

AN ANALYSIS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE, EMPLOYEE STRESS AND HEALTH IN THE IRISH UNIVERSITY SECTOR

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Background

Increased levels of work intensity and increased working hours have been identified as potential occupational stressors, and The European Parliament has called for studies into the effects of working long hours on the family and on individual health. This study concentrates on the issues of stress, workload, and work-life balance in the Irish academic sector. The activities of employees in the Irish university sector are critical for the maintenance of growth and competitiveness in the new knowledge-based economy, and if Irish workers are to compete on the global stage, we need to better understand how to maximize worker health, satisfaction and productivity.

Research Aims

Specific objectives include, to:

- Determine levels of self-reported stress, health and productivity in the university sector
- Determine the impact of work intensity and number of working hours on levels of stress, health and productivity.
- Determine the effects of job involvement and work overload on work-life balance in practice.
- Determine the significance of worker-environment fit in mediating the relationship work schedule and levels of stress, health and productivity.

Methods

A quantitative multivariate survey methodology has been used to measure key independent and dependent variables in a cross-sectional sample of academic staff working in Irish universities. This consists of a purpose designed electronic questionnaire sent to academics in three Irish universities.

A quantitative diary study has been designed and piloted, with the data collection to begin in Quarter One 2011.

Progress to Date

Data analysis on the questionnaire data is complete. A journal article is in preparation. Data collection on phase 2 of the study will begin in February 2011. This consists of a quantitative diary study, which focuses on post-work recovery and detachment from work.

Dissemination

Hogan, V. & Hogan M. (2010). An examination of factors that affect work hours, work-life conflict, and well-being in Irish academics. *STAR Conference*. NUI Galway, August 2010.