; 1981b) and Rainnie (1989), who established that small firm employment relations were not defined by the firm’s size alone.

Furthermore, the results of the study demonstrated there was a significant relationship between industry type and the offering of WLB practices. These results are consistent with the findings of previous studies regarding the relationship between industry type and the offering of WLB practices (Morgan and Milliken 1992; Goodstein, 1994, 1995; Ingram and Simons, 1995; Millikens et al. 1998; Felstead et al. 2002). Hence the findings may be indicative of industry norms around WLB practices operate within SMEs to the extent that they are inclined to offer such practices. The results of the current study allows that the conclusion that WLB provisions offered to employees depends upon the industry they are in can be extended to SMEs.
The data also revealed that the location of the business impacted on whether SMEs offered flexible work options to their employees. It could be argued that the areas where significance was found (i.e. metropolitan Western Australia and non-metropolitan New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia) may be more likely to offer WLB practices to their employees. This may be due to the competition they face in sourcing and retaining quality employees, hence organizations in these locations seek to mimic other organizations. For example, given Western Australia is far removed from the more populated Eastern side of Australia, trying to attract and retain quality staff is difficult. In addition given the resource boom which this state is experiencing, metropolitan based organizations need to compete with the mining businesses that operate in the non-metropolitan areas within that state that offer lucrative employment conditions to entice employees to work in remote locations. Therefore the metropolitan based organizations within this location may seek to offer WLB practices to their employees as a form of motivation and retention measure.

The current study, however, did not find any significant results for leave programs (e.g. paid paternity leave), support benefits (e.g. employee assistance programs – EAP) and care arrangements (e.g. child care arrangements on or near workplace site). This could possibly be attributed to most SMEs not seeing these WLB practices as a financially feasible option. However, this may change in the near future for certain WLB practices due to legislative changes and larger companies, such as Caltex and Insurance Australian Group Limited (IAG) starting to offer generous paid parental leave schemes to attract and retain women (Hopkins 2012).

Overall, the current research provides initial support for the efficacy of a WLB model in SMEs in Australia. This study supports a conceptual framework that is inclusive of four domains: flexible work options, leave programs, support benefits, and care arrangements. The study found perceived WLB practices are significantly influenced by flexible work options. Hence, it is expected that the results of the study could benefit future WLB studies as it provides researchers with useful theoretical implications on adoption of WLB practices in SMEs in Australia. If future WLB research validates and extends the current study to a broader perspective, substantial implications for employee performance outcomes may be realized.
References


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Table 1 Independent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of people employed in their organization (as per the ABS definition: 1–19 employees constitutes small enterprises, 20–200 represents medium enterprises).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location and operations of business</td>
<td>Respondents were asked to indicate in which Australian states or territory they were located (i.e. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory or Australian Capital Territory) and identify if they were metropolitan or non-metropolitan based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry type</td>
<td>Using the Australian New Zealand Industry Classification (ANZIC) codes of industry type (ABS cat No. 1292.0) respondents were asked to nominate which of the following best described their primary industry type: 1 = agriculture, forestry and fishing; 2 = mining; 3 = manufacturing; 4 = electricity, gas, water and waste services; 5 = construction; 6 = wholesale trade; 7 = retail trade; 8 = accommodation and food services; 9 = transport, postal and warehousing; 10 = information media and telecommunications; 11 = financial and insurance services; 12 = rental, hiring and real estate services; 13 = professional, scientific and technical services; 14 = administrative and support services; 15 = public administration and safety; 16 = education and training; 17 = health care and social assistance; 18 = arts and recreation services; 19 = other services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unionisation</td>
<td>Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of employees that were unionized.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Table 2 Work-life balance rotated factor loadings, mean and standard deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>α</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1: FLEX</td>
<td>Compressed work week</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>2.316</td>
<td>0.497</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<td>Flexi time</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.963</td>
<td>0.665</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job sharing</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>1.980</td>
<td>0.517</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Telecommuting</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>2.533</td>
<td>0.724</td>
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<td>Work at home programs</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.431</td>
<td>0.703</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.697</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shorter work days</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>2.424</td>
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<td>Emergency care</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>2.524</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Childcare during school breaks</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>1.532</td>
<td>0.438</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sabbatical breaks</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>2.042</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flexible start and finish times</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.125</td>
<td>0.531</td>
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<td>Factor 2: LEAV</td>
<td>Bereavement leave</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>3.323</td>
<td>0.594</td>
<td>0.76</td>
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<td>Paid maternity leave</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.318</td>
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<td>Paid paternity leave</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>2.115</td>
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<td>Carers leave</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.564</td>
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<td>General domestic/special leave</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.768</td>
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<td>Flexible annual leave</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>3.274</td>
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<td>Telephone access</td>
<td>6.42</td>
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<td>Paid religious holidays</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>2.082</td>
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<td>Factor 3: SUPP</td>
<td>Re-entry scheme</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.923</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employee assistance program</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2.175</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life skills program</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.635</td>
<td>0.701</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsidized fitness centre</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>1.052</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WLB kit or library</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>1.113</td>
<td>0.654</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purchased additional annual leave</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>2.172</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 4: CARE</td>
<td>Childcare on or near site</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1.612</td>
<td>0.540</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Childcare referral system</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.378</td>
<td>0.698</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer work</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.719</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On site breastfeeding area</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>1.486</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paid adoption leave</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>1.523</td>
<td>0.498</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: N = 219, Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation method: VARIMAX. (Scale Composite Reliability SCR = .86) (1. flexible work options, 2. leave programs, 3. support benefits, 4. care arrangements)
### Table 3 Structural parameters estimates for models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Path</th>
<th>$M_1$</th>
<th>$M_2$</th>
<th>$M_3$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t values</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB flexop → flex</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB flexop → telec</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>14.21</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB flexop → athome</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>14.01</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB flexop → parttime</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB flexop → shorter</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB flexop → reentry</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB flexop → flexsf</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB leavep → bereav</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB leavep → mleavep</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB leavep → pleave</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB leavep → cleave</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>10.47</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB leavep → slave</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB Care → ccare</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB Care → referral</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB Care → bfeed</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB Supp → eap</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>9.36</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB Supp → lifeskil</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>8.87**</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB Supp → fitness</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>4.88**</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Flexop (flexible work options), Supp (support benefits), Leav (leave programs), Care (care arrangements) *p≤ 0.01, **p≤ 0.05
Table 4 LISREL goodness-of-fit measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Models</th>
<th>ECVI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>NNFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>RMR</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$M_1$</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M_2$</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M_3$</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ($M_1 = \text{Chi-square } \chi^2 = 393.32, P < 0.000, df = 129$), ($M_2 = \text{Chi-square } \chi^2 = 227.21, P < 0.000, df = 84$), ($M_3 = \text{Chi-square } \chi^2 = 68.91, P < 0.000, df = 38$)
Table 5 Regression analysis for work-life balance responsiveness in relation to institutional factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Flexible work options</th>
<th>Leave programs</th>
<th>Support benefits</th>
<th>Care arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std Err</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>0.718</td>
<td>0.740</td>
<td>0.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff employed</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>1.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>-0.047</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>-0.182*</td>
<td>-0.418*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.187*</td>
<td>2.425*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union membership</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>-0.145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adjusted $R^2$ Flexible work options model was 0.197, Adjusted $R^2$ for leave programs was –0.18, Adjusted $R^2$ for support programs was 0.040, and Adjusted $R^2$ for care arrangements was –0.006. * $p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$.  

Figure 1 Structural model ($M_3$) for work-life balance responsiveness

FLEXOP = Flexible work options; LEAV = Leave programs; SUPP = Support Benefits and CARE = Care Arrangements