

Work-Life Balance: A Diverse Perspective in the New Economy

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in Employment
Committee

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Outline

- Introduction
- Factors contributing to work-life conflict
- Examples of work-life conflict in diversity groups
- Gender and diversity issues in the context of CAALL
- Key gender and diversity questions
- Conclusion
- Links to reference documents

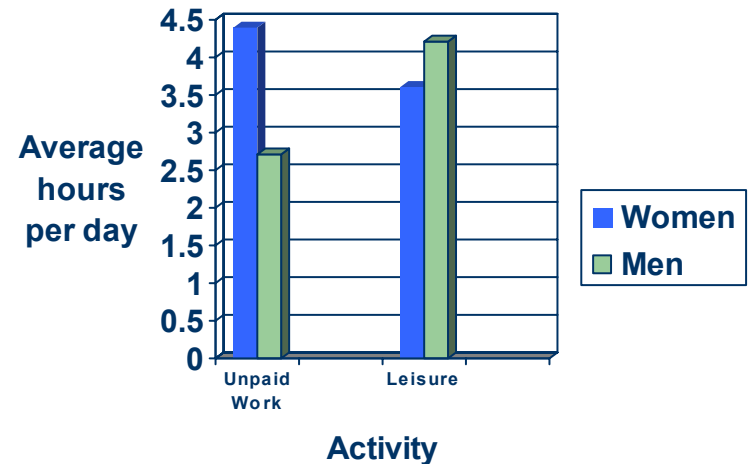
Introduction: Definition of *Work-Life Balance*

- *Work-life balance* is about being able to maintain a balance between work and personal responsibilities on all fronts:
 - Work and family
 - Work and personal fulfillment
 - Work and social and community responsibility

Time Stress is on the Rise

- Both genders report feeling moderately stressed, but women are more severely stressed
- Average number of hours spent per day is higher among women, depending on the activity. For example:
 - Unpaid work
 - Leisure

Hours per day per activity, by gender (24-44 age group)



Source: Statistics Canada, 1999

Market Pressures

- Need for Canadian firms to compete globally:
 - Dealing with downsizing and restructuring of organizations
 - Rise in service sector employment / decline in goods-producing sector employment
 - Skills shortages in key areas (nursing, engineering and management)

Nature of Jobs is Changing

- Technological advancement has driven the need for increased level of skilled workers:
 - Decrease in job security and/or an increase in unemployment /underemployment for those with lack of skills to compete in today's labour market
- Longer work days and more shift work
- Over-representation of employed women in non-standard work

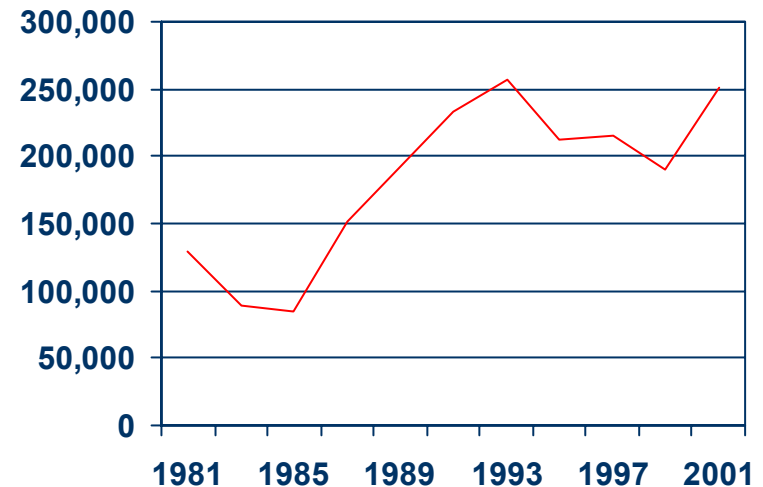
Demographic and Social Changes in the Past 30 years

- More women in the labour force:
 - 46% of women aged 25 or older in labour force in 2000 (35% in 1976)
- Family patterns are changing:
 - More dual-income families
 - More single-parent families
 - More employees have elderly dependents
- Canadian society is more diverse:
 - Aboriginal population
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Recent immigrants and visible minorities

Demographic and Social Changes in the Past 30 years (cont.)

- Net immigration provided 71% of Canada's net labour growth between 1991-1996 as the immigrant population in Canada increased by 15.5%

Immigration in Canada -
Historical Perspective (1981-
2001)



Source: Facts and Figures 2001, Citizen and Immigration Canada

Diversity Groups are Affected by Work-Life Balance in Different Ways

- Aging workforce
- Recent immigrants and visible minorities
- Aboriginal people
- Persons with disabilities
- Rural residents
- Parents of young children
- Lone parents

Gender & Diversity Issues in Work-Life Balance: Labour Standards

- Many workers are struggling to balance their family care responsibilities with work. This creates an increased need to consider:
 - Flexibility of working hours and daily cap on hours
 - Increased access to non-wage benefits for those currently excluded
 - Leave provisions to support care of severely ill family members
 - Accommodating special leaves for vocational training
 - Modifying eligibility criteria to access maternity/parental leave
 - Challenges of particular groups such as domestic workers
- Growing pressures by workers to recognize non-Christian based statutory holidays in employment contracts

Gender & Diversity Issues in Work-Life Balance: Labour Relations

- Recent court decisions on pay equity putting additional pressure to operationalize “equal pay for equal work”
- Balancing work and family and other scheduling issues being raised in collective bargaining. For example:
 - Immigrants requiring more time to travel home for funerals
- Stakeholders assert women and diversity groups in certain sectors may have limited access to unionization and may be under-represented at the bargaining table:
 - Age profile of union membership may lead to conflict over importance of work-life balance
- Mandatory overtime increasingly a problem for workers with family-care responsibilities. For example:
 - Parents with fixed custody arrangements

Gender & Diversity Issues in Work-Life Balance: Occupational Health & Safety

- Fatigue may be an increasing safety issue for workers trying to balance work & family. For example:
 - Employees performing shift work
- Preferences to follow cultural practices at work such as wearing traditional clothing may require alterations to existing safety equipment
- Since the needs of men, women and various diversity groups differ, it may be necessary to alter certain safety standards:
 - Determination of exposure rates of airborne contaminants vary by size and weight
 - Safety can be compromised when clothing and equipment do not fit
 - Equipment design that is inflexible to different body sizes can result in repetitive strain injuries
 - Gender specific guidelines on safe load lifting
 - Design of work stations vary by gender or diversity needs

Gender & Diversity Issues in Work-Life Balance: Research & Policy

- Many sources of gender disaggregated data exist:
 - Statistics Canada, United Nations, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Conference Board of Canada
- However, for many topics gender disaggregated data is not available nor is it available for diversity groups and non standard workers:
 - Sample size often a concern and needs to be addressed in survey design
- Key research areas of interest are arising with gender and diversity implications:
 - Contingent work, changing work relationships, etc.
 - Environmental issues such as contaminant levels for pregnant women

Key Gender and Diversity Questions

1. What impact will gender and diversity factors have on this policy/program/legislation?
2. How could the policy/program/legislation be modified to reduce/ eliminate any identified negative impacts, or to accentuate positive ones?
3. Are gender and diversity considerations accounted for in:
 - Communicating the policy/program/legislation?
 - Evaluating it?
 - Setting directions for future research?
 - Consulting on it?

Conclusion

- Summary:
 - Work-life conflict for working Canadians is on the rise
 - “One size fits all” policy solution not likely to be effective
 - Considering gender and diversity issues can lead to better policy/program/legislative solutions
- Key gender and diversity questions to remember
- Gender and diversity tool

Links to Reference Documents

- For additional information on data in this presentation, please visit the following:
 - <http://labour-travail.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/worklife/>
 - <http://www.worklifecanada.ca/families2.shtml>
 - <http://labour-travail.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/worklife/wlbc-ctvpc/presentation.cfm>
 - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/work-travail/index.html>
 - <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2001/index.html>