



SLOAN WORK AND FAMILY
RESEARCH NETWORK
BOSTON COLLEGE

Questions and Answers about Flexible Work Schedules: A Sloan Work and Family Research Network Fact Sheet

Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets which provide statistical answers to some important questions about work-family and work/life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics about Flexible Work Schedules. (Last updated: December 2006.)

? Do people have flexible work schedules?

- ✔ **Fact 1** According to the 2005 NSE, "there has been an increase in daily flexitime: in 1998, 24% of employers allowed at least some employees to change their starting and quitting times on a daily basis; in 2005, 31% did so" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 2).
- ✔ **Fact 2** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 28.8% of full-time wage and salary workers in 2001 had flexible schedules (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003, p. 15).
- ✔ **Fact 3** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2001, 31.2% of employed (full-time) persons age 65 and over used flexible schedules (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003, p. 15).

? Which employees have access to flexible work schedules?

- ✔ **Fact 1** "Nonwhites are about 50% to 60% less likely than whites to be on a flexible work schedule" (Golden, 2001, p. 57).
- ✔ **Fact 2** "In May 2004, men continued to be somewhat more likely to have flexible schedules than women (28.1 and 26.7 percent, respectively)" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005, p. 2).
- ✔ **Fact 3** "Twice as many (small business) owners as (wage and salaried) employees are able to change their starting and quitting times within some range of hours" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 57).

- ✔ **Fact 4** Of a sample of respondents employed in public service organizations, employees in “management used this program to a significantly greater extent than non-management (employees)” (Kossek, DeMarr, Backman, & Kollar, 1993, p. 632).
- ✔ **Fact 5** “Of those respondents reporting that a job is unsuitable (for flexible work scheduling), 79% are full-time workers and 43% are managers or professionals” (Brewer, 2000, p. 39).
- ✔ **Fact 6** “Married workers are significantly more likely than unmarried workers to have a flexible work schedule, although the magnitude of significance is small—on the order of about 8 percent” (Golden, 2001, p. 57).



Which employees are using flexible schedules?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “Women are somewhat more likely (79%) than men (68%) to use flextime when it is available” (Galinsky, Bond, & Hill, 2004, p. 6).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “Employed, married women with household before tax income levels ranging from \$10,000 to \$74,999 have decreased odds of using flextime compared with those having household incomes of \$75,000 and above” (Billings & Sharpe, 1999, p. 92).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “Having a young child less than six years of age significantly increased the odds of working a flextime schedule after controlling for other factors” (Billings & Sharpe, 1999, p. 92).
- ✔ **Fact 4** “...roughly equal proportions of young women and men in this age group (Generation X) work flexible schedules. In addition, 25- to 34-year old women were more likely than women of other ages to have this kind of flexibility in their jobs” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 13).



Are flexible work schedules important to employees?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “For men in their 20s and 30s, and for women in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, the most important job characteristic is having a work schedule that allows them to spend time with their families” (Radcliffe Public Policy Center with Harris Interactive, 2000, p. 2).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “(Generation X) Americans are more likely than their (Generation X) Canadian counterparts to leave (their jobs) for more control over their work schedules (66 percent compared to 50 percent, respectively), flexibility (59 percent compared to 46 percent, respectively), the ability to work fewer hours (48 percent compared to 37 percent, respectively), and/or the ability to telecommute (50 percent compared to 32 percent, respectively)” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 25).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “Among U.S. (Generation X) respondents, women (83 percent) are much more likely than men (69 percent) to report that flexible work arrangements are important to career advancement and satisfaction” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 31).

✔ **Fact 4** "Based on a 5-point scale, where 5 is strongly agree and 1 is strongly disagree, managers generally intended to use flextime (3.75) and did not intend to use part-time work (1.95) or leaves (1.75) in the future" (Kossek, Barber, & Winters, 1999, p. 37).



How do employees benefit from flexible work schedules?

✔ **Fact 1** Fifty percent of employees who have high access to flexible work arrangements on the job report high levels of life satisfaction (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 39).

✔ **Fact 2** According to the National Study of the Changing Workforce, "employees who have more access to flexible work arrangements report fewer mental health problems" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 39).

✔ **Fact 3** In 2002, 32% of wage and salaried workers with high availability of flexible work arrangements report no interference of job and family life (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 38).

✔ **Fact 4** In 2002, 34% of wage and salaried employees who have high access to flexible work arrangement report "low levels of negative spillover from job to home" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 39).



How do flexible work schedules affect employees' relationships with their employers?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the National Study of the Changing Workforce, in 2002, 73% of employees with high availability of flexible work arrangements reported that there was a high likelihood that they would stay with their current employer for the next year (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 34).

✔ **Fact 2** In 2002, 39% of employees with high availability of flexible work arrangements reported, "high levels of loyalty and willingness to work harder than required to help their employers succeed" (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2002, p. 34).

✔ **Fact 3** "Only 9% of company representatives responding to the 2005 *NSE* survey feel that the use of flexible time and leave policies jeopardizes employees' opportunities for advancement" (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 13).



Which employers offer flexible work schedules?

✔ **Fact 1** "More than 80% of companies with minorities in 25 percent or more of top executive positions offer traditional flextime versus 64 percent of companies with no minorities in key positions" (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. xiii).

✔ **Fact 2** "Eighty-two percent of companies with women in half or more of their top executive positions provide traditional flextime, compared with 56 percent of companies with no women in top positions" (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. xii).

✔ **Fact 3** “Companies with more locations are more likely to provide traditional flextime...” (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. xv).

✔ **Fact 4** Sixty-eight percent of organizations allow some employees to periodically change starting or quitting times. Thirty-three percent allow all or most employees to do so. (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 6)

✔ **Fact 5** Small organizations [50-99 employees] are more likely than large organizations [1000+ employees] to allow all or most employees to periodically change starting or quitting times— 37% and 26%, respectively. (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 6)

? Do employers support flexible work schedules?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the 2005 NSE, “31% (of employers) report that management rewards those within the organization who support effective flexible work arrangements” (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 4)

✔ **Fact 2** “Only 9% of company representatives responding to the 2005 NSE survey feel that the use of flexible time and leave policies jeopardizes employees’ opportunities for advancement” (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 13).

✔ **Fact 3** “Some 24.8% of respondents’ organizations support flexitime compared to 14.5% (compressed work week) and 6.6% (telecommuting)” (Brewer, 2000, p. 38).

? How do employers benefit from flexible work schedules?

✔ **Fact 1** “Only 18 percent of companies offering one or more flexible work arrangements perceive the costs of their investments in these policies as outweighing the benefits, while 36 percent perceive these programs as cost-neutral and 46 percent perceive a positive return on their investments” (Galinsky & Bond, 1998, p. ii).

✔ **Fact 2** There was a stronger relationship between flexitime and positive outcomes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction for managers who had children under the age of 18 (compared to those who did not have children under the age of 18) (Scandura & Lankau, 1997, p. 388).

The Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. You can find a topic page for **Research/Teaching** dedicated to Flexible Work Schedules at: <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/academics.php> (choose ‘Flexible Work Schedules’ from the Topics List).

If you are interested in this topic from the **State Policy** or **Workplace Practice** perspective,

- a) go back to our home page www.bc.edu/wfnetwork/
- b) click on the appropriate user group

c) and choose 'Flexible Work Schedules' from the Topics List

2. Our database of academic literature contains the citations and annotations of literature related to the issue of Flexible Work Schedules. You can connect to this database at:

http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=BCL_WF



References

Billings, J. R., & Sharpe, D. L. (1999). Factors influencing flextime usage among employed married women. *Consumer Interests Annual*, 45, 89-95.

This study uses data from the Current Population Survey, May 1997 supplement on work schedules. The sample consisted of 9,204 employed, married women with and without children. 2,784 used flextime and 6,420 did not. The Current Population Survey (CPS) is conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. "(It) is a monthly nationwide survey of a scientifically selected sample representing the non-institutional civilian population. The sample is located in 754 areas with coverage in every state and the District of Columbia and is subject to sampling error. At the present time, about 60,000 occupied households are eligible for interview every month; of these between 6 and 7 percent are, for various reasons, unavailable for interview." (U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2003). No. 605. Persons Doing Job-Related Work at Home: 2001.

Bond, J., Galinsky, E., Kim, S., & Brownfield, E. (2005). *National study of employers. Highlights of findings*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

This study was designed to build on the 1998 Business Work-Life Study and therefore provides data on changes that have occurred over the last 7 years. "The 2005 NSE sample included 1,092 employers with 50 or more employees- "66 percent are for-profit companies and 34 percent are nonprofit organizations; 44 percent operate at only one location, while 56 percent have operations at more than one location...(The survey was conducted) using telephone interviews with human resource directors. Harris Interactive staff conducted the interviews from September 23, 2004 to April 5, 2005. Employers were selected from Dun & Bradstreet lists, using a stratified random sampling procedure in which selection was proportional to the number of people employed by each company to ensure a large enough sample of large organizations. The response rate was 38 percent, based on the percentage of all companies on the call-list that completed interviews." (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005, p. 1)

Bond, J.T., Thompson, C., Galinsky, E., & Prottas, D. (2002). *Highlights of the national study of the changing workforce*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

"The NSCW surveys representative samples of the nation's workforce once every five years (1992, 1997, 2002). Sample sizes average 3,500, including both wage and salaried employees and self-employed workers" (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002, p. v). Several of the questions in the National Study of the Changing Workforce were taken from or based upon questions in the Quality of Employment Survey (QES) conducted three times by the Department of Labor from 1969 to 1977. Although the NSCW is more comprehensive than the QES in addressing issues related to both work and personal life and has a stronger business perspective, having comparable data from over a 25 year period has provided a unique opportunity to look at trends over time. The 2002 NSCW uses 25 years of trend data to examine five topics in depth: women in the workforce; dual earner couples, the role of technology in employees' lives on and off the job, work-life supports on the job, and working for oneself versus someone else (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002).

To read the Executive Summary or the press release, and to purchase the full report as a PDF E-product, please visit <http://www.familiesandwork.org/announce/2002NSCW.html>.

Brewer, A.M. (2000). Work design for flexible work scheduling: Barriers and gender implications. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 7(1), 33-44.

"The current analysis is based on information gained from the Commuter Questionnaire comprising five sections...The current study is based on data from Sections 2 and 4 of the questionnaire, from 1249 respondents (response rate of 89%). The questionnaires were delivered and collected from each household by interviewers...88% of the sample was in paid employment outside the home" (pp.37-38).

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2005). *Workers on flexible and shift schedules in 2004 summary*. Retrieved December 14, 2006, from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/flex.nr0.htm>

"These findings were obtained from a supplement to the May 2004 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is the monthly household survey that provides information on national employment and unemployment. In May 2004, the survey also collected information about flexible schedules, shift work, and other related topics. The data presented in this release pertain to wage and salary workers who usually worked full time (35 or more hours per week) on their main job."

Catalyst (2001). *The next generation: Today's professionals, tomorrow's leaders*. New York: Catalyst.

"Eight U.S. and two Canadian headquartered organizations—representing a range of industries—provided a list of professional and managerial men and women born between 1964 and 1975. This resulted in a diverse and representative pool of respondents...Phase II: Short questionnaire fielded to 300 women and 150 men professionals and managers born between 1964 and 1975 at each of the participating U.S. organizations to construct the survey. Phase III: 30-minute telephone interviews with 39 of the questionnaire respondents (16 men and 23 women). Phase IV: Survey sent to approximately 3,000 women and 1,500 men (born between 1964 and 1975) throughout 10 organizations•representing a range of industries•garnering a 30 percent response rate. (Thirty-two percent of women and 27 percent of men responded). Two of the participating companies are based in Canada; the remaining eight are based in the U.S." (p. 6).

DiNatale, M., & Boraas, S. (2002). The labor force experience of women from "Generation X". *Monthly Labor Review*, 125(3), 3-15.

"Most of the data in this chapter were derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For more information regarding the Current Population Survey, see Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology, Bureau of Labor Statistics Technical Paper 63, March 2000" (p.15).

Galinsky, E., & Bond, J.T. (1998). *Business work-life study: A sourcebook*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

"The Families and Work Institute's 1998 Business Work-Life Study (BWLS) is one of the first and most comprehensive studies of how U.S. companies are responding to the work-life needs of the nation's changing workforce. Funded by Allstate Insurance Company, The Chase Manhattan Bank, The Commonwealth Fund, Freddie Mac Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, and Travelers Foundation, the 1998 BWLS surveys a representative sample of 1,057 for-profit (84 percent of the sample) and not-for-profit companies (16 percent of the sample) with 100 or more employees. It was developed to complement the Families and Work Institute's 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW), which surveyed a representative sample of employees in the U.S. labor force" (The 1998 Business Work-Life Study Executive Summary, p. 1).

To read the Executive Summary or to purchase the full report, go to: <http://www.familiesandwork.org/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&ProdID=9>

Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T. & Hill, E.J. (2004). *When work works: A status report on workplace flexibility: Who has it? Who wants it? What difference does it make?* Retrieved November 21, 2005, from <http://familiesandwork.org/3w/research/downloads/status.pdf>.

"The research findings reported here are drawn mainly from Families and Work Institute's National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW). The NSCW is conducted every five years, beginning in 1992 and most recently in 2002. This representative sample of approximately 3,500 workers includes wage and salaried employees, self-employed workers, and business owners, although the data presented here pertains only to wage and salaried employees."

Golden, L. (2001). Flexible work schedules: What are we trading off to get them? *Monthly Labor Review*, 124(3), 50-67.

May Current Population Survey (CPS). The Current Population Survey (CPS) is conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. "(It) is a monthly nationwide survey of a scientifically selected sample representing the non-institutional civilian population. The sample is located in 754 areas with coverage in every state and the District of Columbia and is subject to sampling error. At the present time, about 60,000 occupied households are eligible for interview every month; of these between 6 and 7 percent are, for various reasons, unavailable for interview." (U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2003). No. 605. Persons Doing Job-Related Work at Home: 2001. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/pop.pdf>, p. 1-2).

Kossek, E., Barber, A., & Winters, D. (1999). Using flexible schedules in the managerial world: The power of peers. *Human Resource Management, 38*(1), 33-46.

"Survey data were collected from managers at a large midwestern telecommunications company that had adopted flextime, extended leaves of absence, and part-time work." A random sample of 2,000 managers was used (p. 37).

Kossek, E.E., DeMarr, B.J., Backman, K., & Kollar, M. (1993). Assessing employees' emerging elder care needs and reactions to dependent care benefits. *Public Personnel Management, 22*(4), 617-638.

"The data used to assess the elder care needs of employees in public service organizations were based on the results of needs assessments surveys that were collected from three Midwest firms (a utility, a branch of the American Red Cross, and a not for profit hospital)...Only surveys from employees who are currently managing care for an adult dependent are included in this analysis (n=69)..." (p. 622).

Radcliffe Public Policy Center with Harris Interactive (2000). *Life's work: Generational attitudes toward work and life integration*. Cambridge, MA: Radcliffe Public Policy Center.

"The Life's Work study was conducted for the Radcliffe Public Policy Center by Harris Interactive, Inc. and funded by Fleet Boston Financial. The final results are based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,008 adults aged 21 and over. Interviewing was conducted between January 18 and February 2, 2000" (p. 2).

Scandura, T.A., & Lankau, M.J. (1997). Relationships of gender, family responsibility and flexible work hours to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 18*, 377-391.

A matched sample of 80 men and 80 women in managerial positions from 93 different organizations was used for this study. The original list of potential participants was obtained through the American List Council's mailing list of women with job titles of general manager, vice president or president/CEO. A random sample of 1200 was drawn from this list and screened for their willingness to take part and their ability to identify a male peer at their level. Usable surveys were returned at a response rate of 39.7% for women and the men were matched to these women for the final sample size of 80 women and 80 men.

U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2003). No. 606. *Persons on flexible schedules: 2001*. Washington DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

The chief source of these data is the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The sample includes employed full-time wage and salary workers 16 years old and over in the US., and excludes the self-employed. Data relate to the primary job. For description of data sources, see <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/labor.pdf>
