

**The Changing Workplace:
A Survey of Employees' Views and Experiences**

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Preface

In 2003 the Irish government requested the National Centre for Partnership and Performance to establish the Forum on the Workplace of the Future. The Forum compliments existing efforts to support and develop national competitiveness and helps to realise Ireland's broader social and economic objectives. Focusing on internal capabilities, it is developing a clearer picture of the changes needed to meet the challenge of building Ireland's knowledge and innovation-driven economy.

A critical obstacle has been the lack of comprehensive data available in an Irish context. Unlike other countries there is simply no accurate picture available of the Irish workplace, its management and of employees' approach to and experience of change.

Therefore, the National Centre for Partnership and Performance commissioned the Economic and Social Research Institute to carry out this survey among over 5,000 employees. Complementary surveys of employers in the public and private sectors relating to their experiences of and attitudes to changes in the environment and in the workplace were also conducted and are published in a separate volume.

The employee survey provides the first, large, nationally representative study of Irish employees specifically devoted to exploring worker experiences and attitudes and is an integral part of the analytical work of the Forum on the Workplace of the Future.

International research suggests that employees will become the thinking core in the workplace of the future. This means that organisations and policy makers must listen carefully to the experiences of employees. This survey suggests a largely positive experience of work among employees. However, there is no room for complacency. The report shows that urgent action is required in relation to information and consultation, access to opportunities and training, pressure and stress and the positive management of change.

I would like to acknowledge each of the 5,198 employees who kindly gave of their time to participate in this survey. This was a demanding and challenging questionnaire and I am grateful to all those who responded.

I would also like to acknowledge the valuable assistance and direction provided by the Chair of the Forum, Mr. Peter Cassells.

The project has been a collaborative effort among staff within the ESRI and the Centre. I would like to thank all the staff involved, in particular James Williams, Philip O'Connell, Helen Russell, Sylvia Blackwell and Deirdre Whitaker from the ESRI; and Larry O'Connell, Julia Kelly, Lorraine Glendenning, Edna Jordan, Damian Thomas and Cathal O'Regan from the Centre.

Throughout the project various individuals and organisations provided inputs and assistance. The Centre's council and in particular Philip Kelly (Department of An Taoiseach), Tom Wall (ICTU), Brendan McGinty (IBEC) and Professor Bill Roche (UCD); and members of the Centre's Research Panel, in particular Professor John Geary, offered detailed feedback and very useful direction.

Lucy Fallon-Byrne

Director
National Centre for Partnership and Performance

Authors' acknowledgments

We wish to thank the respondents, without whose co-operation this Survey would not have been possible.

We wish to express our gratitude to our colleagues Professor Bill Roche and Professor John Geary, both of the Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business, University College Dublin, who contributed their expertise in this field to developing the questionnaire on which this survey is based. Both made a very substantial contribution to the development of the instrument, and, thus, to the success of the survey.

We also wish to thank Lucy Fallon-Byrne and Dr. Larry O'Connell of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance for their many contributions throughout the project.

Finally, we wish to thank the staff of the Survey Unit and Print Room at the ESRI for their work in preparing, administering and processing the Questionnaires and Deirdre Whitaker and Julia Kelly (NCP), who patiently and painstakingly copy-edited our rough manuscript.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Irish workplaces are changing in response to a range of pressures that include intensification of competition in the international marketplace, rapid changes in the organisation and technology of production and service delivery, as well as changes in the composition, needs and preferences of their workforces.

This report presents the first results of a major national survey into the experiences and attitudes of Irish employees. The survey provides us with the first large nationally representative study of Irish employees specifically devoted to exploring worker experiences and attitudes. The results provide us with a unique insight into the way in which Irish workers experience the workplace and the changes occurring within it. It also provides an important guide for developing policies and employment practices to respond to the pressures for change in shaping the workplace of the future.

The survey was conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute on behalf of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance. Complementary surveys of employers in the public and private sectors relating to their experiences of and attitudes to changes in the environment and in the workplace were also conducted and are published in a separate volume.

The results of this survey provide the most comprehensive information to date on changes affecting Irish workplaces. They provide direct insight into how Irish workers are experiencing their workplaces and the changes occurring within them. The survey confirms that organisations in both the private and public sectors are experiencing strong pressure for change. However, while the results suggest that there has been substantial organisational change in Irish workplaces in recent years, they also cast doubt as to the speed of adjustment and the extent of workplace change.

The survey finds some strong positive features in Irish workplaces. There are high levels of job satisfaction, high levels of commitment to work and high levels of organisational commitment. There is also evidence of substantial change over the past two years and of a willingness to change. The evidence also shows the positive role of communication and consultation in gaining employees' support for change. The survey shows that employees attach considerable importance to opportunities for learning and training in the workplace.

However, a number of key strategic areas arise.

1. There are low levels of information and consultation with employees.
2. There is evidence of an opportunities divide in the workplace linked to educational attainment and social class.
3. There is evidence of significant levels of pressure and stress.
4. The results indicate that there is much that organisations can do to manage change in a positive manner.

Work attitudes and experiences

In general, Irish workers express high levels of satisfaction with work and high levels of commitment to the organisations in which they work. Over 90% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that "in general" they are satisfied with their job. In line with international employment research there are high levels of expressed satisfaction. Satisfaction is lowest in relation to earnings although even in relation to this about 70% of employees are satisfied.

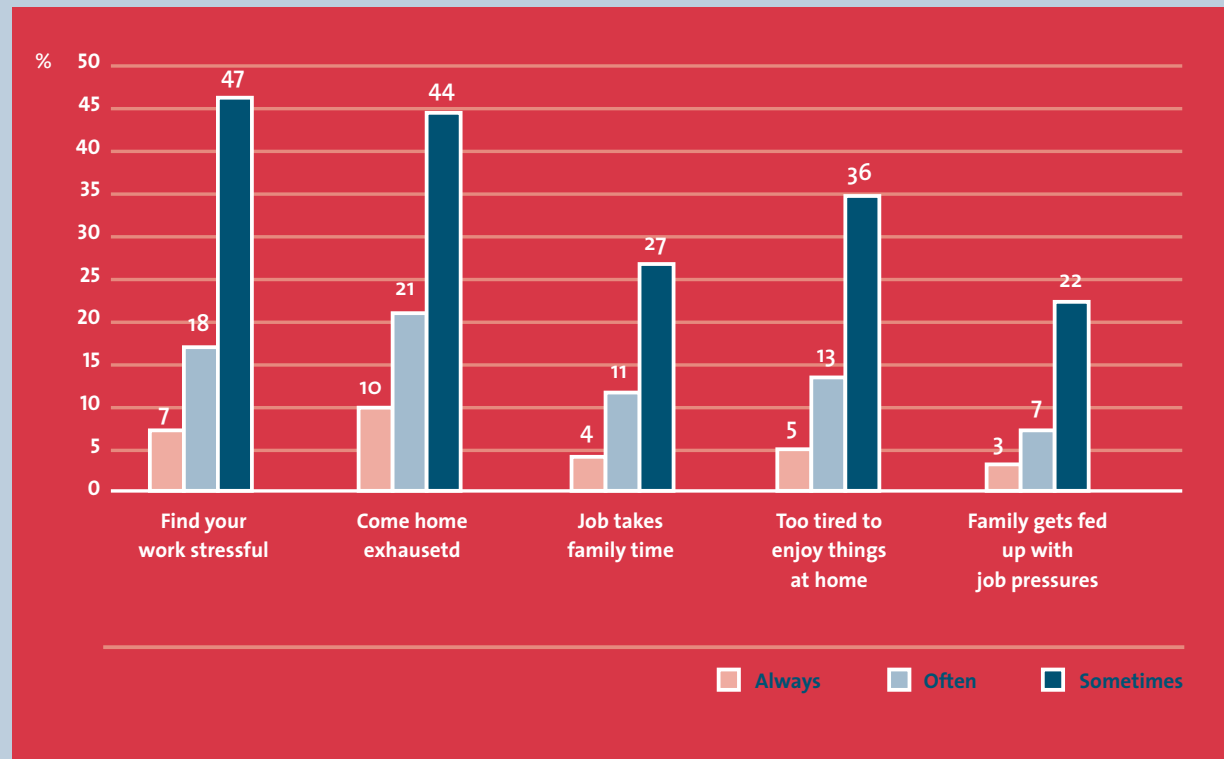
The survey also reveals considerable organisational commitment among employees. Some 80% or more of respondents indicate that they are willing to work harder, that they are proud of the organisation and have similar values to those of the organisation. However, responses are quite nuanced in respect of other aspects of organisational commitment. For example, less than 40% indicate that they would turn down another job with more pay in order to stay with their organisation and about a quarter would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation.

An important aspect of employees' experience in the workplace is the extent of autonomy or control over their work. The findings in relation to autonomy are mixed: 27% of employees have low levels of control, around half (46%) have some level of discretion, but only 27% have a high degree of control over their time and work tasks.

The survey also finds significant levels of work pressure in Irish workplaces: over half of all employees experience some measure of work pressure.

- 82% agree or strongly agree that their job requires them to work very hard
- 51% agree or strongly agree that they work under a great deal of pressure
- 38% agree or strongly agree that they never have enough time to get everything done in their job
- 47% agree or strongly agree that they often have to work extra time over and above their formal hours to get through the job or help out.

Figure 1 Measures of work stress and family/work conflict



Further, as Figure 1 illustrates, a significant minority of workers in Ireland also report that they find work to be stressful.

These results suggest that there is substantial room for developing policies and employment practices to reduce stress levels among employees and to facilitate greater work/life balance. There is also significant potential to improve the level of control that employees have over their day-to-day working lives. There is a negative relationship between stress and autonomy, so that those with less control experience more stress. Indeed the inter-relationships between stress, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment mean that efforts to reduce employee stress may well increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

The study includes a multivariate analysis focusing on the determinants of work stress and job satisfaction, paying particular attention to the role of worker involvement, organisational change and new

work practices in influencing or moderating these outcomes (Chapter 8). While some factors outside the workplace are important for determining work stress, for example family commitments and gender, it is clear that organisations can make a difference. The first area of organisational influence is in the arrangement of working hours. Increasing hours of work are clearly linked to greater stress even when a range of other job characteristics is controlled for. Offering employees the opportunity of flexitime is associated with lower stress levels, but working from home and job sharing have the opposite impact. The presence of family friendly policies is also associated with lower stress. This may reflect a greater understanding of employees' external commitments among those employers who put such policies in place.

Giving workers greater control and discretion over their jobs is also a key way of reducing stress. Involvement of workers in decision making has a positive impact on work stress if this is done through direct and regular consultation. Sharing of information with employees is also associated with lower levels of stress.

Organisational practices are also found to influence employee satisfaction. Greater consultation or direct involvement through participatory work practices, regular information exchange, greater employee discretion (including working from home as an extension of this discretion), and the provision of training all increase employee satisfaction. Reducing work stress and work pressure also have a strong impact on satisfaction so the results relating to work stress are also crucial for employee satisfaction.

The finding that these communication and consultation strategies have positive impacts is important to organisations wishing to implement change, since change is found to increase employee stress and dissatisfaction (even if this change may have long term benefits for employees). Keeping employees informed and participating in decisions that affect them are key to managing change in a positive way.

Workplace practices

The survey asked a series of questions relating to the extent to which various practices are used in Irish workplaces. There is some variation in the extent to which non-traditional working arrangements are implemented:

- About 14% of employees report that working from home is used in their workplace, but only about 8% of all employees are personally involved in working from home.
- Almost 43% of employees work in workplaces that use flexible working hours or flexitime, and almost one quarter of all employees are personally involved in such flexible hours.
- Just under 30% of employees work in workplaces that use job-sharing and about 6% of all employees are personally involved in job-sharing. Women are much more likely than men to be involved.
- Well over half of all employees report that their workplaces use part-time hours and over one fifth of all employees are personally involved in part-time working. About 35% of women are involved in part-time working, compared to 9% of men.

The survey also investigated work-practices relating to performance monitoring and rewards.

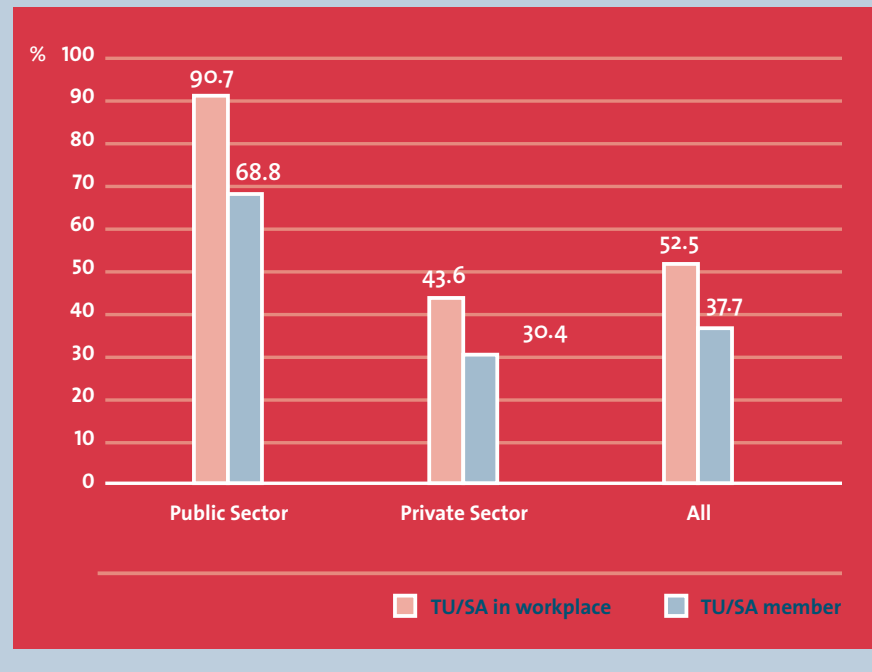
- Overall, just under half of all employees are employed in workplaces that conduct regular performance reviews or appraisals and over 40% of all employees are personally involved in the practice. There are no discernible gender differences in these patterns.
- Less than a quarter of workers are employed in workplaces that use performance related pay and less than 20% of all employees are involved themselves. Men are more likely than women to encounter this practice (23% versus 15%).
- Just under 16% of workers are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options, although less than 12% of all employees themselves receive these types of rewards. Among those who do work in workplaces that implement these reward systems, well over 70% are personally involved in the practice. This suggests that while the practice of offering profit or gain sharing is rare in Irish workplaces, it has broad coverage within the companies where it is implemented.

Overall about two-thirds of all employees report that there is a formal explicit policy on respect and dignity in their workplace. Three quarters of all workers are employed in workplaces where there is an explicit policy on equal opportunities in the workplace. Policies in relation to respect and dignity as well as equality are more commonly found in the public than the private sector.

Trade unions

Over half of employees say there is a union or staff association in their workplace and 38% of all employees are member of a union. There are marked differences between the public and private sectors. Over 90% of public sector employees have a union in their workplace compared to only 44% of those in the private sector. Union density is similarly divergent across these two sectors: more than two-thirds of public sector workers are union members compared to less than a third of private sector workers.

Figure 2 Trade union presence and membership



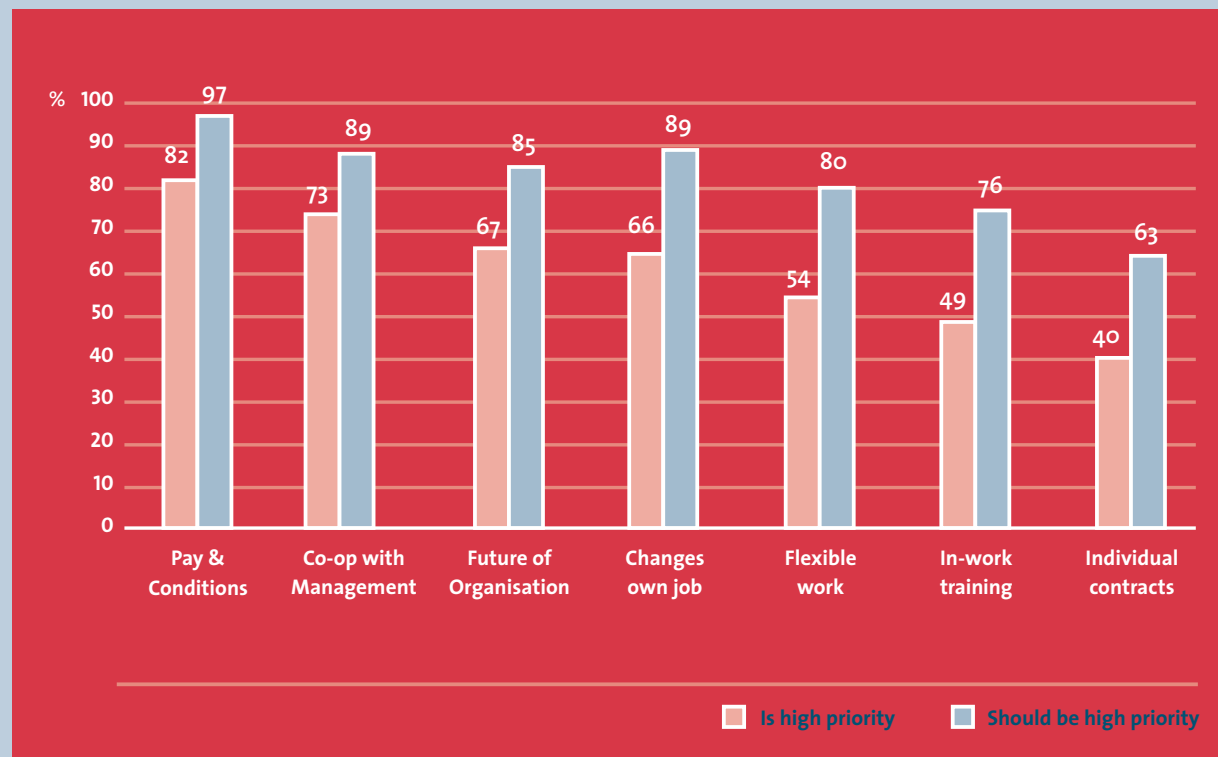
- The presence of unions and union density increases with establishment size. Only 14% of workers in very small firms are union members while membership rises to 55% in establishments with over 100 employees
- Full-time workers are much more likely to be union members: about 40% of full-time employees are union members, compared to just under 30% of part-timers.
- About 41% of employees with permanent contracts are union members, compared to only 22% of casual workers or those with temporary contracts.

In general, trade unions are rated positively by both members and non-members alike. Over 60% of members (62%) feel that the union is very or fairly good at representing their interests. A further 22% of members give neutral answers and only 16% give a negative rating.

Union members are moderately committed to their unions/staff associations: over 70% feel there is a lot to gain from membership, are proud of their involvement, and feel the union record is good. However, for the great majority of union members (78%) loyalty to the union does not supersede loyalty to their work, and more than half of union

members agree that they could work just as well in a non-unionised organisation. There is a belief among members that unions share their sense that pay and conditions are a high priority, however members believe that flexible working conditions and training should be a higher priority for their unions than they currently are.

Union members are more likely than non-members to be employed in workplaces that implement regular performance appraisal, but they are less likely to be employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. Union members are more likely to work in workplaces that offer profit or gain-sharing or share options. They are also more likely to have participated in employer-sponsored education or training in the past two years. In these respects unionised organisations appear to implement more progressive work practices. However, there are no significant differences between union members and non-members in work satisfaction, nor in the strength of commitment to the organisations that they work for. Moreover, union members also display higher levels of work pressure and stress than non-members.

Figure 3 Priorities of trade union / staff association

Note: Excludes those not a member of a TU or staff association

A central point to emerge from the employee survey was that employees expect their unions to be proactive in co-operating with management to better the performance of their organisations. Members also want unions to participate actively in decisions about the future of the organisation. As shown in Figure 3 these issues were cited as a priority by between 85% and 90% of employees surveyed.

Employees also want their unions to provide a broader range of representation. While the traditional concerns of pay and conditions remain a high priority, union members believe that negotiating more flexible working conditions and better in-work training should be higher priorities for unions than they currently are.

These findings suggest that while unions are likely to be essential partners in change in the public sector, their role in many private sector workplaces may be more marginal. The implications of this divergence in terms of the relative pace of change in the public and private sectors, how change is

managed and securing mutual gains for employers and employees remain to be worked out. However, it should be noted that the report also shows that the presence of a trade union in the workplace has no significant positive or negative effect on employees' willingness to accept change at work.

Training

Overall, 48% of employees report that they participated in education or training provided by their employer over the past 2 years. Table 1 shows that training participation is closely linked to previous educational attainment: those with third level qualifications are nearly twice as likely to have participated in training as those with no qualifications. Training incidence is also strongly related to social class: almost two-thirds of higher professionals received training, compared to about one-third of semi-skilled manual workers, and a little over one-quarter of unskilled manual workers.

| Table 1 Participation in employer sponsored training in past two years | |
|--|---------|
| | trained |
| | % |
| Men | 49.4 |
| Women | 46.1 |
| No Qualification | 34.2 |
| Junior Certificate | 38.0 |
| Leaving Certificate | 49.3 |
| Third Level | 59.4 |
| Higher Professionals & Managers | 63.4 |
| Lower Professional | 61.2 |
| Other Non-manual | 50.8 |
| Skilled Manual | 48.8 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 34.9 |
| Unskilled Manual | 27.9 |
| All | 47.9 |

The terms of employment are also important: full-time workers receive more training than part-timers, permanent workers receive more training than those on temporary contracts.

Training is much more common in the public than the private sector. Training incidence is highest in Public Administration and Defence, followed by Transport and Communications. Training is also strongly influenced by establishment size: those working in establishments with 100 or more employees were twice as likely to have participated in training than those in establishments with 1–4 employees (61% versus 30%, respectively).

Almost 80% of all education and training undertaken by employees with employer sponsorship was general in nature, considered by respondents to be “Of use in getting a job with another employer”. Only about 20% of training was considered to be specific and “of use only in current job.” This pattern, whereby most training is general in nature is similar to that found in other countries.

The vast majority (94%) of those who participated in training consider that it has been of use to them in carrying out their current job. Training was also found to be associated with higher levels of job satisfaction.

Gender

The workplace in Ireland remains highly gendered. There is a high level of gender segregation across the workforce in terms of the type of jobs that men and women do (Fahey et al., 2000). Moreover there are gender differences in pay and conditions, hours of work and contract types (e.g. Barrett et al. 2002). Given these differences we would expect gender to be a significant factor in our study of employee attitudes and experiences.

In the current study we find that gender has a significant effect on work pressure, work stress, autonomy, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Female employees were found to experience lower levels of work pressure but higher levels of work stress. The latter result was found when factors such as occupation, sector and hours of work are held constant. This result may arise because women have greater responsibility for caring and domestic work, since the stress scale incorporates stresses between family and work commitments. Women have less control and discretion in the workplace, which is consistent with gender differences in occupational profile. However, women are found to express higher levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of organisational commitment despite their disadvantaged position in the labour market relative to men. There is no gender difference in general employment commitment.

The survey reveals some well-established and some less well known gender differences in working patterns. Female employees are more likely to be involved in part-time work, flexible hours and job-sharing. However, male employees are more likely to have the option of working from home, which perhaps follows from the greater control male employees have over the organisation of their work.

In terms of organisational practices and features, women are just as likely as men to have regular performance reviews but are less likely to receive performance related pay and profit-shares/share options. These differences may well contribute to the persistent gender pay gap.

Men are slightly more likely to receive training than women, which could have consequences for promotional prospects. Women are less likely to be in workplaces with partnership or participation arrangements than men, and are less likely to be personally involved in such arrangements. However, there is no gender difference in consultation, which suggests that this informal method of involving workers is more successful at including female workers. Female employees are less likely to be willing to accept change in the future even controlling for factors such as occupation, sector and earnings, therefore strategies to include these workers in decision making, which improves openness to change, becomes all the more important.

The effects of social class and education

Social class and level of educational attainment are associated with important differences in relation to key aspects of day-to-day work as well as access to opportunities for training and development at work. Both class and education strongly influence the quality of employees' working life as well as their attitudes to change in the workplace. These differences relate to:

- Job satisfaction and work commitment
- Levels of information and consultation
- Levels of discretion and autonomy
- Levels of partnership and participation
- Levels of training.

Job satisfaction and work commitment: Those in higher occupational groups record substantially higher levels of job satisfaction than those in less skilled occupations. Job satisfaction also increases with educational level, which is likely to reflect the job conditions experienced by more highly educated employees. Occupational status also influences both employment commitment and organisational commitment. In general, employees in higher non-manual occupations are most committed to their organisations. Moreover, the survey found a strong association between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, suggesting that taking steps to address either of these issues will have mutually beneficial effects.

Levels of information and consultation: The survey found that there is quite a strong relationship between the amount of information employees say they receive from managers and level of education, with more highly educated employees reporting the most communication. Occupational class is also strongly correlated with communication in the workplace, with managers and professional groups reporting much higher levels of communication than those in manual occupations, particularly unskilled manual workers. Workers with lower educational attainment and in less skilled occupations also report much less consultation about decisions and changes affecting their work. The higher the level of educational attainment and occupational class, the higher the perceived level of consultation. The overall picture that emerges from these findings is that education and social class or occupation play a dominant role in determining the level of information and consultation that employees perceive they are receiving at work.

Levels of discretion and autonomy: Job discretion and autonomy are strongly related to occupation and level of education. Those in managerial, professional and technical occupations have a high level of autonomy and low levels of monitoring in their jobs. Discretion declines continually with each occupational group with the lowest levels experienced by plant/machine operators who tend to have highly routine tasks which allow little opportunity for discretion either in the pace or the nature of the work. Those with higher levels of educational attainment, especially third-level

graduates, report substantially more autonomy than those with lower levels of education. Women report lower levels of discretion in the workplace than men, reflecting the high levels of vertical gender segregation in the Irish labour market.

Levels of partnership and participation: Professional and other non-manual workers are much more likely than manual workers to report the presence of partnership arrangements in their workplaces. Professionals and managers are much more likely than other workers to report the presence of participation arrangements. Semi- and unskilled manual workers are most likely to report that they do not know of partnership or participation arrangements in their workplace. However, in workplaces where such arrangements are reported to exist, there are high levels of involvement among skilled and unskilled manual workers as well as among professionals. Nevertheless, more highly educated employees are more likely to be involved in participation structures than those who are less well educated.

Levels of training: Participation in employer-provided training is closely linked to educational attainment and occupational class. Only 35% of those with no educational qualifications report participation in employer-sponsored training within the last two years, compared to almost 60% of those with third level qualifications. Only 28% of unskilled manual workers and 35% of semi-skilled manual workers received training compared to 63% of higher professionals. The survey also found that younger workers are more likely than older ones to receive training and the incidence declines substantially among those aged 55 or over. These findings suggest that workers who are least well equipped to deal with workplace change – older workers and those with lower skills and less education – are the very groups who are receiving less access to training.

Communications in the workplace

The majority of workers regard formal communication channels as the most important source of information. Nearly 70% of employees cite management and supervisors as the most useful source of information concerning their workplaces. Another 21% cite “the grapevine” as the most important information source, and 6% cite the union or staff association.

Surprisingly high percentages of employees indicate that they are “hardly ever” provided with information in key areas such as product/service innovation; introduction of new technology; levels of competition; changes to work practices (Figure 4). As many as 36–42% of private sector employees respond that they “hardly ever” receive information in such areas. Even higher percentages of private sector employees report hardly ever receiving information on areas such as sales; profits or re-organisation of the company. Provision of information by management to public sector employees is perceived to be somewhat better than among private sector workers.

The survey also examines employees’ experience in relation to consultation. Employees were asked about the level of consultation before decisions were taken, if reasons are given and the level of feedback received. Figures 4a and 4b show that substantial numbers of employees indicate a lack of prior consultation on major decisions regarding their work.

Substantial numbers of employees also indicate lack of prior consultation on major decisions regarding their work: only 25% report that they are “almost always” consulted; 21% that they are consulted “sometimes” and as many as 27% of workers feel they are consulted “rarely” or “almost never”. We also found that surprisingly high levels of employees (22%) feel that they are “rarely” or “almost never” provided with feedback on why decisions are made. Finally, the same proportion of employees indicated that even when they are consulted prior to decisions being made little attention is paid to their views.

Figure 4a Percentage of private sector employees “hardly ever” receiving information from management in 6 areas of work

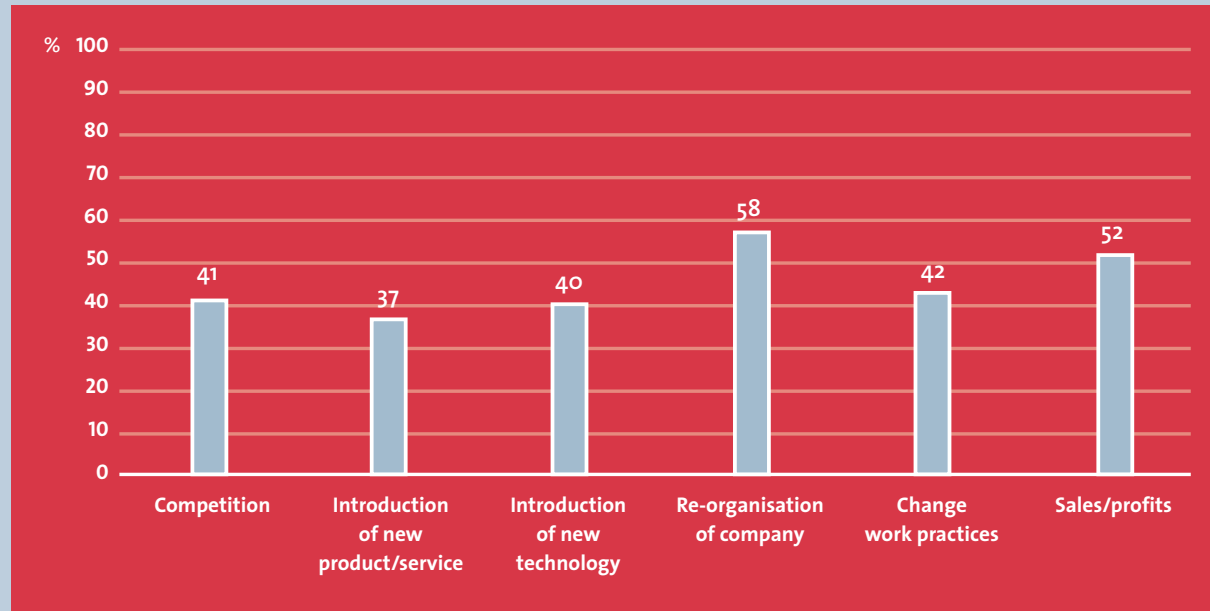
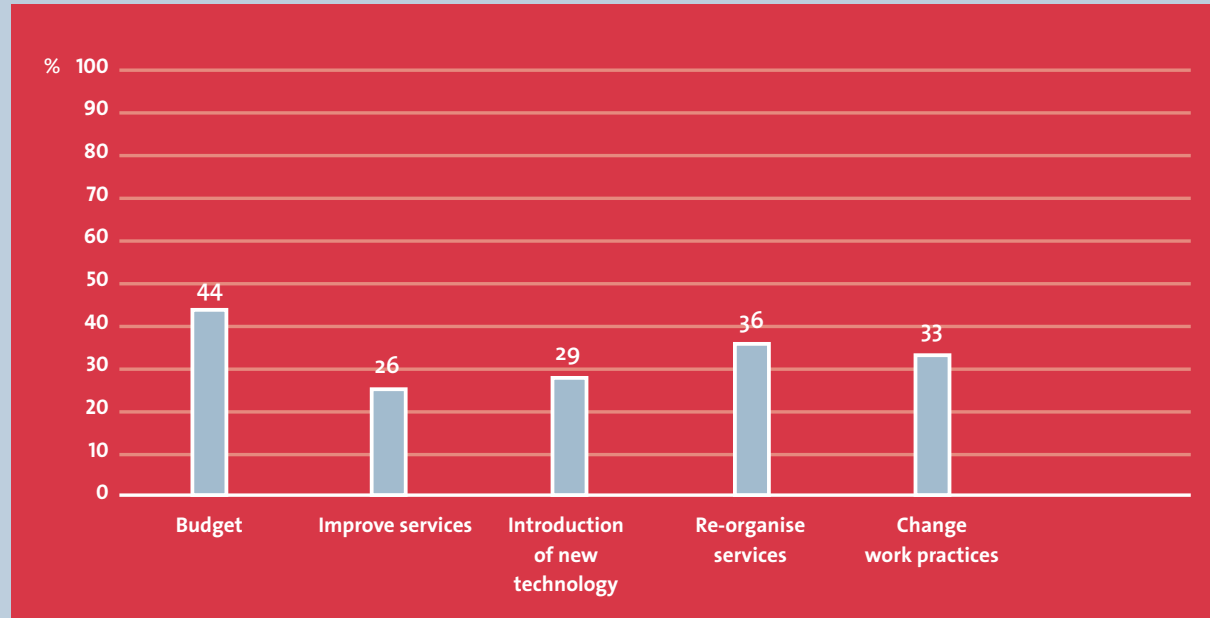


Figure 4b Percentage of public sector employees “hardly ever” receiving information from management in 5 areas of work



As already noted, the models assessing the simultaneous effects of both organisational and individual-level characteristics on perceived levels of information flows and consultation in the workplace show that two factors in particular exert immense influence on information and consultation: social class and educational attainment. Professional and managerial workers report more regular receipt of information from management than other non-manual workers, and much more regular information flows than manual workers, even when other organisational and individual factors are taken account of. We find a similar pattern with respect to consultation about decisions that affect people's work: the higher the social class position, the greater the degree of consultation, even when other relevant factors are taken account of. Educational attainment is also highly influential: the higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the regularity of information from management and the greater the extent of consultation.

Partnership, participation and consultation

Two different modes of employee involvement in the workplace can be distinguished. Partnership refers to collective organisation in which employee representatives work with management to promote partnership and co-operation, or to improve the organisation's performance. Participation refers to modes of direct involvement and consultation over the way in which work is organised and carried out in work teams, problem solving groups, project groups; quality circles; or continuous improvement programmes or groups.

Overall, 23% of all employees indicate that partnership committees involving management and unions exist at their workplaces. And among those employees that report the presence of partnership institutions, about one-quarter are personally involved in partnership committees.

About 38% of all employees report that there are arrangements for direct participation in their workplaces. Within workplaces that implement arrangements for direct participation, the extent of employee involvement is high: over 70% of employees in such workplaces indicate that they are personally involved in such participation groups.

Partnership institutions are much more common in the public sector: about 45% of workers in public sector organisations report the presence of partnership institutions in their workplaces, compared to 18% of those in the private sector.

Participation arrangements are more widely dispersed: about 47% of workers in public sector organisations, and 35% of those in the private sector, report the presence of participation arrangements.

Both forms of employee involvement are more prevalent in large than in small organisations. They are both more likely to be encountered by full- than part-time workers, and by permanent, rather than temporary employees.

Both forms of employee involvement are also closely linked to social class: incumbents of higher social class positions are more likely to report that they work in an organisation where both such modes of employee involvement are present. For example, 25% of higher professionals and managers report the presence of partnership arrangements in their workplaces, compared to about 12% of unskilled manual workers. Moreover, almost 30% of higher professionals and managers are personally involved in partnership committees, compared to 19% of unskilled manual workers. Almost 60% of higher professionals and managers report the presence of participation arrangements in their workplace, compared to less than 20% of unskilled manual workers. However, among those working in organisations where participation arrangements are present, personal involvement is widespread, irrespective of social class.

The pattern of responses regarding consultation was similar across both the public and private sectors, indicating that large proportions of employees feel excluded from the decision-making process and from information and consultation in the workplace. Overall, a substantial proportion of employees (39%) report that their workplace has no formal partnership institutions, no participation arrangements and low levels of consultation. Only 6% of employees work in "high involvement" organisations which are characterised by the presence of all three forms of involvement.

Table 2 Respondents' opinions on the effects of partnership and participation arrangements

| | Partnership Positive Effect | Participation Positive Effect |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Job satisfaction | 72 | 91 |
| Productivity or performance | 67 | 89 |
| Pay and conditions | 71 | 52 |
| Employment Security | 70 | 57 |
| Employees willingness to embrace change | 73 | 86 |
| Confidence with which employees co-operate with management | 76 | 88 |

In general, respondents perceive the effects of partnership institutions in a very positive light (Table 2). Two-thirds or more of respondents see partnership arrangements as having positive effects on issues of direct interest to employees – job satisfaction, pay and conditions and employment security – as well as of importance to the organisation - performance, willingness to embrace change, and the confidence with which employees co-operate with management.

The perceived impact of participation arrangements is even more positive than that of partnership, particularly for organisational performance and functioning. Over 85% of respondents consider that participation has a positive effect on productivity or performance, on the confidence with which employees co-operate with management, and on willingness to embrace change. However, when the effects of partnership institutions and participation arrangements on both satisfaction and willingness to change are assessed in multivariate models, while participation increases job satisfaction, both partnership and participation are neutral with respect to willingness to change.

Respondents' subjective assessment of the impact of participation on their own jobs is more mixed. While the vast majority consider that participation has a positive effect on job satisfaction, only about half consider that it has a positive effect on employment security, and on pay and conditions. This positive effect of participation is confirmed in the model of work satisfaction.

Change in the workplace

Our survey of employees reveals that there has been substantial organisational change in Irish workplaces in recent years. Change has been particularly frequent with respect to the introduction of new technology and appears to have been particularly prevalent in the public sector.

There has also been substantial change in aspects of workers' own jobs over the last two years, particularly with respect to increased responsibilities, pressure, use of technology and skill demands, but also increased rates of pay. Irish workers have experienced some intensification of pace, pressure and responsibility at work in recent years. When we derive a summary index of changes in the past two years we find that public sector workers report higher rates of change in their own jobs than do private sector workers. Job change also appears more prevalent in larger organisations.

Table 3 Willingness to accept change in aspects of employment over the next 2 Years

| | Willing | Neither willing/unwilling | Unwilling |
|--|---------|---------------------------|-----------|
| | % | % | % |
| Increase in the responsibilities you have | 74 | 12 | 14 |
| Increase the pressure you work under | 44 | 19 | 37 |
| Increase in technology involved in your work | 75 | 15 | 10 |
| Being more closely supervised/ managed | 41 | 23 | 36 |
| Increase in level of skill necessary to carryout your work | 79 | 13 | 8 |
| Having to work unsocial hours | 31 | 18 | 51 |

Workers respond in a very nuanced manner to questions regarding their willingness to accept change at work over the next two years (Table 3). About three-quarters of all employees are willing to accept increased responsibilities in their jobs, increased technology or computers in their work, and to increased skill needs to carry out their jobs. On the other hand, half of all employees are unwilling to accept unsocial hours. Other areas where workers have reservations about change include increased pressure, and being more closely supervised or managed.

The multivariate statistical model of employees' willingness to change allows us to assess the factors that determine willingness to change while controlling for the effects of other influential variables. The model shows that males, younger workers, those with higher education, those in higher socio-economic classes, and those with shorter job tenure are more willing to accept change at work. Public sector employees and workers in hotels, restaurants and bars, and in other services are less willing to change, but workers in public administration are more open to change. The presence of formal partnership structures is neutral with respect to willingness to change. However, less formalised forms of employee partnership and

involvement are influential. Employees who report higher levels of consultation relating to decisions that affect their work are more likely to be willing to accept change, even when other factors, including personal, job and organisational characteristics are taken into account. These findings are significant because they suggest that those employers that engage in systematic consultation with their workers may find that their workers are more receptive to change.

The report suggests that there is much that organisations can do to manage workplace change in a positive way. Employee involvement is critical for gaining the support of the workforce for change. The critical factor here appears to be the extent to which employees are consulted and informed about decisions that affect their work, as well as the extent to which attention is paid to the views of employees. Employees who report higher levels of consultation relating to decisions that affect their work are more likely to be willing to accept change.

Organisational practices can contribute to successful management of change in other ways. The survey found that greater consultation or direct involvement through participatory work practices, regular information exchange and greater employee discretion all increase employee satisfaction. Reducing work stress and work pressure also have a strong impact on satisfaction and the survey found that here again organisations can make a difference through flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies, giving workers greater control and discretion over their jobs and sharing of information with employees. The impact of these practices is especially important to organisations wishing to implement changes, as the positive effects on employee satisfaction and reduction of work stress can act to counter the stress and dissatisfaction that are often associated with workplace change. The inter-relationships between stress, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment mean that efforts to reduce employee stress may well increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Survey of Employees

In this report we analyse the first results of a major national survey into the experiences and attitudes of Irish employees. While there have been a number of studies of Irish employees in the past these have either focused exclusively on managers or have involved rather small samples and response rates.¹ Therefore, this survey provides us with the first, large, nationally representative study of Irish employees specifically devoted to exploring worker experiences and attitudes. It collates the views of over 5,000 employees. The results provide us with a unique insight into the way in which Irish workers experience the workplace and the changes occurring within it. It also provides an important guide for developing policies and employment practices to form the workplace of the future.

¹This is the case in the Irish elements of European-wide surveys such as the European Values Survey, the Eurobarometer Surveys and the European Survey on Working Conditions.

1.1 Introduction

As a small open economy Ireland has experienced very considerable change in its competitive environment and in the labour market over recent years. In the last two decades we have shifted from an economy with extremely high levels of unemployment to one with exceptional levels of growth and employment creation, with levels now slowing to more average levels. The National Centre for Partnership and Performance's Consultation Paper (2003) identifies a wide range of factors driving change in the world of work. These include increasing international competition; changing industry boundaries; technological change; international legislative and regulatory changes; increasing consumer awareness and demands for better quality; changes in the profile of the workforce and the changing needs of employees. These changes in the external and internal environment are likely to have very significant implications for the nature of the Irish workplace.

There is widespread consensus that to deal with this continually changing environment Irish industry must adopt a strategy to produce high value-added products and to deliver services, in both the private and public services sector, of the highest quality. Pursuing this type of strategy has implications for the type of human resource management practices implemented at workplace level. The structure of work, the adaptability of training systems and the climate of employee relations are identified as key competitive levers. Thus talk of high performance work systems, employee involvement, workplace partnership, family-friendly practices, and performance related pay systems figure prominently in national discussions.

However, while most parties to the debate can agree on the conditions necessary for securing Ireland's competitive position in international markets, there are doubts as to the true extent of such innovations in the Irish workplace and as to whether Irish employees are adequately prepared

and trained (Roche and Geary, 1998). We simply do not have an accurate picture of the Irish workplace, its management and of employees' responses and expectations. In this respect Ireland compares unfavourably to countries such as the UK, Australia and the US which all conduct regular surveys of employees and employment relations.

The great benefit of these studies is that they focus on the views and experiences of people at work. As Gallie et al. (1998, p.24) have emphasised, "...they provide the most direct and reliable information on the lived experiences of those who have been subject to change... If there are elaborate managerial policies, with respect to the organisation and regulation of work, that employees are unaware of, then there must be doubts about whether they are likely to be efficacious. If we wish to know whether conditions of employment have improved or deteriorated, the direct knowledge of employees about the changes they have experienced remains by far our surest guide".

The results of the survey reported here provide the first and critical step in understanding how employees experience work in Ireland and whether the Irish workplace is well positioned to realise the vision of competing in a "high-value high skills" regime.

The results also provide a guide of how to develop a model, or models, of the "desired workplace" wherein a shared capital of loyalty and trust exists to underpin employees' co-operation with workplace change. The task therefore is to examine the preconditions, in respect of the nature of work and its management, for eliciting employees' commitment to cooperate with organisational upgrading.

The report is structured in the following way. The remainder of this chapter briefly outlines the methodology used in undertaking the survey, including the questionnaire design, sampling procedures, interviewing techniques and weighting procedures. It also reports the response rates achieved. Chapter 2 investigates the attitudes and subjective experiences of employees. In relation to attitudes it considers the levels of job satisfaction, employment commitment and organisation commitment of workers, and the examination of experiences focuses on the key issues of discretion/control, work pressure and work stress. It explores

how these factors relate to respondents work characteristics and their personal characteristics. This provides important information on the features of employment that enhance employee satisfaction and commitment and minimise the negative stresses (including work/family conflict). This analysis also provides important contextual information on employees readiness for change.

Chapter 3 focuses on employment practices. It investigates the current incidence of flexible employment practices (such as working from home, flexitime, job-sharing, part-time hours) and new work practices (such as performance appraisal, performance related pay, profit sharing/share options). The chapter investigates the types of workplaces and workers who are most likely to be covered by these arrangements. Flexible working arrangements are extremely important in integrating certain groups into the labour market and in reducing the work/life conflicts highlighted in the chapter. The new work practices investigated here are often heralded as increasing workers' stake in their organisation and therefore enhancing productivity. The results show us how common these practices currently are and where their use is most extensive.

Chapter 4 examines the incidence of trade union presence involvement and commitment. Trade union membership is used as an explanatory variable in our discussion of a range of issues relating to the workplace. Therefore, this chapter provides the necessary context to interpreting those results. We examine how trade union presence varies by organisational characteristics and membership rates among employees with different occupational and personal characteristics. We then consider members' rating of the effectiveness of their unions, their commitment to the union and their views on union priorities.

Chapter 5 looks at the issue of training. Widespread access to appropriate training is a key element of any proposed transformation to a high-skilled, knowledge-based economy. Here we examine the incidence of employer provided training among workers with different educational backgrounds and personal characteristics. We also consider the incidence of training across different types of organisations.

In Chapter 6 we examine the current level of consultation and communication in the workplace, these issues are likely to be crucial in managing change in the workplace and encouraging employee support for change. It looks at the type of information currently distributed in the workplace and the extent to which workers views are elicited and acted upon.

In Chapter 7 we address the central issue of worker involvement. This is seen as another important factor in initiating workplace change (O'Connell, 2003). The chapter considers three modes of worker involvement. First, it examines the prevalence of indirect involvement through trade union representation or staff associations. Second, it measures more direct involvement through groups such as work teams, problem-solving groups, quality circles etc. Finally, it looks at involvement through regular and extensive consultation with workers. The chapter also examines workers' knowledge of such arrangements and examines their perception of their effectiveness.

Chapter 8 concentrates on two worker outcomes – work stress and job satisfaction. We consider how the workplace practices, forms of employee involvement and organisational change outlined in previous chapters, impact on employee satisfaction and stress. We adopt a multi-variate modelling approach, which allows us to test the independent impact of firm characteristics, personal characteristics and organisation issues while controlling for all the other relevant factors. The models also examine some of the inter-relationships between job satisfaction and work stress, pressure and autonomy.

The final Chapter addresses the critical issue of change in the workplace. It investigates employees' recent experience of change and their expectation of change in the future. It addresses changes in working conditions (hours, pay, job security, supervision) in work demands (skill levels, use of technology, discretion, responsibility, pressure) and in the competitive environment. It investigates employees' willingness to accept changes going forward and assesses their knowledge/perceptions of the sources of pressure for change.

Appendix A provides an overview of the methodology and sampling process used in this study.

Chapter 2

Work Attitudes and Experiences

In the context of the workplace of the future it is important to identify the factors associated with enhanced employee satisfaction and commitment.

This chapter explores a range of work attitudes and experiences. It taps into a series of different factors which shed light on the quality of employees' experiences in the workplace.

2.1 Introduction

The first set of issues examined in this chapter are worker attitudes. We focus on employees' job satisfaction, work commitment and organisation commitment. The study of work attitudes have formed a central part of sociological and social-psychological research on the workplace. As Rose (1994, p.244) points out "It is widely accepted....that work attitudes are important for understanding the work behaviour of employees and workplace social relations, and even for grasping long-term trends in social relations and cultural values."

The second set of issues examined in this chapter relate to employees subjective experience of work. Here we examine the level of autonomy, work intensity and work stress experienced by workers. The level of autonomy or discretion that people exercise in their work has long been considered a central element on the quality of work and has played a central role in the sociological debates

about upskilling versus deskilling of the workforce. Braverman (1974) argued that workers have been stripped of control so that the execution of tasks has become increasingly separated from their conception, resulting in alienation for workers. Others have contested this account arguing that changes in the occupational structure, in technology and in work practices have resulted in the upskilling of employees (e.g. Gallie, 1991) nevertheless these authors also recognise the centrality of control and task discretion in defining skill.

Finally, we turn to the issues of work intensity and work pressure, which are also central issues in peoples' quality of life and their experience of employment. Our examination of work pressure places a specific focus on the issue of work-life balance. This issue has become an increasing focus for policymakers as evidenced by the setting up of the National Framework Committee on Policies for Work/Life Balance. Here we consider the extent to which employment pressures impinge upon respondents' home and family life.

Figure 2.1 Satisfaction with current job

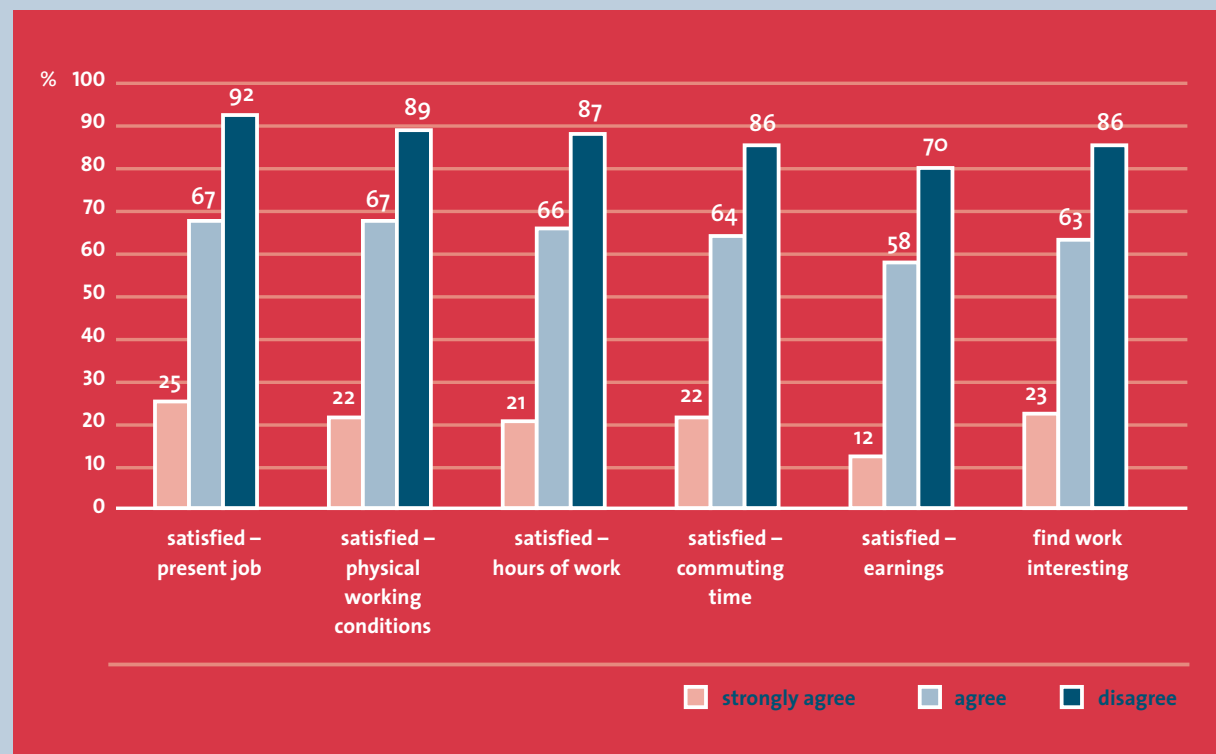


Table 2.1 | Mean job satisfaction by hours of work

| | All | Men | Women |
|-----------|--------|------|--------|
| Part-time | 0.96 | 0.86 | 0.98 |
| Full-time | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.87 |
| Sig. | P<.001 | n.s. | P<.001 |

2.2 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured in a variety of ways. First respondents were asked about their overall job satisfaction, then we focused on satisfaction with a number of important aspects of employment. These were mainly extrinsic factors such as the physical working conditions, hours of work, commuting time and earnings but included an item on intrinsic job interest. In general, we see that Irish employees express a high level of satisfaction with their current job (see Figure 2.1). Over 90% of respondents say that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that “in general” they are satisfied with their job.¹ When we move from this global measure to more detailed job components we see that satisfaction levels decline marginally but remain very high, with between 86% and 89% of employees expressing satisfaction with physical working conditions, hours of work and commuting time. While 86% also agree or strongly agree that their job is interesting. Given the increasing length of the average commute to work, the high level of satisfaction on this aspect of work is somewhat surprising.² The lowest satisfaction levels are recorded on earnings where 30% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they are satisfied with their earnings.

These high levels of expressed job satisfaction are a common feature of employment research and are not altogether unsurprising. First, we would expect that those who are relatively dissatisfied with their job will seek to change it (within the constraints of available job opportunities), while those who are

satisfied will remain longer in that job. Second, there may be some response bias, as to admit to tolerating high dissatisfaction levels may appear irrational or humiliating (Rose, 1994, p.250). A satisfaction scale was constructed based on respondents’ average scores on each of the six questions outlined above, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction.³ The high overall satisfaction levels expressed on these type of measure means that it is often more meaningful to examine the relativities between groups as we do in the following tables rather than concentrating on the overall scores.

The relationship between job/organisational characteristics and job satisfaction

Here we examine the relationship between job satisfaction and a range of job and workplace characteristics, these are – hours of work, temporary/permanent contract, occupational class, sector, and size of organisation.

We look first at the influence of contractual arrangements i.e. hours of work and nature of contract. Those working part-time (defined as less than 30 hours per week) are found to express higher levels of job satisfaction than those working full-time. Further analysis shows that this effect is confined to female employees. Male part-time employees are no more or less satisfied than men working full-time.

The remaining job and organisational characteristics are examined in Table 2.2. In terms of security of contract those with permanent contracts are

1. The response categories for each of these questions were strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

2. Further analysis shows that satisfaction with commuting time is somewhat lower in Dublin (77%) than elsewhere (89%) a similar score is found if we include the surrounding counties Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow (79% satisfied). Satisfaction with commuting time among respondents in Cork City and Limerick City are not significantly different to the rest of the sample. However, this regional breakdown can provide only a very rough proxy for people’s actual commuting time.

3. The responses were scored 2 for “strongly agree”, 1 for “agree”, -1 for “disagree” and -2 for “strongly disagree”, the scale therefore ranges from minus 2 to plus 2. Those recorded as missing on any item are excluded from the final index. This is how missing values are treated in all of the scales unless otherwise stated.

Table 2.2 Mean job satisfaction by job and organisational characteristics

| | Satisfaction Score ¹ |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Permanent | 0.91 |
| Temp/Casual | 0.82 |
| Occupation² | |
| Legislators/Senior Officials/Managers | .96 |
| Professionals | 1.00 |
| Technicians/Assoc Professionals | .95 |
| Clerks | .94 |
| Service Work/Shop Mkt Sales | .84 |
| Skill agriculture/fishery | .79 |
| Craft & related trades | .93 |
| Plant/machine operators | .79 |
| Elementary Occupations | .74 |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | |
| Construction | .89 |
| Wholesale Retail | .89 |
| Hotel Restaurants | .72 |
| Transport Storage Communications | .85 |
| Finance & Other Business Services | .90 |
| Public Administration & Defence | .94 |
| Education | 1.09 |
| Health | .92 |
| Other Services | .89 |
| Public Sector | |
| Private (& Commercial Semi-State) | .88 |
| Size of Workplace (Local Unit) | |
| 1-4 | 1.01 |
| 5-19 | .94 |
| 20-99 | .92 |
| 100+ | .89 |
| Total | |
| ¹ The scale ranges from -2 to +2. Higher scores indicate greater satisfaction. | |
| ² ISCO classification. | |

significantly more satisfied with their jobs than those on casual, temporary or fixed-term contracts. Occupation also has a significant impact on job satisfaction. Those in higher occupational groups record substantially higher levels of job satisfaction than those in less skilled occupations. For example, the average score for professionals is 1.00 while for those in elementary occupations (which includes unskilled manual and non-manual occupations) the mean score is only .74. In general, those in manual jobs have lower job satisfaction than those in white collar occupations.

The sector in which one is located also influences satisfaction score. Those employed in the public sector are more satisfied than employees in the private sector. The satisfaction rates across industrial sector are consistent with this finding as the highest levels of satisfaction are recorded in Education, Health and Public Admin./Defence the three sectors which are predominantly public sector. By far the lowest satisfaction levels are recorded in the Hotel/Restaurant Industry. Satisfaction levels in the remaining industries are clustered quite closely together.

Our analysis found that working in a very small organisations with less than 5 employees was found to enhance job satisfaction but the differences between the other size categories was not significant.

Relationship between individual characteristics and job satisfaction

In this section we consider whether job satisfaction levels are influenced by individual level characteristics. We split these characteristics into two groups; personal and family. Gender does not significantly effect job satisfaction at the general level, but as we saw with part-time hours, it may interact with other variables.

Age is significant. Our analysis found that the two younger age groups have significantly lower satisfaction levels than those aged 40 and over.

We then consider two central “human capital” characteristics – education and tenure which are found to have a strong impact on objective labour market outcomes such as pay, occupational level etc. Job satisfaction levels increase with educational level

Table 2.3 Job satisfaction by personal characteristics

| | Mean Satisfaction Score |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Male | .88 |
| Female | .91 |
| Age | |
| Under 25 years | .85 |
| 25-39 years | .88 |
| 40-54 years | .92 |
| 55 years & over | .99 |
| Education Level¹ | |
| No qualifications | .81 |
| Junior/Inter cert level | .87 |
| Leaving Certificate | .89 |
| Third Level or Equivalent | .96 |
| Tenure | |
| Less than 1 year | .85 |
| 1-5 years | .86 |
| Over 5 years | .94 |
| Union membership | |
| Union member | .89 |
| Non-union member | .90 |

¹ PLCs are included with Leaving Cert, and Diplomas are included in the third level or equivalent category.

Table 2.4 Job satisfaction by family status*

| | Satisfaction Score |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| No Children < 18 years | .89 |
| Youngest < 5 years | .89 |
| Youngest 6-17 years | .89 |
| Family Status | |
| Couple & children (< 18 years) | .90 |
| Couple no children (< 18 years) | .93 |
| Single & children (< 18 years) | .88 |
| Single no children (< 18 years) | .87 |

The satisfaction score ranges from -2 to +2.
* note further analysis controlling for gender showed that neither family status measure was related to job satisfaction for women or men.

which is likely to reflect the job conditions experienced by these groups. Job tenure also has a positive relationship with job satisfaction but only at the five-year point (which is consistent with the arguments outlined above that those who are more satisfied are more likely to remain in the job and perhaps those who cannot move adjust their expectations). Trade Union membership has no significant impact on overall job satisfaction.

Finally we look at the relationship between job satisfaction and family status. We looked at two measures, one which was based on parental status only and another which included partnership status. Neither has an influence on job satisfaction. Further tests showed that there was no effect for either men or women.

Employment commitment and organisational commitment

A common means of measuring people's general work commitment is to examine whether employment is valued in itself, rather than simply as a source of income (Warr, 1982). This measure incorporates both those for whom employment is some form of social or moral duty as well as those who look to employment as a source of self-fulfilment. This definition does not imply that those who attach importance to pay are uncommitted to their work: only those with a purely instrumental approach to employment are defined here as uncommitted. To measure non-financial employment commitment respondents whether:

If you were to get enough money to live as comfortably as you would like for the rest of your life, would you continue to work, not necessarily in your present job, or would you stop working?

Our survey found that over two-thirds (68%) of employees would want to work even if there was no financial necessity. This is somewhat higher than the level of non-financial commitment found in the 1996 Eurobarometer survey for Ireland, which asked the same question. Then it was found that 62% of those in work would continue to do so irrespective of financial necessity (Gallie, 1997). That survey also included the self-employed who tend to be more committed to work than employees (Russell, 1998), which suggests that work commitment has increased in the intervening period.

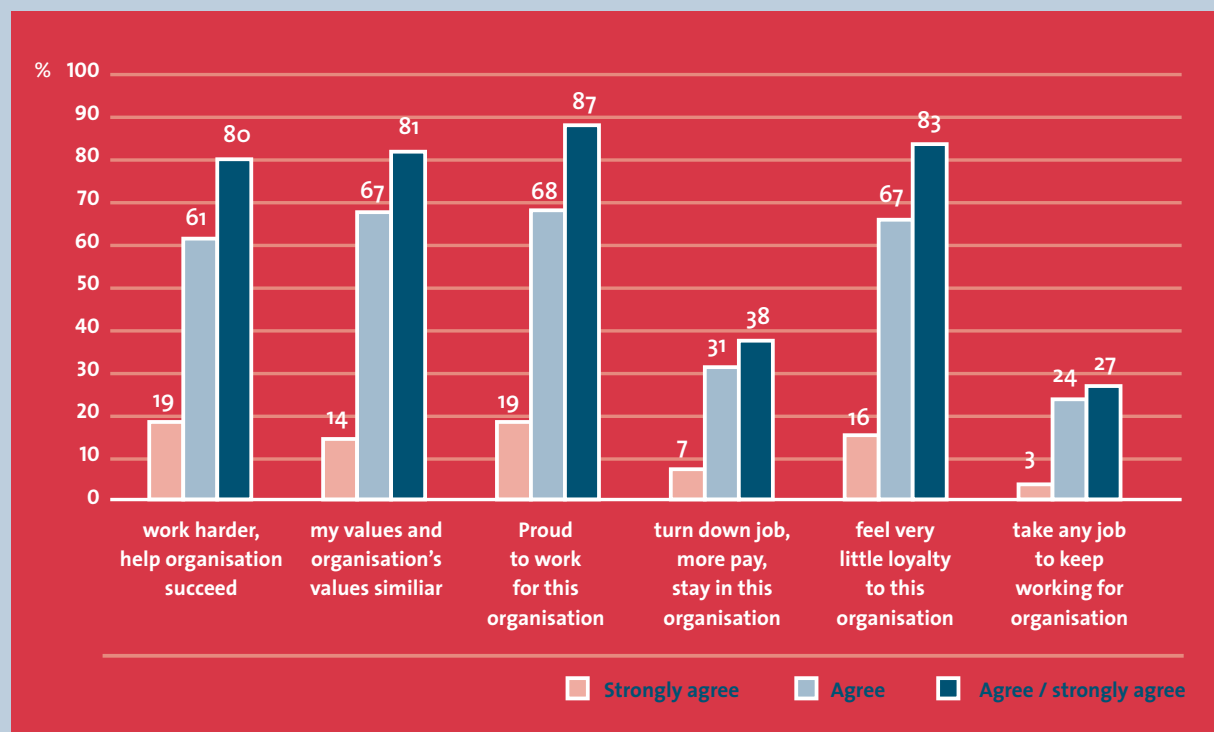
Commitment to work in general can be distinguished from the second aspect of work orientation examined here – organisational commitment. This involves a person's loyalty to a particular organisation and the extent to which he or she shares its goals and values (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990). To assess organisational commitment respondents were asked to agree or disagree with six statements:

- I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation succeed
- I am proud to be working for this organisation
- I would turn down another job with more pay in order to stay with this organisation
- My values and the organisation's values are very similar
- I feel little loyalty to the organisation that I work for
- I would take almost any job to keep working for this organisation.

Responses to these six items were combined to form an index of organisational commitment based on respondents' average across the six items. The scale ranges from -2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher levels of organisational commitment.

Organisational commitment is found to vary significantly by contract status, not surprisingly those on non-permanent contracts are significantly less committed to the organisations for which they work. This result has also been found in a range of EU countries (Russell, 1999) and is a trade-off which employers must consider in deciding on contract types. This low organisational commitment does not reflect a low work commitment among those on temporary contracts as they are more likely to say that they would continue to work even if there was no financial necessity. A number of authors have argued that job insecurity in the form of unemployment can underline the intrinsic importance of work in people's lives and therefore increase non-financial employment commitment. A similar process may be behind these results for non-permanent workers.

Figure 2.2 Organisational commitment



* The response categories presented for this variable are disagree and disagree strongly as the statement is phrased negatively.

Table 2.5 Work commitment and organisational commitment by job characteristics

| | % would work without financial need | Organisational commitment score ¹ |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Part-time | 67.5 | .44 |
| Full-time | 67.8 | .40 |
| Permanent | 66.4 | .42 |
| Temp/Casual | 74.9 | .29 |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary | 63.2 | .35 |
| Construction | 66.9 | .37 |
| Wholesale Retail | 64.0 | .41 |
| Hotel Restaurants | 71.7 | .22 |
| Transport Storage Communications | 63.2 | .32 |
| Finance & Other Business Services | 70.0 | .35 |
| Public Administration & Defence | 74.5 | .54 |
| Education | 72.3 | .61 |
| Health | 70.3 | .49 |
| Other Services | 72.3 | .52 |
| Public Sector | 73.0 | .53 |
| Private Sector | 66.5 | .37 |
| Size Local Unit | | |
| 1-4 | 72.7 | .56 |
| 5-19 | 69.9 | .40 |
| 20-99 | 65.8 | .37 |
| 100+ | 65.8 | .37 |
| Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers | 64.8 | .53 |
| Professionals | 76.5 | .48 |
| Technicians/Assoc Professionals | 68.9 | .46 |
| Clerks | 70.7 | .45 |
| Service work, Shop & Sales | 68.5 | .36 |
| Skilled Agriculture & Fishery | 90.7 | .21 |
| Craft & Related Trades | 67.6 | .38 |
| Plant/machine operators | 59.4 | .28 |
| Elementary Occupations | 57.6 | .27 |

¹The organisational commitment scale ranges from -2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher commitment.
²armed service occupational group not reported because of small numbers.

Part-time workers are no less committed either to employment or to their employing organisations than full-time workers, which contradicts those who conflate hours of work and commitment (e.g. Hakim, 1998).

The industrial sector has a strong influence on organisational commitment and again the main split is between public and private sectors. Overall, public sector workers have a commitment score of .53 compared to .37 for private sector workers. The highest organisational commitment levels are recorded for those in the education sector, followed by the public administration/defence sector, other services and health sectors. As with job satisfaction those in the hotel/restaurant sector record exceptionally low levels of organisational commitment.

Non-financial employment commitment also varies among employees in different sectors but the gaps between sectors are not as wide. For example, general commitment among those in the hotel/restaurant and the financial services/business sector is as high or higher than employees in the health sector.

The size of the workplace is found to be related to both general employment commitment and organisational commitment. In both cases it is those in smaller organisations/firms that are most committed, particularly those in workplaces of less than five people.

Finally, occupational position is found to influence both employment commitment and organisational commitment. In general employees in the higher non-manual occupations are most committed to their employing organisations. Those with the lowest organisational commitment are skilled agricultural workers (which is a small group $n=45$), plant/machine operators and workers elementary occupations. This is likely to reflect the poorer working conditions in these occupations. The relationship between general employment commitment and occupation follows a somewhat similar pattern, however, here it is professionals and skilled agricultural workers who record the highest levels of commitment.

It is interesting that many of the job characteristics that were associated with high job satisfaction are also associated with higher organisational commitment. Indeed there is a high correlation between respondents' job satisfaction score and organisational commitment score (Pearsons' $R = .61$). This suggests that taking steps to address either of these issues will have mutually beneficial effects.

Personal characteristics and commitment

Male and female employees are found to have the same level of non-financial employment commitments, however, women record a somewhat higher level of organisational commitment. There are different age trends for employment and organisational commitment: employment commitment decreases with age especially among those approaching retirement (a result also found in international research, Loscocco and Kalleberg, 1988). However, organisational commitment increases with age. This may be associated with increased tenure or differential rewards associated with seniority or may reflect attitudinal differences due to age or cohort.

Employees with third level education express the highest levels of employment commitment and organisational commitment. However, the relationship between education and the two commitment measures is non-linear. So for example the difference in organisational commitment between those with third level education and no qualifications is not significant. This result may be confounded by age effects (as older employees have lower education levels and higher commitment). Multivariate models would be needed to separate these effects.

Table 2.6 | Employment commitment and organisational commitment by personal characteristics

| | % Work if no financial need | Organisational Commitment ¹ |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Male | 68.4 | .39 |
| Female | 67.1 | .42 |
| Under 25 years | 71.2 | .31 |
| 25-39 years | 70.2 | .38 |
| 40-54 years | 65.1 | .46 |
| 55 years & over | 58.5 | .54 |
| Education Level | | |
| No qualifications | 62.4 | .40 |
| Junior/Inter cert level | 58.1 | .37 |
| Leaving Certificate | 68.8 | .39 |
| Third Level or Equiv. | 75.6 | .47 |
| Tenure | | |
| Less than 1 year | 75.1 | .31 |
| 1-5 years | 68.6 | .37 |
| Over 5 years | 64.7 | .46 |
| Union member | 65.1 | .41 |
| Non-union member | 69.3 | .40 |

¹ The organisational commitment scale ranges from -2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher commitment.

Tenure also has opposing effects on employment commitment and organisational commitment. Those with the shortest tenure have the highest levels of employment commitment but they have the lowest level of organisational commitment. Given that tenure will at least partly reflect loyalty to one's organisation it is not surprising that there is a strong relationship between these two variables.

Employees who are not members of trade unions have a slightly higher level of employment commitments than members, however this may reflect the occupational and sectoral distribution of union membership. Union membership does not affect organisational commitment.

Finally, we examine whether commitment levels of employees – to work in general and to their firms – is related to family circumstances. We found no relationship overall, however there was a significant effect for women only. Female employees with children under 18 years show lower non-financial work commitment than women with no dependent children. The differences between men with differing family responsibilities are not statistically significant. Organisational commitment does not vary significantly by parental status for either women or men (Table 2.7).

Table 2.7 | Commitment by family status

| | % would work if no financial need | | Organisational Commitment Score ¹ | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|--|-------|
| | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| No dependent children | 67.1 | 69.8 | .38 | .44 |
| Youngest child <5yrs | 72.6 | 62.1 | .42 | .39 |
| Youngest child 6-17yrs | 69.2 | 63.3 | .39 | .41 |
| | 68.4 | 67.0 | .39 | .42 |

1. The scale ranges from -2 to +2 and higher scores indicate higher commitment.

2.4 Employee autonomy

We now move on to an important aspect of employee experience that is his/her level of autonomy or control. This may well be linked to issues of partnership and participation discussed in Chapter 7. As mentioned in the introduction discretion and control are central to definitions of skill and have been found to vary substantially across occupational groups.

We included six measures of autonomy which have been widely used and validated in previous surveys:

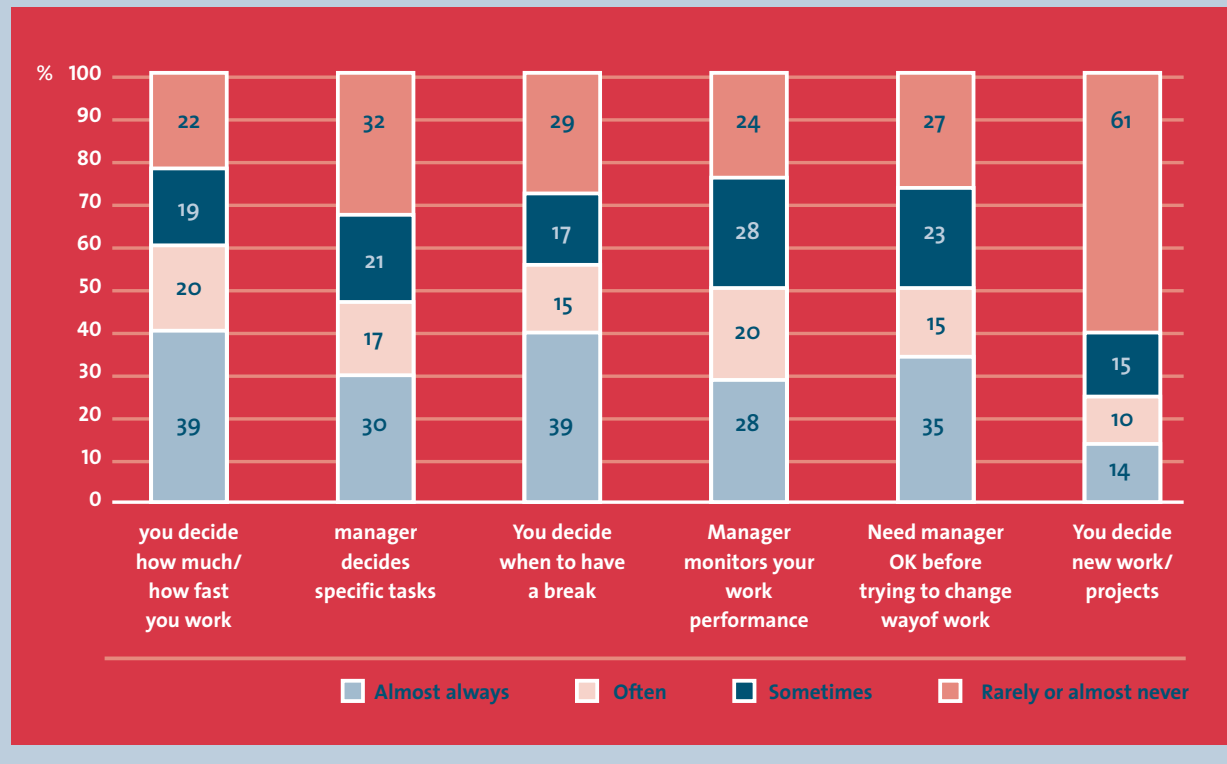
- You decide how much work you do or how fast you work during the day
- Your manager decides the specific tasks you will do from day to day
- You decide when you can take a break during the working day
- Your manager monitors your work performance
- You have to get your manager's OK before you try to change anything with the way you do your work
- You can decide to take on new work or new contracts or initiate new projects.

The response set was “almost always”, “often”, “sometimes”, “rarely/almost never”. We can see from the responses in Figure 2.3 that discretion on these items is quite variable. Almost 40% of workers almost always control their pace of work and the timing of breaks, but less than 30% control the tasks they do (i.e. manager never decides) but only 24% never have their performance monitored and only 14% can “almost always” initiate new work/contracts.

The autonomy scale was constructed using responses to these six items. For positively worded statements i.e. those that “You decide....” a score of 0 is given for “rarely/never”, 1 for “sometimes”, 2 for “often” and 3 for “almost always”. The scoring was reversed for the other three items, which means that greater autonomy leads to higher scores. Scores on the six items were then averaged for each respondent. The scale therefore ranges from 0 to 3 and the average score was 1.43.

For descriptive purpose we grouped this scale into three categories low medium and high. We found that 27% of employees have low levels of control, around half (46%) have some level of discretion, but only 27% have a high level of control over their time and work tasks.

Figure 2.3 Measures of autonomy



Autonomy and job/organisation characteristics

Levels of autonomy do not differ between part and full-time workers but those who are permanent are entrusted with more discretion over their work activities than non-permanent staff. Job discretion is strongly related to occupational position as anticipated. Those in managerial, professional and technical occupations have a high level of autonomy and low levels of monitoring in their jobs reflecting the different nature of the employment relationship for these occupational groups. Discretion then declines continually with each occupational position with the lowest levels experienced by plant/machine operators who tend to have highly routinised tasks which allow little opportunity for discretion either in the pace or the nature of the work.

Levels of autonomy also vary across sectors although it is likely that this will largely reflect the occupational composition of the workforce in these sectors rather than purely sectoral differences in work practices. It is interesting that this is one of

the few dimensions of work experiences/attitudes examined in this chapter where there is no difference between the public and private sectors. The bureaucratic and hierarchical structures that often prevail in the public sector may mean that there is less discretion for white-collar employees at lower levels of the hierarchy (further multivariate analysis would be needed to investigate this issue further). In fact there is significant variation within the public sectors with the education sector showing higher levels of autonomy than the civil service (public admin) and the health sector.

Finally, we find that employee discretion varies with organisational size. Those in the smallest units have the greatest autonomy while those in large organisations of 100 or more have the least discretion. There is no difference between employees in the two mid-categories (5 to 99 employees).

The relationship between job autonomy and personal characteristics

Both gender and age are significantly related to job autonomy. Women are found to exercise less discretion in the workplace than male employees, this reflects the high levels of vertical gender segregation in the Irish labour market (Hughes, 2002) which means that women are concentrated at the lower levels of occupations where they have less control over their time and tasks. Levels of discretion are found to increase with the age of employees which is likely to reflect increasing responsibility associated with greater experience and seniority. This pattern is also reflected in the higher levels of autonomy experienced by workers with longer job tenure. Those with over five years experience on the job have an average score of 1.58 on the job autonomy scale compared to 1.23 among new job entrants.

Levels of task and time discretion increase with educational qualifications, the effect is particularly noticeably for graduates, which would be expected due to the higher skill levels of jobs occupied by this group. Trade union members have a significantly lower level of discretion in employment than non-union members. It is likely that some of this effect is due to the occupational composition of union members rather than union membership per se, however further analysis would be needed to confirm this.

Table 2.8 Job autonomy by job/–
organisation characteristics

| | Autonomy Score |
|---|----------------|
| Part-time | 1.41 |
| Full-time | 1.44 |
| Permanent | 1.49 |
| Temporary/Casual | 1.16 |
| Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers | 2.06 |
| Professionals | 1.70 |
| Technicians/Assoc Prof | 1.72 |
| Clerks | 1.48 |
| Service Work, Shop & Sales | 1.28 |
| Skilled Agriculture & Fishery | 1.31 |
| Craft & related trades | 1.20 |
| Plant/machine operators | 1.08 |
| Elementary Occupations | 1.12 |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary | 1.33 |
| Construction | 1.24 |
| Wholesale Retail | 1.46 |
| Hotel Restaurants | 1.36 |
| Transport Storage Communications | 1.47 |
| Finance & Other Bus Services | 1.61 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 1.42 |
| Education | 1.60 |
| Health | 1.41 |
| Other Services | 1.56 |
| Public Sector | 1.45 |
| Private Sector | 1.43 |
| Size Local Unit | |
| 1-4 | 1.64 |
| 5-19 | 1.46 |
| 20-99 | 1.42 |
| 100+ | 1.34 |
| All | 1.43 |

The scale ranges from 0 to 3. Higher scores indicate greater autonomy.

Table 2.9 Job autonomy by
personal characteristics

| | Autonomy Score |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Male | 1.47 |
| Female | 1.39 |
| Under 25 years | 1.07 |
| 25-39 years | 1.42 |
| 40-54 years | 1.60 |
| 55 years & over | 1.76 |
| Education Level | |
| No qualifications | 1.28 |
| Junior/Inter cert level | 1.22 |
| Leaving Cert | 1.43 |
| Third Level or Equiv. | 1.70 |
| Tenure | |
| Less than 1 yr | 1.23 |
| 1-5years | 1.34 |
| Over 5 years | 1.58 |
| Union member | 1.32 |
| Non-union member | 1.50 |

The scale ranges from 0 to 3. Higher scores indicate greater autonomy.

Figure 2.4 Measure of work pressure

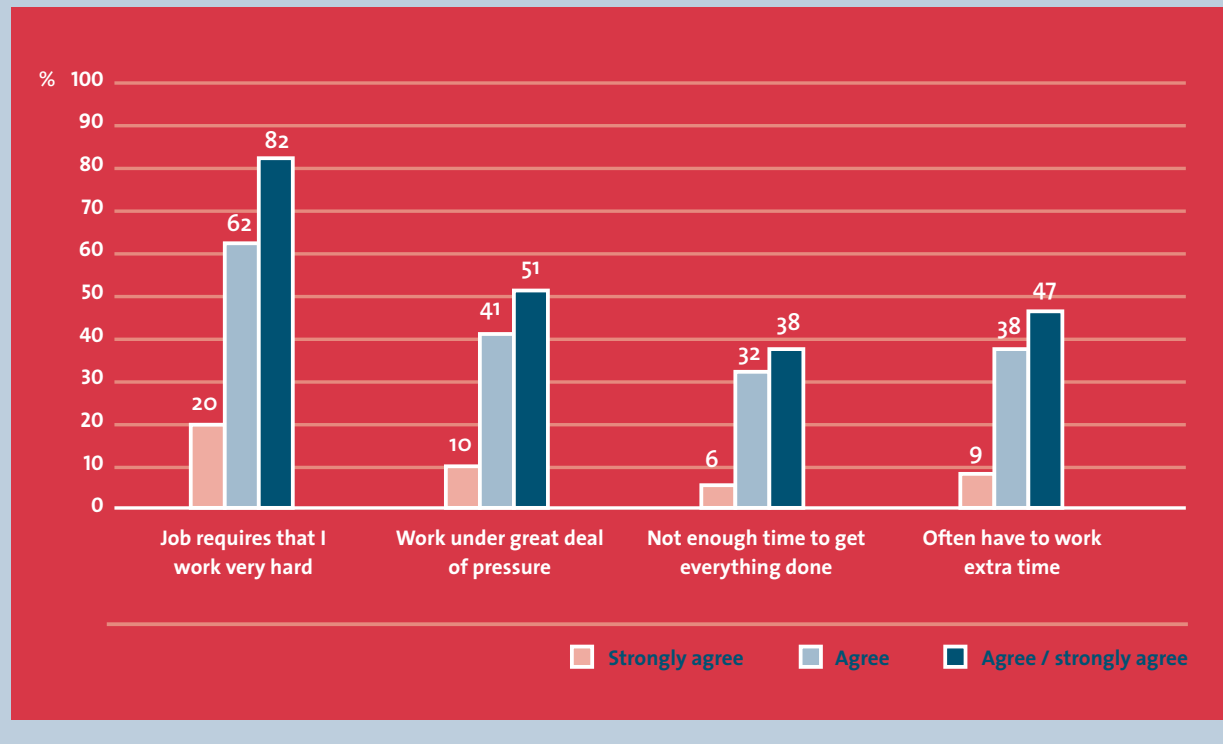
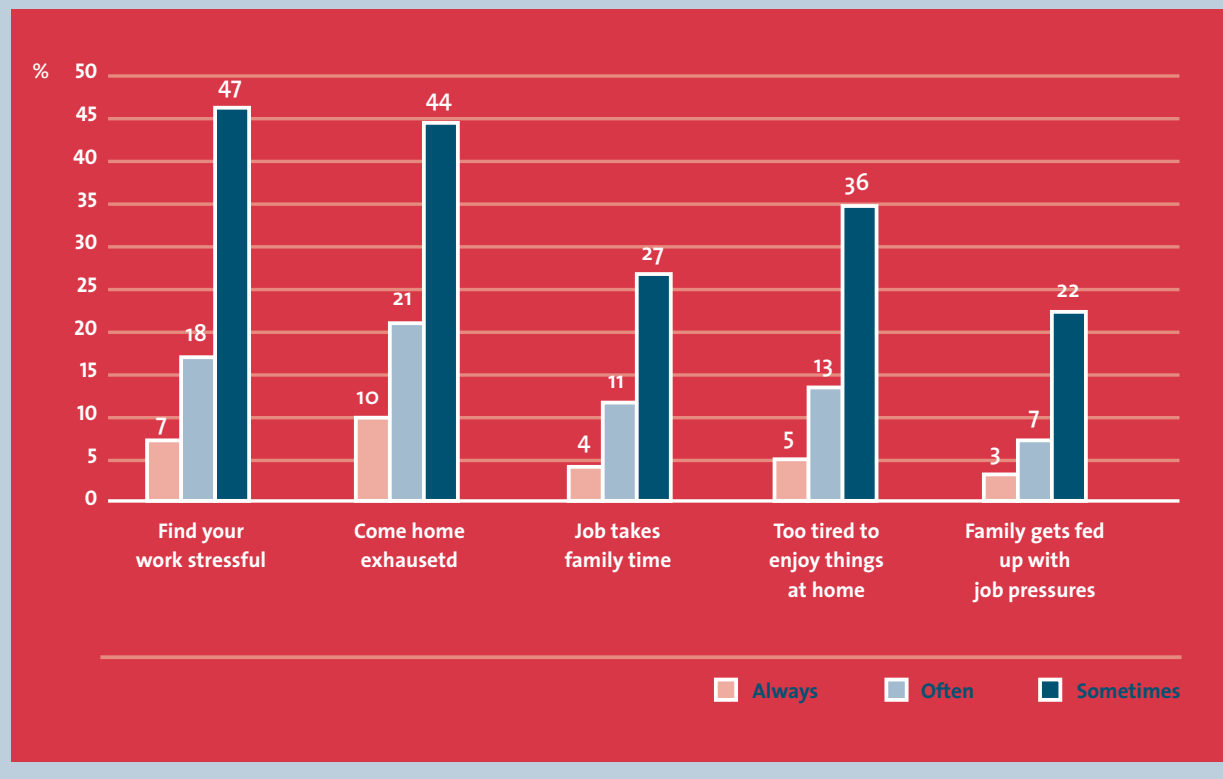


Figure 2.5 Measures of work stress and family/work conflict



2.5 Work intensity/pressure and work stress

In this section we consider workers' experience of work pressure or intensity. There is growing international literature on the intensification of work and the extent to which workers are being put under increasing pressure. As our data relate to only one point in time we cannot comment on the extent to which work has intensified, nevertheless we can see that a significant proportion of Irish employees report experiences of work pressure (see Figure 2.4).

- 82% agree or strongly agree that their job requires them to work very hard
- 51% agree or strongly agree that they work under a great deal of pressure
- 38% agree or strongly agree that they never have enough time to get everything done in their job
- 47% agree or strongly agree that they often have to work extra time over and above their formal hours to get through the job or help out.

These four items are combined to form a work pressure scale with higher scores indicating greater pressure. The scale ranges from -2 to +2 with an average score of .17 for all employees. As this result is positive this indicates that the average worker experiences some work pressure.

While work intensity may well lead to stress for the individual employees this is not axiomatic therefore we also consider a number of more direct measures of stress. Within these measures we focus in particular on the issue of work/life balance and the extent to which the effects of work spill over into people's home and family life. Respondents were asked how often they experienced the following:

- Find your work stressful
- Come home from work exhausted
- Find that your job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner or family
- Feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home
- Find that your partner/family gets fed up with the pressure of your job.

The response set allowed was "always", "often", "sometimes", "hardly ever", and "never" (scored from 4 to 0). A composite scale was made based on respondents' mean score over the five items.⁴ The overall results on these five items are reported in Figure 2.5. We see that a quarter of employees always or often find their work stressful, and a higher proportion (31%) frequently come home from work exhausted, 18% are often or always too tired to enjoy things outside work which suggests there is a work/life balance problem for significant minority of workers. On the two work/family conflict items, we see that between 10 and 15% of respondents record such problems.

These results are similar to the EU wide findings from the 2001 Eurobarometer surveys. Gallie & Paugam (2002) report that 31% of respondents across the EU always/often found their work stressful, 25% of workers regularly came home from work exhausted, 19% reported that their job always/often prevented them from giving the time they want to their family, 20% were often/always too tired after work to enjoy the things they would like to do at home, and 10% reported that their partner/family gets fed up with the pressure of the respondents' job.

In the following analysis we examine employees' responses to the work pressure and work stress scales together as the two issues are strongly related. We focus first on their relationship with job characteristics.

⁴ Some of those not living with a partner or family did not respond to the last two items, therefore where there was missing information we averaged respondents scores on the items which they did answer.

Table 2.10 | Work intensity and work stress by job characteristics

| | Work Pressure Score | Work Stress Score |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| Part-time | -.03 | 1.33 |
| Full-time | .22 | 1.67 |
| Permanent | .21 | 1.64 |
| Temp/Casual | -.02 | 1.45 |
| Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers | .65 | 1.89 |
| Professionals | .52 | 1.80 |
| Technicians & Assoc Professionals | .24 | 1.61 |
| Clerks | .02 | 1.44 |
| Service Work & Shop /Sales | .00 | 1.53 |
| Skilled Agriculture & Fishery | -.37 | 1.78 |
| Craft & related trades | .22 | 1.56 |
| Plant/machine operators | -.01 | 1.67 |
| Elementary Occupations | -.06 | 1.49 |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary | .09 | 1.65 |
| Construction | .28 | 1.60 |
| Wholesale Retail | .03 | 1.47 |
| Hotel Restaurants | .19 | 1.79 |
| Transport & Communications | .21 | 1.74 |
| Finance + Other Bus Services | .24 | 1.59 |
| Public Administration & Defence | .27 | 1.62 |
| Education | -.31 | 1.55 |
| Health | .22 | 1.67 |
| Other Services | .05 | 1.46 |
| Public Sector | -.33 | 1.69 |
| Private Sector | .14 | 1.59 |
| Size Local Unit | | |
| 1-4 | .02 | 1.38 |
| 5-19 | .15 | 1.57 |
| 20-99 | .21 | 1.63 |
| 100+ | .22 | 1.72 |
| All | .17 | 1.61 |

The work pressure scale ranges from -2 to +2, higher scores indicate more pressure. The stress scale ranges from 0 to 4, higher scores indicate greater stress.

Table 2.11 | Work intensity and work stress by personal characteristics

| | Work Pressure Score | Work Stress Score |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Male | .21 | 1.64 |
| Female | .14 | 1.57 |
| Under 25 years | .07 | 1.45 |
| 25-39 years | .19 | 1.69 |
| 40-54 years | .24 | 1.65 |
| 55 years & over | .08 | 1.44 |
| No Dependent Children (<18 years) | .15 | 1.53 |
| youngest child <5 years | .24 | 1.80 |
| Youngest child 6-17 years | .19 | 1.68 |
| Education Level | | |
| No qualifications | .00 | 1.59 |
| Junior/Inter cert level | .08 | 1.54 |
| Leaving Certificate | .13 | 1.58 |
| Third Level or Equiv. | -.44 | 1.74 |
| Tenure | | |
| Less than 1 year | -.02 | 1.45 |
| 1-5 years | .12 | 1.58 |
| Over 5 years | .27 | 1.68 |
| Union member | .24 | 1.70 |
| Non-union member | .13 | 1.55 |

*The work pressure scale ranges from -2 to +2, higher scores indicate more pressure.
The stress scale ranges from 0 to 4, higher scores indicate greater stress.*

Job characteristics, work pressure and work stress

Work pressure is lower among those on non-standard employment contracts, this is true for part-timers and those on non-permanent contracts. A similar pattern is noted for work stress with those in permanent full-time jobs experiencing greater stress. Given that part-time work is one of the main methods of reconciling work and family demands it is reassuring that stress levels are somewhat lower for this group.

Work pressure and work stress is highest among those higher up the occupational hierarchy, especially among professionals and senior officials/managers. The association between increased responsibility and greater job pressure and stress is well established. Work pressure is also high amongst skilled craft workers and skilled agricultural workers although in the latter group the

small numbers mean that there is a large error attached to this estimate. The relationship between stress and occupational position is not as clear-cut as for work pressure, which confirms that sources of stress can be varied across employees – lack of control can be equally stressful as having too much responsibility, similarly some sources of stress may be related to a clash between work and other demands rather than the nature of work itself (see below).

The experience of work pressure and work stress is more common in the public sector than the private sector. Although public sector workers are not subject to competitive pressures, demands for greater work intensity may arise from other sources for example, from the demands of the general public, labour shortages, or change processes. Our discussion of change in Chapter 9 and in the survey of public sector employers addresses some of these issues. It is somewhat unexpected that public sector workers experience greater stress than private sector workers as the public sector is usually believed to have better policies to reconcile work-life balance issues. Across industrial sectors the highest levels of work pressure are experienced by employees in the Construction Industry, Public Administration/Defence and Education Sectors. The lowest levels of pressure are experienced by those in the Wholesale & Retail Industry, Other Services and Manufacturing Sectors. These results may be partly explained by the occupational composition of workers in these sectors, however, further analysis is needed to assess this.

The results for work stress/work/family conflict are rather different. It is employees within the Hotel/Restaurant Industry and the Transport & Communications sector who experience the highest levels of work stress. This may reflect the greater tendency for workers in these sectors to work unsocial hours which has implications for family life. Stress levels are also high in the Health sector.

Finally, our survey found that work pressures and work stress both increase with organisational size but only up to 20 employees. Those in workplaces with less than 5 employees experience least work intensity while those in workplaces of 20 or more experience the highest levels. Those in workplaces of more than 100 employees are most likely to experience stress. Again this may be somewhat counter-intuitive in terms of work-life balance as small and medium size enterprises have been found to have a low level of family friendly policies (Equality Authority, 2002).

Worker characteristics, work intensity and work stress

Here we consider how work intensity and work stress are related to personal and family characteristics. As a number of the items in the work stress scale particularly relate to conflicts between the demands of work and family/home life we would expect that personal characteristics will have a strong effect here. This is less the case with work pressure which considers only internal work demands, in this the impact of personal characteristics is likely to be more indirect (i.e. in influencing the nature of the occupation you are selected into).

The results in Table 2.11 show that male employees experience more work pressure and stress than female employees. Although men tend to take on less responsibility for caring/household work than women, the greater inflexibility of their jobs and longer hours of paid work may well lead to higher levels of work/life conflict.

Work pressure is found to increase with age until it peaks among the 40-54 year age group, older workers (55 plus) experience low levels of pressure. In contrast, work stress peaks in the 25-39 age group, the period of family formation and key career development.

The effects of family are shown more directly by the figures for those with and without children under 18 years. Those with pre-school children are found to experience the highest levels of work stress and work pressure. Perhaps the inability of parents with young children to manage work pressure through long hours leads to an increase in the subjective experience of work pressure.

Those with third level education experience higher levels of work pressure and work stress than other groups but below this there is little difference by education level. The experience of graduates is likely to reflect the pressure associated with higher level jobs with greater responsibility as discussed earlier.

A similar explanation is likely to lie behind the results for tenure. However, it is worth noting that work pressure is more strongly related to tenure than work stress. Finally, we find that union members experience higher levels of work pressure and work stress than non-union members.

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter has undertaken two main tasks. First to describe the work attitudes and experiences of Irish employees. Second to examine how these attitudes and experiences are influenced by worker and job characteristics. In relation to the first task we have seen that, as in other European employee surveys, workers generally express a high level of satisfaction in their jobs. When we look at different aspects of employment, satisfaction is lowest in relation to earnings, but, even on this, 70% of employees are satisfied. On another positive note, there is a high level of organisational commitment among the workforce although in general this loyalty would not go as far as turning down better offers or tolerating demotion to stay with one's current company.

The results on the level of autonomy are somewhat more mixed: 27% of employees have low levels of control, around half (46%) have some level of discretion, but only 27% have a high degree of control over their time and work tasks. Nor do the results on work pressure and work stress leave room for complacency. Over half the employee workforce experience some measure of work pressure, while a quarter regularly find their work stressful and another half (47%) sometimes find their work stressful. There is also evidence of work/family clashes for around a quarter of employees. These results suggest that there is substantial room for developing policies and employment practices to improve stress levels among employees and to facilitate greater work/life balance. There is also significant potential to improve the level of control that employees have over their day-to-day working

Table 2.12

| | Stress | Work Pressure | Organisational Commitment | Autonomy | Job Satisfaction |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------------|---------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Stress Scale | 1 | 0.506 | -0.193 | -0.036 | -0.315 |
| Pressure | 0.506 | 1 | 0.068 | 0.102 | -0.030 |
| Organisational Commitment | -0.193 | 0.068 | 1 | 0.242 | 0.608 |
| Autonomy | -0.036 | 0.102 | 0.242 | 1 | 0.206 |
| Job Satisfaction | -0.315 | -0.030 | 0.608 | 0.206 | 1 |

All correlations are significant at the 5% level.

lives. As the results in the appendix table show there is a negative relationship between stress and autonomy, so that those with least control experience more stress. Indeed the inter-relationships between stress, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (see Table 2.12) mean that efforts to reduce employee stress may well increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment. These issues are explored in greater detail in Chapter 8 when we construct regression models of job satisfaction and work stress.

The results of investigation of the relationship between work attitudes/experiences and job/worker characteristics were too many to summarise here. Our main conclusions are that employees' attitudes and experiences are highly stratified by their occupational position, industrial sector, length of tenure, size of organisation and the permanency of their contract. The hours worked had a less consistent influence, there was no difference between part-timers and full-timers on employment commitment or organisational commitment, nor did these two groups differ on level of autonomy. Only among female employees did part-time hours effect satisfaction (increasing it) which may be related to the lower work pressure and fewer family/work stresses experienced by part-timers.

Personal characteristics also proved influential with education, age and job tenure having particularly strong influence on employee attitudes and experiences. Gender emerges as significant in relation to subjective experiences (autonomy, work pressure and work stress) but not in relation to most of the attitude measures (satisfaction, employment commitment) the exception being organisational commitment where women were slightly more committed. Family status was found to influence employment commitment, work pressure and work stress but not job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The influence of trade union membership is also mixed, having more influence on experiences than attitudes.

Chapter 3

Workplace Practices

This chapter examines the extent to which various employment practices are used in the workplace. We turn first to workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work. We then investigate the use of performance appraisal and reward systems. Finally, we look at the extent to which workplaces have adopted formal policies relating to dignity and equality at work.

TABLE 3.1 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by gender and age group

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Men | 16.0 | 38.5 | 21.7 | 39.0 |
| Women | 10.9 | 48.0 | 38.4 | 69.6 |
| ≤ 24 years of age | 7.9 | 41.0 | 24.6 | 52.7 |
| 25–39 years of age | 31.7 | 40.5 | 28.1 | 50.6 |
| 40–54 years of age | 16.9 | 47.0 | 35.0 | 56.5 |
| ≥ 55 years of age | 15.3 | 44.0 | 27.9 | 56.5 |
| All | 13.6 | 42.9 | 29.5 | 53.4 |

3.1 Location and hours of work

We begin by looking at the frequency with which employees work in establishments in which various non-traditional working arrangements with respect to the location and hours of work are used, including working from home, flexible hours, job-sharing arrangements and part-time working.

Table 3.1 shows that overall, about 14% of employees report that working from home is used in their workplace. Men are more likely than women to report that their workplace uses working from home. Those in the 25–39 year age group are more likely to be employed in a workplace using home-working than any other age group.

Overall 43% of employees work in workplaces that use flexible hours. Women are more likely than men to be employed in workplaces with flexible hours. Workers over the age of 40 are somewhat more likely than younger age groups to work in workplaces with flexible hours.

Just under 30% of employees work in workplaces that use job-sharing. Women (38%) are much more likely than men (22%) to report that their workplace uses this work practice. There is no clear age-related pattern in relation to this work practice.

Well over half of all employees report that their workplaces use part-time hours. Women (70%) are much more likely than men (39%) to report that their work place uses this work practice. There is no clear age-related pattern in relation to the use of part-time hours.

Table 3.2a shows the extent to which those employees who responded that their workplaces used home-working were themselves personally involved in the practice. Table 3.2b shows the percentage of all employees involved in each of the work practices. In workplaces that utilise home working men are more likely than women to be involved. Overall, about 10% of men are involved in home-working, compared to less than 6% of women. The incidence of being involved in home-working, in workplaces that use the practice, increases with age: from 36% among those under age 24 to more than 80% of those aged 55 or over.

About 57% of those who report that their workplaces use flexible working hours are personally involved in the practice, and there is no difference between men and women. Younger workers, particularly those under the age of 24 are somewhat more likely than their older colleagues to be personally involved.

Table 3.2a Extent to which employees are personally involved in workplace practices relating to location and hours of work by gender and age group
As % of employees in workplaces that use the practices

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Men | 67.5 | 56.4 | 16.3 | 24.2 |
| Women | 52.6 | 57.4 | 25.9 | 50.5 |
| ≤ 24 years of age | 35.5 | 51.9 | 28.2 | 45.3 |
| 25–39 years of age | 58.1 | 56.3 | 20.1 | 34.4 |
| 40–54 years of age | 67.4 | 58.7 | 22.8 | 41.0 |
| ≥ 55 years of age | 83.8 | 63.1 | 17.4 | 50.6 |
| All | 61.6 | 56.9 | 22.2 | 40.3 |

Table 3.2b Extent to which employees are personally involved in workplace practices relating to location and hours of work by gender and age group
As % of all employees

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Men | 10.8 | 21.7 | 3.5 | 9.4 |
| Women | 5.7 | 27.6 | 9.9 | 35.1 |
| ≤ 24 years of age | 2.8 | 21.3 | 6.9 | 23.9 |
| 25–39 years of age | 18.4 | 22.8 | 5.6 | 17.4 |
| 40–54 years of age | 11.4 | 27.6 | 8.0 | 23.2 |
| ≥ 55 years of age | 12.8 | 27.8 | 4.9 | 28.6 |
| All | 8.4 | 24.4 | 6.5 | 21.5 |

We noted above that job-sharing arrangements are relatively rare in Irish workplaces. Overall, only 6.5% of workers are involved in the practice and even within workplaces that utilise such arrangements, only 22% of all employees report that they are personally involved in the practice. Women and younger workers are more likely to be so involved.

Just over 40% of employees in workplaces that use part-time working are personally involved in part-time working. Women are about twice as likely as men (50% and 24% respectively) to work part-time. While there is little evidence of a clear age related pattern, older workers appear to be more likely to be personally involved in part-time work.

Table 3.3 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by education

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|--|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Used in workplace | | | | |
| No Qualification | 7.9 | 33.8 | 16.3 | 50.7 |
| Junior Certificate | 6.0 | 40.4 | 23.2 | 52.2 |
| Leaving Certificate | 13.4 | 44.6 | 30.0 | 52.5 |
| Third Level | 23.2 | 45.3 | 39.6 | 57.8 |
| All | 13.6 | 42.9 | 29.5 | 53.4 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace | | | | |
| No Qualification | 75.7 | 56.6 | 26.3 | 52.0 |
| Junior Certificate | 62.3 | 55.1 | 25.5 | 48.1 |
| Leaving Certificate | 56.6 | 56.3 | 23.6 | 40.3 |
| Third Level | 65.0 | 59.2 | 17.8 | 29.4 |
| All | 61.6 | 56.9 | 22.2 | 40.3 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of all employees | | | | |
| No Qualification | 6.0 | 19.1 | 4.3 | 26.4 |
| Junior Certificate | 3.7 | 22.3 | 5.9 | 25.1 |
| Leaving Certificate | 7.6 | 25.1 | 7.1 | 21.2 |
| Third Level | 15.1 | 26.8 | 7.0 | 17.0 |
| All | 8.4 | 24.4 | 6.5 | 21.5 |

Table 3.3 shows workplace practices in relation to location of work and working hours by education. More educated workers are more likely to report that their workplace uses home-working, but there is no evident relationship with personal involvement in this practice. There is little evidence of any strong relationship between education and the use of either flexible hours or part-time hours in the workplace. However, those with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed in workplaces that use job-sharing. This is likely to be related to sectoral effects: those with higher education are more likely to work in the public sector, and, as we show below, job-sharing is more common in public sector workplaces.

Full-time and permanent workers are more likely than part-timers or temporary or casual workers to report that their workplaces utilise working from home (Table 3.4). However, among those who do report that their workplace uses home-working, there are no differences between employees in terms of either working hours or contract in the extent to which they are personally involved in the practice. Part-time workers are more likely than full-timers to report that their workplace uses flexible working hours, although there is no significant difference between temporary and permanent employees. As might be expected, part-time employees in workplaces that use flexible working hours are more likely than their full-time counterparts to be involved in flexible working hours.

Table 3.4 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by nature of contract

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|--|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Used in workplace | | | | |
| Part-time | 10.8 | 47.7 | 37.0 | 85.8 |
| Full-time | 14.3 | 41.8 | 27.8 | 46.1 |
| Permanent | 14.3 | 43.0 | 29.6 | 50.7 |
| Temporary | 10.3 | 42.4 | 28.7 | 66.9 |
| All | 13.6 | 42.9 | 29.5 | 53.4 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace | | | | |
| Part-time | 68.1 | 74.3 | 45.1 | 85.7 |
| Full-time | 60.6 | 52.5 | 15.4 | 21.0 |
| Permanent | 60.4 | 56.3 | 20.1 | 33.0 |
| Temporary | 70.4 | 60.3 | 33.2 | 68.6 |
| All | 61.6 | 56.9 | 22.2 | 40.3 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of all employees | | | | |
| Part-time | 7.4 | 35.4 | 16.7 | 73.5 |
| Full-time | 8.7 | 21.9 | 4.3 | 9.7 |
| Permanent | 8.6 | 24.2 | 5.9 | 16.7 |
| Temporary | 7.3 | 25.6 | 9.5 | 45.9 |
| All | 8.4 | 24.4 | 6.5 | 21.5 |

As shown in Table 3.4, part-time workers are more likely to be employed in workplaces that use job-sharing, and those that do work in such establishments are substantially more likely than their full-time counterparts to be engaged in job sharing. There are no differences between permanent and temporary employees in the use of job-sharing in their workplaces.

Part-time workers are very substantially more likely to be employed in workplaces that use part-time hours (86% versus 46%), and among those that do work in such establishments there is a very high incident of part-time working (86%). Temporary workers are also more likely than permanent workers to report that their workplace uses part-time working, and those who are employed in such workplaces are also more likely to be personally engaged in part-time work.

Workers with longer tenure with a current employer (i.e. 5 or more years) are more likely to report that their workplace uses home-working, and longer-term employees in workplaces that do use the practice are more likely than shorter-term employees to report that they are personally engaged in home working. The latter effect, relating to personal involvement is to be expected: longer-tenure workers are more likely to be governed by flexible working and supervision arrangements. However, the former, utilisation pattern, is likely to be a compositional effect, related to occupation and sector.

Table 3.5 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by tenure

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|--|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Used in workplace | | | | |
| < 1 year | 11.5 | 40.2 | 23.8 | 54.9 |
| 1 to 5 years | 11.4 | 42.9 | 25.9 | 52.8 |
| > 5 years | 16.4 | 44.5 | 34.5 | 53.2 |
| All | 13.6 | 42.9 | 29.5 | 53.4 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace | | | | |
| < 1 year | 57.4 | 53.5 | 27.9 | 52.4 |
| 1 to 5 years | 61.0 | 65.7 | 22.3 | 42.9 |
| > 5 years | 65.3 | 57.9 | 20.7 | 34.0 |
| All | 61.6 | 56.9 | 22.2 | 40.3 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of all employees | | | | |
| < 1 year | 6.6 | 21.5 | 6.6 | 28.8 |
| 1 to 5 years | 7 | 28.2 | 5.8 | 22.7 |
| > 5 years | 10.7 | 25.8 | 7.1 | 18.1 |
| All | 8.4 | 24.4 | 6.5 | 21.5 |

Table 3.6 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by union membership

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|--|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Used in workplace | | | | |
| Union Member | 12.7 | 45.5 | 43.6 | 53.2 |
| Non-union | 14.2 | 41.3 | 20.8 | 53.5 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace | | | | |
| Union Member | 49.4 | 50.7 | 17.8 | 28.7 |
| Non-union | 68.3 | 61.1 | 27.8 | 47.2 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of all employees | | | | |
| Union Member | 6.3 | 23.1 | 7.8 | 15.3 |
| Non-union | 9.7 | 25.2 | 5.8 | 25.3 |

Workers with longer tenure are also somewhat more likely to be employed in workplaces that use flexible hours and job-sharing, and, again, this is probably due to occupational and sectoral effects (Table 3.5). There is no evident relationship between workplace use of part-time hours. However, within workplaces that use part-time hours, workers with short tenure, less than 1 year, are more likely to report that they are personally engaged in part-time working. This is likely due to the fact that part-time jobs are more accessible to new entrants to employment (O'Connell and Gash, 2003).

Table 3.6 shows that union members are less likely to report that home-working is used in their workplace, and they are also less likely to be personally involved in home-working in workplaces that do use it. There are few if any differences between union members and non-members in the extent of utilisation of either flexible or part-time hours in their workplaces. Union members are more likely to be employed at a workplace that uses job-sharing. However, within workplaces that do use job-sharing, a higher proportion of non-members than union members report that they are personally involved in job sharing.

Higher professionals and managers are much more likely to be employed in workplaces that use working from home than any social group, and manual workers of all types are least likely. Within workplaces that do use home-working, however, the incidence of manual workers who are actually involved in the practice is high, and generally higher than among the non-manual classes.

higher professionals and managers are also more likely to report that flexible hours are used in their workplaces, although the variation in this by social class is more muted. Unskilled manual workers who are employed in workplaces that use flexible hours are more likely to be personally involved in the practice than other social classes. Lower professionals are more likely than any other social class to be employed in workplaces that use job sharing, followed by other non-manual workers.

About half or more of all social classes, with the exception of skilled manuals (19%) report that part-time hours are used in their workplaces. Within workplaces that use part-time working, the extent to which respondents are involved increases from less than 20% among higher professionals and managers to 40% among other non-manual workers, and to over 50% among Semi- and unskilled manual workers.

There is substantial variation by economic sector in the use of working from home, from about 7% in construction, wholesale and retail and other services, to 15% or over in manufacturing, transport and communications, public administration and defence, and education. Finance and other business services shows the highest incidence. Use of working from home is somewhat more common in the public than in the private sector. These data relate to the extent to which working from home is reported as used or available in the workplace. Respondents were also asked whether they were personally involved in the practice. About 62% of those who were employed in workplaces which use working from home did in fact engage in this practice, and there was limited variation across economic sectors.

Table 3.7 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by social class

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|--|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Used in workplace | | | | |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 38.5 | 53.5 | 33.2 | 50.6 |
| Lower Professional | 17.1 | 44.8 | 45.9 | 63.5 |
| Other Non-manual | 15.2 | 47.8 | 37.6 | 61.8 |
| Skilled Manual | 7.7 | 30.1 | 9.5 | 18.6 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 4.0 | 44.3 | 24.8 | 64.4 |
| Unskilled Manual | 6.4 | 31.4 | 18.7 | 48.2 |
| All | 13.6 | 42.9 | 29.5 | 53.4 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of employees in workplace | | | | |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 68.5 | 58.9 | 12.2 | 19.4 |
| Lower Professional | 61.6 | 57.9 | 23.9 | 29.7 |
| Other Non-manual | 47.7 | 57.8 | 24.8 | 40.4 |
| Skilled Manual | 72.7 | 54.9 | 22.3 | 29.4 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 65.4 | 51.1 | 18.8 | 50.1 |
| Unskilled Manual | 83.1 | 69.1 | 31.3 | 66.5 |
| All | 61.6 | 56.9 | 22.2 | 40.3 |
| Respondent personally involved as % of all employees | | | | |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 26.4 | 31.5 | 4.1 | 9.8 |
| Lower Professional | 10.5 | 25.9 | 11.0 | 18.9 |
| Other Non-manual | 7.3 | 27.6 | 9.3 | 25.0 |
| Skilled Manual | 5.6 | 16.5 | 2.1 | 5.5 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 2.6 | 22.6 | 4.7 | 32.3 |
| Unskilled Manual | 5.3 | 21.7 | 5.9 | 32.1 |
| All | 8.4 | 24.4 | 6.5 | 21.5 |

Overall, about 43% of respondents work in establishments where flexible hours, or flexitime arrangements, are available, and about 57% of these respond that they themselves are involved in such arrangements. Flexible hours are most common in public administration and defence (59%), and common also in hotels and restaurants, transport

and communications, finance and business services, and in the health sector. Only 20% of employees in construction report that their workplace uses flexible hours. Flexible hours are more common in public than in private sector workplaces.

Table 3.8 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by economic sector

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|---|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 15.0 | 40.2 | 23.3 | 42.1 |
| Construction | 6.8 | 19.2 | 3.0 | 11.7 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 7.5 | 43.1 | 18.3 | 61.6 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 3.8 | 52.7 | 22.7 | 82.1 |
| Transport & Communications | 17.2 | 49.9 | 29.5 | 41.4 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 27.8 | 49.6 | 33.2 | 60.6 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 19.7 | 58.5 | 58.3 | 48.4 |
| Education | 17.7 | 33.0 | 39.5 | 63.6 |
| Health | 9.1 | 51.8 | 59.9 | 75.2 |
| Other Services | 7.0 | 35.7 | 18.7 | 53.9 |
| Public Sector | 15.0 | 47.7 | 58.0 | 61.3 |
| Private Sector | 13.3 | 41.8 | 22.7 | 51.5 |
| All Sectors | 13.6 | 42.9 | 29.5 | 53.4 |

In general, the extent of job-sharing is relatively rare. Just under 30% of respondents work in establishments which offer job-sharing arrangements, and only 22% of those report that they are personally involved in job-sharing. The main exceptions to this are public administration and defence, and health, where almost 60% of employees work in establishments with job-sharing. Job-sharing is much more common in public (58%) than in private sector (23%) workplaces.

Over half of all employees report that part-time hours are used in their workplace, and 40% of these are personally involved in part-time working. Part-time hours are very widely available in hotels and restaurants and in health (both over 75%). They are least common in construction (12%). Part-time working is more common in public than in private sector workplaces.

Workers employed in the smallest establishment size-category, 1–4 employees, are most likely to report that their workplace uses home-working, and the vast majority of employees in those workplaces are personally involved. The use of flexible working hours appears to be most common in the largest size-category, 100 or more employees. However, the coverage, i.e. the proportion of workers in those workplaces that do use flexible hours within workplaces declines with workplace size, as might be expected.

Table 3.9 | Workplace practices in relation to location and hours of work by size of local establishment

| | Working from home | Flexible hours/ Flexitime | Job-sharing/ Week on-off | Part-time hours |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Used in workplace | | | | |
| 1-4 employees | 18.4 | 40.0 | 13.8 | 46.7 |
| 5-19 employees | 9.6 | 38.1 | 22.5 | 51.6 |
| 20-99 employees | 13.2 | 39.8 | 31.0 | 54.6 |
| >100 employees | 15.4 | 51.6 | 40.9 | 56.7 |
| All | 13.6 | 42.9 | 29.5 | 53.4 |
| Respondent personally involved | | | | |
| 1-4 employees | 89.9 | 72.3 | 53.8 | 64.5 |
| 5-19 employees | 71.5 | 55.5 | 21.2 | 46.5 |
| 20-99 employees | 57.7 | 58.0 | 24.5 | 36.8 |
| >100 employees | 45.7 | 51.4 | 15.9 | 30.1 |
| All | 61.6 | 56.9 | 22.2 | 40.3 |

Work-sharing is also more common in larger workplaces, and, again, its coverage declines with establishment size. There is some tendency for the proportion of workers responding that their workplace uses part-time working to increase with firm size.

3.2 Performance and rewards

In this section we look at the extent to which employees experience performance reviews, and the extent to which various forms of flexible reward systems are used, including performance-related pay, and profit sharing, share options or gain sharing. Table 3.10 shows that overall, just under half of all employees are employed in workplaces that conducted regular performance reviews or appraisals. Among those that are so employed, almost 87% are personally involved in the practice. There are no discernible gender differences in these patterns.

Table 3.10 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by gender

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| Men | 48.3 | 27.9 | 18.1 |
| Women | 49.0 | 19.7 | 13.1 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved - in workplace | | | |
| Men | 86.3 | 80.9 | 75.1 |
| Women | 87.1 | 77.7 | 70.0 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |
| Respondent personally involved - % of all employees | | | |
| Men | 41.7 | 22.6 | 13.6 |
| Women | 42.7 | 15.3 | 9.2 |
| All | 42.1 | 19.2 | 11.6 |

Less than a quarter of workers are employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. Men are more likely than women to encounter this practice (28% versus 20). Among those who are employed in workplaces that implement the practice, about 80% are personally involved, irrespective of gender.

Just under 16% of workers are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options, and men are somewhat more likely than women to report this practice. Among those who do work in workplaces that implement these reward systems, well over 70% are personally involved in the practice. This suggests that while the practice of offering profit or gain sharing is rare in Irish workplaces, it has broad coverage within the companies where it is implemented.

There is little variation by age group in the extent to which workers are employed in workplaces that use performance review, although those in the 40–54 year age group are somewhat more likely than other age groups to report this practice. Coverage of this practice within workplaces that do use it appears to be widespread.

There is no clear age-related pattern in the extent to which employees report that their workplaces use performance-related pay, although those aged between 25–54 years show a somewhat higher incidence than in either the younger or older age groups. The same pattern is evident in relation to profit and gain sharing.

Table 3.11 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by age-group

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| < 24 years of age | 45.7 | 21.9 | 11.8 |
| 25-39 years of age | 46.9 | 25.7 | 17.3 |
| 40-54 years of age | 49.7 | 24.5 | 17.4 |
| > 55 years of age | 46.0 | 20.1 | 12.3 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved – in workplace | | | |
| < 24 years of age | 81.4 | 75.9 | 52.1 |
| 25-39 years of age | 88.7 | 86.5 | 72.9 |
| 40-54 years of age | 87.3 | 75.6 | 84.4 |
| > 55 years of age | 85.3 | 72.2 | 69.5 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |
| Respondent personally involved – all employees | | | |
| < 24 years of age | 37.2 | 16.6 | 6.1 |
| 25-39 years of age | 41.6 | 22.2 | 12.6 |
| 40-54 years of age | 43.4 | 18.5 | 14.7 |
| > 55 years of age | 39.2 | 14.5 | 8.5 |
| All | 42.1 | 19.2 | 11.6 |

Experience of performance management varies by education. Table 3.12 shows that the higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the likelihood that an individual will be employed in a workplace that uses regular performance reviews or appraisals. Within workplaces that use these practices, coverage is widespread, and there is limited variation by education.

Those with higher levels of education are also more likely to be employed in workplaces that use performance-related pay, and there is a clear split between those with a Leaving Certificate, or higher education and those with lower qualifications. Within workplaces implementing this reward system, there is no clear relationship with education, although those with no qualifications are least likely to be personally involved in performance-related pay.

Table 3.12 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by age-group

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| No Qualification | 35.6 | 13.0 | 7.3 |
| Junior Certificate | 37.1 | 17.0 | 12.3 |
| Leaving Certificate | 51.1 | 26.3 | 17.1 |
| Third Level | 58.0 | 29.7 | 19.6 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved – in workplace | | | |
| No Qualification | 84.6 | 64.9 | 55.4 |
| Junior Certificate | 86.1 | 83.3 | 66.5 |
| Leaving Certificate | 85.2 | 79.3 | 72.1 |
| Third Level | 89.2 | 78.9 | 78.8 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |
| Respondent personally involved- all employees | | | |
| No Qualification | 30.1 | 8.4 | 4.0 |
| Junior Certificate | 31.9 | 14.2 | 8.2 |
| Leaving Certificate | 43.5 | 20.9 | 12.3 |
| Third Level | 51.7 | 23.4 | 15.4 |
| All | 42.1 | 19.2 | 11.6 |

Similarly, those with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options. Moreover, within workplaces implementing this reward system, coverage is positively related to educational attainment: about 55% of those with no qualifications are personally involved in profit or gain sharing, compared to almost 80% of those with third level education.

Full-time workers are more likely than part-timers to be employed in workplaces that use regular performance appraisal (Table 3.13). However, within workplaces that do implement the practice, part-timers are slightly more likely to be personally involved. Workers with permanent or open-ended contracts are more likely than temporary or casual workers to be employed in workplaces with performance appraisal, but there are no discernible differences in the coverage of this practice across different contract types.

Table 3.13 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by nature of contract

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| Part-time | 44.0 | 12.5 | 7.1 |
| Full-time | 49.7 | 26.6 | 17.7 |
| Permanent | 50.8 | 26.5 | 17.4 |
| Temporary | 37.4 | 11.4 | 7.5 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved | | | |
| Part-time | 90.4 | 87.3 | 64.4 |
| Full-time | 85.9 | 78.8 | 73.9 |
| Permanent | 86.9 | 80.1 | 76.3 |
| Temporary | 85.3 | 74.2 | 35.2 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |

Table 3.14 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by tenure

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| < 1 year | 44.0 | 19.5 | 8.2 |
| 1 to 5 years | 49.3 | 25.0 | 15.0 |
| > 5 years | 50.1 | 25.3 | 19.6 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved | | | |
| < 1 year | 82.2 | 74.3 | 57.7 |
| 1 to 5 years | 88.5 | 81.1 | 67.4 |
| > 5 years | 86.7 | 80.2 | 78.8 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |

Table 3.15 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by tenure

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| Union Member | 55.0 | 22.0 | 19.8 |
| Non-member | 44.7 | 25.3 | 13.4 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved | | | |
| Union Member | 85.0 | 77.9 | 70.8 |
| Non-member | 87.9 | 80.7 | 75.4 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |

Permanent and full-time workers are much more likely than either part-time or temporary workers to be employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. While coverage of this reward system is widespread within workplaces that use the system, temporary workers are less likely than their other colleagues to be personally involved.

Permanent and full-time workers are much more likely than either part-time or temporary workers to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain-sharing. Within workplaces that use these systems, temporary workers are a great deal less likely than permanent workers, and part timers somewhat less likely than full-timers, to be personally involved.

Employees who have worked for the same employer for more than one year are somewhat more likely than those with shorter tenure to report that their workplace uses regular performance appraisal, although within workplaces that do use this practice, coverage is widespread. This pattern also applies to the use and coverage of performance-related pay.

The longer the tenure with a current employer, the greater the likelihood that an employee will report that profit or gain sharing is used in his/her workplace. Within workplaces, coverage of this reward system also increases with tenure.

Union members are more likely than non-members to report that their workplaces implement regular performance appraisal, although the differences in the extent to which members versus non-members are personally involved in the practice is minimal. Non-members are more likely to be employed in workplaces that use performance related pay. Union members are more likely to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing, although within such workplaces, they are somewhat less likely than non-members to be personally involved in this reward system.

In general there is a clear divide between manual versus non-manual workers with respect to being employed in workplaces that perform regular performance appraisal: the non-manual are more likely to report that this practice is a feature of their workplaces. Higher professionals are more likely than any other social class to be employed in workplaces that carry out performance reviews. Within workplaces that perform such reviews, there is little variation by social class.

Almost half of all higher professionals and managers are employed in workplaces where performance-related pay is used, compared to less than a quarter of any other social class, and less than 7% of unskilled manual workers. However, within workplaces that do use this reward system, there is widespread coverage.

Table 3.16 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by social class

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 65.8 | 48.0 | 32.6 |
| Lower Professional | 56.5 | 25.0 | 14.5 |
| Other Non-manual | 55.7 | 25.4 | 17.4 |
| Skilled Manual | 36.6 | 22.0 | 12.5 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 42.5 | 18.2 | 13.7 |
| Unskilled Manual | 28.4 | 6.8 | 3.1 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved – in workplace | | | |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 90.1 | 85.2 | 82.9 |
| Lower Professional | 89.3 | 82.0 | 76.0 |
| Other Non-manual | 84.6 | 72.3 | 69.8 |
| Skilled Manual | 82.0 | 81.0 | 73.2 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 87.7 | 82.7 | 64.6 |
| Unskilled Manual | 87.3 | 81.9 | 73.3 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |
| Respondent personally involved – all employees | | | |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 59.3 | 40.9 | 27.0 |
| Lower Professional | 50.5 | 20.5 | 11.0 |
| Other Non-manual | 47.1 | 18.4 | 12.1 |
| Skilled Manual | 30.0 | 17.8 | 9.2 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 37.3 | 15.1 | 8.9 |
| Unskilled Manual | 24.8 | 5.6 | 2.3 |
| All | 42.1 | 19.2 | 11.6 |

Higher professionals and managers are also much more likely to be employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing (33% compared to an average of 16%). Again, however, coverage is widespread across social classes in those workplaces that use this reward system.

There is substantial variation by sector in the extent to which workers report that performance appraisal is implemented in their workplace. About one-third or less of workers in Construction, Hotels and Restaurants and Other Services encounter this practice, compared to about two-thirds in Finance and Business Services and Public Administration and Defence.

Table 3.17 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by sector

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 55.1 | 35.5 | 28.6 |
| Construction | 33.0 | 17.0 | 8.5 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 46.2 | 21.9 | 13.3 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 30.1 | 13.4 | 6.6 |
| Transport & Communications | 46.8 | 25.2 | 20.5 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 69.4 | 49.6 | 36.2 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 64.2 | 13.6 | 3.0 |
| Education | 41.5 | 10.4 | 0.4 |
| Health | 44.5 | 6.3 | 2.0 |
| Other Services | 31.7 | 15.9 | 5.3 |
| Public Sector | 49.5 | 9.9 | 1.7 |
| Private Sector | 48.4 | 27.4 | 19.0 |
| All Sectors | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |

Table 3.18 | Workplace practices in relation to performance and incentives by size of workplace

| | Performance Reviews | Performance -related pay | Profit sharing, share options, gain sharing |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | % | % | % |
| Used in Workplace | | | |
| 1-4 employees | 32.5 | 14.6 | 8.0 |
| 5-19 employees | 38.7 | 19.1 | 10.2 |
| 20-99 employees | 45.9 | 22.4 | 13.3 |
| >100 employees | 67.3 | 34.3 | 26.6 |
| All | 48.6 | 24.1 | 15.8 |
| Respondent personally involved | | | |
| 1-4 employees | 88.6 | 96.6 | 74.5 |
| 5-19 employees | 86.6 | 71.2 | 77.1 |
| 20-99 employees | 87.5 | 79.8 | 71.8 |
| >100 employees | 85.7 | 79.9 | 72.6 |
| All | 86.7 | 79.7 | 73.2 |

Almost half of those employed in Finance and Business Services report that performance-related pay is used in their workplace, substantially higher than in any other sector. Workers in Education and Health are least likely to report this reward system. Both of these sectors are mainly in the public sector, where the use of performance related pay is relatively rare.

Profit and gain sharing is largely confined to a few sectors, mainly Finance and Business Services, Manufacturing, and Transport and Communications. Less than 2% of workers in the public sector are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing, compared to 19% in the private sector.

Employees in larger establishments are more likely to be employed in workplaces that perform regular performance appraisal. One third of employees in establishments in the 1-4 size category report this practice, compared to two-thirds of those in the largest size category (100 employees or more). The use of performance-related pay also increases with establishment size, as does profit and gain sharing.

3.3 Respect, dignity and equal opportunity

Respondents were also asked about formal policies relating to respect and dignity at work and on equal opportunities in the workplace. Overall about two-thirds of all employees report that there is a formal explicit policy on respect and dignity in their workplace. Three quarters of all workers are employed in workplaces where there is an explicit policy on equal opportunities in the workplace.

There are no gender differences in regard to formal workplace policies on either respect and dignity or equality. Workers in the 25-54 year age groups are somewhat more likely than younger workers to be employed in workplaces with explicit policies on respect and equality.

While full-time workers are slightly more likely to report that there are formal policies on respect, dignity and equality in their workplaces, these differences are unlikely to be statistically significant. Permanent workers are more likely than temporary workers to be employed in workplaces with explicit policies on these issues.

Table 3.19 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by gender and age group

| | Policy on respect and dignity at work | Policy on equal opportunities at work |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Men | 66.7 | 74.5 |
| Women | 69.3 | 75.8 |
| < 24 years of age | 58.2 | 70.3 |
| 25-39 years of age | 70.1 | 74.4 |
| 40-54 years of age | 71.7 | 79.0 |
| > 55 years of age | 66.7 | 75.6 |
| All | 67.9 | 75.1 |

Table 3.20 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by nature of contract

| | Policy on respect and dignity at work | Policy on equal opportunities at work |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Part-time | 64.7 | 73.0 |
| Full-time | 68.7 | 75.6 |
| Permanent | 69.9 | 76.6 |
| Temporary | 57.8 | 67.3 |
| All | 67.9 | 75.1 |

Table 3.21 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by social class

| | Policy on respect and dignity at work | Policy on equal opportunities at work |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 80.4 | 83.9 |
| Lower Professional | 82.0 | 83.4 |
| Other Non-manual | 68.8 | 78.0 |
| Skilled Manual | 55.4 | 65.4 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 64.8 | 72.9 |
| Unskilled Manual | 54.3 | 62.0 |
| All | 67.9 | 75.1 |

Table 3.22 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by sector

| | Policy on respect and dignity at work | Policy on equal opportunities at work |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 67.2 | 75.6 |
| Construction | 53.5 | 57.5 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 61.4 | 73.4 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 47.2 | 58.7 |
| Transport & Communications | 75.0 | 80.6 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 73.8 | 78.8 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 88.8 | 92.9 |
| Education | 81.0 | 85.5 |
| Health | 78.5 | 81.5 |
| Other Services | 50.6 | 64.8 |
| Public Sector | 87.3 | 89.9 |
| Private Sector | 63.3 | 71.6 |
| All | 67.9 | 75.1 |

Table 3.23 Workplace policies in relation to respect, dignity and equality by establishment size

| | Policy on respect and dignity at work | Policy on equal opportunities at work |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| 1-4 employees | 41.4 | 55.9 |
| 5-19 employees | 56.7 | 66.1 |
| 20-99 employees | 71.0 | 77.8 |
| > 100 employees | 85.9 | 87.8 |
| All | 67.9 | 75.1 |

Professionals and managers are much more likely to report that their workplace has explicit policies in relation to respect, dignity and equal opportunity than other social classes. Unskilled manual workers are least likely to report either of these policies in the workplace.

Almost 90% of workers in public administration and defence report that there is an explicit policy on respect and dignity in the workplace, and 92% report a policy on equality. Sectors in which these policies are less widespread include construction, hotels and restaurants, and other services.

Explicit policies on respect, dignity and equal opportunity, are much more frequent in the public than in the private sector.

Larger establishments are much more likely to implement explicit policies relating to both respect and equality in the workplace. About 41% of workers in establishments with 1-4 employees report that there is a formal policy on respect and dignity, compared to 86% of employees in the largest size category (100 or more employees). Similarly, about 55% of those employed in the smallest size category, compared to 88% of those in the largest, are employed in workplaces that have adopted a formal explicit policy on equal opportunity in the workplace.

3.4 Summary

The survey asked a series of questions relating to the extent to which various workplace practices are used in Irish workplaces. There is some variation in the extent to which non-traditional working arrangements are implemented:

- About 14% of employees report that working from home is used in their workplace, but only about 8% of all employees are personally involved in working from home.
- Almost 43% of employees work in workplaces that use flexible working hours or flexitime, and almost one-quarter of all employees are personally involved in such flexible hours.
- Just under 30% of employees work in workplaces that use job-sharing and about 6% of all employees are personally involved in job-sharing. Women are much more likely than men to be involved.
- Well over half of all employees report that their workplaces use part-time hours and over one-fifth of all employees are personally involved in part-time working. About 35% of women are involved in part-time working, compared to 9% of men.

The survey also investigated work-practices relating to performance monitoring and rewards.

- Overall, just under half of all employees are employed in workplaces that conducted regular performance reviews or appraisals and over 40% of all employees are personally involved in the practice.
- Less than a quarter of workers are employed in workplaces that use performance-related pay and less than 20% of all employees are involved themselves.
- Just under 16% of workers are employed in workplaces that offer profit or gain sharing or share options. While the practice of offering profit or gain sharing is rare in Irish workplaces, it has broad coverage within the companies where it is implemented.

Overall about two-thirds of all employees report that there is a formal explicit policy on respect and dignity in their workplace. Three-quarters of all workers are employed in workplaces where there is an explicit policy on equal opportunities in the workplace. Policies in relation to respect and dignity as well as equality are more commonly found in the public than the private sector.

Chapter 4

Trade Union Involvement and Commitment

In this chapter we focus on the issue of trade union presence and involvement. The chapter provides some context on the rate and distribution of trade union involvement among Irish employees, to allow us to understand the effects of trade union membership discussed elsewhere in the report. In this chapter, we examine trade union membership by personal and job characteristics. We also examine workers' evaluations of their trade unions, the importance they attach to them and their commitment to their unions.

Table 4.1 Trade union presence and membership

| | TU/Staff Assoc in Workplace | Member of TU/ Staff Association |
|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Yes | 52.5 | 37.7 |
| No | 47.5 | 62.3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Table 4.2 Trade union presence and membership by organisational characteristics

| | TU/SA in Workplace ¹ | TU/SA Member |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Public | 90.7 | 68.8 |
| Private ² | 43.6 | 30.4 |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary | 59.2 | 40.0 |
| Construction | 43.1 | 33.7 |
| Wholesale Retail | 38.9 | 28.8 |
| Hotel Restaurants | 23.8 | 13.0 |
| Transport, & Communication | 63.3 | 50.3 |
| Finance & Other Business Services | 41.1 | 27.6 |
| Public Administration & Defence | 90.5 | 72.1 |
| Education | 73.8 | 47.8 |
| Health | 67.6 | 52.8 |
| Other Services | 24.8 | 16.5 |
| Size of Local Unit | | |
| 1-4 | 17.9 | 14.0 |
| 5-19 | 35.8 | 26.3 |
| 20-99 | 58.4 | 40.9 |
| 100+ | 75.0 | 54.7 |
| All | 52.5 | 37.7 |

¹ Respondents who said there was no union/SA in workplace but who previously said that their employer recognised a union/SA were recoded to missing.

² Private includes commercial semi-state organisations.

4.1 Introduction

Trade union membership is used as an explanatory variable throughout the report for a number of reasons. First, there is an expectation that union presence will influence working conditions and pay within organisations. For example, there is Irish research which shows that union members enjoy a wage premium compared to non-union members (Callan and Reilly, 1993, Walsh and Whelan, 1976). Second, there is a relationship between modes of employee involvement (specifically partnership) and trade union presence in the work-places. Third, trade unions where they are present, are likely to play a significant role in the negotiation of change in the workplace.

4.2 Trade union membership

Respondents to the survey were asked separately if they were a member of a union or staff association, if there was a trade union or staff association in their workplace and if their employer recognised a trade union. A number of respondents said that there was no union in their workplace even though their employer recognised a union, these have been recoded to missing. Table 4.1 outlines the extent of union presence and membership. Over half of employees say there is a union in their workplace and 38% of all employees are members of a union.¹

Both union presence and union density vary widely with organisational characteristics (Table 4.2). The most decisive factor is public/private sector location. Over 90% of public sector employees have a union in their workplace compared to only 44% of those in the private sector. Union density is similarly divergent across these two sectors: 69% of public sector workers are union members compared to less than a third (30%) of private sector workers. These differences are also reflected in the industrial sector figures. Union presence and membership is highest in Public Administration/Defence and in the public sector dominated health and education sectors. Union membership is also high in the transport and communications sector. Union membership is lowest in Financial Services (28%) and in Other Services (17%).

Table 4.3 Trade union membership by worker characteristics

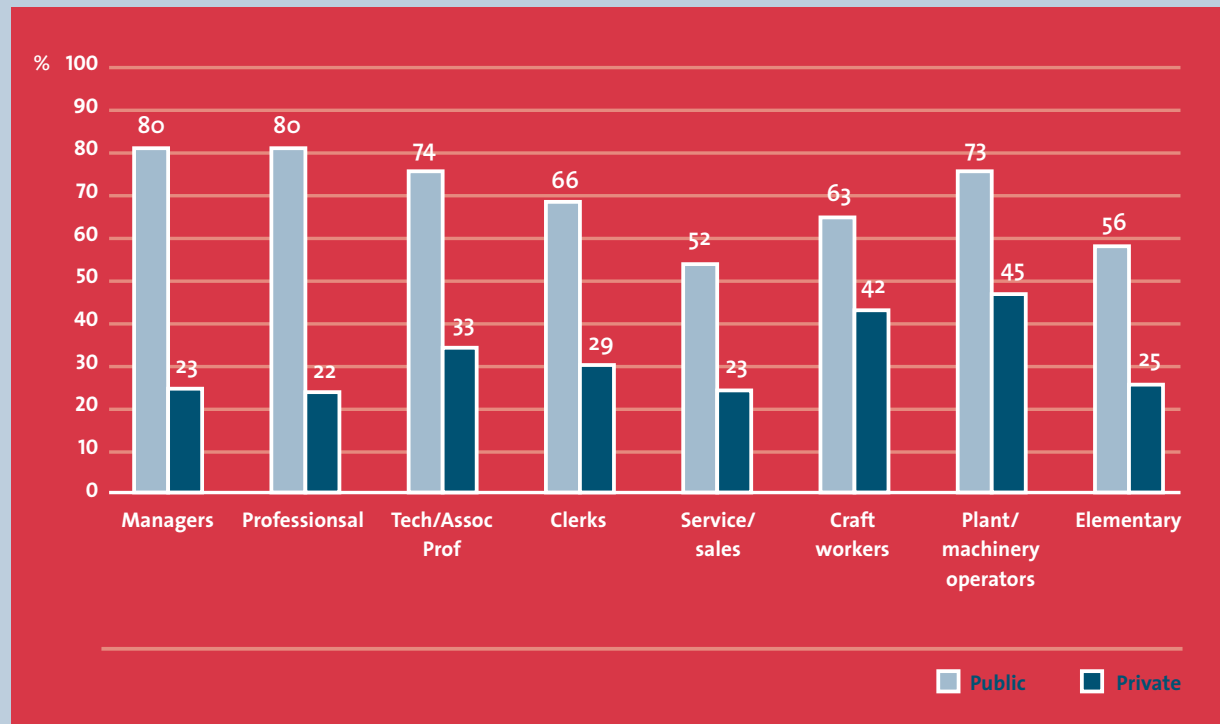
| | % |
|-------------------------|------|
| Men | 38.0 |
| Women | 37.4 |
| Under 25 years | 27.8 |
| 25-39 years | 41.9 |
| 40-54 years | 39.5 |
| 55 years & over | 35.5 |
| No qualifications | 27.2 |
| Junior/Inter cert level | 40.4 |
| Leaving Certificate | 37.1 |
| Third Level or Equiv. | 42.5 |
| Tenure | |
| Less than 1 year | 17.0 |
| 1-5 years | 31.9 |
| Over 5 years | 49.3 |
| Part-time | 29.2 |
| Full-time | 39.6 |
| Permanent | 40.8 |
| Temporary/casual | 22.1 |

Unsurprisingly, the presence of unions and union density increases with establishment size. Only 14% of workers in very small firms are union members while membership rises to 55% in establishments with over 100 employees.

Union membership also varies strongly with individual level characteristics, including job characteristics. Union membership is lowest among young workers. However, workers in the oldest age category (55 plus) also have below average union membership rates. Union membership is low among those with no educational qualifications, but otherwise there is little variation by educational level.

¹ Union membership is included in the weight construction (see chapter 2). Therefore these membership figures reflect those found in the Quarterly National Household Survey.

Figure 4.1 Union membership by occupation across public and private sectors



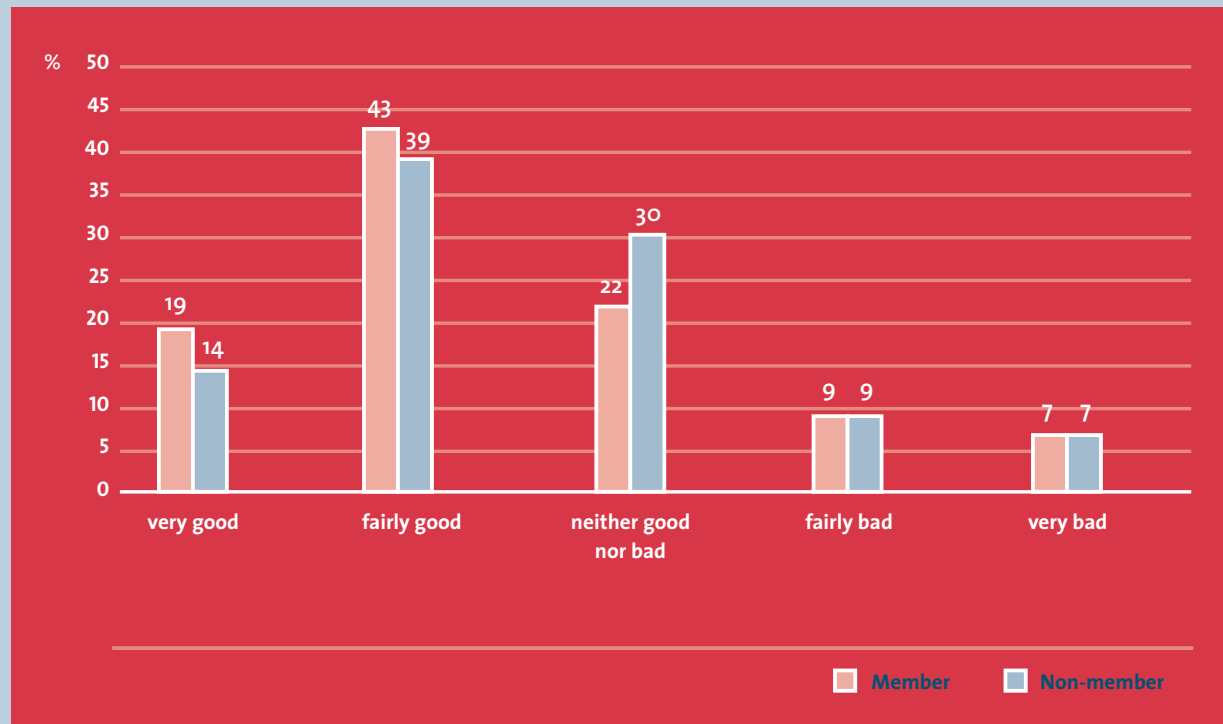
Membership increases with job tenure and is significantly lower among those on non-permanent contracts. Part-time workers are less likely to be union members than full-time workers, however despite this difference membership does not vary by sex. Perhaps women's over-representation in the public sector compensates for any reduction in female membership due to part-time working.

The relationship between occupational position and union membership is strongly influenced by the public versus private sector location (see Figure 4.1). For example, within the public sector managers/senior officials and professionals have the highest rates of union membership (80%) while service workers have the lowest unionisation rate (52%). However within the private sector union membership is lowest among managerial and professional workers.

4.3 Union effectiveness and union commitment

All employees who said that there was a union/staff association in their workplace were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the union in representing their interests. It should be noted that the non-union members in this analysis are not therefore representative of all those who are not in unions, but only of non-members in unionised work places. In general, trade unions are rated positively by both members and non-members alike (Figure 4.2). Over 60% of members (62%) feel that the union is very or fairly good at representing their interests. A further 22% of members give neutral answers and only 16% give a negative rating.

Figure 4.2 Effectiveness of union in representing your interests



Union members were asked a further series of questions about their commitment to the union.

- I feel a sense of pride at being part of the Union or Staff Association
- The record of my Union or Staff Association is a good example of what dedicated people can get done
- There is a lot to be gained from joining the Union or Staff Association
- My loyalty is to my work and not to my Union or Staff Association
- As long as I'm doing the kind of work that I enjoy, it does not matter if I belong to a Union or Staff Association
- I could work just as well in another organisation where there was no Union or Staff Association, as long as the type of work was similar.

The responses show that union members are moderately committed to their unions/staff associations: 75% feel there is a lot to gain from membership, 70% are proud of their involvement and a similar proportion feel the union record is good, and 54% disagree that it does not matter if they belong to a union as long as they are doing work they enjoy. However, for the great majority of union members (78%) loyalty to the union does not supersede loyalty to their work, and more than half (57%) of union members agree that they could work just as well in a non-unionised organisation.

Trade union members were asked both what they believed the priorities of the union to be and what they thought they should be. A central point to emerge was that employees expect their unions to be proactive in co-operating with management to better the performance of their organisations. They want unions to participate actively in decisions about the future of the organisation. These issues were cited as a priority by between 85% and 90% of employees surveyed. The survey also found that employees have a very positive attitude to partnership arrangements.

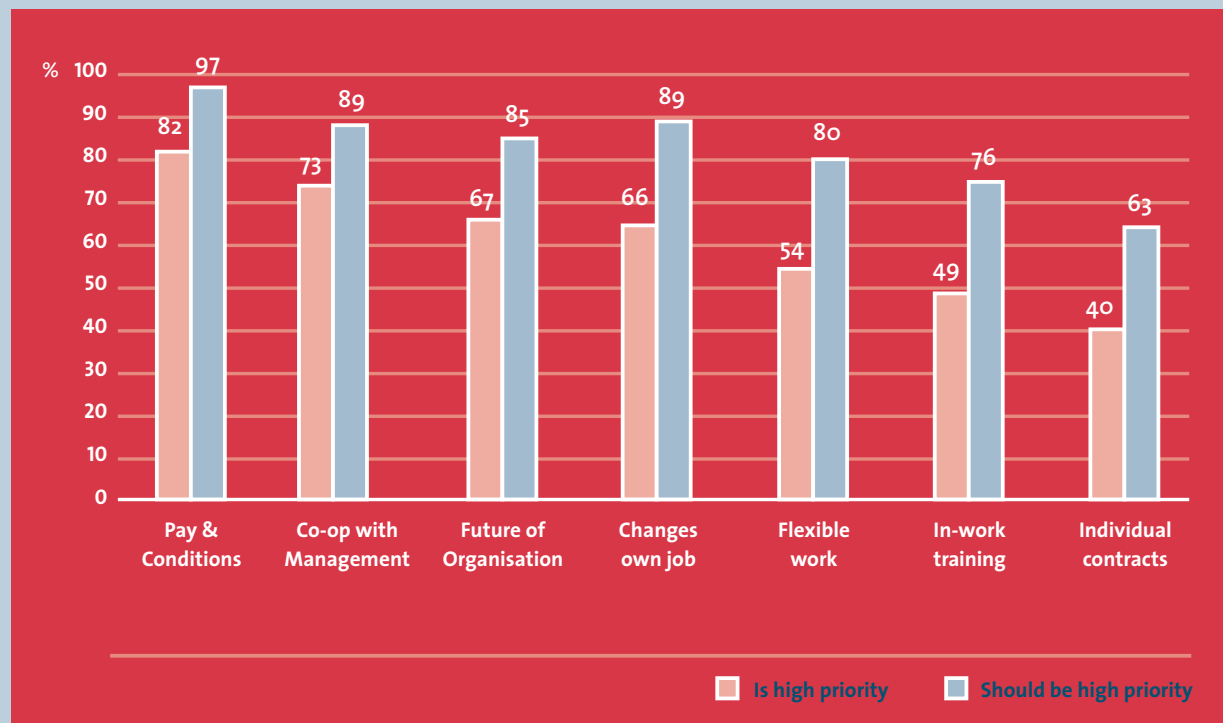
Finally, there is a clear belief that union's main priority is pay and conditions and that the membership are in agreement with the priority placed on this item. However, members put a higher priority on flexible working conditions and negotiating in work-related training than they believe their union do (these two items show the widest gap between "is a high priority" and "should be high priority"). Members are also more likely to mention matters of individual interest/concern as a priority. In interpreting these findings it should be noted that the majority of union members say all seven items should be a high priority so they have not ranked the importance of the items listed.

Figure 4.3 Commitment to union/staff association



Note: Trade union members only

Figure 4.4 Priorities of trade union/staff association



4.4 Summary

The analysis in this chapter has shown that trade union membership is highly stratified by organisational characteristics, particularly industrial sector and public/private ownership. Union density also varies significantly with the size of the organisation. Individual level factors, such as job characteristics, and in particular contract status, part-time working and tenure are highly influential. Age, sex and education are less influential.

In general union members are satisfied with their unions performance and are moderately committed to their unions. However, there are clear limits to this commitment, most members feel loyalty to their work rather than their union and over half of union members say they could work just as well in a non-unionised workplace.

Employees expect their unions to be proactive in co-operating with management to better the performance of their organisations. They want unions to participate actively in decisions about the future of the organisation. These issues were cited as a priority by between 85% and 90% of employees surveyed. The survey also found that employees have a very positive attitude to partnership arrangements.

Finally, there is a belief among members that unions share their sense that pay and conditions are a high priority. However, members believe that flexible working conditions and training should be a higher priority for their unions than they currently are.

A woman with glasses is pointing at a laptop screen. A man is looking at the screen. The background is a blurred office setting. The entire image has a red tint.

Chapter 5

Training

Training is widely regarded as an essential contribution to the economic well being of individuals, organisations and societies in order to respond to current changes in the organisation and technology of production and service delivery and to counter the socially disruptive effects of increased labour market flexibility. The extent of training activity in Ireland appears to have increased somewhat in recent years (Fox, 2003) and Ireland appears to be close to the European average with respect to the incidence of training of those at work (O'Connell, 1999; Fox, 2003).

This chapter examines participation in training. It identifies the personal and organisational correlates of training.

Overall 48% of employees report that they participated in training provided by their present employer, over the last two years. Table 5.1 shows the variation in training incidence by personal characteristics, and reveals a familiar pattern. Men are slightly more likely to participate in training than women. Workers aged 25-39 are most likely to receive training, and training incidence declines substantially among those aged 55 years and over. Training participation is closely linked to educational attainment: only 35% of those with no qualifications received training, compared to almost 60% of those with third level qualifications. Training incidence is also strongly related to social class: 63% of higher professionals received training, compared to 35% of semi-skilled manual workers, and 28% of unskilled manual workers.

The terms of employment are also important: full-time workers receive more training than part-timers, permanent workers receive more training than those on temporary contracts. Tenure is also important, with all those who have been in a job for more than a year receiving more training than those who have less than a year of job tenure. Those with five or more years with the current employer show a slightly lower training incidence than those with 1-5 years tenure, but this difference is not statistically significant. Finally, union members are substantially more likely to have participated in training than non-members.

Table 5.2 shows the organisational correlates of training. Training is much more common in the public sector: 60% of workers in the public sector, compared with 45% of those in the private sector participated in employer sponsored training in the previous 2 years. Training incidence is highest in Public Administration and Defence (65%), followed by Transport and Communications (56%). Training incidence was lowest in Other Services (38%). Training is also strongly influenced by establishment size: those working in establishments with 100 or more employees were twice as likely to have participated in training than those in establishments with 1-4 employees (61% versus 30% respectively).

Employee involvement is also related to training incidence. Workers in organisations where partnership institutions or participation arrangements are present are more likely to participate in training. Similarly, those working in organisations characterised by high degrees of consultation in relation to decisions affecting workers' jobs are more likely to participate in training.

One of the key distinctions in the economics of training is that between "general" versus "specific" training. General training is defined in terms of its transferability: general training may be of use to both current and subsequent employers, whereas specific training is of use only to the current employer. In the human capital approach employers are less willing to pay for general training, since if they do so, they must recoup the cost by paying a wage below marginal productivity after training, and in a competitive labour market the workers would leave to earn their full marginal product with another employer. This gives rise to the poaching problem whereby non-training employers can pay higher rates to workers who have received general training from a previous employer.

In our survey respondents who indicated that they had participated in employer education or training provided by their employer over the past 2 years were asked:

Do you feel that the skills or knowledge which you have acquired in this education or training would be of any use to you in getting a job with another employer or was the education or training specific to your current job only?

Almost 80% of all education and training undertaken by employees with employer sponsorship was general in nature, considered by respondents to be "Of use in getting a job with another employer". Only about 20% of training was considered to be specific, "of use only in current job." This pattern, whereby most training is general in nature is similar to that found in other countries (see, for example, Booth and Bryan (2002) in the United Kingdom; Pischke (2000) in Germany; and Loewenstein and Spletzer (1999) in the US).

Table 5.1 Participation in employer sponsored training in past two years, by individual characteristics

| | trained |
|-------------------------|---------|
| | % |
| Men | 49.4 |
| Women | 46.1 |
| < 24 years of age | 49.2 |
| 25-39 years of age | 50.3 |
| 40-54 years of age | 46.9 |
| > 55 years of age | 37.5 |
| No Qualification | 34.2 |
| Junior Certificate | 38.0 |
| Leaving Certificate | 49.3 |
| Third Level | 59.4 |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 63.4 |
| Lower Professional | 61.2 |
| Other Non-manual | 50.8 |
| Skilled Manual | 48.8 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 34.9 |
| Unskilled Manual | 27.9 |
| Part-time | 39.6 |
| Full-time | 49.8 |
| Permanent | 50.0 |
| Temporary | 37.0 |
| < 1 year in the job | 35.8 |
| 1-5 years in the job | 51.1 |
| 5+ years in the job | 49.5 |
| Union Member | 58.9 |
| Non-union | 41.2 |
| All | 47.9 |

Table 5.2 Participation in employer sponsored training in past two years, by organisational characteristics

| | trained |
|---|---------|
| | % |
| Public Sector | 60.0 |
| Private Sector | 45.1 |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 45.5 |
| Construction | 49.4 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 42.1 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 32.8 |
| Transport & Communications | 55.6 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 52.5 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 64.8 |
| Education | 47.1 |
| Health | 53.8 |
| Other Services | 38.2 |
| 1-4 employees | 30.1 |
| 5-19 employees | 42.7 |
| 20-99 employees | 47.7 |
| >100 employees | 60.6 |
| Partnership institutions | 63.5 |
| No partnership | 43.2 |
| Participation arrangements | 62.7 |
| No participation | 39.2 |
| High Consultation | 55.7 |
| Low Consultation | 44.3 |
| All | 47.9 |

Table 5.3 Proportions of trainees receiving general versus specific training by personal characteristics

| | General training | Of use only in current job |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Men | 77.6 | 22.4 |
| Women | 81.5 | 18.5 |
| < 24 years of age | 79.5 | 20.5 |
| 25-39 years of age | 82.0 | 18.0 |
| 40-54 years of age | 77.2 | 22.8 |
| > 55 years of age | 72.9 | 27.1 |
| No Qualification | 84.6 | 15.4 |
| Junior Certificate | 78.8 | 21.2 |
| Leaving Certificate | 78.1 | 21.9 |
| Third Level | 80.7 | 19.3 |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 87.6 | 12.4 |
| Lower Professional | 73.2 | 26.8 |
| Other Non-manual | 82.0 | 18.0 |
| Skilled Manual | 80.0 | 20.0 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 74.6 | 25.4 |
| Unskilled Manual | 76.6 | 23.4 |
| Part-time | 78.1 | 21.9 |
| Full-time | 79.6 | 20.4 |
| Permanent | 79.4 | 20.6 |
| Temporary | 79.3 | 20.7 |
| <1 year in the job | 80.2 | 19.8 |
| 1-5 years in the job | 82.9 | 17.1 |
| 5+ years in the job | 76.9 | 23.1 |
| Union Member | 75.8 | 24.2 |
| Non-union | 82.5 | 17.5 |
| All | 79.4 | 20.6 |

Table 5.4 Proportions of trainees receiving general versus specific training by organisational characteristics

| | General training | Of use only in current job |
|---|------------------|----------------------------|
| | % | % |
| Public Sector | 70.5 | 29.5 |
| Private Sector | 82.2 | 17.8 |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 81.1 | 18.9 |
| Construction | 87.7 | 12.3 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 79.5 | 20.5 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 93.3 | 6.7 |
| Transport & Communications | 74.3 | 25.7 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 84.7 | 15.3 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 66.1 | 33.9 |
| Education | 71.5 | 28.5 |
| Health | 76.4 | 23.6 |
| Other Services | 76.1 | 23.9 |
| 1-4 employees | 76.9 | 23.1 |
| 5-19 employees | 78.9 | 21.1 |
| 20-99 employees | 80.7 | 19.3 |
| >100 employees | 79.0 | 21.0 |
| Partnership institutions | 76.4 | 23.6 |
| No partnership | 80.8 | 19.2 |
| Participation arrangements | 80.2 | 19.8 |
| No participation | 78.5 | 21.5 |
| High Consultation | 80.5 | 19.5 |
| Low Consultation | 78.8 | 21.2 |
| All | 79.4 | 20.6 |

Women are somewhat more likely than men to report that their training was general in nature, and older workers are less likely than their younger colleagues to participate in general training: for example, 73% of those aged 55 or over who received training in the past 2 years participated in general training, compared to 80% of those aged less than 25. Almost 85% of those with no qualifications who received training reported that they received general training, compared to 80% or less of those with

higher levels of educational attainment. Higher Professionals and Managers are more likely than manual workers to report that their training was general. However, while 88% of Higher Professionals and Managers who were trained considered the training to be general, only 73% of Lower Professionals considered their training to be general, compared to 82% of Other Non-Manual workers and 80% of Skilled Manual Workers.

There were no significant differences in the nature of training between full- and part-time workers, nor between employees on temporary versus permanent contracts, although as noted in Table 5.1 above, full-timers and permanent workers are much more likely to receive training than part-timers and temporary workers. Similarly, union members are much more likely than non-members to receive training, but among those trained, union members are less likely to receive general training than non-members.

Public sector workers are more likely than those in the private sector to have participated in training in the past two years (Table 5.2) and a substantially greater proportion of training in the public sector is specific to the current employer (30%) than is the case in the private sector (18%). There are also marked differences in the nature of training by economic sector. In Hotels and Restaurants 93% of trainees considered their training to be general. Over 80% of workers in Manufacturing, Construction, Wholesale and Retail Trade and in Finance and Business Services who received training reported that it was general training. The share of training that was of use only in the current job was higher in Public Administration and Defence (34%) Transport and Communications (26%) and in Health and Other Services (24%).

The balance between general versus specific training does not vary much by size of organisation. Nor does this vary by the presence of partnership institutions, participation arrangements, or extent of consultation.

Table 5.5 Proportion of those who received training who considered that the training has been of use in carrying out the current job

| | % |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Men | 94.1 |
| Women | 93.6 |
| No Qualification | 90.7 |
| Junior Certificate | 90.0 |
| Leaving Certificate | 94.1 |
| Third Level | 96.2 |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 95.8 |
| Lower Professional | 93.6 |
| Other Non-manual | 95.9 |
| Skilled Manual | 93.5 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 90.1 |
| Unskilled Manual | 90.9 |
| All | 93.9 |

The vast majority of workers (94%) who have received education or training in the past two years consider that it has been of use to them in carrying out their current job. There are no appreciable differences by age or gender in this pattern. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to consider that the training has been useful than those with lower levels of qualification. Similarly, professionals, other non-manual, and skilled manual workers are more likely than semi- or unskilled manual workers to consider that their training was useful in the current job. There were no significant differences by organisational characteristics in the extent to which trained workers consider that the training has been of use in the current job.

Chapter 6

Communications In The Workplace

This chapter examines current levels of consultation, information and communication in the workplace. It outlines the type of information available in the workplace and the extent to which workers' views are considered and acted upon.

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter we turn our attention to several aspects of communications and consultation within the workplace. We begin in Section 6.2 by considering employees' perceptions of their single most useful source of information on issues concerning the workplace. In Section 6.3 we move on to discuss the perceived regularity or otherwise of information flow from management on a range of work-related topics. These include information provided on issues such as the level of competition faced by the employer; plans to change company structures, introduce technology, change the range of products or services provided; budgets etc. Section 6.4 focuses on the employee's perception of the regularity of consultation by management prior to decisions being taken in areas which affect their own jobs. Finally, Section 6.5 provides a brief summary of our main findings.

6.2 Most useful source of information

In the course of the survey respondents were asked to select from 4 pre-coded options the most useful source of information concerning their workplace. The results are presented in Table 6.1.

From the bottom row of the table one can see that, in aggregate terms, almost 70% of employees cite Management/Supervisors as their most useful source of information. A further 20% (as many as 1 in 5 workers) record "the grapevine" as their most important source of workplace information. The residual are fairly equally split as between the Union/Staff Association (6%) and miscellaneous "Other" sources (5%).

The detail of the table illustrates some variations according to the range of classificatory variables considered throughout the analysis. One can see, for example, from Section A of the table that substantially higher than average percentages of employees in three sectors, viz. Public Administration/Defence (13%); Education (11%) and Transport/Storage/Communications (10%) cite the Trade Union or Staff Association as the single most useful source of information in contrast to, for example, Management/Supervisors. All three sectors are largely characterised as being generally (though not exclusively) related to the public sector. This trend is confirmed in Section B of the table which clearly illustrates the relative importance of Trade Union/Staff Association channels among Public Sector employees at the expense of more management-oriented sources. One can see that only 58% of Public Sector employees cite management as being among the most important source of information. This compares with 72% among their private sector counterparts.

Size of establishment (numbers employed in the local unit) would appear to be related to perceived relative importance of the main source of information. In broad terms, as size of local unit increases the perceived relative importance of management sources seems to decline somewhat while the percentages citing both Trade Union and informal (grapevine) sources increase. It is not at all surprising that this should be so. In smaller enterprises contact and communication with proprietor managers may simply be a consequence of size.

Table 6.2 provides details on variations in perceived relative importance of information sources within the workplace according to characteristics of the employee, in contrast to characteristics of their workplace (as represented in Table 6.1). In general, the story told by these figures in Table 6.2 suggests that full-time/part-time work status; nature of tenure (permanent or temporary) and gender are not related to perceived importance of information sources within the workplace.

Table 6.1 Employees' perceptions of the most useful source of information concerning their workplace classified according to characteristics of the workplace

| | Most Useful Source of Information | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| | Management/ Supervisors | Union/Staff Association | The Grapevine | Other | |
| | % | % | % | % | |
| A. Economic Sector | | | | | |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary | 70.6 | 4.9 | 19.9 | 4.6 | 100.0 |
| Construction | 73.7 | 5.4 | 17.4 | 3.5 | 100.0 |
| Wholesale/Retail | 71.9 | 4.5 | 20.4 | 3.2 | 100.0 |
| Hotels, Restaurants etc | 72.7 | 1.8 | 21.7 | 3.8 | 100.0 |
| Transport Storage Communications | 61.3 | 9.5 | 25.1 | 4.2 | 100.0 |
| Finance & Oth Business Services | 72.6 | 2.7 | 19.5 | 5.2 | 100.0 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 61.4 | 13.2 | 17.9 | 7.5 | 100.0 |
| Education | 56.6 | 11.0 | 26.0 | 6.4 | 100.0 |
| Health | 65.5 | 7.9 | 22.7 | 4.0 | 100.0 |
| Other Services | 74.8 | 1.7 | 16.6 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| B. Public / Private Sector | | | | | |
| Public Sector | 58.2 | 13.4 | 22.1 | 6.3 | 100.0 |
| Private Sector/Comm Semi-State | 71.5 | 4.0 | 20.2 | 4.3 | 100.0 |
| C. Size of Local Unit | | | | | |
| 1-4 employees | 75.3 | 2.2 | 15.9 | 6.5 | 100.0 |
| 5-19 employees | 73.4 | 2.9 | 18.7 | 5.0 | 100.0 |
| 20-99 employees | 63.2 | 8.2 | 23.5 | 5.1 | 100.0 |
| 100+ employees | 68.5 | 7.3 | 21.1 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 69.2 | 5.7 | 20.4 | 4.7 | 100.0 |

Sections D and E indicate that age of employee and their length of tenure in current job are to some degree related to the importance assigned to the four sources of information. It would appear that the importance of formal management sources wanes slightly (but not substantially) with age while "Other" sources assume an increasing importance as the employee gets older. These miscellaneous "Other" sources include informal contacts outside the workplace; the media; industry groups

or representative bodies etc. Similarly, the importance of formal management sources declines somewhat with length of tenure in current job. This is paralleled by a commensurate increase in the relative importance of the Trade Union or Staff Association with length of service. This trend could, perhaps, reflect a tendency for employees to join the Trade Union or Staff Association after an initial settling-in period in their job.

Table 6.2 Employees' perceptions of the most useful source of information concerning their workplace classified according to characteristics of the employee

| | Most Useful Source of Information | | | | Total |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------|
| | Management/ Supervisors | Union/Staff Association | The Grapevine | Other | |
| | % | % | % | % | |
| A. Full-Time/Part-Time | | | | | |
| Part-time (<30 hrs/wk) | 67.9 | 5.5 | 22.0 | 4.7 | 100.0 |
| Full-time (30+ hrs/wk) | 69.2 | 5.9 | 20.3 | 4.7 | 100.0 |
| B. Nature of Contract | | | | | |
| Permanent | 68.8 | 6.3 | 20.1 | 4.8 | 100.0 |
| Temporary/Casual | 69.5 | 3.3 | 23.3 | 3.9 | 100.0 |
| C. Gender | | | | | |
| Male | 69.3 | 6.1 | 20.0 | 4.6 | 100.0 |
| Female | 68.5 | 5.5 | 21.2 | 4.8 | 100.0 |
| D. Age | | | | | |
| < 25 years | 73.1 | 5.2 | 19.5 | 2.2 | 100.0 |
| 25-39 years | 69.0 | 5.9 | 20.7 | 4.4 | 100.0 |
| 40-54 years | 66.6 | 6.1 | 21.8 | 5.5 | 100.0 |
| 55 years+ | 67.1 | 5.6 | 18.5 | 8.8 | 100.0 |
| E. Tenure in Current Job | | | | | |
| < 1 year | 74.7 | 3.0 | 18.9 | 3.4 | 100.0 |
| 1-5 years | 71.8 | 4.4 | 19.9 | 3.9 | 100.0 |
| 5+ years | 65.3 | 7.7 | 21.2 | 5.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 69.2 | 5.7 | 20.4 | 4.7 | 100.0 |

6.3 Provision of information by management

In the course of the survey private sector employees (including those engaged in the commercial semi-state sector) were asked to record the regularity with which management provided them with information on 6 different aspects of their work as follows:

- The level of competition faced by their employer
- Plans to develop new products or services
- Plans to introduce new technology
- Plan to re-organise the company e.g. mergers; joint ventures; staff reductions etc.
- Plans to change work practices e.g. working in teams etc.
- Information on sales, profit, market share etc.

Given differences in the issues facing public and private sector organisations the areas presented to public sector employees varied somewhat from those presented to private sector respondents. Accordingly, public sector employees were asked to record the regularity with which they received information on the following:

- The budget of the organisation
- Plans to improve the service their organisation provides
- Plans to introduce new technology
- Plans to re-organise how public services are delivered
- Plans to change work practices e.g. working in teams.

All respondents (public and private sector) were asked to indicate whether they received information on each of the areas in question on a regular basis, occasional basis or hardly ever.¹

To present a summary measure of how regularly management informed its employees we assigned a score of “2” to each item if the respondent said he/she was informed on a “regular basis”; a score of “1” if he/she was informed “occasionally” and a score of “0” if he/she recorded that management “hardly ever” provided the information in question. The average score was then calculated for each respondent across the six relevant items of information for private sector respondents and across the five items of information for public sector employees. This means that each respondent had a potential average “information score” ranging from 2 in a situation where information on all relevant items was provided by management on a “regular basis” to 0 in situations where information on all items was “hardly ever” provided. The results are summarised in Table 6.3 below.

The authors point out that this is a simplified way of presenting the data. Nonetheless, it does provide a summary index whose construction is extremely transparent. We clearly do not claim that the set of pre-coded items presented to respondents was comprehensive or exhaustive of the full range of information which could be provided to employees by management. It does, however, cover the main areas which could potentially impact on the shape of the workplace of the future in the extent to which the items included address changes in strategy; the competitive environment within which the company operates; the general financial performance of the company and the way in which work is organised.

¹ See Qs 43a and 43b of Questionnaire, Appendix A.

Table 6.3 Mean scores on summary measures of information provided by management to public and private sector employees

| | Private Sector | Public Sector |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Mean | Mean |
| A. Economic Sector | | |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Construction | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Wholesale/Retail | 0.9 | - |
| Hotels, Restaurants etc | 0.6 | - |
| Transport Storage Communications | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| Finance & Other Business Services | 1.1 | 1.5 |
| Public Admin & Defence | - | 1.2 |
| Education | 0.7 | 1.0 |
| Health | 0.6 | 0.9 |
| Other Services | 0.7 | 1.1 |
| B. Size of Local Unit | | |
| 1-4 employees | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| 5-19 employees | 0.8 | 1.1 |
| 20-99 employee | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| 100+ employees | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Total | 0.9 | 1.0 |

From the bottom line of Table 6.3 one can see that, in aggregate, public and private sector employees would appear to be equally informed by management with both groups having a mean score of 1.

Section A of the table provides details on variations in perceived levels of information from management according to industrial sector. The figures show, for example, that private sector employees involved in construction; hotel/restaurants etc.; education; health and other services indicate lower perceived levels of management information than their counterparts in other sectors. There would appear to be less overall variation among public sector employees with the exception of those in the construction sector where information levels are perceived to be particularly low.

Section B of the table would suggest that perceived levels of available management information do not seem to be substantially impacted upon by type of firm.

From Table 6.4 it would appear that full-time and permanent employees in both private and public sector organisations feel better informed by management than their part-time or temporary/-casual counterparts (Sections A and B of Table 6.4).

One can clearly see from the table that there is quite a strong relationship between receipt of information from management and level of educational attainment and also social class for both public and private sector employees. In the private sector the average for higher professional workers is 3.3 times that of unskilled manual workers. The comparable ratio in the public sector is 2.5. Similarly, the ratio

Table 6.4 Mean score on summary measures of information provided by management to public and private sector employees classified according to characteristics of the employee

| | Private Sector | Public Sector |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Mean | Mean |
| A. Full-Time/Part-Time | | |
| Part-time (<30 hrs/wk) | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| Full-time (30+ hrs/wk) | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| B. Nature of Contract | | |
| Permanent | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Temporary/Casual | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| C. Tenure in Current Job | | |
| < 1 year | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| 1-5 years | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| 5+years | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| D. Educational Attainment | | |
| Primary or less | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Junior/Inter. Certificate | 0.7 | 0.8 |
| Leaving Certificate | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Third level or equivalent | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| E. Social Class | | |
| Higher Professional, Managers | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Lower Prof, Managers, Proprietors | 1.2 | 1.1 |
| Other Non-Manual | 0.9 | 1.1 |
| Skilled Manual | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Semi-Skilled manual | 0.7 | 0.8 |
| Unskilled Manual | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| Total | 0.9 | 1.0 |

between those with third level qualifications and those with primary level or less is 1.9 times in the private and 2.5 times in the public sector. These trends with social class and level of attainment may, of course, reflect the level at which an employee is working in his/her organisation. They may also, at least to some degree, reflect their ability to assimilate and access information from management. In other words, the information may

actually be provided to all workers but those with lower levels of educational attainment or from lower social class categories may not be aware of its relevance or indeed may not want to access it. One can, of course, only surmise as to whether or not this is, in fact, the case.

An alternative way of considering trends in levels of information provided by management would be to focus on the responses to each of the individual pre-coded items presented to respondents in the course of the survey. Table 6.5 presents summary information on the percentage of employees who record that they “hardly ever” receive any information from management in the area in question. The reader is reminded that the respondent was given the three options of recording that he/she received the information on a:

- Regular basis
- Occasionally
- Hardly ever

The figures in Table 6.5 relate only to the percentages who recorded “hardly ever” and links this to personal characteristics.

Section A provided details in respect of the private sector while Section B provides information on the public sector. From the bottom row of Section A one can see that 36-42% of private sector employees record that they “hardly ever” receive information in areas such as the introduction of new products/ services; new technology; level of competition faced by the company and changes in work practices. At least three of these four issues have a very directly impact on the day-to-day work of respondents. Information on the level of competition faced by the employer is slightly different from the other three items in the sense that it does not directly impact on the day-to-day operational procedures of the work. The fact that well over one-third of all private sector employees feel that they are “hardly ever” given information on areas such as product innovation; new technology or work practices is somewhat disconcerting.

Table 6.5 | Percentage of private and public sector employees who record

| | SECTION A: | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Level of competition | Introducing new products/ services |
| B. Size of Local Unit | | |
| 1-4 employees | 45.0 | 39.2 |
| 5-19 employees | 44.8 | 40.0 |
| 20-99 employees | 44.7 | 41.7 |
| 100+ employees | 31.8 | 26.1 |
| C. Full-Time/Part-Time | | |
| Part-time (<30 hrs/wk) | 51.8 | 43.6 |
| Full-time (30+ hrs/wk) | 39.1 | 35.1 |
| D. Nature of Contract | | |
| Permanent | 37.5 | 33.8 |
| Temporary/Casual | 60.9 | 51.2 |
| E. Tenure in Current Job | | |
| < 1 year | 55.5 | 46.5 |
| 1-<5 years | 43.1 | 37.3 |
| 5+years | 34.0 | 31.4 |
| F. Union Membership | | |
| Member | 34.2 | 31.1 |
| Non-Member | 44.1 | 38.9 |
| H. Age | | |
| < 25 years | 54.0 | 47.0 |
| 25-39 years | 38.7 | 34.0 |
| 40-54 years | 34.8 | 31.0 |
| 55 years+ | 38.3 | 37.8 |
| I. Educational Attainment | | |
| Primary or less | 58.2 | 54.4 |
| Junior/Inter. Cert. | 45.9 | 45.5 |
| Leaving Certificate | 39.2 | 33.9 |
| Third level or equivalent | 30.9 | 23.4 |
| J. Social Class | | |
| Higher Professional, Managers | 19.6 | 18.7 |
| Lower Prof, Managers, Proprietors | 27.8 | 21.1 |
| Other Non-Manual | 39.8 | 34.1 |
| Skilled Manual | 48.4 | 41.5 |
| Semi-Skilled manual | 45.8 | 41.4 |
| Unskilled Manual | 59.7 | 61.2 |
| TOTAL | 41.1 | 36.5 |

that they “hardly ever” receive information from management on a range of items regarding their company or organisation

| PRIVATE SECTOR | | | | SECTION B: PUBLIC SECTOR | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Information on:</i> | | | | <i>Information on:</i> | | | | |
| Introducing new technology | Reorganise company | Changes in work practices | Sales profits etc. | Budget of organisation | Improve services provided | Introducing new technology | Reorganise service delivery | Changes in work practices |
| 43.9 | 67.6 | 51.6 | 62.7 | 51.0 | 35.5 | 39.1 | 46.8 | 44.0 |
| 44.7 | 64.9 | 47.9 | 58.6 | 38.2 | 27.2 | 28.5 | 33.4 | 29.6 |
| 43.2 | 59.6 | 44.9 | 57.6 | 49.3 | 25.2 | 28.1 | 35.6 | 33.3 |
| 28.4 | 45.1 | 29.5 | 35.7 | 41.3 | 22.9 | 28.2 | 35.4 | 31.3 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 48.9 | 68.8 | 51.3 | 67.1 | 49.0 | 32.3 | 34.3 | 42.6 | 38.5 |
| 37.7 | 55.9 | 40.5 | 49.5 | 42.6 | 23.2 | 27.3 | 33.6 | 30.6 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 36.5 | 55.1 | 39.3 | 48.6 | 40.5 | 21.9 | 25.5 | 32.7 | 30.9 |
| 55.6 | 73.4 | 58.1 | 72.8 | 61.5 | 42.9 | 45.8 | 51.1 | 40.9 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 51.9 | 70.0 | 51.8 | 62.6 | 53.1 | 32.9 | 43.3 | 47.7 | 43.7 |
| 42.4 | 59.6 | 43.0 | 56.2 | 48.2 | 28.4 | 31.6 | 39.1 | 31.8 |
| 32.2 | 51.8 | 37.7 | 44.9 | 41.3 | 23.6 | 26.0 | 32.6 | 30.8 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 34.2 | 51.9 | 34.4 | 45.4 | 40.8 | 19.8 | 24.1 | 30.5 | 27.9 |
| 41.8 | 60.6 | 45.7 | 55.4 | 52.1 | 38.8 | 40.6 | 48.2 | 43.6 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 51.0 | 68.8 | 51.0 | 63.2 | 49.5 | 21.1 | 30.0 | 40.8 | 32.3 |
| 38.0 | 57.1 | 39.1 | 49.1 | 44.3 | 27.7 | 32.6 | 36.8 | 33.3 |
| 33.1 | 50.2 | 37.9 | 47.5 | 44.5 | 23.4 | 25.3 | 33.3 | 31.2 |
| 36.3 | 58.3 | 47.8 | 53.7 | 39.6 | 30.5 | 31.7 | 40.4 | 37.2 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 58.1 | 70.9 | 54.7 | 72.5 | 70.7 | 66.0 | 69.0 | 69.5 | 54.5 |
| 51.9 | 66.5 | 51.6 | 62.9 | 51.6 | 32.3 | 40.5 | 49.8 | 44.5 |
| 35.6 | 56.3 | 39.0 | 49.4 | 42.0 | 21.8 | 25.6 | 32.2 | 28.9 |
| 26.8 | 46.0 | 34.3 | 37.2 | 38.4 | 18.4 | 20.5 | 28.4 | 28.5 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 18.3 | 32.1 | 22.4 | 24.0 | 18.6 | 14.0 | 15.4 | 19.2 | 27.8 |
| 18.1 | 40.4 | 33.3 | 34.6 | 37.9 | 17.0 | 20.3 | 31.3 | 23.0 |
| 32.6 | 55.5 | 41.0 | 47.1 | 45.1 | 24.6 | 27.5 | 33.4 | 35.6 |
| 45.7 | 66.9 | 47.8 | 66.4 | 66.1 | 49.6 | 47.9 | 49.5 | 31.7 |
| 50.7 | 67.0 | 47.3 | 57.5 | 51.7 | 36.1 | 44.0 | 50.5 | 45.1 |
| 68.4 | 75.4 | 56.2 | 80.8 | 76.9 | 55.1 | 61.9 | 62.6 | 51.5 |
| 39.5 | 58.0 | 42.2 | 52.4 | 44.3 | 25.7 | 29.1 | 36.0 | 32.7 |

Table 6.6 Employees classified according to their perceived experience of consultation about decision making in their company or organisation

| | Almost Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Almost Never | Total |
|---|---------------|-------|-----------|--------|--------------|-------|
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Consulted before decisions which affect your work? | 26.8 | 21.1 | 24.2 | 14.6 | 13.3 | 100.0 |
| If changes occur, how often given the reason why? | 35.9 | 20.6 | 21.8 | 12.4 | 9.3 | 100.0 |
| If consulted before decisions, is attention paid to your views? | 31.4 | 18.3 | 27.7 | 12.5 | 10.2 | 100.0 |

One can also see from the figures that even higher percentages of private sector employees record having hardly ever received information on sales or profits and also on company restructuring or re-organisation (52% and 58% respectively).

The detail of the table suggests that a reasonably consistent relationship holds for all 6 items of information with each of the main classificatory variables in the table. For example, one can see that provision of information² by management increases with size of establishment; it is much higher among full-time than part-time staff; among permanent than temporary staff and it increases with length of tenure, age, level of educational attainment and social class.

Comparable figures for public sector employees are outlined in Section B of the table. These suggest that somewhat, lower percentages of employees record that they are “hardly ever” provided with the relevant information by management. One can see that just over one-quarter record that they hardly ever receive information on improving the quality of services. Approximately, one-third (29–33%) record “hardly ever” receiving information on the

² From the table the provision of information can be taken as the obverse of the percentage recording that they ‘hardly ever’ receive the information in question.

introduction of new technology; re-organising of service delivery or changes to workplace practices. The area with the highest percentage of employees recording that they hardly ever receive information from management relates to issues of budget for the organisation in question. Although the percentages of persons who “hardly ever” receive the information in question are generally lower than among their private sector counterparts the relationship between perceived receipt of information and all of the classificatory variables contained in the table is entirely consistent with the trends displayed by private sector employees.

6.4 Consultations on decisions and change in the workplace

The final aspect of communications considered relates to the degree of prior consultation with employees before management decisions which affect their work are taken and the extent to which employees’ views or concerns are listened to within the workplace.

A total of three questions was asked of respondents, viz.

- How often are you and your colleagues consulted before decisions are taken that affect your work?
- If changes in your work occur, how often are you given the reason why?

- If you are consulted before decisions are made is any attention paid to your views (see Q44 of Questionnaire in Appendix A).

Respondents were asked to record whether or not each happened “almost always”; “often”; “sometimes”; “rarely” or “almost never”.

Table 6.6 provides information on the aggregate percentages of respondents falling into each of the response categories.

The figures show 28% of employees record that they are rarely or almost never consulted before decisions are taken which affect their work. Almost 22% feel that if changes occur in their work they are rarely or almost never given the reason for the changes. Just under one-quarter of respondents feel that if they are consulted prior to work-related decisions being made, attention is rarely or almost never paid to their views.

To summarise the results across the relevant questions a score was assigned to each of the response outcomes as follows:

| Response Outcome | Score |
|------------------|-------|
| Almost always | 4 |
| Often | 3 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| Rarely | 1 |
| Almost never | 0 |

The average score for each respondent across the three questions was then calculated. By definition this average score ran from a maximum of “4” for an employee who felt that he/she was “almost always” consulted by management to “0” for those who felt that they were “almost never” consulted prior to decisions which affected their job. The mean scores are presented in Table 6.7.

From the table one can see that the aggregate average score is 2.5. From Section A of the table one can see that there is some slight variation by industrial sector. Perceived consultation is lowest in the Hotel & Restaurant and also Transport, Storage, Communications sectors (2.3) rising to a maximum (2.7) in

Table 6.7 Average scores on summary measure of prior consultation

| | Mean Score |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| A. Industrial Sector | |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary | 2.4 |
| Construction | 2.5 |
| Wholesale/Retail | 2.4 |
| Hotels, Restaurants etc | 2.3 |
| Transport Storage Communications | 2.3 |
| Finance & Other Business Services | 2.6 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 2.4 |
| Education | 2.7 |
| Health | 2.5 |
| Other Services | 2.6 |
| B. Public/Private Sector | |
| Public | 2.5 |
| Private | 2.5 |
| C. Size of Local Unit | |
| 1-4 employees | 2.7 |
| 5-19 employees | 2.5 |
| 20-99 employees | 2.4 |
| 100+ employees | 2.4 |
| D. Tenure Status | |
| Permanent | 2.5 |
| Temporary/Casual | 2.2 |
| E. Gender | |
| Male | 2.5 |
| Female | 2.4 |
| F. Union Membership | |
| Yes | 2.4 |
| No | 2.5 |
| G. Educational Attainment | |
| Primary or less | 2.1 |
| Junior/Inter. Cert | 2.3 |
| Leaving Certificate | 2.5 |
| Third level or equivalent | 2.7 |
| H. Social Class | |
| Higher Professional, Managers | 3.0 |
| Lower Prof, Managers, Proprietors | 2.7 |
| Other Non-Manual | 2.5 |
| Skilled Manual | 2.4 |
| Semi-Skilled manual | 2.2 |
| Unskilled Manual | 2.2 |
| Total | 2.5 |

Table 6.8 Results of multiple regression in estimating simultaneous effects on the level of information provided in the public and private sectors.

| | Private Sector ¹ | Public Sector ² |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| (Constant) | 0.754 ** | 0.870 |
| Construction | -- | -0.239 |
| Wholesale Retail | -- | -0.006 |
| Hotel Restaurants | -- | -0.173 |
| Transport & Communications | -- | 0.027 |
| Finance & Other Business Services | -- | -0.047 |
| Public Admin & Defence | -- | -0.060 |
| Education | -0.094 | -0.331 ** |
| Health | -0.131 | -0.308 ** |
| Other Services | 0.000 | -0.266 ** |
| 5-19 employees | -0.047 | -0.027 |
| 20-99 employees | -0.129 | -0.040 |
| 100+ employees | -0.044 | 0.109 |
| (Ref Cat: 1-4 Employees) | | |
| Full-time | 0.045 | 0.063 |
| Male | 0.005 | 0.043 |
| 1-5 years in job | 0.090 | 0.064 |
| 5+ years in job | 0.128 ** | 0.132 |
| (Ref Cat: Less than 1 year in job) | | |
| Junior Cert/Inter | | |
| Leaving Certificate | 0.278 ** | 0.001 |
| Third Level | 0.433 ** | 0.097 * |
| (Ref Cat: None/Primary) | 0.429 ** | 0.151 ** |
| Lower Professional & Managerial | -0.167 ** | -0.106 * |
| Other Non-manual | -0.275 ** | -0.242 ** |
| Skilled Manual | -0.587 ** | -0.495 ** |
| Semi-skilled Manual | -0.413 ** | -0.455 ** |
| Unskilled Manual | -0.504 ** | -0.594 ** |
| (Ref Cat: Higher Professional) | | |
| Number of jobs held last 3 years | 0.003 | 0.003 |
| Permanent | 0.161 ** | 0.147 ** |
| Union Member | 0.003 | 0.091 ** |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.140 | 0.200 |

1. Reference category in Public Sector is Public Administration and Defence. Public Sector equation is restricted to those employed in Public Administration and Defence; Education; Health; and Other Services.

2. Reference category in Private Sector is Manufacturing and Primary Industry

* Significant at 90% confidence level. ** Significant at 95% confidence level.

the Education sector. One can see that there is very little variation in perceived consultation links in terms of public/private sector, gender or Trade Union membership. It is interesting, however, to note that although the differences between Union and non-union members are very small the perceived level of consultation prior to change is marginally lower among union members than non-members.

The table shows that perceived levels of prior consultation are differential according to size of local unit, tenure status and, most importantly, social class and level of educational attainment. The latter two classificatory variables clearly provide the greatest level of discrimination in terms of perceived levels of prior consultation. The higher the level of educational attainment and social class the higher is the perceived level of consultation.

6.5 Simultaneous effects of characteristics on information and consultation

The tables discussed above allow a one-dimensional consideration and interpretation of the factors influencing perceived levels of information flows or levels of communications within the workplace. Each table shows how perceived information flows or consultation is related to each variable or characteristic in isolation. As noted in our discussion of some of these tables it is possible that both information flows and levels of consultation may be subject to parallel or simultaneous influences of a number of factors. Some of this simultaneity is not immediately apparent in our discussion of the unidimensional tables.

To address this issue we present the results of a multiple regression approach to information flows in the workplace in Table 6.8 above. The dependent variable is the summary measure of information provided to workers as discussed in Table 6.3 above. The results in Table 6.8 assess how this measure varies relative to the simultaneous effects of the firm and individual-level variables outlined in the table. Results are presented separately for workers in the public and private sectors.

The most important message from Table 6.8 is that when one controls for the individual-level characteristics of education and social class the influence of other variables (both firm-level and industrial level) cease to be statistically significant. The over-riding importance of both education and class is clear from the table. One can see that sectoral employment effects in Education, Health and “Other Services” remain significant for private sector employees (though not for those in the public sector). Being a permanent (rather than temporary) staff employee also has a statistically significant effect.

Table 6.9 Results of multiple regression in estimating simultaneous effects on the extent of consultation in the workplace

| | Equation 1 | Equation 2 |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| (Constant) | 2.529 ** | 2.908 ** |
| Construction | 0.012 | 0.064 |
| Wholesale Retail | -0.048 | 0.023 |
| Hotel Restaurants | -0.202 ** | -0.094 |
| Transport & Communications | -0.194 ** | -.227 ** |
| Finance & Other Business Services | 0.062 | -.167 ** |
| Pub Admin/ Defence | -0.058 | -.101 |
| Education | 0.260 ** | .111 |
| Health | -0.055 | -0.065 |
| Other Services | 0.016 | -.103 |
| (Ref Cat: Manufacturing & Primary) | | |
| 5-19 employees | | -.156 ** |
| 20-99 employees | | -0.306 ** |
| 100+ employees | | -0.306 ** |
| (Ref Cat: 1-4 employees) | | |
| Full-time | | -0.0446 |
| Male | | 0.0634 |
| Public Sector | | -0.0437 |
| 1-5 years in job | | -0.0713 |
| 5+ years in job | | 0.0111 |
| (Ref Cat: Less 1 year in job) | | |
| Junior Cert/Inter | | .106 |
| Leaving Certificate. | | .226 ** |
| Third level | | .250 ** |
| (Ref Cat None/Primary) | | |
| Lower Professional & Managerial | | -0.225 ** |
| Other Non-manual | | -0.431 ** |
| Skilled Manual | | -0.579 ** |
| Semi-skilled Manual | | -0.695 ** |
| Unskilled Manual | | -0.686 ** |
| (Ref Cat: Higher Professional) | | |
| Number of jobs held last 3 years | | -0.008 |
| Permanent | | 0.225 ** |
| Union Member | | -0.121 ** |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.013 | 0.071 |

** Significant at 95% confidence level.

In Table 6.9 we present a similar analysis of influences on our summary measure of consultation in the workplace. The first equation provides results based only on sector. One can see that significant effects are apparent in the Hotel/Restaurant, Transport/Construction and Education sectors. When one includes individual-level characteristics in the analysis, however, one can see that, as was the case with information flows discussed above, the overriding effect is education and social class. Other variables to remain statistically significant in this more expansive equation include number of employees, permanency of tenure and Union membership. It is notable that the sign on the Union membership variable is negative. This implies that, even when controlling for other firm and individual level characteristics members of Trade Unions have a slightly higher propensity than non-Union members to record a relative lack of consultation in the workplace.

6.6 Summary

In this chapter we considered various aspects of communications in the workplace. This ranged from sources of information, to levels of consultation prior to decisions being taken, to feedback on the reasons for decisions which had been taken.

In general we found that 70% of employees considered management the single most important source of information in the workplace, with 20% of employees citing “the grapevine” and 6% “the union”.

Public sector employees clearly saw the union as a relatively more important source of information than did their private sector counterparts. A total of 58% of public sector compared with 71% of private sector employees cited management as the single most useful source of workplace information. In contrast 13% of public sector workers cited the union or staff association compared with only 4% of private sector employees.

In general, surprisingly high percentages of employees seemed to feel that they were “hardly ever” provided with information in key areas such as product/service innovation; introduction of new technology; levels of competition; changes to work practices. As many as 36-42% of private sector employees felt that they “hardly ever” receive information in such areas. Even higher percentages of private sector employees recorded having “hardly ever” received information on areas such as sales; profits or re-organisation of the company. Provision of information by management to public sector employees was perceived to be somewhat better than among private sector workers. In general, the extent to which information was provided improved with size of establishment, with full-time (in contrast to part-time) status; length of tenure; age; education and social class.

In terms of prior consultation on major decisions regarding their work only 25% recorded that they were “almost always” consulted; 21% said they were consulted “sometimes” and as many as 27% of workers felt they were consulted “rarely” or “almost never”. We found relatively little variation in levels of consultation according to the standard set of classificatory variables used throughout the analysis.

As was the case with prior consultations we also found that surprisingly high levels of employees (22%) felt that they were “rarely” or “almost never” provided with feedback on why decisions were made. Finally, the same proportion of employees indicated that even when they were consulted prior to decisions being made, little attention was paid to the views expressed.

In general, when we considered a summary score of perceived levels of consultation we found that it was most strongly correlated with social class, level of educational attainment and tenure status within the workplace.

We saw in Section 6.5, however, that when we attempted to model the simultaneous effects of both firm and individual-level characteristics on perceived levels of information flows and consultation in the workplace that the main picture to emerge was the overwhelming influence of social class and level of educational attainment. Although a few other variables such as permanency of status and size of firm remain significant when the full set of individual-level variables is included in the analysis, the over-riding importance of education and social class was clearly apparent from the analysis.

One could clearly question the accuracy of the rather negative views held by relatively high proportions of employees regarding issues such as prior consultation, feedback and whether or not attention was paid to any views expressed. In many respects the factual accuracy of the views expressed is not of critical relevance. The important fact is that such high proportions of employees feel themselves to be excluded from the consultations or decision making within the workplace. This will clearly have important HR and other impacts on the shaping of the workplace in the future.

Chapter 7

Forms of Involvement: Partnership and Participation

In this chapter we examine the extent to which various aspects of partnership and participation are to be found in the workplace. We make a fundamental distinction between two types of worker involvement in the workplace. Partnership refers to collective organisation in which employee representatives work with management. Participation refers to modes of direct involvement and consultation over the way in which work is organised and carried out.

We operationalised the concept of **partnership** in the survey in the following question:

Some workplaces establish committees on which unions work with management to promote partnership and co-operation, or to improve the organisation's performance. Do union officers or shop stewards represent members on any such committees in your workplace?

The question was asked only of those who reported their employer recognised a trade union or staff association. Respondents who answered “yes” to the question on partnership committees were then asked whether they personally participated in such committees and a series of questions about their opinions as to what effects these types of bodies had on various aspects of their job and the workplace.

We operationalised the concept of **participation**, or direct involvement, in the survey in the following question:

In some workplaces employees are given a direct say in deciding the way in which work is actually carried out. This is done through what might be known as work teams; problem solving groups; project groups; quality circles; continuous improvement programmes or groups. Are there any arrangements in your workplace to involve staff directly in the way in which the work is carried out on a day to day basis?

Respondents who answered “yes” to this question were then asked whether they personally participated in such committees and a similar set of questions about their opinions as to what effects these types of bodies had on various aspects of their job and the workplace.

Overall, 23% of all employees responded that partnership committees exist at their workplaces. Among those that answered in the affirmative, about one-quarter of employees are personally involved in partnership committees.

About 38% of all employees responded that there are arrangements for direct participation in their workplaces. Within workplaces that implement arrangements for direct participation, the extent of employee involvement is high: over 70% of employees in such workplaces reported that they are personally involved in such participation groups.

7.1 The extent of partnership and participation

About 55% or more of respondents working in Public Administration and Defence responded that partnership arrangements existed in their workplaces. Partnership arrangements were also relatively common in Transport and Communications (37%), Education (31%), Health (32%). Outside these predominantly public sector industries formal partnership was much less prevalent particularly among employees in Hotels and Restaurants, Construction and “Other Services”.

Among those who reported the presence of partnership arrangements, about one-quarter were personally involved in partnership committees, although 43% of those in Other Services, and 37% in Education, were so involved. Less than 8% of employees in the small minority of workplaces in the Construction where partnership arrangements are found are personally involved in partnership committees.

Participation arrangements are most common in Education (52%), and in Public Administration and Defence (47%), and least common in Hotels and Restaurants (21%). However, within workplaces where participation structures are found, the extent to which employees are involved is high and widespread. In Construction 94% of employees in such workplaces report that they personally participate in such arrangements. The lowest incidence of personal involvement occurs in Other Services.

Table 7.1 | Extent of partnership and participation in workplaces

| | Presence of Arrangement | Personally Involved |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Partnership | 23.0 | 26.5 |
| Participation | 37.5 | 71.2 |

Table 7.2a | Incidence of partnership arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by sector

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|---|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 27.7 | 27.1 |
| Construction | 8.2 | 7.6 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 13.5 | 24.6 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 3.9 | 30.0 |
| Transport & Communications | 36.8 | 28.0 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 19.7 | 17.8 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 54.6 | 28.0 |
| Education | 30.5 | 36.8 |
| Health | 31.6 | 26.0 |
| Other Services | 7.5 | 42.9 |
| All Sectors | 23.0 | 26.4 |

Table 7.2b | Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by sector

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|---|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 44.2 | 64.5 |
| Construction | 26.0 | 94.3 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 28.1 | 70.5 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 20.8 | 78.9 |
| Transport & Communications | 42.1 | 70.9 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 43.8 | 67.9 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 47.1 | 71.5 |
| Education | 51.8 | 77.7 |
| Health | 37.6 | 70.6 |
| Other Services | 24.8 | 65.2 |
| All Sectors | 37.5 | 71.2 |

Table 7.3a Incidence of partnership arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by public/private sector

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|----------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Public Sector | 45.4 | 29.9 |
| Private Sector | 17.7 | 24.5 |
| All | 23.0 | 26.4 |

Table 7.3b Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by public/private sector

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|----------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Public Sector | 46.8 | 76.1 |
| Private Sector | 35.3 | 69.7 |
| All | 37.5 | 71.2 |

Employees in the public sector (45%) are much more likely than those in the private sector (18%) to report the presence of partnership arrangements, and there are similar proportions reporting that they do not know of such arrangements in the two sectors. Within establishments where partnership arrangements exist, a somewhat greater proportion is personally involved in the public sector.

Employees in the public sector (47%) are also more likely than those in the private sector (35%) to encounter arrangements for direct participation in their workplaces. Within establishments where participation structures are found, a somewhat greater proportion is personally involved in the public sector (76% versus 70%).

The incidence of partnership arrangements increases with establishment size. About 7% of workers in the smallest size workplace, with 1-4 employees, report the presence of partnership arrangements, compared to 39% of employees in the largest size

category, with 100 or more employees. Within workplaces with partnership committees, the frequency of personal involvement falls with firm size. This is presumably due to “economies of organisational scale”: the ratio of places on partnership committees to total staff numbers is likely to fall with establishment size, so the likelihood that any randomly selected individual employee will report participation in such a committee should also decline.

The incidence of participation structures also increases with establishment size. About 23% of workers in the smallest size workplace, with 1-4 employees, report the presence of participation structures, compared to 49% of employees in the largest size category, with 100 or more employees. Within workplaces with participation arrangements, the frequency of personal involvement falls with firm size, although not to the same extent as we find in relation to involvement in partnership, above.

Table 7.4a Incidence of partnership arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by establishment size

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|-----------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| 1-4 employees | 6.7 | 32.6 |
| 5-19 employees | 13.1 | 34.2 |
| 20-99 employees | 22.5 | 24.6 |
| >100 employees | 39.3 | 25.1 |
| All | 23.0 | 26.4 |

Table 7.4b Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by establishment size

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|-----------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| 1-4 employees | 23.3 | 76.0 |
| 5-19 employees | 33.9 | 77.4 |
| 20-99 employees | 35.2 | 74.6 |
| >100 employees | 49.3 | 63.9 |
| All | 37.5 | 71.2 |

Table 7.5a Incidence of partnership arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by social class

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|-------------------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 25.2 | 29.8 |
| Lower Professional | 34.3 | 36.0 |
| Other Non-manual | 25.2 | 18.5 |
| Skilled Manual | 18.7 | 29.1 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 18.8 | 26.0 |
| Unskilled Manual | 11.9 | 18.5 |
| All | 23.0 | 26.4 |

Professionals and Managers and Other Non-manual workers are much more likely than manual workers to report the presence of partnership arrangements in their workplaces. On the other hand, Semi-skilled and Unskilled Manual workers are more likely to report that they do not know of such arrangements. Within workplaces with partnership arrangements, Lower Professionals are more likely to be personally involved in partnership committees than any other social class.

Professionals and Managers are much more likely than either Other Non-manual, or all manual workers, to report the presence of participation structures in their workplaces. Semi-skilled and Unskilled Manual workers are more likely to report that they do not know of such arrangements. Personal involvement is highest among Professionals and Managers, but there are high levels of involvement also among Skilled and Unskilled manual workers.

Full-time workers are more likely than part-timers to report that their workplace has partnership arrangements, although a greater proportion of part-timers do not know. Full-time workers are also more likely to be involved in partnership committees. A similar pattern is evident with respect to permanent employees, who are more likely than temporary employees to report partnership arrangements and to participate in committees.

Full-time workers are more likely than part-timers to report the presence of participation structures in their workplaces. Similarly, permanent workers are also more likely than temporary workers to encounter these forms of direct involvement. Within workplaces where participation arrangements are found, permanent and full time workers are more likely than either temporary or part-time workers to be personally involved.

Table 7.5b Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by social class

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|-------------------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Higher Prof. & Managers | 57.8 | 78.5 |
| Lower Professional | 51.4 | 79.7 |
| Other Non-manual | 38.0 | 68.7 |
| Skilled Manual | 33.1 | 70.0 |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 27.2 | 57.0 |
| Unskilled Manual | 19.8 | 74.7 |
| All | 37.5 | 71.2 |

Table 7.6a Incidence of partnership arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by nature of contract

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|-----------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Part-time | 16.7 | 21.2 |
| Full-time | 24.4 | 27.3 |
| Permanent | 24.9 | 27.9 |
| Temporary | 13.0 | 12.8 |
| All | 23.0 | 26.4 |

Table 7.6b Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by nature of contract

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|-----------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Part-time | 29.4 | 63.2 |
| Full-time | 39.3 | 72.5 |
| Permanent | 40.2 | 72.4 |
| Temporary | 23.4 | 61.3 |
| All | 37.5 | 71.2 |

Table 7.7 Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by union membership

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|--------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Union Member | 46.4 | 69.4 |
| Non-member | 32.0 | 72.8 |
| All | 37.5 | 571.2 |

Table 7.8a Incidence of partnership arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by gender and age-group

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|--------------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Men | 24.0 | 30.0 |
| Women | 21.8 | 22.1 |
| < 24 years of age | 13.3 | 14.3 |
| 25-39 years of age | 24.2 | 24.1 |
| 40-54 years of age | 27.3 | 29.8 |
| > 55 years of age | 24.1 | 39.0 |
| All | 23.0 | 26.4 |

Table 7.8b Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by gender and age-group

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|--------------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| Men | 38.9 | 73.6 |
| Women | 35.8 | 68.2 |
| < 24 years of age | 29.5 | 65.3 |
| 25-39 years of age | 39.3 | 69.9 |
| 40-54 years of age | 40.3 | 76.4 |
| > 55 years of age | 37.1 | 68.7 |
| All | 37.5 | 71.2 |

Table 7.9a Incidence of partnership arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by education

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|---------------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| No Qualification | 16.1 | 45.6 |
| Junior Certificate | 19.2 | 16.6 |
| Leaving Certificate | 23.0 | 22.9 |
| Third Level | 29.3 | 32.8 |
| All | 23.0 | 26.4 |

Table 7.9b Incidence of participation arrangements in the workplace and whether respondent is personally involved by education

| | Yes | Personally Involved |
|---------------------|------|---------------------|
| | % | % |
| No Qualification | 22.9 | 51.8 |
| Junior Certificate | 28.2 | 65.7 |
| Leaving Certificate | 37.5 | 69.3 |
| Third Level | 52.0 | 81.4 |
| All | 23.0 | 71.2 |

Union members are more likely to be employed in workplaces where participation arrangements are found (46% versus 32%). However, in workplaces where participation arrangements are present, a slightly greater proportion of non-members (73%) than members (69%) may be involved.¹

Men are slightly more likely than women to report the presence of partnership arrangements in their workplaces, and where such arrangements do exist, men are also more likely to be personally involved. Women are more likely to respond that they do not know about partnership arrangements. Men are also somewhat more likely than women to encounter participation arrangements in their workplaces. Where such participation structures are found, men are also more likely to be personally involved.

¹ We do not report a corresponding analysis of the relationship between union membership and partnership since, in measuring the incidence of partnership, the Questionnaire only asks questions about the presence of partnership institutions in relation to employers that recognise a trade union or staff association.

Workers in the 40-54 year age group are more likely than those in other age groups to report that there are partnership arrangements in their workplace. However, where partnership committees do exist, workers in the older age group, 50 or more years, are more likely to be personally involved. Younger workers, particularly those under age 25 are more likely to respond that they do not know of partnership arrangements in their workplaces.

Younger workers, aged less than 25 years, are less likely to report the presence of participation structures in their workplaces. Between 37% and 40% of workers in the older age groups report such structures. Where participation arrangements are in place, workers in the 40-54 year age group are most likely to be directly involved.

Those with higher levels of education are more likely to encounter partnership arrangements in their

Table 7.10a Respondents' opinions on the effects of partnership arrangements

| | Positive Effect | No Effect | Negative Effect | Total |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Job satisfaction | 71.8 | 24.9 | 3.3 | 100.0 |
| Productivity or performance | 67.2 | 28.6 | 4.2 | 100.0 |
| Pay and conditions | 71.2 | 25.2 | 3.6 | 100.0 |
| Employment Security | 70.2 | 26.8 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| Employees willingness to embrace change | 73.2 | 20.4 | 6.3 | 100.0 |
| Confidence with which employees co-operate with management | 76.2 | 19.1 | 4.7 | 100.0 |

Table 7.10b Respondents' opinions on the effects of participation structures

| | Positive Effect | No Effect | Negative Effect | Total |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Job satisfaction | 91.0 | 8.2 | 0.8 | 100.0 |
| Productivity or performance | 89.2 | 10.1 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| Pay and conditions | 51.9 | 45.0 | 3.1 | 100.0 |
| Employment Security | 56.8 | 40.4 | 2.8 | 100.0 |
| Employees willingness to embrace change | 86.4 | 12.1 | 1.4 | 100.0 |
| Confidence with which employees co-operate with management | 87.5 | 11.1 | 1.4 | 100.0 |

workplaces, and this is particularly true of those with a Leaving Certificate or higher qualification. However, within workplaces where partnership arrangements exist, those with no formal qualifications are much more likely than those with any higher level of education to participate in partnership committees.

The likelihood that employees report the presence of participation structures in their workplaces increases with educational attainment. Over half of all employees with third level qualifications report the existence of such structures. Personal involvement in participation structures also increases with education: over 80% of employees, in workplaces where such structures are present, report that they are personally involved in such direct participation.

7.2 The impact of partnership and participation

Respondents who reported the presence of either partnership or participation arrangements in their workplaces were asked their opinion as to the effects that such arrangements or structures had on various aspects of their jobs and their workplaces. Table 7.10a summarises the responses in respect of partnership.

In general, respondents perceive the effects of partnership arrangements in a very positive light. Two-thirds or more of respondents see partnership arrangements as having positive effects on issues

Table 7.11a Percentage of respondents in public and private sector that consider that partnership has positive effects

| | Public Sector | Private Sector | All |
|--|---------------|----------------|------|
| | % | % | % |
| Job satisfaction | 74.6 | 70.2 | 71.8 |
| Productivity or performance | 62.9 | 70.0 | 67.2 |
| Pay and conditions | 69.5 | 72.4 | 71.2 |
| Employment Security | 67.8 | 71.8 | 70.2 |
| Employees' willingness to embrace change | 77.2 | 70.9 | 73.2 |
| Confidence with which employees co-operate with management | 78.0 | 75.2 | 76.2 |

Table 7.11b Percentage of respondents' in public and private sectors that consider that participation has positive effects

| | Public Sector | Private Sector | All |
|--|---------------|----------------|------|
| | % | % | % |
| Job satisfaction | 88.9 | 91.7 | 91.0 |
| Productivity or performance | 85.8 | 90.3 | 89.2 |
| Pay and conditions | 40.6 | 55.7 | 51.9 |
| Employment Security | 40.4 | 62.3 | 56.8 |
| Employees willingness to embrace change | 87.5 | 86.1 | 86.4 |
| Confidence with which employees co-operate with management | 88.2 | 87.3 | 87.5 |

of direct interest to employees – job satisfaction, pay and conditions and employment security – as well as of importance to the organisation – performance, willingness to embrace change, and the confidence with which employees co-operate with management.

In general, the impact of participation structures is even more positive than that of partnership, particularly for organisational performance and functioning. About 89% of respondents consider that participation has a positive effect on productivity or performance, 88% that it has a positive

effect on the confidence with which employees co-operate with management, and 86% that it has a positive effect on willingness to embrace change. Respondents' subjective assessment of the impact of participation on their own jobs is more mixed. While 91% of respondents consider that participation has a positive effect on job satisfaction, only 57% consider that it has a positive effect on employment security, and only 51% that it has a positive effect on pay and conditions.

Table 7.12a Percentage of respondents in different workplace size-categories that consider that partnership has positive effects

| | 1 – 4 Employees | 5-19 Employees | 20-99 Employees | 100+ Employees |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Job satisfaction | 77.2 | 70.3 | 73.7 | 70.9 |
| Productivity or performance | 78.5 | 67.7 | 70.0 | 64.7 |
| Pay and conditions | 85.5 | 67.3 | 68.0 | 73.5 |
| Employment Security | 82.6 | 68.0 | 68.4 | 71.3 |
| Employees willingness to embrace change | 77.9 | 72.8 | 75.5 | 71.8 |
| Confidence with which employees co-operate with management | 81.2 | 78.2 | 76.3 | 75.4 |

Table 7.12b Percentage of respondents in different workplace size-categories that consider that participation has positive effects

| | 1 – 4 Employees | 5-19 Employees | 20-99 Employees | 100+ Employees |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Job satisfaction | 90.2 | 90.2 | 90.8 | 91.8 |
| Productivity or performance | 95.7 | 89.9 | 87.5 | 88.5 |
| Pay and conditions | 54.1 | 52.8 | 49.2 | 53.2 |
| Employment Security | 63.8 | 60.2 | 53.3 | 55.7 |
| Employees willingness to embrace change | 87.0 | 89.0 | 88.2 | 82.9 |
| Confidence with which employees co-operate with management | 85.2 | 89.0 | 87.6 | 87.0 |

In general there is little evidence to suggest that workers' assessments of the impact of partnership differ substantially between the public and private sectors. The principal exception to this relates to the impact on productivity and performance: 70% of workers in the private sector consider that partnership has a positive effect on productivity and performance, compared to 63% in the public sector. We did not find strong evidence of variation in these measures across economic sectors (results not tabulated here).

With regard to the participation structures, there are no substantial differences between public and private sector workers in their assessment of its impact on organisational performance, co-operation and willingness to embrace change. However, public sector workers are much less likely than private sector workers to consider that participation has a positive effect on either their pay and conditions or their job security. This is presumably because public sector workers consider that these issues are influenced by factors beyond the organisation of work in the workplace.

On first inspection it is difficult to detect a clear relationship between workplace size and employees' assessment of the influence of partnership. This is mainly due to the fact that the proportions assessing the influence as positive fluctuate in the middle size categories (5-19 and 20-99 employees). However, if we compare the smallest with the largest workplaces a general pattern does appear: workers in larger workplaces are less likely than their counterparts in very small workplaces to evaluate the impact of partnership positively across the entire range of issues, relating both to their own employment situation and to organisational functioning. This could be due to the possibility that partnership institutions are more remote from individual workers in larger organisations. This is an issue which warrants further investigation.

In contrast to the size-related pattern that we find in relation to the effects of partnership, there is little evidence to suggest that employees' assessments of the impact of direct participation

structures vary with workplace size. The main exception to this general pattern is that employees in large establishments, with 100 or more employees, are less likely to consider that participation has a positive effect on employment security than their counterparts in very small workplaces, with 1-4 employees (56% versus 64%).

7.3 Modes of employee involvement

Partnership and participation represent relatively formalised modes of employee involvement. Partnership entails formal institutionalised relationships with trade unions or staff associations. Direct participation in how work is actually carried out also entails some degree of formal organisation, for example in teams, groups or circles.

Employee involvement may also take the form of less formalised modes of consultation that may nevertheless have important implications for the functioning and performance of organisations. Chapter 6 presents information on the extent of consultation in relation to three separate questions:

- How often are you and your colleagues consulted before decisions are taken that affect your work?
- If changes in your work occur, how often are you given the reason why?
- If you are consulted before decisions are made is any attention paid to your views?

Respondents were asked to record whether or not each happened "almost always"; "often"; "sometimes"; "rarely" or "almost never".

Table 7.13 | Modes of employee involvement – percentage distribution of employees

| | | No Participation | Participation | All |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------|
| | | % | % | % |
| No Partnership | Low Consultation | 38.7 | 12.9 | 51.6 |
| | High Consultation | 14.4 | 10.8 | 25.2 |
| | | 53.1 | 23.7 | 76.8 |
| Partnership | Low Consultation | 7.3 | 8.0 | 15.2 |
| | High Consultation | 2.0 | 5.9 | 7.9 |
| | | 9.3 | 13.9 | 23.2 |
| All | | 62.4 | 37.6 | 100.0 |

In Chapters 8 and 9 we examine the impact of different modes of employment involvement on a number of important outcomes, including employees' job satisfaction, stress, and willingness to accept change at work. Table 7.13 looks at how three different modes of employee involvement are related. To facilitate the analysis we have dichotomised consultation. Consultation is considered "high" where the employee is "almost always" or "often" consulted before decisions are taken that affect her work, and is given the reason why changes occur, and attention is paid to his views. Less intensive levels of consultation are scored low for Table 7.13.²

A substantial minority of employees, 39%, report that they work in establishments in which there are no formal partnership institutions, no participation arrangements, and where there is low consultation. At the other extreme, just 6% of employees work in "high involvement" establishments which are characterised by the presence of all three modes of involvement. Some workplaces combine two forms of involvement. Just under 17% of all employees work in establishments that combine participation with high consultation. Another 14% work in establishments that combine partnership and participation. Just 8% are in workplaces combining partnership with high consultation.

2. In analysing the impact of Consultation in Chapters 8 and 9 we utilise the full variation in the scale, which can vary between 0 and 4, rather than the dichotomy in Table 7.13.

7.4 Summary

We have identified two different modes of employee involvement in the workplace. Partnership refers to collective organisation in which employee representatives work with management to promote partnership and co-operation, or to improve the organisation's performance. Participation refers to modes of direct involvement and consultation over the way in which work is organised and carried out in work teams, problem solving groups, project groups; quality circles; or continuous improvement programmes or groups.

Overall, 23% of all employees indicate that partnership committees involving management and unions exist at their workplaces. And among those employees that report the presence of partnership institutions, about one-quarter are personally involved in partnership committees.

About 38% of all employees report that there are arrangements for direct participation in their workplaces. Within workplaces that implement arrangements for direct participation, the extent of employee involvement is high: over 70% of employees in such workplaces indicate that they are personally involved in such participation groups.

Partnership institutions are much more common in the public sector: about 45% of workers in public sector organisations report the presence of partnership institutions in their workplaces, compared to 18% of those in the private sector. Participation arrangements are more widely dispersed: about 47% of workers in public sector organisations, and 35% of those in the private sector, report the presence of participation arrangements.

Both forms of employee involvement are more prevalent in large than in small organisations. They are both more likely to be encountered by full- rather than part-time workers, and by permanent, rather than temporary employees.

Both forms of employee involvement are also closely linked to social class: incumbents of higher social class positions are more likely to report that they work in an organisation where both such modes of employee involvement are present. For example, 25% of Higher Professionals and Managers report the presence of partnership arrangements in their workplaces, compared to about 12% of Unskilled Manual workers. Moreover, almost 30% of Higher Professionals and Managers are personally involved in partnership committees, compared to 19% of Unskilled Manual workers. Almost 60% of Higher Professionals and Managers report the presence of participation arrangements in their workplace, compared to less than 20% of Unskilled Manual workers. However, among those working in organisations where participation arrangements are present, personal involvement is widespread, irrespective of social class.

In general, respondents perceive the effects of partnership institutions in a very positive light. Two-thirds or more of respondents see partnership arrangements as having positive effects on issues of direct interest to employees – job satisfaction, pay and conditions and employment security – as well as of importance to the organisation – performance, willingness to embrace change, and the confidence with which employees co-operate with management.

The perceived impact of participation arrangements is even more positive than that of partnership, particularly for organisational performance and functioning. Over 85% of respondents consider that participation has a positive effect on productivity or performance, on the confidence with which employees co-operate with management, and on willingness to embrace change.

Respondents' subjective assessment of the impact of participation on their own jobs is more mixed. While the vast majority consider that participation has a positive effect on job satisfaction, only about half consider that it has a positive effect on employment security, and on pay and conditions.

Chapter 8

The Determinants of Work Stress and Job Satisfaction

In this chapter we focus on two key employee outcome measures – work stress and job satisfaction. We consider the central question of how the workplace practices, forms of employee involvement and organisational change outlined in previous chapters impact on employee satisfaction and stress.

In Chapter 3 we examined some of the individual and firm level factors that were associated with levels of stress and job satisfaction among employees. However, these relationships were examined at the bi-variate level, that is one at a time. While that analysis highlighted a number of important associations it could not take into account the complex inter-relationships between the explanatory variables. For example, the effect of trade union membership could not be separated from the sectoral distribution of union members, nor could the impact of gender be separated from the distinctive occupational distributions of men and women. Therefore in this chapter we adopt multi-variate modelling techniques, which allow us to test the impact of these factors simultaneously. This means that the independent impact of each firm or personal characteristic can be identified more clearly. The models also help to clarify the relative importance of different factors in explaining work stress and job satisfaction. The models also add to the analysis in Chapter 2 by examining some of the inter-relationships between job satisfaction and work stress, pressure and autonomy.

8.1 Work stress

The measure of work stress used here is constructed from respondents' answers to a set of five items. There are two general items "find work stressful" and "come home exhausted", and three items relating to the extent to which work impinges on life outside work. Details on these items and the composite scale are outlined in Chapter 2. It is important to reiterate that this measure is likely to capture general work stress and tensions associated with trying to maintain a balance between work and other commitments (particularly family commitments). This is an important policy concern at both national and EU level. For example the EU Employment Guidelines are committed to improving policies to reconciling family and working life. Reducing work stress is also central to the quality of work agenda. It is important that employment opportunities are not increased at the expense of creating a highly stressed workforce. Moreover, change in the workplace needs to be managed in a way that minimises stress for the workforce.

We begin by constructing a base model of the determinants of work stress drawing on many of the individual and firm level variables discussed in Chapter 2. We then develop the analysis by adding in 5 key sets of variables. These are: employee autonomy; patterns of worker involvement (partnership, participation and consultation); organisational change; flexible working arrangements; and new work practices (performance reviews, performance related pay, share options).

The basic model of work stress contains a set of individual and job factors found to be significant in the earlier analysis. However, a number of key differences emerge in the multivariate model. First, when other personal and job characteristics are controlled women are found to experience higher levels of work stress than men, which may reflect

gender differences in domestic responsibilities or gender differences in work experiences. Having a pre-school age child significantly increases stress. This effect was found to be the same for male and female employees (i.e. the interaction with gender was insignificant). The model includes a measure of the number of hours worked per week rather than a part-time/full-time dichotomy. The results show that each additional work hour increases work stress levels. Trade union membership is found to increase work stress even when occupation and sector is controlled. The sectoral results are similar to those found in the bivariate analysis with higher stress levels noted in the public sector and in the hotel/restaurant industry. The size of the local unit has a very strong impact on stress even when personal and other job factors are controlled, with stress increasing with organisational size. The social class variable shows that those in lower/professional managerial occupations and those in the skilled manual class experience higher levels of stress than those in unskilled manual occupations (the reference category). The insignificance of the highest class is due to inclusion of the variable measuring managerial/supervisory responsibilities. Finally involvement in employer sponsored training in the last two years has no effect on work stress.¹

Autonomy and work stress

While stress increases with occupational class and managerial responsibilities, which is consistent with the cliché of the stressed executive, stress is also associated with being in a job with low levels of control. The co-efficient for autonomy shows that each score on the autonomy scale reduces the level of work stress (the scale construction is described in Chapter 2).

¹. Note that tenure and contract status were removed from the model because they were insignificant. Education was also excluded because of the high correlation between education and occupation/social class.

Table 8.1 Models of work stress: Base model and full model

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | B | Sig. | B | Sig. |
| (Constant) | .334 | *** | .763 | *** |
| 25-39 years | .098 | ** | .111 | ** |
| 40-54 years | .097 | ** | .133 | *** |
| 55 years plus | -.007 | n.s. | .036 | n.s. |
| Female | .158 | *** | .166 | *** |
| Youngest Child under 5 years | .179 | *** | .183 | *** |
| Youngest child 5-17 years | .050 | * | .055 | * |
| Hours worked per week | .020 | *** | .020 | *** |
| Trade Union Member | .069 | ** | .022 | n.s. |
| Public Sector | .109 | ** | .121 | ** |
| Construction | -.008 | n.s. | .021 | n.s. |
| Wholesale Retail | -.041 | n.s. | -.015 | n.s. |
| Hotels & Restaurants | .304 | *** | .319 | *** |
| Transport & Communications | .088 | * | .066 | n.s. |
| Finance & Other Business Services | .082 | * | .045 | n.s. |
| Public Administration & Defence | -.126 | ** | -.169 | ** |
| Education | .021 | n.s. | .028 | n.s. |
| Health | .107 | ** | .105 | * |
| Other Services | .003 | n.s. | .025 | n.s. |
| 5-19 employees | .129 | *** | .086 | ** |
| 20-99 employees | .159 | *** | .081 | ** |
| 100+ employees | .209 | *** | .117 | ** |
| Higher Professional & Manager | .068 | n.s. | .136 | ** |
| Lower Professional | .179 | *** | .226 | *** |
| Other Non-manual | .013 | n.s. | -.044 | n.s. |
| Skilled Manual | .110 | ** | .132 | ** |
| Semi-skilled manual | .088 | * | .074 | n.s. |
| Senior Management | .237 | *** | .374 | *** |
| Middle Management | .152 | *** | .219 | *** |
| Supervisor | .095 | ** | .145 | *** |
| Training in last 2 years | -.025 | n.s. | -.007 | n.s. |
| Autonomy | | | -.109 | *** |
| Partnership | | | -.037 | n.s. |
| Participation | | | -.026 | n.s. |
| Consultation | | | -.135 | *** |
| Organisational Change | | | .089 | *** |
| Family-Friendly Policies | | | -.078 | ** |
| Work from Home | | | .134 | ** |
| Flexitime | | | -.054 | * |
| Job Share | | | .088 | ** |
| Performance reviews | | | .056 | ** |
| Profit share/Share options | | | -.018 | n.s. |
| Performance related pay | | | .047 | n.s. |
| N | 5110 | | 4836 | |
| Adjusted R² | .125 | | .181 | |

Reference categories: under 25 years, male, no children under 18, not member of TU or staff association, private sector, manufacturing/primary industry, <5 employees in local unit, unskilled occupations
 *** p < .001 ** p < .05 * p < .10, n.s. not significant.

Worker involvement

In the full model we also test the effect of different modes of worker involvement on work stress: formal partnership, informal participation and consultation. These forms of involvement are discussed in Chapter 7 above. The partnership and participation variables are dichotomous while the consultation measure is a scale based on responses to three questions about how often the respondent is consulted on decisions, work changes and has their views taken into account. The variables are not mutually exclusive i.e. a worker may have formal partnership, participation and consultation in their place of work. The results show that consultation has a significant impact on reducing work stress, while partnership and participation have no effect.

We also tested the impact of level of access to information, when this is included without controls for worker involvement it is found to have a negative impact on stress. In other words the greater the access to information the lower the stress. However, the measure is highly correlated with consultation and so is excluded from the model.

Organisational change

Employees were asked about four types of organisational change over the last two years – changes in ownership or management, introduction of new technology, new CEO and introduction of family-friendly policies. Given our focus on issues of work/family stresses the item on family-friendly policies was examined separately while the other three items were included in a scale (scoring three if the respondent had experienced all three types of change and zero if he/she had experienced none). The results from model 2 (Table 8.1) show that organisational change significantly increases work stress among employees. However, introducing family friendly policies has a countervailing effect – reducing stress among employees. This positive effect of family-friendly policies occurs even though the model controls for the personal uptake of flexible arrangements.

Workplace practices and work stress

The final set of variables added refer to a range of work practices that employees are personally involved in. Three are flexible work practices (working from home, flexitime and job share) which might be expected to help reduce stress arising from work/family conflicts. Flexitime works in the manner anticipated i.e. reducing stress (the effect is only of borderline statistical significance). In contrast, working from home increases stress levels. Rather than reconciling work and family demands, it appears that working from home increases those tensions, perhaps by impinging on family time and space. Those involved in job share also have somewhat higher levels of work stress. Since fewer hours of work are found to reduce stress, and this is already controlled in the model, there is something else about this particular arrangement that increases stress.

Regular performance reviews are found to increase stress levels of employees (although performance related pay is found to have no effect). This suggests that the positive benefits of these arrangements must be weighed against the negative impact on employee stress.

8.2 The determinants of job satisfaction

Respondent's satisfaction with their jobs was measured along a range of dimensions – physical working conditions, hours of work, commuting time, earnings, and interest. These together with a measure of overall job satisfaction were combined to form a satisfaction scale (see Chapter 2 for details). In addition to testing the independent effect of the personal and job characteristics studied in Chapter 2, we consider a number of new relationships, first the models examine the role of economic rewards in job satisfaction. Second, we test the impact of a number of measures of job quality (autonomy, stress and work pressure). Third we evaluate the impact of types of employee involvement. Fourth, we examine the impact of organisational change on job satisfaction, and finally we examine the effect of the six work practices described above (flexible and new working arrangements).

Base model

The base model for job satisfaction differs from that constructed to explain work stress. Family characteristics are dropped because they are insignificant. The effect of hours of work was also insignificant so we have reverted to the part-time/full-time distinction. Contract status (permanent v non-permanent), length of tenure and earnings are included in the base model since our own analysis (Chapter 2) or previous research has shown these to have a significant influence on job satisfaction (Guest, 2001). Only one of the variables, social class and education, are included because of problems of colinearity. We have also added a variable on management level and receipt of training.

Controlling for the core personal and job characteristics, age is found to have no independent effect on job satisfaction, but women are found to have higher levels of job satisfaction. Weekly earnings have a weak positive effect on satisfaction levels because the measurement unit of this variable is small (one euro) the co-efficient for earnings is small but it borders on statistical significance (at 10% level). Part-timers are more satisfied than full-time workers and non-permanent employees are less satisfied than permanent employees even when occupation level and sector are held constant. Trade union membership has no impact on satisfaction when job characteristics are controlled.

The sectoral effects are similar to those observed in Chapter 2. Employees in the hospitality industry (hotels/restaurants) are most dissatisfied even when factors such as wages and contract status are taken into account. Those in the education sector are significantly more satisfied than other employees even with these controls. The occupational/-social class effects are weaker in the multivariate models: only higher managers and professionals are significantly more satisfied than the unskilled manual group who make up the reference category. However, if we add an additional variable which provides additional details on management/-supervisory responsibilities, we find the effect of higher professional/ managerial class disappears but that senior managers and middle managers are more satisfied than “employees”.

Those who have received employer sponsored training during the last two years are more satisfied with their jobs, even when job level and other characteristics are controlled. This type of investment in employees therefore has positive returns in terms of worker satisfaction.

As in the model of work stress, organisational size is highly significant. Those in the smallest organisations (less than five people) are much more satisfied with their jobs than those in the other three organisational size categories. The negative effect increases with organisational size so that those in organisations with 100 or more employees are least satisfied.

Job quality scales

Once the base model is specified we test the effects of additional job quality and organisational variables. When autonomy and work stress are added we find that those with greater control over their job tasks and time are more satisfied with their jobs, while those who experience higher levels of work stress are less satisfied with their job. Both these variables are highly significant. This result suggests that measures that reduce stress, identified in the previous section, will also have a pay-off in terms of increasing worker satisfaction. Higher levels of work pressure were also found to be associated with lower levels of job satisfaction, however, it was not possible to estimate a model including both work stress and work pressure because of colinearity.³

It should be noted that the strength of association between these measures and job satisfaction may be somewhat overstated because they are all subjective measures. This means that responses to both the dependent and independent variables may be influenced by underlying personality characteristics. For example, some respondents may tend to high ratings while other may have a more negative outlook.

2. This was asked as two separate items for private sector workers but is combined into one item so that the scale has the same range for public and private sector workers.

Modes of worker involvement

Direct involvement of workers through regular consultation or through team working practices etc. (participation) are found to have a positive impact on job satisfaction. The positive effect is strongest for consultation. Indirect involvement through formal partnership has no effect on work satisfaction. Information exchange is also important for employee satisfaction, the more regularly an employee receives information on factors such as organisational plans and budget/sales/profits the higher the satisfaction levels recorded.

Organisational change

Recent organisational change (in the last two years) has a weak negative effect on satisfaction, while the introduction of family-friendly or flexible policies has a weak positive influence on satisfaction.

Work practices

Of the three flexible arrangements studied directly, only one is significant. Employees permitted to work from home have higher job satisfaction (although as we saw above this is coupled with higher levels of stress). Job sharing has a weak positive effect on satisfaction. It should be noted that part-time hours are insignificant in this final model.

Work practices that seek to link employee rewards to those of the company are found to have no positive (or negative) effect on employee satisfaction.

Table 8.3 | Regression models of job satisfaction

| | B | Sig. | B | Sig. |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| (Constant) | .884 | *** | .809 | *** |
| 25-39 years | -.015 | n.s | -.012 | n.s |
| 40-54 years | .001 | n.s | -.026 | n.s |
| 55 years plus | .046 | n.s | -.008 | n.s |
| Female | .044 | ** | .054 | ** |
| Weekly Earnings | .000 | * | .000 | n.s |
| Part-Time | .048 | ** | -.021 | n.s |
| Temporary or casual | -.055 | ** | -.047 | * |
| Tenure < 1 year | .006 | n.s | -.030 | n.s |
| Tenure 1-5 years | -.036 | * | -.053 | ** |
| Trade Union Member | -.017 | n.s | -.002 | n.s |
| Public sector | -.019 | n.s | .038 | n.s |
| Construction | .045 | n.s | .076 | * |
| Wholesale Retail | .009 | n.s | -.002 | n.s |
| Hotels & Restaurants | -.087 | ** | .004 | n.s |
| Transport & Communications | -.065 | * | -.025 | n.s |
| Finance & Other Business Services | -.007 | n.s | .006 | n.s |
| Pub Admin/ Defence | .066 | n.s | .020 | n.s |
| Education | .166 | *** | .119 | ** |
| Health | .003 | n.s | .037 | n.s |
| Other Services | .025 | n.s | .045 | n.s |
| 5-19 employees | -.082 | ** | -.036 | n.s |
| 20-99 employees | -.111 | *** | -.026 | n.s |
| 100+ employees | -.145 | *** | -.058 | * |
| Higher Prof and Manager | .047 | n.s | -.061 | n.s |
| Lower Professional | .013 | n.s | -.043 | n.s |
| Other Non-manual | .020 | n.s | -.047 | n.s |
| Skilled Manual | .027 | n.s | .015 | n.s |
| Semi-skilled manual | -.015 | n.s | -.016 | n.s |
| Senior Management | .113 | ** | .037 | n.s |
| Middle Management | .052 | * | .007 | n.s |
| Supervisor | .015 | n.s | -.024 | n.s |
| Training in last 2 years | .110 | *** | .061 | *** |
| Autonomy score | | | .070 | *** |
| Work Stress Score | | | -.194 | *** |
| Partnership | | | .000 | n.s |
| Participation | | | .051 | ** |
| Consultation | | | .094 | *** |
| Access to Information | | | .068 | *** |
| Organisational Change | | | -.016 | * |
| Family friendly policies | | | .033 | * |
| Work from Home | | | .084 | ** |
| Flexitime | | | -.007 | n.s |
| Job share | | | .054 | * |
| Performance reviews | | | .011 | n.s |
| Share options/gain share | | | .020 | n.s |
| Performance-related pay | | | .000 | n.s |
| N | 4552 | | 4055 | |
| Adjusted R² | 0.04 | | .217 | |

Ref categories: under 25 years, male, over 5 yrs tenure, not member of TU, private sector, manufacturing/primary industry, <5 employees in local unit, unskilled occupations, no management/supervisory responsibilities, no recent training.

*** p < .001 ** p < .05 * p < .10, n.s. not significant.

8.3 Summary and conclusions

This chapter has focused on the determinants of work stress and job satisfaction, paying particular attention to the role of worker involvement, organisational change and new work practices in influencing or moderating these outcomes.

While some factors outside the workplace are important for determining work stress, for example family commitments and gender, it is clear that organisations can make a difference. The first area of organisational influence is in the arrangement of working hours. Increasing hours of work were clearly linked to greater stress even when a range of other job characteristics were controlled. Offering employees the opportunity of flexitime is also found to reduce stress but working from home and job sharing have the opposite impact (when hours are controlled). Introducing family-friendly policies also has a more general positive effect on employees' stress. This may reflect a greater understanding of employees' external commitments among employers who put such policies in place.

Giving workers greater control and discretion over their jobs is also a key way of reducing stress. Involvement of workers in decision making has a positive impact on work stress if this is done through direct and regular consultation. Sharing of information also has a positive effect of reducing stress.

Organisational practices are also found to influence employee satisfaction. Greater consultation or direct involvement through participatory work practices, regular information exchange, greater employee discretion (including working from home as an extension of this discretion), and the provision of training all increase employee satisfaction. Reducing work stress and work pressure also have a strong impact on satisfaction so the results relating to work stress are also crucial for employee satisfaction.

The positive impact of these communication and consultation strategies are especially important to organisations wishing to implement changes, since change is found to increase employee stress and dissatisfaction (even if this change has long-term benefits for employees). Keeping employees informed and participating in decisions that affect them is key to managing change in a positive way.

Chapter 9

Change in the Workplace

In this chapter we examine employees' experiences of and attitudes to change in the workplace. We begin by considering the extent to which employees have experienced change in the workplace in the relatively recent past. We turn then to look at changes at the level of the job, as distinct from changes at the level of the organisation. We then look at employees' assessments of their employers' responses to changes in the environment. Finally, we consider the extent to which employees indicate willingness to accept change in relation to their own jobs and develop a statistical model to examine the factors influencing openness to change in the workplace.

9.1 Organisational and management change

Tables 9.1a and 9.1b show the proportions of employees who respond that specific organisational or management changes have taken place at their workplace in the past two years for the private and public sectors, respectively. In the private sector, 13% of employees reported a change of ownership of the company. About one-third experienced a re-organisation of the company or its management, and 46% the introduction of substantial new technology. Just under one-quarter reported the appointment of a new chief executive, which seems implausibly high within a 2-year time frame. Another quarter reported the introduction of family-friendly or other flexible working arrangements. These data suggest a substantial frequency of change, particularly with respect to the introduction of new technology.

Change appears to be even more prevalent among public sector workers. Over 60% experienced the introduction of new technology, and 44% the re-organisation of the organisation or management. Over one-third report the appointment of a new chief executive, which is, again, implausible. Over 40% also experienced the introduction of family friendly or other flexible working arrangements.

There is substantial sectoral variation across the private sector in the extent to which employees report change. Transport and Communications appears to be undergoing substantial change along a range of dimensions: 31% of employees report a change of ownership, 54% experienced a re-organisation of the company or management, and almost half, the introduction of substantial new technology. Over 45% of employees in Transport and Communications report the appointment of a new chief executive.

Table 9.1a | Percentage reporting change at the workplace in the last two years, private sector

| | Yes | No | Don't know/ Not applicable |
|---|------|------|-------------------------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Change in ownership of organisation | 13.2 | 83.9 | 2.9 |
| Re-organisation of company or management | 33.7 | 64.1 | 2.2 |
| Introduction of substantial new technology | 46.1 | 51.2 | 2.7 |
| New Chief Executive | 23.5 | 73.7 | 2.7 |
| Introduction of family-friendly policies or increased flexibility | 23.3 | 73.2 | 3.5 |

Table 9.1b | Percentage reporting change at the workplace in the last two years, public sector

| | Yes | No | Don't know/ Not applicable |
|---|------|------|-------------------------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Re-organisation of organisation or management | 44.0 | 52.9 | 3.1 |
| Introduction of substantial new technology | 62.0 | 34.6 | 3.3 |
| New Chief Executive | 34.3 | 61.6 | 4.1 |
| Introduction of family-friendly policies or increased flexibility | 42.3 | 53.2 | 4.5 |

Table 9.2a | Percentage reporting change at the workplace in the last two years, private sector*

| | Change in ownership | Re-organisation | New technology | New CEO | Flexible working |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| Manufacturing Industry | 13.5 | 38.5 | 56.5 | 26.9 | 26.7 |
| Construction | 7.5 | 21.3 | 30.5 | 10.5 | 14.0 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 10.3 | 31.4 | 48.4 | 20.0 | 23.6 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 17.6 | 24.5 | 29.8 | 16.8 | 20.9 |
| Transport & Communications | 30.6 | 54.1 | 48.6 | 45.5 | 22.4 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 14.3 | 43.0 | 54.4 | 31.6 | 30.8 |
| Education | 6.9 | 24.7 | 46.3 | 19.0 | 26.9 |
| Health | 8.7 | 20.4 | 38.0 | 12.8 | 17.8 |
| Other Services | 7.5 | 20.5 | 23.3 | 17.2 | 9.7 |
| All Sectors | 13.2 | 33.7 | 46.1 | 23.5 | 23.3 |

** Public Administration and Defence excluded because of small number of cases.*

Table 9.2b | Percentage reporting change at the workplace in the last two years, public sector*

| | Re-organisation | New technology | New CEO | Flexible working |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Transport & Communications | 34.3 | 53.5 | 29.5 | 9.9 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 53.0 | 69.5 | 44.1 | 49.3 |
| Education | 34.8 | 58.9 | 30.3 | 32.8 |
| Health | 43.6 | 56.7 | 29.7 | 44.3 |
| Other Services | 55.0 | 76.2 | 22.3 | 54.9 |
| All Sectors | 44.0 | 62.0 | 34.3 | 42.3 |

** Several sectors were excluded because of limited numbers of cases.*

Table 9.3a | Percentage reporting change at the workplace in the last two years by establishment size, private sector

| | Change in ownership | Re-organisation | New technology | New CEO | Flexible working |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| | % | % | % | % | % |
| 1-4 employees | 8.1 | 11.5 | 28.3 | 7.8 | 16.0 |
| 5-19 employees | 8.6 | 24.8 | 39.3 | 16.3 | 17.3 |
| 20-99 employees | 15.6 | 36.8 | 48.5 | 24.5 | 22.4 |
| >100 employees | 17.2 | 49.2 | 58.4 | 36.6 | 33.1 |
| All Sectors | 13.2 | 33.7 | 46.1 | 23.5 | 23.3 |

Table 9.3b | Percentage reporting change at the workplace in the last two years by establishment size, public sector

| | Re-organisation | New technology | New CEO | Flexible working |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------|------------------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| 1-4 employees | 32.8 | 47.6 | 28.9 | 27.3 |
| 5-19 employees | 39.4 | 58.3 | 29.8 | 40.5 |
| 20-99 employees | 43.3 | 64.1 | 33.1 | 38.4 |
| >100 employees | 49.8 | 65.1 | 39.1 | 50.1 |
| All Sectors | 44.0 | 62.0 | 34.3 | 42.3 |

Several other sectors also experienced substantial change. About 57% of employees in Manufacturing report the introduction of new technology and 39% experienced a re-organisation of the company or management. In Finance and Business Services, 54% of employees report that new technology has been introduced at their workplace, and 43% report a corporate re-organisation. In contrast, there is much less evidence of change in Construction, Health and Other Services, across the range of dimensions of change considered here.

In the public sector, two sectors appear to be particularly prone to change: Public administration and Defence, and Other Services. In each of these sectors, over half of the employees report a re-organisation, and well over two-thirds report the introduction of new technology.

Tables 9.3a and 9.3b show the proportions of employees who respond that specific organisational or management changes have taken place at their workplace in the past two years, by size of local establishment, for the private and public sectors, respectively. The data show that the incidence of change increases steadily and consistently with size of establishment for each dimension of change in both the private and public sectors.

9.2 Change in the job

The previous section focused on organisational changes. In this section we turn to changes in aspects of respondents' own work. Table 9.4 shows the frequency with which respondents experienced various aspects of change in their own work over the past two years, as well as the direction of change, in cases where change was reported. Substantial proportions (37-40%) report that their levels of responsibility, work pressure, skill demands, and decision-making have changed, and in the vast majority of cases that change has entailed an increase. This pattern suggests that Irish workers have experienced some intensification of pace, pressure and responsibility at work in recent years. Less than 20% of employees registered a change in their own job security, and in three-quarters of those who did, they reported that their job security increased. Surprisingly, only 57% of employees respond that their hourly pay rate changed in the last 2 years, although almost 99% of them said that it increased. This is not entirely consistent with national trends in pay rates, which grew rapidly in the last few years (See e.g. ESRI, Quarterly Economic Commentary).

Table 9.4 | Percentage reporting change in aspects of own work, and direction of change, last two years

| | Change in last 2 years | Increased | Decreased |
|---|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | % | % | % |
| The responsibilities you have | 42.0 | 95.7 | 4.3 |
| The pressure you work under | 38.1 | 93.0 | 7.0 |
| The number of hours you work | 21.8 | 75.6 | 24.4 |
| The level of technology or computers in your work | 36.3 | 97.6 | 2.4 |
| Your job security | 19.6 | 75.1 | 24.9 |
| Your hourly pay rate | 56.6 | 98.7 | 1.3 |
| Level of skill necessary to carry out your work | 37.0 | 97.8 | 2.2 |
| Level of decision-making which you have in your day-to-day work | 38.3 | 96.2 | 3.8 |

Table 9.5 | Summary index of changes in last two years, by economic sector

| | Mean Number of Changes |
|---|------------------------|
| Manufacturing Industry & Primary Sector | 2.98 |
| Construction | 2.59 |
| Wholesale & Retail | 2.71 |
| Hotels & Restaurants | 2.40 |
| Transport & Communications | 3.10 |
| Finance & Bus. Services | 3.16 |
| Public Admin & Defence | 3.42 |
| Education | 2.85 |
| Health | 2.59 |
| Other Services | 2.20 |
| Public Sector | 3.08 |
| Private Sector | 2.77 |
| All Sectors | 2.83 |

Table 9.6 | Summary index of changes in last two years, by size

| | Mean Number of Changes |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1-4 employees | 2.19 |
| 5-19 employees | 2.77 |
| 20-99 employees | 2.76 |
| >100 employees | 3.26 |
| All Sectors | 2.83 |

Table 9.7 | Percentage of employees who report change responding that they understand the reasons for change

| | % |
|----------------|------|
| Public Sector | 91.5 |
| Private Sector | 86.6 |
| All Sectors | 87.6 |

Table 9.8 Increased supervision compared to 2 years ago, by public / private sector

| | Yes | No |
|----------------|------|------|
| | % | % |
| Public Sector | 16.3 | 83.7 |
| Private Sector | 18.6 | 80.8 |
| All Sectors | 18.6 | 81.3 |

Table 9.5 provides a summary index of changes to employees' jobs in the last 2 years by simply summing across the 8 change items reported in Table 9.4 above. The index can vary between 0, no change whatever, to 8 changes across each of the individual dimensions. Overall, employees experienced a mean of 2.83 changes in the past 2 years. As we have seen before, Public Administration and Defence is most prevalent to change, with an average score of 3.4 changes, closely followed by Finance and Business Services (3.2) and by Transport and Communications (3.1). Change in employees own jobs was least frequent in Other Services (average score of 2.2). Change was more frequent in the public than the private sector.

In general, the average number of changes in employees own jobs was greater in large establishments (with 100 or more employees) than in the very smallest, although there is little to distinguish between the two middle-size categories.

Those respondents who reported any change in their own jobs on any of the items listed in Table 9.4 above were also asked whether they understand the reasons for change. Almost 90% answer that they do understand the reasons for change, and the incidence of such understanding is somewhat higher in the public than the private sector.

Overall, about 19% of employees report that they are now more closely supervised at work than they were two years ago. Private sector workers are slightly more likely than their public sector counterparts to have experienced an increase in supervision.

Table 9.9a | Employees' assessment of employers' responses to change, private sector

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---|------|------|------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Introducing new technology | 63.8 | 27.0 | 9.2 |
| Developing new products or services | 64.9 | 26.5 | 8.6 |
| Cutting costs | 53.6 | 39.9 | 6.5 |
| Putting more pressure on employees to work harder | 56.2 | 32.5 | 11.4 |
| Increasing the level of skill to carry out the job | 48.2 | 46.4 | 5.3 |
| Introducing more flexible working times and practices | 36.4 | 55.5 | 8.1 |

Table 9.9b | Employees' assessment of employers' responses to change, public sector

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--|------|------|------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Introducing new technology | 74.6 | 17.0 | 8.4 |
| Cutting costs | 65.8 | 24.4 | 9.9 |
| Putting more pressure on employees to work harder | 56.2 | 39.0 | 4.8 |
| Increasing the level of skill to carry out the job | 61.0 | 34.2 | 4.8 |
| Introducing more flexible working times and practices | 50.0 | 43.9 | 6.0 |
| Co-ordinating services with people working in different areas, office or departments | 54.9 | 33.3 | 11.7 |

9.3 Employees' assessment of employer strategies

Given that different organisations may both experience and respond to change differently, we asked respondents how they felt that their employers were responding to changes in the environment in respect of a series of job and workplace related issues. Some of the items differ between the public and private sectors, so we report the responses separately.

Almost two-thirds of employees in private sector workplaces believe that their employers are responding to changes in the operating environment by introducing new technology and developing new products and services. Over half consider that they are responding to external change by cutting costs and putting more pressure on employees to work harder. Almost half believe that the employer response entails increasing the level of skill needed to carry out the job. Only 36% of employees consider that their employers are responding to the changing environment by introducing more flexible working times and practices (e.g. to accommodate childcare, commuting etc.).

Table 9.10 | Willingness to accept change in aspects of employment, next two years

| | Willing | Neither willing/unwilling | Unwilling |
|---|---------|---------------------------|-----------|
| | % | % | % |
| Increase in the responsibilities you have | 73.8 | 11.9 | 14.4 |
| Increase in the pressure you work under | 44.3 | 19.0 | 36.6 |
| Increase in technology involved in your work | 75.3 | 14.9 | 9.7 |
| Being more closely supervised/ managed | 40.8 | 23.1 | 36.0 |
| Increase in level of skill necessary to carry out your work | 78.8 | 12.8 | 8.4 |
| Having to work unsocial hours | 30.9 | 18.1 | 50.9 |

In general, public sector workers are in broad agreement with their private sector counterparts with respect to how they see their employers responding to changes in the environment, although at higher frequency levels. Almost 75% of public sector workers believe that their employers are responding to change by introducing new technology, and 66% believe their employers are responding by cutting costs. Over 60% of public sector workers also consider that their employers are increasing skill levels, a substantially higher rate than was found among private sector workers (48%). This finding is also consistent with public sector workers willingness to accept increased skill levels in their jobs, discussed in Table 9.9 above.

Half of all public sector workers consider that their employers are responding to change by introducing more flexible working times and practices, substantially higher than in the private sector (36%). Finally, about 55% of workers in the public sector believe that their employers are responding to change by co-ordinating services with people working in other areas, office or departments.

9.4 Willingness to accept change

Table 9.10 shows responses to a series of questions designed to measure the extent to which employees are willing to accept change in the workplace over the next 2 years, in relation to 6 aspects of their work.

About three-quarters or more of all employees are willing to accept increased responsibilities in their jobs, increased technology or computers in their work, and increased skill needs to carry out their jobs. On the other hand, half of all employees are unwilling to accept unsocial hours. Other areas where workers have reservations about change include increased pressure (44% willing, 37% unwilling), and being more closely supervised or managed (41% willing, 36% unwilling).

Table 9.11 Willingness to accept change in aspects of employment, next 2 years, public versus private sector

| | Public Sector | | Private Sector | |
|---|---------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| | Willing | Unwilling | Willing | Unwilling |
| | % | % | % | % |
| Increase in the responsibilities you have | 72.1 | 17.1 | 74.2 | 13.7 |
| Increase the pressure you work under | 35.5 | 47.2 | 46.4 | 34.2 |
| Increase in technology involved in your work | 78.0 | 10.0 | 74.7 | 9.7 |
| Being more closely supervised/ managed | 41.5 | 36.1 | 40.7 | 36.0 |
| Increase in level of skill necessary to carry out your work | 82.2 | 7.3 | 78.1 | 8.6 |
| Having to work unsocial hours | 30.9 | 52.5 | 31.0 | 50.6 |

Table 9.11 shows employees' willingness to change aspects of their jobs by public versus private sector. There are few marked differences between the sectors, although private sector workers are more willing to accept, and less resistant to, increased pressure at work, and, perhaps somewhat less willing to accept an increase in skill levels. This latter may reflect the greater frequency with which public sector workers have experienced change, discussed above.

Table 9.12 develops an OLS model of willingness to change, allowing us to ascertain the effects of variables of interest while controlling for the effects of other influential variables. The dependent variable in these models is a five-item scale constructed by calculating the mean value of the first 5 items in the list of aspects of change in Tables 9.10 and 9.11 above. The scale thus captures willingness to accept increased responsibility, pressure, technology, supervision and skill levels and varies from 0, unwilling to accept change, to 2, willing to accept change.¹

The first equation examines the impact of personal and job characteristics on willingness to accept change at work. Compared to the reference category – those aged less than 25 – older workers are less willing to accept change, and this pattern increases with age. Women are less open to change at work than men. The higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the willingness to accept

change at work. Social class is also influential: Higher Professionals and Other Non-manual workers are more likely to be willing to accept change than the reference category, Unskilled Workers. So also are Lower Professionals, although to a somewhat lesser extent, and Skilled and Semi-skilled Workers to a much lesser extent. In addition to the impact of social class, we also looked at the effects of exercising managerial or supervisory functions within organisations, but found no significant effects (results not tabulated here).

Weekly earnings are not related to willingness to change. Neither are various aspects of terms of employment, including temporary contracts, job-sharing or working from home. However part-time workers are less willing to accept change. Those working on flexitime are more willing to accept change. Compared to the reference category, those who have been employed by the same employer for more than 5 years, and those with shorter job tenure, are more willing to accept change. Finally, experience of change in the past two years, as summarised in a measure of the total number of changes experienced at work in the past two years (based on the items listed in Table 9.4), has no influence on willingness to accept change in the future.

¹ The final item, relating to working unsocial hours, was not included because a reliability test suggested that this latter item differed too greatly from the other items included in the scale, and that inclusion of this item would have generated a scale with a significantly lower alpha value.

Table 9.12 | OLS Model of Willingness to Accept Change, 5 Item Scale

| | Coefficient | Coefficient | Coefficient |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| (Constant) | -1.712*** | -1.642*** | -1.812*** |
| Age 25-39 | -0.070** | -0.076** | -0.077** |
| Age 40-54 | -0.136*** | -0.140*** | -0.145*** |
| Age 55+ | -0.212*** | -0.216*** | -0.225*** |
| Female | -0.079*** | -0.073*** | -0.075*** |
| Junior Certificate | 0.090** | 0.089** | 0.096** |
| Leaving Certificate | 0.100*** | 0.091** | 0.089** |
| Third Level | 0.123*** | 0.118*** | 0.120*** |
| Higher Professional | 0.208*** | 0.190*** | 0.139*** |
| Lower Professional | 0.164** | 0.168*** | 0.125*** |
| Other Non-manual | 0.193** | 0.180*** | 0.154*** |
| Skilled Manual | 0.094** | 0.083** | 0.072** |
| Semi-skilled Manual | 0.094** | 0.097** | 0.081** |
| Weekly Earnings | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Temporary Contract | -0.013 | -0.007 | 0.005 |
| Part-time | -0.048* | -0.038* | -0.045** |
| Work from Home | -0.016 | -0.023 | -0.018 |
| Flexitime work | 0.064*** | 0.059*** | 0.036** |
| Job-sharing | -0.011 | -0.010 | -0.012 |
| LT 1 year in job | 0.097*** | 0.102*** | 0.092*** |
| 1-5 years in job | 0.059** | 0.058** | 0.057** |
| Number of job changes, last 2 years | 0.000 | -0.001 | -0.004 |
| Public sector organisation | | -0.062** | -0.053* |
| Construction | | -0.046 | -0.065* |
| Retail | | -0.030 | -0.038 |
| Hotel and Restaurants | | -0.115** | -0.119*** |
| Transport & Communications | | -0.025 | -0.010 |
| Finance and Business | | 0.005 | 0.006 |
| Public Administration | | 0.090* | 0.089** |
| Education | | 0.009 | -0.011 |
| Health | | -0.010 | -0.012 |
| Other Services | | -0.084* | -0.087** |
| 5-19 Employees in local unit | | -0.033 | -0.018 |
| 20-99 Employees in local unit | | -0.071** | -0.043* |
| 100+ Employees in local unit | | -0.027 | 0.001 |
| Received training in last 2 years | | 0.022 | 0.003 |
| Organisational change in last 2 years | | | 0.003 |
| Family-friendly policy in last 2 years | | | 0.037** |
| Union recognised, no partnership | | | 0.016 |
| Partnership Institutions | | | -0.010 |
| Participation arrangements | | | -0.004 |
| Consultation | | | 0.084*** |
| N of cases | 4722 | 4734 | 4673 |
| R² | 0.061 | 0.070 | 0.105 |
| Adjusted R² | 0.057 | 0.063 | 0.098 |

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

The first equation examines the impact of personal and job characteristics on willingness to accept change at work. Compared to the reference category, those aged less than 25, older workers are less willing to accept change, and this pattern increases with age. Women are less open to change at work than men. The higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the willingness to accept change at work. Social class is also influential: Higher Professionals and Other Non-manual workers are more likely to be willing to accept change than the reference category, Unskilled Workers. So also are Lower Professionals, although to a somewhat lesser extent, and Skilled and Semi-skilled Workers to a much lesser extent. In addition to the impact of social class, we also looked at the effects of exercising managerial or supervisory functions within organisations, but found no significant effects (results not tabulated here).

The second equation adds organisational characteristics. Employees in public sector organisations are less willing to accept change in the workplace than their counterparts in the private sector. Compared to the reference category, Manufacturing, those in Hotels and Restaurants and in Other Services are less willing to accept change, while those in Public Administration are more willing. Workers in organisations with more than 5 employees appear to be less willing to accept change than those in small organisations with less than 5 employees, although this effect is statistically significant only in respect of those with 20-99 employees. Those who had received education or training sponsored by their employers were no less likely to be willing to embrace change than those who had not.

The final equation adds employee involvement and organisational change in the recent past. Experience of organisational change in the past two years, including organisational re-structuring, appointment of a new chief executive or adoption of new technology has no discernible influence on willingness to accept future change in the workplace. Introduction of family-friendly policies or increased flexibility in the last two years does, however, have a positive and significant impact on willingness to accept change.

The effects of employee involvement are mixed. As discussed in Chapter 8, organisations with formal partnership institutions represent a sub-set of all organisations in which trade unions or staff associations are recognised. To assess the impact of partnership and union organisation we specify 2 dummy variables representing respectively, organisations in which unions are recognised but partnership institutions do not exist, and organisations in which unions are recognised and involved in partnership institutions. The reference category, therefore, is organisations in which unions are not recognised by the employer. Compared to the reference category, with no union recognition, neither union recognition nor the presence of partnership institutions has any impact on willingness to change.

The presence of participation arrangements in deciding how work is actually carried out, such as in work teams, project or problem-solving groups, or quality circles, is also neutral with respect to employee's reported willingness to accept change in the workplace. However, the Consultation scale, measuring the extent to which employees are consulted and informed about decisions that affect their work, as well as the extent to which attention is paid to employees' views, is influential. Employees who report higher level of consultation relating to their jobs are more likely to be willing to accept change, even when other factors, including personal, job and organisational characteristics are taken into account. We experimented with alternative specifications of equation 3, specifying various interactions between the measures of employee involvement (results not tabulated). The reported specification is the most robust and parsimonious.

We also investigated the impact of several additional work practices, including performance appraisal, performance related pay, and profit or gain sharing or share options. However, none of these work practices had any discernible impact on openness to change (results not tabulated).

9.5 Summary and conclusions

This chapter has focused on experiences of, and attitudes to, change in the workplace.

The results suggest that there has been substantial organisational change in Irish workplaces in recent years. Change has been particularly frequent with respect to the introduction of new technology and appears to have been particularly prevalent in the public sector.

There has also been substantial change in aspects of workers' own jobs over the last two years, particularly with respect to increased responsibilities, pressure, use of technology and skill demands, but also increased rates of pay. Irish workers have experienced some intensification of pace, pressure and responsibility at work in recent years. When we measure change in terms of a summary index of changes in the past two years we find that public sector workers report higher rates of change in their own jobs than do private sector workers.

Job change also appears more prevalent in larger organisations.

Workers respond in a very nuanced manner to questions regarding their willingness to accept change at work over the next two years. About three-quarters of all employees are willing to accept increased responsibilities in their jobs, increased technology or computers in their work, and to increased skill needs to carry out their jobs. On the other hand, half of all employees are unwilling to accept unsocial hours. Other areas where workers have reservations about change include increased pressure, and being more closely supervised or managed.

Our model of willingness to change allows us to assess the factors that determine willingness to change while controlling for the effects of other influential variables. The model shows that males, younger workers, those with higher education, those in higher socio-economic classes, and those with shorter job tenure are more willing to accept change at work. Public sector employees and workers in Hotels and Restaurants and in Other Services are less willing to change, but workers in Public Administration are more open to change. The presence of formal partnership structures is neutral with respect to willingness to change. However, less formalised forms of employee partnership and involvement are influential. Employees who report higher levels of consultation relating to decisions that affect their work are more likely to be willing to accept change, even when other factors, including personal, job and organisational characteristics are taken into account.

Appendices



A. Methodology

In this section we discuss the methodology used in the employee attitude survey. We begin in Section 1 by detailing the sample, fieldwork and response rates. Section 2 discusses the questionnaire before moving on to consider re-weighting of the data in Section 3.

A.1 The sample, fieldwork and response rates

The fieldwork for the survey was carried out between June and early September 2003 using a telephone methodology. All questionnaires were completed with the respondent by interviewers from the ESRI's national panel. The questionnaire was carried out as a dedicated, single purpose survey for the National Centre for Partnership and Performance. It was not included as part of a larger omnibus or multi-purpose survey.

The sample was selected on a random basis from a total of 300 sampling points throughout the country. A set of 100 random telephone numbers was generated in each sampling part and these were used to generate a targeted 20 completed questionnaires from each cluster point. A total of 5,509 questionnaires was completed in the course of the survey. Of these 320 were unusable due to incomplete information and so were not included in the analysis. The current report is based on the analysis of 5,198 questionnaires.

One can see from Table 1.1 that these were generated from 11,716 phone calls to private households. This gives a response rate of 46.5%. In a further 50.6% of households the interview was refused; while in the remaining 2.9% of households the survey was partially completed or completed in such a way that it could not subsequently be used for analysis. The proportion of such surveys was unusually high in this survey. In general, in surveys of this nature partial completion of the questionnaire is close to zero.

Table A.1 Response rates from employee attitude survey

| | n | % |
|--------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Completed and used in analysis | 5,198 | 46.5 |
| Partially completed/unusable | 320 | 2.9 |
| Refusals | 5,658 | 50.6 |
| Sub-total | 11,176 | 100.0 |
| Invalid Calls: | | |
| Not private household | 5,510 | |
| Non existent/no reply | 16,158 | |
| No employees in household | 10,121 | |
| Total | 31,789 | |

The reader can see from Table 1.1 that not all calls made were to private households. Given the random nature of the phone numbers we do not know in advance whether or not the random number generated is a valid number for a household. In many cases it was not connected or non-existent; it was a business or fax number or it did not contain a valid member of the target population – in this case an employee. The inclusion of these invalid (or “deadwood”) numbers of the population does not adversely impact on the statistical nature of the sample. They are simply invalid numbers and can be discarded as such in calculating response rates.

A.2 The questionnaire

The survey instrument contained 8 sections as follows:

- A. Details on respondent's current labour market situation such as occupation; industrial sector; size of local unit and enterprise; number of hours worked; status of tenure; trade union membership.
- B. Attitudes to job, intensity and autonomy of the work. This section recorded level of agreement with a series of statements on job satisfaction, pressure, commitment, stress, autonomy etc.
- C. Change in the workplace – the incidence of structural re-organisation; change in Chief Executive; introduction of new work practices and changes over recent years in areas of responsibility, pressure worked under, employee's willingness to accept such change if it were to continue into the future etc.
- D. Skill levels and training provided by the employer over the 2 years preceding the survey.
- E. Communications – this section includes sources of information; perceptions on the adequacy or otherwise of information received from management and prior consultation regarding changes in areas affecting the respondent's job.
- F. Employee/employer relations – this section deals with relations between different groups of employees and also between management and employee.
- G. Partnership and Involvement – this section considers the extent of direct and also indirect participation by employees in decisions as to how the work is carried out.
- H. Background or classificatory variables. This included the standard set of classificatory variables used in analysis of the data. These include age, sex, marital status, number of dependent children, level of educational attainment etc.

The complete questionnaire is provided at the end of this chapter.

A.3 Sample weights

In line with all sample surveys the data collected had to be weighted or statistically adjusted prior to analysis. The purpose of this so-called re-weighting procedure is to compensate for any biases in the distribution of characteristics in the completed sample as compared to the population of interest – in this case the population of employees living in private households. The potential biases in question could derive either from the nature of the sampling frame used or from differential response rates within sub-groups of the population or the interaction of both effects.

Whatever the origin of the discrepancy between the sample and population distributions, we adjust the distributional characteristics of the sample in line with important analytical variables such as age, sex, level of educational attainment, social class, size of establishment, public/private sector etc. This is done by comparing the sample characteristics to external population controls. These latter came principally from the Quarterly National Household Survey (Q2 2002 and Q2 2003). The variables used in the weighting scheme were as follows:

- Gender
- NACE sector (11 categories)
- Age cohort (8 categories)
- Broad regional identifier (BMW vs. other)
- Number of employees in local unit (4 categories)
- Union membership (2 categories)
- Level of educational attainment (4 categories)
- Number of adults in the household (5 categories)
- Public/private sector (3 categories, private, commercial and non-commercial semi-state).

A total of 80 control variables was set up from the interactions of these variables. The weighting procedure used was based on a minimum distance algorithm which adjusts an initial weight in a regression-type framework such that the distribution of characteristics in the sample matches that of the set of control totals.

Table A2 outlines the complete list of population controls. Columns A and B shows the distribution for the population as a whole. Columns C and D presents the comparable distribution for the un-weighted sample. Columns E and F provide details on the weighted sample. Finally, column G provides details on the differences between the structure of the weighted sample and the population along the dimensions used in the re-weighting procedure. One can see that, in general terms, prior to weighting our sample was under-represented among persons with lower levels of educational attainment and younger persons. The sample weights connect for the sample distribution and provide a very close match to the population distributions (see Column G of Table A.2)

Table A.2 | Comparison of Population and Sample Distributions of Key Controls

| | | Population | | Unweighted Sample | | Weighted Sample | | Differences Population and Weighted Sample (F-B) |
|----------------------|----------|------------|------|-------------------|---------|-----------------|------|--|
| | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| | | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | |
| Gender*NACE1 | MALE_AB | 18,500 | 1.3 | 33 | 0.6 | 18,658 | 1.3 | 0.0 |
| | MALE_CDE | 194,200 | 13.2 | 640 | 12.3 | 195,709 | 13.3 | -0.1 |
| | MALE_F | 130,300 | 8.9 | 239 | 4.6 | 130,287 | 8.9 | 0.0 |
| | MALE_G | 96,700 | 6.6 | 287 | 5.5 | 97,528 | 6.6 | -0.1 |
| | MALE_H | 39,600 | 2.7 | 113 | 2.2 | 39,887 | 2.7 | 0.0 |
| | MALE_I | 64,200 | 4.4 | 224 | 4.3 | 64,763 | 4.4 | 0.0 |
| | MALE_JK | 90,700 | 6.2 | 290 | 5.6 | 91,493 | 6.2 | -0.1 |
| | MALE_L | 49,900 | 3.4 | 262 | 5.0 | 50,327 | 3.4 | 0.0 |
| | MALE_M | 32,900 | 2.2 | 161 | 3.1 | 33,182 | 2.3 | 0.0 |
| | MALE_N | 29,400 | 2.0 | 104 | 2.0 | 29,652 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| | MALE_O | 30,600 | 2.1 | 59 | 1.1 | 30,862 | 2.1 | 0.0 |
| | FMAL_AB | 4,200 | 0.3 | 16 | 0.3 | 4,049 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| | FMAL_CDE | 84,300 | 5.7 | 287 | 5.5 | 80,615 | 5.5 | 0.3 |
| | FMAL_F | 8,200 | 0.6 | 25 | 0.5 | 8,270 | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| | FMAL_G | 113,500 | 7.7 | 423 | 8.2 | 113,589 | 7.7 | 0.0 |
| | FMAL_H | 58,800 | 4.0 | 183 | 3.5 | 58,410 | 4.0 | 0.0 |
| | FMAL_I | 24,800 | 1.7 | 92 | 1.8 | 25,039 | 1.7 | 0.0 |
| | FMAL_JK | 104,000 | 7.1 | 399 | 7.7 | 101,633 | 6.9 | 0.2 |
| | FMAL_L | 40,300 | 2.7 | 243 | 4.7 | 40,870 | 2.8 | 0.0 |
| | FMAL_M | 77,500 | 5.3 | 409 | 7.9 | 78,163 | 5.3 | 0.0 |
| FMAL_N | 129,300 | 8.8 | 572 | 11.0 | 129,144 | 8.8 | 0.0 | |
| FMAL_O | 46,900 | 3.2 | 128 | 2.5 | 46,485 | 3.2 | 0.0 | |
| Gender*Age | MAL1519 | 38,600 | 2.6 | 141 | 2.7 | 38,953 | 2.7 | 0.0 |
| | MAL2024 | 117,300 | 8.0 | 270 | 5.2 | 118,304 | 8.1 | -0.1 |
| | MAL2534 | 237,100 | 16.1 | 475 | 9.2 | 237,788 | 16.2 | 0.0 |
| | MAL3544 | 171,500 | 11.7 | 682 | 13.1 | 172,970 | 11.8 | -0.1 |
| | MAL4554 | 134,600 | 9.2 | 540 | 10.4 | 135,765 | 9.2 | -0.1 |
| | MAL5559 | 46,200 | 3.1 | 173 | 3.3 | 46,595 | 3.2 | 0.0 |
| | MAL6064 | 25,500 | 1.7 | 111 | 2.1 | 25,718 | 1.8 | 0.0 |
| | MAL65HI | 6,200 | 0.4 | 20 | 0.4 | 6,253 | 0.4 | 0.0 |
| | FML1519 | 31,000 | 2.1 | 133 | 2.6 | 31,333 | 2.1 | 0.0 |
| | FML2024 | 108,200 | 7.4 | 309 | 6.0 | 106,371 | 7.2 | 0.1 |
| | FML2534 | 216,600 | 14.7 | 642 | 12.4 | 209,617 | 14.3 | 0.5 |
| | FML3544 | 162,000 | 11.0 | 858 | 16.5 | 163,364 | 11.1 | -0.1 |
| | FML4554 | 120,000 | 8.2 | 570 | 11.0 | 121,096 | 8.2 | -0.1 |
| | FML5559 | 34,900 | 2.4 | 177 | 3.4 | 35,209 | 2.4 | 0.0 |
| | FML6064 | 11,300 | 0.8 | 68 | 1.3 | 11,410 | 0.8 | 0.0 |
| | FML65HI | 7,800 | 0.5 | 20 | 0.4 | 7,867 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| Gender*Region | MALBMW | 186,700 | 12.7 | 683 | 13.2 | 187,800 | 12.8 | -0.1 |
| | MALOTH | 590,400 | 40.2 | 1,729 | 33.3 | 594,548 | 40.5 | -0.3 |
| | FMLBMW | 166,200 | 11.3 | 829 | 16.0 | 165,390 | 11.3 | 0.1 |
| | FMLOTH | 525,500 | 35.8 | 1,948 | 37.5 | 520,878 | 35.5 | 0.3 |

Table A.2 | Continued

| | | Population | | Unweighted Sample | | Weighted Sample | | Differences Population and Weighted Sample (F-B) |
|-------------------------|----------|------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------------|------|--|
| | | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| | | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | |
| Gender*Size | | | | | | | | |
| Local Unit | MAL19EMP | 296,400 | 20.2 | 897 | 17.3 | 298,220 | 20.3 | -0.1 |
| | MAL49EMP | 126,900 | 8.6 | 521 | 10.0 | 127,988 | 8.7 | -0.1 |
| | MAL50EMP | 353,700 | 24.1 | 994 | 19.2 | 356,139 | 24.3 | -0.2 |
| | FML19EMP | 263,900 | 18.0 | 1,204 | 23.2 | 264,945 | 18.0 | -0.1 |
| | FML49EMP | 113,000 | 7.7 | 640 | 12.3 | 113,832 | 7.8 | -0.1 |
| | FML50EMP | 314,900 | 21.4 | 933 | 18.0 | 307,491 | 20.9 | 0.5 |
| Gender*Union | | | | | | | | |
| M'ship | MAL34U | 149,400 | 10.2 | 249 | 4.8 | 150,295 | 10.2 | -0.1 |
| | MAL34NU | 243,600 | 16.6 | 637 | 12.3 | 244,750 | 16.7 | -0.1 |
| | MAL35U | 145,900 | 9.9 | 817 | 15.7 | 147,164 | 10.0 | -0.1 |
| | MAL35NU | 238,100 | 16.2 | 709 | 13.7 | 240,138 | 16.4 | -0.1 |
| | FML34U | 135,200 | 9.2 | 300 | 5.8 | 127,766 | 8.7 | 0.5 |
| | FML34NU | 220,600 | 15.0 | 784 | 15.1 | 219,555 | 14.9 | 0.1 |
| | FML35U | 127,700 | 8.7 | 856 | 16.5 | 128,852 | 8.8 | -0.1 |
| | FML35NU | 208,300 | 14.2 | 837 | 16.1 | 210,095 | 14.3 | -0.1 |
| Gender*Education | | | | | | | | |
| | MAL34NO | 45,200 | 3.1 | 41 | 0.8 | 44,629 | 3.0 | 0.0 |
| | MAL34LW | 65,100 | 4.4 | 143 | 2.8 | 65,657 | 4.5 | 0.0 |
| | MAL34HI | 209,000 | 14.2 | 349 | 6.7 | 210,405 | 14.3 | -0.1 |
| | MAL34DE | 73,700 | 5.0 | 353 | 6.8 | 74,354 | 5.1 | 0.0 |
| | MAL35NO | 44,100 | 3.0 | 225 | 4.3 | 44,478 | 3.0 | 0.0 |
| | MAL35LW | 63,700 | 4.3 | 313 | 6.0 | 64,247 | 4.4 | 0.0 |
| | MAL35HI | 204,200 | 13.9 | 479 | 9.2 | 205,948 | 14.0 | -0.1 |
| | MAL35DE | 72,000 | 4.9 | 509 | 9.8 | 72,630 | 4.9 | 0.0 |
| | FML34NO | 40,900 | 2.8 | 19 | 0.4 | 32,206 | 2.2 | 0.6 |
| | FML34LW | 59,000 | 4.0 | 86 | 1.7 | 57,486 | 3.9 | 0.1 |
| | FML34HI | 189,200 | 12.9 | 366 | 7.1 | 189,996 | 12.9 | -0.1 |
| | FML34DE | 66,700 | 4.5 | 613 | 11.8 | 67,633 | 4.6 | -0.1 |
| | FML35NO | 38,600 | 2.6 | 167 | 3.2 | 38,744 | 2.6 | 0.0 |
| | FML35LW | 55,700 | 3.8 | 227 | 4.4 | 56,177 | 3.8 | 0.0 |
| | FML35HI | 178,700 | 12.2 | 644 | 12.4 | 180,230 | 12.3 | -0.1 |
| | FML35DE | 63,000 | 4.3 | 655 | 12.6 | 63,796 | 4.3 | -0.1 |
| No. of Adults | | | | | | | | |
| in H'hold | ADULT1 | 130,723 | 8.9 | 564 | 10.9 | 128,487 | 8.7 | 0.2 |
| | ADULT2 | 647,741 | 44.1 | 2,465 | 47.5 | 650,440 | 44.3 | -0.2 |
| | ADULT3 | 279,072 | 19.0 | 1,072 | 20.7 | 281,206 | 19.1 | -0.1 |
| | ADULT4 | 223,258 | 15.2 | 702 | 13.5 | 222,507 | 15.2 | 0.0 |
| | ADULT5 | 188,006 | 12.8 | 386 | 7.4 | 185,975 | 12.7 | 0.1 |
| Pub/Priv Sector | | | | | | | | |
| | PUBLIC | 278,100 | 18.9 | 1,636 | 31.5 | 280,306 | 19.1 | -0.2 |
| | PRIVATE | 1,133,000 | 77.1 | 3,326 | 64.1 | 1,130,287 | 77.0 | 0.2 |
| | COMSTATE | 57,700 | 3.9 | 227 | 4.4 | 58,023 | 4.0 | 0.0 |

NACE SECTORS: A,B – Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry, Fishing; C,D,E – Mining, Quarrying, Manufacturing, Electricity, Gas, Water Supply; F – Construction; G – Wholesale/Retail; H – Hotels, Restaurants; I – Transport; J,K – Financial, Other Business; L – Public Administration; M – Education; N – Health and Social Work; O – Other.

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