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**HUMAN RESOURCES AND REDUCED HOURS**

A Thesis in

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by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to discover how often Human Resource professionals use reduced hour policies and how much HR professionals desire to use these policies. This study also aims to find the difference between reduced hour use and opinions of women and men HR professionals. HR professionals were surveyed in the United States and Australia to determine the differences between the two countries regarding the use and opinion of reduced hours in the field of HR. The results show that more Australian HR professionals use reduced hour policies than American HR professionals and more Australian companies make reduced hours available than American companies. Also, in both countries, women were more likely than men to use reduce hours, want to but not be able to use reduced hours and believe that reduced hours policies should be expanded. Furthermore, the results indicate that the majority of HR professionals in America and Australia believe that reduced hours should be made more available and that more HR professionals desire to use these policies than have been able to use them.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In a society with a shrinking workforce, increased demands on workers, increased stress, more stress-related illness, additional family responsibilities and a rapidly increasing speed with which tasks are expected to be accomplished (due to technology and globalization) it is progressively more important to ensure that we have a healthy workforce with flexible working options. One way to do this is by encouraging organizations to make available reduced hour working schedules. By defining reduced hours, discussing the extent of reduced hours, comparing reduced hours and part-time work, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of reduced hours, reviewing similarities and differences between Australia and the USA, explaining the information the surveys are designed to gather, and discussing the results and why the results are important, readers will gain a greater understanding about the details of this research.

#### **What are Reduced Hours?**

A reduced hour working arrangement is a flexible work option that allows employees to cut back hours from a full-time work schedule while still maintaining their same job and career track, but with reduced pay, and sometimes reduced benefits (Barnett, 1998; Barnett & Gareis, 2000; Hill & Kadi, 2001). For example, an individual might work 32 hours a week instead of the traditional 40. In many cases, the professional moving from full- to part- time remains in the same position and negotiates a reduced workload when needed. This is a high-status, career-oriented option of flexibility that

contrasts with traditionally lower status part-time positions. In the literature the concept of reduced hours is given several different terms. Although the majority of references used the term ‘reduced hours’, some of the authors use ‘new-concept part-time employment’ (Hill 2004, Kahne 1985) or ‘reduced-load work’ to refer to the same concept (Buck 2000, Lee 2000, Kossek 2005).

There are many different ways to make reduced hours work and it can take several forms. The possibilities are unique to each job and every individual. There are flexible options such as part-time partnerships, part-time contractors, reduced hours “extended” and “flexible” partnership track, mutual flexibility (when both the firm and the associate make efforts), extended flexible leaves, job-sharing, and flex-time (Boston Bar Association 1999).

### **Extent of Reduced Hours**

The concept of reduced hours in America has come a long way. This is mainly due to the fact that it is commonly used as a recruitment and retention tool. A 2005 survey was given to 54 American companies leading in adopting flexible work arrangements. All but three of 54 organizations indicated that less than 5% of their managers and professionals were working a reduced hours arrangement. The percent of total professional workforce working reduced hours is relatively small, but the numbers are increasing over time. Compared to five years ago, 77% said that there are more professionals and managers working reduced hours in their firm (Kossek 2005, p. 10).

While research shows that access to these policies is expanding or at least is perceived to be more inclusive, flexible policies still appear to be unevenly distributed

among men and women. Men find it harder than women to be granted part-time or reduced hour positions (Kossek 2005, Meiksins 2002). Women were found to use flexible work arrangements for longer periods of time, rather than for a transitional period following maternity leave. The average number of years spent using reduced hours was five but nearly half used flexible work arrangements for more than five years (Catalyst 2000).

### **Reduced Hours vs. Part-Time Work**

Part-time work was and is still seen as a less permanent, less stable, less career oriented, and a less desirable type of work. On the other hand, reduced hours is more permanent, stable type of work in which people remain on a certain career path with the idea that this is a temporary arrangement and the professional will be working a full-time schedule in the future. Part-time work has traditionally involved those who do not choose to work less, but are hired into lower-level jobs and are poorly compensated with no benefits (Lee 2000). A reduced hours work situation is much more attractive than working part-time because the reduced hour employee will in most cases have higher pay, a higher status job, benefits, and will be made to feel like they are a valuable asset to the company.

### **Advantages of Reduced Hours**

Research indicates that reduced hours may be a solution to current problems in the workforce such as the loss of valuable talent, stressed employees and high turn-over. The benefits of a reduction of hours include the retention of skilled workers; reduced

absenteeism; reduced turnover; reduced overtime pay, improved employee morale; a better employee attitude towards the company; lower training and recruiting costs; less burnout; less stress; more peak-period coverage, full-time coverage where there are vacations or illness, increased employee performance, reduced job fatigue, fewer injuries; lower health-care costs, and higher productivity. Additionally, employees are able to maintain their career identity, maintain professional skills, maintain career momentum, be available to take care of sick dependents or children, while children get the quality time and care they desire and need from their parents (Kossek 2005, Lewis 1996, Meiksins and Whalley 2002).

### **Disadvantages of Reduced Hours**

There are several disadvantages that reduced hours can bring to all individuals working a reduced hour schedule as well as to co-workers and the organization. Some disadvantages include that there are often negative assumptions that are associated with employees working a reduced hour schedule. Some assumptions are that the employee is lazy, does not care about the job, the manager or co-workers, does not do a good enough job, etcetera. Other drawbacks are that employees often receive less money and benefits. There may also be guilt from not being at work as much as other co-workers, missing out on some events in the work place, not feeling as included, not being taken as seriously in the work place, suffering adverse career consequences (ie. being overlooked for a promotion) and in some cases being expected to do the same amount of work in less time. Furthermore, it can be difficult for managers to put together and manage a schedule (ie. meetings) when there are reduced hour employees not always at the office. Managers sometimes must put effort and time into fighting off negative assumptions co-workers

may be making about reduced-hour colleagues, learn how to support and manage a person on a reduced hours schedule, be careful not to overload a reduced hours professional with extra work in a way that disrespects the reduced hours agreement and stay unbiased (being a fair manager) in decision making that may involve reduced-hours employees. Also, a reduced hours employee can put extra work, pressure and stress on coworkers as they attempt to pick up the work the reduced-hour co-worker is not doing. Reduced hours may create a sense of inequality at the workplace and take away motivation and morale from other employees.

It seems that the main reasons some of these disadvantages exist are due to a lack of understanding and knowledge in the work place about reduced hours and the many benefits it can bring to people and organizations. Some of these problems are likely to be eliminated if managers and employees are educated about reduced hours and encouraged to have an open mind about flexibility.

### **Comparison of United States and Australia**

To better understand the United States it is helpful to look outside the US and make cross-cultural comparisons. The country of Australia is comparable to the US in many ways but the key differences are that it has more family programs and a livable wage (Drago and Wooden 2006). Some of the United States and Australia similarities include that both are part of the developed world, have democratic governments and are highly integrated into the global economy. They also have European-based societies in which the majority of inhabitants are English-speaking, have seen an increasing diversity of family forms, an increase in delayed and denied childbearing, continue to have gender

inequality (Drago, Scutella and Pirretti 2007), and the majority of unpaid care giving still seems to fall upon the shoulders of women in both countries. Many women in Australia and the US, particularly highly educated women with career aspirations, find traditional employment inconsistent with childbearing and childrearing. Both Australia and the US have experienced large declines in union membership during the last half-century (Drago and Wooden 2006). In both societies, many work/family policies have been structured around a gendered model of the labor market—through the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in the US, and the combination of the Sex Discrimination Act and workplace awards in Australia (Drago and Wooden 2006).

Some of the areas that differ between the two countries include governmental policies supportive of low-wage employees in Australia and the availability of attractive part-time options and opportunities for employees as compared to the US where part-time work is normally not attractive. Australian women are less often employed and they are more likely to work part-time than women in America. Marriages are more stable in Australia and more traditional gender roles are still upheld. Australia has a larger amount of nontraditional families and Australian work/family policies are negotiated through enterprise agreements while the US policies are mainly implemented unilaterally by corporations. The national minimum as a percentage of median wages for adult earners was 58.8% in Australia, but only 32.2% in the US. In the United States there is a more equal division of labor in the home and also higher rates of labor force participation and higher rates of full-time employment for women. Overwork is twice as prevalent in the United States (49.5% compared to 23.1%) (Drago and Wooden 2006, p. 11). Government policies are more family-responsive in Australia. Although neither country

provides legislation for private sector paid parental leave, new parents with permanent employment in the Australian government and many private sector employees are given a full year of shared unpaid leave compared with only 12 weeks in the United States.

### **Data Gathered and Research Questions**

Two surveys were conducted, one in HR groups in Australia and one in the United States, in order to gather information on the following: if they have ever used reduced hours, if they have ever desired to use reduced hours but were not able to, their overall opinion about reduced hours and what barriers held them back from utilizing reduced hours. The main goal of the surveys was to have enough information to determine how often HR professionals utilize reduce hours options and to find out how much HR professionals desire to use these policies.

To go into a bit more detail, some of the questions the research focused on getting answers to are as follows: ‘Are there a larger number of HR professionals who want to use reduced hours policies than the number of professionals who actually use them?’, ‘Do most HR professionals feel reduced hours options should be expanded or not?’ and ‘Are there barriers that keep HR professionals from using reduced hour options? If so, what are they?’ There most likely are a larger number of HR professionals who want to use reduced hours than who actually use them because of barriers that exist in the field and in their personal life (ie. financial, no support from management or supervisor, fear of adverse career impact, no policy available at organization). According to many studies that will be discussed in the literature review, across a number of other professions many believe that companies need to provide more flexible options for employees. It is

reasonable to assume that this finding will be similar in the field of human resource management.

The following information focuses more on demographics and its effect on the utilization and opinion of reduced hours policies. ‘Are more men or women HR professionals taking advantage of reduced hours policies?’ It is likely that more women are using these policies because there are many more women in the HR profession and it is more socially acceptable for woman to take a reduced hours schedule in order to raise children or take care of parents. ‘Will HR professionals with children value and want reduced hour policies more than professionals without children?’ It is probable that HR professionals with children are more likely to value and take advantage of reduced hours because they are more likely to need them. ‘Will HR professionals in a dual-earner family want reduced hours more than HR professionals not in a dual-earner family?’ It is easy to assume that professionals in a dual-earning family are more likely to use reduced hours. For example, a single working person is less likely to be able to afford a lower income and fewer benefits on a reduced hours schedule while a dual-earning family already will have one (possibly) stable income to enable the second earner to work fewer hours.

This research is also aiming to gather information in order to compare the use and opinion of reduced hours in Australia and the United States. Two important questions that focus the research are ‘Do more reduced hours policies for HR professionals exist in Australia or the US?’ and ‘Do more HR professionals in Australia take advantage of reduced hours policies than in the US?’.

It is likely that more reduced hours policies exist in Australia. This is likely because Australia's government has made more part-time benefit options and is more supportive of giving new mothers paid maternity leave. Its policies seem to be more flexible than US policies and this may carry over to the HR field as well. Australian professionals are also more likely than US professionals to make use of reduced hours policies because the breadwinner family structure is more common in Australia. This means that it is more common and acceptable for Australian women to stay home or work less (reduced hour schedule) than women in the US. Also, Australia's maternity leave policy suggests more openness to and acceptance of flexible options. This breaks down some of the barriers that may cause United States HR professionals to hesitate from using these policies.

## **Results**

The results indicate that the majority of HR professionals in America and Australia believe that reduced hours should be made more available and that more HR professionals desire to use these policies than have been able to use them. The results show that more Australian HR professionals use reduced hour policies than American HR professionals and more Australian companies make reduced hours available than American companies. Another interesting finding is that women HR professionals use reduced hours, want to use reduced hours but are unable to and believe reduced hours should be expanded more than men HR professionals. The research indicates that the most prominent barriers to employees using reduced hours in America, in order of significance, are that there is no employer policy, financial difficulties, managers and supervisors not supportive of reduced hours, and adverse career consequences. In

Australia, the top barriers, in order of significance, are financial difficulties, adverse career consequences, managers and supervisors not supportive, and that there is no employer policy.

### **Significance of Results**

The importance of this study is that it reveals new knowledge and takes steps towards helping to improve the amount of flexibility in the field of human resources. These steps have the potential to ensure that people are able to have a work-life balance, help talented men and women to stay in the workforce, and assist in minimizing stress including stress related illnesses. HR is the department that creates and implements flexible policies. They have the opportunity to use these policies and set an example for the workforce with the hope that other departments will follow suit. If reduced hours are managed in a strategic manner, HR has the ability to lead by example in transforming an unhealthy company culture into a healthy and thriving company culture. By taking advantages of these policies for themselves and ultimately improving their lives, it is likely that they can indirectly improve the lives of others who also may decide to utilize reduced hours.

This research shows that the amount of reduced hour options being made available and being utilized by HR professionals is insufficient compared to the desires and needs of HR professionals. This knowledge can help employers, the government and society to recognize that there is a problem and there needs to be a solution: more reduced hours policy promotion, acceptance and utilization. In finding that Australia has more progressive, available and utilized reduced hours options than the United States, America can use Australia as a bench mark and as a vision for the future. Australia is

seemingly the most similar country to the United States. If it can make these flexible working options successful it is likely that America can also.

Hopefully America will eliminate the barriers that are keeping Americans from using reduced hours and will also give working professionals more of an opportunity to live their lives in a healthy and balanced way. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it also will benefit employers, employees, parents, spouses and children alike.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

To have a better understanding of the concepts and context of the issues, it is helpful to provide a review of the history and current trends in the labor market, the history of reduced hours and part-time work, reduced hours in America, part-time work in Australia and the field of Human Resource Management.

#### **I. Current Trend of the Labor Market**

The United States labor market is an ever changing and evolving dynamic market. Our society is now a low-fertility, ageing population, facing a decline in job stability, with less attachment between a worker and his/her job. People are working longer hours at a faster pace and technology is revolutionizing the workplace.

Time is a scarce and highly prized resource for employees and employers. Work patterns confirm increased turnover, absenteeism and stress-related illnesses. Economic, demographic and social trends add to the misalignment between the demands of work and family. Competitive pressures are causing companies to drive down costs by outsourcing work or reducing staff. When added together, these factors place a great burden on those who remain employed (Thompson 2004).

The traditional family pattern of the breadwinner husband and homemaker wife is now a minority family structure. The dual-earner families are increasing the norm in two-parent families including those with young children. Some factors that contribute to this trend include economic need, women's desire for independence, contemporary job uncertainties, and the disappearance of the 'job for life'.

The juggling of responsibilities has increased stress and illness. There are high numbers of employees taking early retirement because of disability. Often this is because of mental rather than physical illness, usually attributed to stress. The government is concerned and wants to address stress and burnout issues to reverse this trend (Gambles , Lewis, and Rapoport 2006).

There has been a moderate decline in job stability in America although the extent and timing of this decline over the past three decades is not clear. It seems that during the 1900s America experienced a decline in job stability. This was possibly due to exceptionally high rates of job separations in the early years of the decade, the period when concerns about downsizing emerged (Carre et al. 2000).

Because of the growing female attachment to the labor force during the last 30 years, voluntary resignations have declined among women. Male workers have faced growing competition for long-term jobs leading to stability declines for men (Carre et al. 2000). Between 1989 and 1999 alone, women's labor force participation increased from 56% to 59%, and nearly 3/5 of mothers with children under age 18 work (United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics).

There were 68 million working women in 2003, a significant increase from 18.4 million in 1950. Although more women are becoming increasingly active in the workforce, a wage gap still exists. The wage gap has narrowed by only a half a penny a year for the past 40 years. The gap between median earnings of full-time, year-round workers widened in 2005, with women's earnings currently 76% of men's, down from 77% in 2004. At this pace, it will take another 40 years for women to reach wage parity with men. It has been discovered that over the course of a working lifetime, the average

woman loses approximately \$523,000 due to the wage gap. In 2003, nearly three-quarters of all mothers were in the labor force. Among mothers with young children, 70% worked for pay (BPWUSA 2006).

Even though women participation rates have grown over the past years it is reported that the work force is losing many valuable women employees due to a lack of flexible policies. New York Times journalist Jenny Anderson said that the task force (sponsored by Goldman Sachs and Lehman Brothers), surveyed 2,443 “highly qualified” women (with high-honors undergraduate, graduate or professional degrees) about their work patterns; among the women in the survey with children, 43% reported that they had left work voluntarily at some point in their careers. Of those, 93% wanted to return; 74% managed to do so, though only 40% of that group did so full time.

Women in professional careers have several options when deciding whether, when, and to what degree they want to incorporate work and family roles. An increasing number appear to be delaying marriage and childbearing to build a professional life (United States Census Bureau, 2002). There is controversy about the wisdom of this decision. On one hand, adopting a greater family role might lead to less professional career involvement for women (Statham, Vaughan, & Houseknecht 1987). On the other hand, delaying marriage and children increases the likelihood that these women will never marry and or have children (Hewlett, 2002). Because marrying and having children are important components of the life script of most professional women (Galinsky, Salmond, Bond, Kropf, Moore, & Harrington 2002), many are looking for ways to more successfully integrate work and home (Hill 2004).

Professional women who choose to marry and have children find it very hard, or nearly impossible, to create a harmonious life in which they feel successful in managing both work and family responsibilities (Hill & Kadi, 2001). Some mothers try to "do it all," continuing to work long hours in their professional careers while simultaneously investing heavily in their family (Taeuber, 1996). Others wind up on the so-called "Mommy Track," molding their ultimate career aspirations in order to raise children (Schwartz, 1989). Some choose to drop out of the workforce temporarily or permanently. One-third of new mothers with college degrees do not participate in the workforce at all during the year they give birth (Taeuber 1996). Some new mothers decide to work part-time in their professional occupations (Meiksins & Whalley, 2002) (Hill 2004). It seems that the recent trend for professional mothers is to leave the workplace. Also, women who have continuously worked full-time are less likely to be married and have children than women who have taken leaves or worked part-time (Lewis 1996).

In Lewis's focus groups (1996) women explained how work boosts confidence and self-esteem, brings shape and structure to their lives, and confers status and standing in their communities. It is a shame that so many talented women have to miss out on these benefits because of the inflexibility of the workplace.

A number of United States citizens seem to be valuing leisure time over money. Harvard Business School's class of 2006 expressed the importance of managing a career and a family to a room full of people at the school's Dynamic Women in Business conference. "We never would have had this panel in business school," said Ms. Stoeber. "For us, it was all about how to compete with the boys." While wooing women back to

Wall Street is a large task, the pipeline of new female talent also appears to be stagnating. At almost half of the nation's top business schools, fewer women will make up the class of 2007 than that of 2003, according to the schools' data. Columbia Business School, a top feeder to Wall Street, has seen its class size grow 5.5% from 2003 to 2007; women represented 36% of the class of 2003 but 34% of the class of 2007. According to Universities, 13% of first- or second-year women at top-tier M.B.A. programs chose Wall Street as a preferred industry in 2002: by 2006, that figure had fallen to 6.9% (and that from a larger sample size of 1,603 women)(Anderson 2006).

People desire more flexibility. Robert Drago, Work-Family studies professor and author from the Penn State University explained that a 1990 poll found that more than half the men surveyed said they would be willing to have their salaries cut by 25% if they could have more family or personal time. In another survey, 40% of fathers said they would quit their jobs if they could in order to spend more time with their children.

The Business and Professional Women Foundation (1999) found that having flexible or shorter week hours is very important to working women. Having opportunities to work part-time is of major or moderate concern to 51% of the women surveyed. Research also indicates that after taking some time out of the work force, these workers seek to return to the work force fairly quickly, as long as they have a workable and appealing setup. A survey of 2,443 women and 653 men, co-authored by Sylvia Ann Hewlett of the Center for Work-Life Policy, found women who take career breaks are only out of the work force for 2.2 years, on average. And only 5% of mothers who return even want to go back to their former employers; instead, they seek flexibility at smaller firms or by starting their own businesses (Shellenbarger 2006).

Because many women are still interested in their careers but cannot seem to balance their life with children and a career, or simply are choosing leisure over money, they seem to opt-out of the workforce. Companies are recognizing this and are beginning to take action. Big companies are trying to win women back by addressing the barriers to re-entry. They are offering flexible schedules and helping women to update their skills. A need for skilled employees, particularly in accounting, consulting and finance, is leading big employers in these fields to get creative. Although their new programs are open to both women and men, they're drawing more females because skilled women are more likely to leave high-paying jobs in the first place, to raise children and for other reasons. In a study of 13,838 employees, Watson Wyatt, Arlington, Va., found women ages 25 to 40 making over \$75,000 a year were nearly 20% more likely to leave their jobs than men. Female turnover was 11.4% a year, compared with 9.6% for men (Shellenbarger 2006).

New challenges are also facing employers within a global market place. There is a new drive for greater productivity and quality and a need for a flexible workplace which can rapidly respond to new technology and changing markets. Many employers have cut the size of their core workforce and moved towards flatter less hierarchical structures with a parallel drive to empower employees or teams to be more accountable and to work autonomously (Lewis 1996). Paid work is taking up even more of peoples' lives, leaving little time to address the demands of dependents or their activities. In the 1990s dominant organizational cultures with traditional values remain resistant to change to more flexible cultures (Lewis 1996).

The actual number of work hours is steadily increasing. Results found that virtually all respondents (98%) indicated that professionals were expected to work longer than a 40 hour work week. Half (49%) indicated that most professionals in their organization worked between 41-45 hours per week, followed by 38% responding 46-50 hours as the norm, then 7% reporting 51-60 hours, followed by 2% stating 61 hours or more per week (Kossek 2005, p. 7).

Because of this demand and desire for flexibility, many are doing what they can to compromise with their employer so that they are able to have a more balanced life. Some are choosing to telecommute from home which allows them to reduce their commute times, be closer to family members, or better coordinate childcare arrangements. Some are choosing flex-time as an option to fulfill family goals. They are abandoning traditional work hours and adopting a schedule that better accommodates their life events. Some are reducing the hours worked each week by cutting from 50- to 60-plus hours a week or by officially becoming a part-time worker. Others are abandoning the corporate world and the lifestyle that goes along with it and are opting for entrepreneurship as a way to increase flexibility and perceived control (Lee 2000).

It is hard for employees to gain flexibility and still get ahead because of the 'ideal worker norm' in America. Ideal workers are regarded as those who demonstrate 'commitment' in terms of long hours and an exclusive dedication to the job. In other forms of work, where unpaid overtime is not expected, ideal workers tend to be regarded as those who intensely work full-time. They do not modify work for family or other

reasons. Yet workforces are increasingly diverse and 'ideal' worker assumptions are problematic for a growing number of people (Gambles et al. 2006).

While America was concerned about work/life balance for several decades in the 1990s, work/life balance started to become a global concern, as companies from around the world sought to recruit and retain employees worldwide. IBM was one of the first United States based companies to address work/life issues outside American soil. After conducting a survey in 1996, they found that excessive workload and lack of work/life balance were the top two sources of job dissatisfaction among their employees. They addressed work/life issues to fix this dissatisfaction (Catalyst 2000).

Employees need more flexibility to better balance their lives. Employers are missing out on reducing turnover and keeping valuable employees. Children need and desire time with their parents.

Many mothers try part-time work, but end up dropping out of the workforce altogether because of the low pay, lack of benefits and advancement, and other exploitative conditions presently associated with part-time work. The current system is bad for women and it is inconsistent with our ideals of gender equality. It is bad for men because it cuts them off from full participation in family life during the crucial period when their children are young. It is bad for children, because children need time with their parents (Drago 2000, p 51).

There is more to life than work. Americans are overworked and saddled with so many obligations that we can no longer enjoy our lives like we thought we would. If this is the case, as the authors of "Putting Work in Its Place: A Quiet Revolution", Peter Meiksins and Peter Whalley (2002), claim, then it may be time to re-evaluate work. In their study, Meiksins and Whalley mostly found that their respondents, when asked about their work-life balance, spoke excitedly about their lives. They explained how they

enjoyed their jobs and that they continued to think of themselves as a professional. At the same time, they spoke of the pleasures of their roles as parents, volunteers, hobbyist, or whatever else they spent time doing. They found that ‘putting work in its place’ is not always easy, but it is possible.

After reviewing several of the literatures available regarding reduced hours and part-time employment, the general consensus is that professionals’ desire reduced hours and part-time work so they can better balance their lives. People value the ability to enjoy both and have the choice with their life decisions. Parents get burned out from long work days, children, and chores still left to be done. In the situation of being both a full-time employee and a parent if one worked all day he/she could only spend one to two hours with children before they went to bed around eight. Most people are not happy with this (Meiksins and Whalley 2002).

In summary, the labor market is rapidly shrinking, work-loads are increasing, and the old family structure which placed Father as ‘breadwinner’ and Mother as head of domestic work and childcare is changing. These three developments apart are fine, but together they create a problem that is negatively affecting many Americans. The harm these alterations have caused include that large numbers of employees are experiencing burnout, employers are encountering higher rates of turnover, and children are spending the majority of their time apart from their parents.

## **II. Reduced Hours**

It seems that the aspiration to integrate more into one's life and still have a career is a nation-wide desire. One way to do this is through working reduced hours. Current research has publicized that reduced hours work may be the new wave of the future. There is a dire need to redefine work.

Reduced hours is a flexibility tool used in companies around the world, including in the United States and Australia. Reduced hours occurs when employees work less than full-time and are paid commensurately maintaining prorated professional salaries and benefits (Barnett, 1998; Barnett & Gareis, 2000; Hill & Kadi, 2001). In many cases, the professional employee moving from full- to part- time remains in the same position and negotiates a reduced workload when needed. This is a high-status, career-oriented options to flexibility that contrasts with traditional lower status part-time work. Reduced hours maintains prorated professional salaries and sometimes benefits. The company's rationale for adopting such an option is to convince women to continue making professional career contributions as they expand their family responsibilities. (Hill 2004).

Reduced hours allows people to cut back the hours they work for a specific period of time with the right to return to full-time status at the end of that period. For example, an individual might work 32 hours a week instead of the traditional 40. Or, an individual might lower their overall load by working a different schedule during different seasons of the year, for example working full-time during the peak tax season and then 80% the rest of the year, or working only 50% in the summer in order to spend time with kids on vacation but working full-time the other nine months of the year (Kossek 2005).

There are many different ways to make this option work and it can take several forms. The possibilities are unique to each job and every individual. The rules are whatever negotiation works for the employee and employer. Reduced hours can come in any shape and form whether it be having less hours each day or working less days in a typical work week (compressed work week). There are many flexible options such as part-time partnerships, part-time contractors, reduced hours “extended” and “flexible” partnership track, telecommuting, working from home, mutual flexibility (when both the firm and the associate make efforts), extended flexible leaves, back-up child care facilities, job-sharing, and flex-time (Boston Bar Association 1999).

In the literature the concept of reduced hours is given several different terms. Although the majority of references used the term ‘reduced hours’, some of the authors used ‘new-concept part-time employment’ (Hill 2004, Kahne 1985) or ‘Reduced-Load Work’ to refer to the same concept (Buck 2000, Lee 2000, Kossek 2005).

### **America’s History of Reduced Hours and Part-Time Work**

The history of reduced hours begins with part-time work (Kahne 1984). Part-time work was and is sometimes still seen as a less permanent, less stable, less career oriented, and less desirable type of work. Part-time work has been around for decades, but it has primarily applied to a small range of occupations and offered little opportunities for career advancement. In its traditional form, as some describe as “Old Concept” part-time work, hourly earnings are low, and fringe benefits are small or do not exist (Kahne 1987).

Part-time work has traditionally involved those who do not choose to work less, but are hired into lower-level jobs and are poorly compensated with no benefits (Lee

2000). Part-time work has rapidly been increasing and there are many reasons why part-time work exists and has grown. The main reasons why people decide to work part-time include the pressures of family responsibility, disability, and taxation, which reduce the end value of additional work to the point where they are unattractive. Employers like part-time work because its advantages include reduced wage cost, reduced overtime and reduced turnover, higher productivity by virtue of less fatigued workers, and low absenteeism. However the disadvantages to an employer include higher administrative and training costs, and opposition of full-time employees due to loss of full-time positions or overtime (Mckie 2005, Cunningham-Burley & Campling 2005).

With the changing demographics, the concept of reduced hours developed out of a demand for more flexibility for managers and professionals. There has been a long-term trend toward taking time off and the desire to take time off for longer periods of time. Up to the late 1920s, almost all of the progress in reducing hours occurred in shortening the workday. The six-day workweek with no vacations remained the standard. But with the establishment of an eight- or nine-hour workday, an increasing number of firms introduced a five-day workweek. This early form of reduced hours made sense because of the relatively harmful effects on health, productivity, and family life of a long workday. By the end of the 1930s, the five-day workweek became the norm in much of manufacturing. (Kossek 2005). In 1938 the Fair Labor Standard Act was passed which stated that work over 40 hours per week was to be treated as over-time and employees should be compensated accordingly (Encarta 2008). By the 1960s, the five-day schedule had been almost universally adopted in nonagricultural industries. The postwar era also

saw an increase of annual vacations to blue collar workers and an addition in annual holidays (Kossek 2005).

It is ironic that part-time is increasing because back in the 1970s several members of congress and labor market analysts have asserted that current federal, state, and local regulations act to discourage potential workers and employers from part-time employment arrangements because the net-gain of part-time work is limited. They took action and discouraged employees to work part-time by making part-time jobs undesirable (Levitan and Belous 1997).

The concept of flexibility and reduced-hours is not new. President Carter had promised to create new work programs. He stated during his 1976 presidential campaign, “I will encourage-actively and aggressively- the adoption of the Federal government and in the private business sector, of flexible working hours for men and women, and I will take action to increase the availability of part-time jobs, with proper provisions for fringe benefits and job security (Levitan and Belous 1977).

Apart from collective bargaining, attempts have been made on the legislative front to reduce the length of the 40 hour week and increase overtime premium pay rates. However, most of this legislation campaigns have been blocked in the past (Levitan and Belous 1977).

The late 1980s were a time of great change in the Unites States workplace. The demographics of the American workforce began to diversify, in both ethnic composition and gender. The workplace was slow to adapt to the need for this change workforce. In a 1989 study, Flexible Work Arrangements, Catalyst accurately predicted that flexibility would be of considerable importance in the 1990s. Catalyst (1989) saw that the

demographics of the workforce were rapidly changing, and that corporations were competing to recruit the best and brightest from a shrinking and more diverse labor pool. Because of this, employees demanded more control of their work schedules and the ability to customize their career paths.

Some progress was made by the passing of the first federal law in the United States to address family leave. The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed by President Bill Clinton on February 5, 1993. It requires employers with 50 or more employees to offer up to 12 weeks of unpaid job-protected family or medical leave to qualifying employees (Catalyst 2000).

Research indicates that reduced hours may be a solution to current problems in the workforce such as the loss of valuable talent, stressed employees, and high turn-over to name just a few. The benefits of a reduction of hours include the retention of skilled workers, reduced absenteeism, reduced turnover, reduced overtime pay, improved employee morale, a better employee attitude toward the company, lower training and recruiting costs, less burnout, less stress, more peak-period coverage, full-time coverage where there are vacations or illness, increased employee performance, reduced job fatigue, fewer injuries, lower health-care costs, higher productivity, employees are able to maintain a career identity, able to maintain professional skills and career momentum, employees can be available to take care of sick dependents or children and children get the quality time and care they desire and need from their parents (Kossek 2005, Lewis 1996, Meiksins and Whalley 2002).

### **III. America and Reduced Hours**

The concept of reduced hours in America has come a long way. A reason this has occurred is that flexible work arrangements are now used as a method of recruitment. It is difficult for companies to offer job security and they are cutting back on pensions and benefits the same time that workloads are rising. Reduced-load work is a tool, that will not cost the company a lot of money, but will engage the labor force and reward them for their work. Employers that can manage employees effectively and fairly are likely to capitalize on potential workforce talent. Reports show that today's employers are more likely to support implementation of reduced-hour work for professionals. Companies are more likely to have a supportive work-life culture and an overall work-life strategy. Organizations are also more likely to adopt a transformational/elaboration approach (a more pro-active and compromising employer approach in execute flexible polices) to meet the needs of a changing workforce (Kossek 2005).

A 2005 survey was given to 54 leading American companies leading in adopting reduced load flexible work policies. All but three of 54 organizations indicated that less than 5% of their managers and professionals were working a reduced hours arrangement. The percent of total professional workforce working reduced hours is relatively small, but the numbers are increasing over time. Compared to five years ago, 77% said that there are more professionals and managers working reduced hours in their firm (Kossek 2005, p. 10).

Catalyst (2000, pp. 65-66) also found that most companies had only a handful of employees using flexible work arrangements and that most employees using flexible work arrangements had been at their companies for more than five years. The research

displayed an increase in the use of reduced hours over a ten year comparative study that was conducted between 1989 to 1999. After ten years, more companies had formal policies and guidelines governing (61.4% compared to 50%) flexible work arrangements and were monitoring or tracking employees who used them.

Work-life management exists in many companies. One third of the organizations surveyed have two or more individuals or groups dedicated to work-life management, 1/3 had only one individual or group dedicated to work-life, and one 1/3 of organizations had no individual or group designated to work-life. Sixty-five percent said that work-life resided with in corporate Human Resources. Some organizations have it within diversity or compensation and benefits, while some outsourced a portion of work-life responsibilities as part of their employee assistance plan. Most of the employees assigned to lead the work life area were women. They were generally seasoned employees with an average tenure of 13 years (Kossek 2005, p. 8).

While previously the access to reduced hours was viewed as an earned reward and privilege to favored and high performing (Meiksins and Whalley 2002) employees reduced hours seem to be more equally available. The majority of firms' perceived likelihood of access to reduced-load work was seen as about equal across all employee groups, with some slight variations. Most organizations (40%) reported that salaried employees were equally as likely to access of reduced-load work options as compared to hourly employees. Thirty-three percent reported that salaried employees are more likely to have access, 27% reported that salaried employees were less likely to have access. Most (59%) said that persons working at headquarters were equally likely to have access to reduced-load work as were persons working in the field, 25% said headquarters are

more likely to have access, and 16% indicated that persons working at headquarters were less likely to have access to reduced load than persons working in the field. There was little difference in perceived likelihood of access to reduced load by industry or organizational size. Employees with children were equally as likely (76%) as those without to have access to reduce hours. Married people were also equally as likely (86%) to have access compared to non married people. Employees with elder care were equally as likely (86%) as those without such responsibilities (Kossek 2005, p. 11).

The approval process for an employee to begin working reduced-hours varies among companies. To obtain a reduced hours schedule 41% of employees need approval from their companies Human Resource Department and a formal agreement with their direct supervisor, 30% need a formal agreement with their direct supervisor, and 16% need informal agreement with their direct supervisor. No company had a policy that gave the HR department authority to approve a reduced hour arrangement without a direct supervisor's approval (Kossek 2005, pp. 11-12).

While research shows that access to these policies are expanding or at least are perceived to be more inclusive, flexible policies still appear to be unevenly distributed among men and women. Men find it harder than women to be granted part-time or reduced hour positions (Kossek 2005, Meiksins 2002). Women were equally likely as men to have access to reduced-load work options. Women were also found to use flexible work arrangements for longer periods of time, rather than a transitional period following maternity leave. The average number of years spent using reduced hours was five but nearly half used flexible work arrangements for more than five years (Catalyst 2000).

A current trend that research uncovered is that part-timers work beyond the hours they agreed to work. Catalyst (2000) found that 94% of employees that were surveyed reported this. Meiksins and Whalley (2002) referred to this as “Cultural Overtime”. Overtime is a normal part of our culture of technical organizations and serves an important role in motivation and control. Even if managers are supportive and do nothing to make them feel that they must increase their hours, they feel the pressure anyway. Many part-time employees must do unpaid work in order to maintain professional commitment to the job.

Promotions are not as common among reduced hours employees but this seems to be changing for the better. Meiksins (2002) found that managers did not want reduced hour employees to keep moving up because if the employees were part-time they did not think a promotion could be handled. Several people interviewed were obliged to “trade down” out of a managerial position in order for them to get their employers to agree to let them work a reduced schedule. Still, 24 of the 45 women who participated in Catalyst’s study (2000, p. 66) received promotions while working on flexible schedules. Also, Kossek (2005, p. 22) reported that 70% of employers agreed that a high performing employee working on reduced-load had an equal chance for advancement as an employee working full-time. Only 16% agreed that an employee would have to work full time to get promoted.

Due to the ideal workers norm it is more difficult for people with flexible work schedules to get promotions and raises. Also, some employers use ‘face time’ (how much a person is seen in the workplace) to determine the amount of committed an employee has to his/her job and the company. This often makes it harder for reduced

hour employees to get ahead because they are not present as much and assumptions can be made that they are less committed (Gambles et. al. 2006).

Other trends that Catalyst (2000) found include that family concerns were the most frequently cited reasons for wanting to work part-time. Over one-third of the surveyed part-time professionals had supervisory responsibilities and client responsibilities. Use of flexible arrangements did not reduce the cost of child care for employees. Companies provide flexible work arrangements to retain professionals and management-level employees. The study found no evidence to believe that flexible work arrangements are costly and result in a flood of requests, as some middle managers fear.

Research has shown that employees on a part-time or reduced hours schedule often are criticized as being uncommitted to work or, if they have kids, as being only part-time parents. The people the researchers talked with insist on their identities as professionals even while pursuing other interests. In working part-time, they are not only challenging institutional arrangements but also the pressure to identify completely with those organizations.

Some of the major obstacles that have been identified regarding the implementation and success of flexible work arrangements include lack of middle management support, policy limitations, corporate culture, and negative connotations associated with the use of flexible work arrangement. (Catalyst 2000). Employees who worked primarily at home and part-time occasionally referred to feelings of isolation when at work.

According to Lee (2002), the top twelve reported factors contributing to the success of reduced hour arrangements include individual characteristics and behavioral

strategies, a concentrated and highly focused work style, a strong performance record, a unique skill set in high demand, a high level of hard work and commitment, an entrepreneurial style of taking initiative, strong and clear personal values around the idea of work-family balance, the ability to manage seamless communication, a supportive boss, competent and supportive peers and subordinates, an organization with an employee-centered culture, and working with a company who has a widely publicized work-life policy.

Research has been done in many fields to see if this reduction is feasible and to discover the effects it may have. It appears to take a similar but varied form in each field that was researched. The fields that will be reviewed include medicine, law, academia, accounting, nursing, law enforcement and engineering.

For physicians, Lundgren, Ferguson, and Fleischer-Cooperman (2001) found that working fewer hours not only led to increased satisfaction with family life but may also increase fulfillment of professional's norms and commitments. They were able to sustain the mission to provide quality family care. The majority of the respondents stated that working reduced hours was a positive experience and that overall, the benefits outweighed their concerns.

Implementations of reduced hours among doctors is informal and unstructured. Physicians must play an active role in the process. Many of the outcomes depended on the department and an employee's relationship with his/her supervisor and peers (Lundgren, Ferguson, and Fleischer-Cooperman 2001).

Demographic data suggest that physicians who plan to work reduced hours select particular areas of medical specialization and not others. For example, more than half of

the reduced-hours physicians were medical specialist as opposed to surgeons of general practitioners (Barnett 2001). Reduced-hour physicians had less career mobility, began seeing themselves as less dedicated physicians, diminished their professional networks, experienced a sense of isolation at work, and had fringe benefits that were unevenly available (Lundgren, Ferguson, and Fleischer-Cooperman 2001).

Today, many associates and partners in law firms view life as a successful lawyer as incompatible with significant child care involvement or responsibilities. In the 1980's and throughout the 1990's, law firms have experienced dramatic attrition, especially in the junior classes, and among women and minorities. Associates identify their firms' practices regarding the balance of law practice and life as a major factor in the challenge of integrating a legal career and parenthood is not a new one. For women lawyers, marriage and parenthood have always been a central issue in their professional lives (Boston Bar Association of 1999). Male and female associates express a strong preference for employers that support flexible work arrangements, including, but not limited to, telecommuting and part-time employment (Boston Bar Association of 1999).

In private law firms hours expectations exceed those in many other occupations. A number of attorneys working a "reduced schedule" of 70-80% report that they often work in excess of 45 hours a week. Sometimes associates with "reduced hour" arrangements are viewed as less committed and valuable than their full time colleagues. Despite the availability of reduced hour schedules, women associates and partners typically believe working fewer annual hours at their firm will be "death to my career." Men seem to hold this belief as well because virtually no men formally seek a reduced

schedule in order to increase their family care opportunities/responsibilities (Boston Bar Association of 1999).

Although reduced hours may be a possibility for doctors and lawyers, there has not been as much forward movement for professors. Many professors view reduced hours as the ticket to a 'dead-end job'. Currently, people in the academic profession are offered only two alternatives. They can choose to work long hours and (with luck) get tenure, or they can refuse to work those hours and suffer the consequences. The present practices artificially reduce the talent pool by eradicating a large percentage of qualified candidates (that is, mostly mothers) from achieving tenure (Drago 2000).

Professor Robert Drago and Joan Williams (2000) proposed a half-time tenure track for university faculty. Professors could have an assured and steady career advance without having to pay the price of not being available to their children. In their plan they suggested that faculty members who work half-time in a year should be paid one-half their annual salary, with the other half of the salary retired to the affected department to cover resulting teaching needs. During this period of half-time workload, the university can contribute one-half of the amount it would have contributed for retirement, health, and other benefits the faculty member would have received being full-time. When a faculty member shifts to half-time schedule, the tenure clock shall run half as fast as it normally does for a full-time faculty member.

Major accounting firms have now added an inspiring array of multi-faceted work-family initiatives to assist employees in fashioning work/life balance plans and provide information on others' experiences with their arrangements. For instance, more than 650 administrative and client service professionals at Deloitte & Touche now have

flexible work arrangements that include compressed work weeks, reduced work weeks, reduced work loads, periodic reduced workloads, and/or telecommuting. These accounting firms are reporting reductions in employee attrition rates, greater employee productivity, higher work quality and client satisfaction, savings of millions of dollars in recruiting, replacement and training costs, and greatly improved morale (Boston Bar Association 1999).

A study done by Edwards and Robinson (2001), regarding reduced hours in the nursing and police profession, found that part-time police officers and nurses are permanent employees and have salaries pro-rated with full-time pay scales, allowances, pensions, holidays and fringe benefits. Employees are expected to carry the same obligations as full-timers in respect of recall to duty, shift work and public holiday working. The majority of nurses and police officers stated that job satisfaction had increased and stress levels reduced as a result of working fewer hours. Also, unlike the earnings of most part-time workers, their salaries are pensionable. Pay and conditions of police officers and nurses are undoubtedly superior to those of part-time workers of either gender. It was often found that part-timers are at a disadvantage in applying for promotion and in the amount of training they receive.

In engineering, Meikins and Whalley (2002) found that because women at the engineering level are scarce and because companies need to retain women employees to make their diversity numbers look good, employers are willing to work out a flexible schedule with a 'deserving' employee. In this field reduced hours is used as a reward and benefit. Men find it harder than women to be granted part-time positions.

Part-time workers frequently claim that they are able to accomplish almost as much as they had when full-time. Their idea of reduced work is a 40-hour-work week. To make reduced hours work in this field the employee must shop around for an agreeable manager. Even though reduced-hour engineers sometimes find it difficult to get interesting and responsible work, it can be found. They sometimes had to deal with negative attitudes from their peers and they also had to put up with a negative effect on salary and promotions. Many of these employees lose benefits and promotions and sometimes feel isolated during this time (Meikins and Whalley 2002).

The engineers interviewed felt pressure to go back to full-time status. Only a minority of part time workers are able to sustain their reduced work arrangements longer than a year or two, reflecting, in part, employer's continued resistance to long-term flexible work options. Even though the time using reduced hours was typically brief, the engineers that were interviewed were pleased and satisfied with their decision (Meikins and Whalley 2002).

There are many pros and cons to a reduced hours arrangement in these technical and professional occupations. Overall, it appears that with compromise and negotiation a reduced hours plan is feasible and most people in these case studies seem to agree that the benefits out-weigh the costs.

#### **IV. Australia and Part-Time Work**

To better understand the United States it is helpful to look outside America and make cross-cultural comparisons. The country of Australia is comparable to America in many ways but the key differences are that it has more family programs and a livable wage (Drago and Wooden 2006).

Some of the similarities include that both are part of the developed world, have democratic governments, are highly integrated into the global economy, and have European-based societies in which the majority of inhabitants are English-speaking. Also, both countries have seen an increasing diversity of family forms, an increase in delayed and denied childbearing, and continue to have gender inequality (Drago, Scutella and Pirretti 2007). Another huge similarity is that among a list of nine developed nations, Jacobs and Gerson (2000) identify these two as having the largest proportion of workers who report that they work at least 40 hours each week. The majority of unpaid care giving still seems to fall upon the shoulders of women in both countries. The evidence presented suggests that many women in Australia and America, particularly highly educated women with career aspirations, find traditional employment inconsistent with childbearing and childrearing. Also, both Australia and America have experienced large declines in union membership during the last half-century (Drago and Wooden 2006).

In both societies, many work/family policies have been structured around a gendered model of the labor market—through the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in America, and the combination of the Sex Discrimination Act and workplace awards in Australia (Drago and Wooden 2006).

As was previously discussed many studies have shown evidence of a 'time divide' where overworked employees (people who work more hours than they desire) coexist with employees who work shorter hours and desire to work more (also referred to as old-concept part-time work). Evidence of a time divide appears in the United States (Drago 2000, Jacobs and Gerson 2004) and in Australia (Drago, Tseng and Wooden 2005). It seems that employers in both nations are providing an insufficient quantity of medium-hour jobs (Drago and Wooden 2006).

A few of the major differences between America and Australia were mentioned earlier but a more in-depth look is necessary to better understand both countries. Some of the areas that differ between the two countries include governmental policies supportive of low-wage employees in Australia and the availability of attractive part-time options and opportunities for employees as compared to America where part-time work is normally not attractive. Australian women are less often employed and they are more likely to work part-time than women in America. Marriages are more stable in Australia and more traditional gender roles are still upheld. Australia has a larger amount of nontraditional families and Australian work/family policies are negotiated through enterprise agreements while the United States policies are negotiated by corporate sponsors. The national minimum as a percentage of median wages for adult earners was 58.8% in Australia, but only 32.2% in America. In the United States there is a more equal division of labor in the home and also higher rates of labor force participation and higher rates of full-time employment for women. America also has a more severe time divide than Australia. Reported overwork is twice as prevalent in the United States. (49.5% compared to 23.1%) (Drago and Wooden 2006, p. 11).

Government policies are more family-responsive in Australia. Although neither country provides legislation for private sector paid parental leave, new parents with a permanent employment are guaranteed a full year of shared unpaid leave compared with only 12 weeks in the United States. This Australia policy is granted to both full-time and part-time workers. Also, a recent Australian Industrial Relations Commission decision allows long-term casual workers to have parental leave. Paid maternity and paternity leave is available in the public sector and is also becoming more common in the private sector. However, Baird 2003, showed that women in low-paying jobs have less access to paid maternity leave (Drago and Wooden 2006).

Australia passed strong equal pay legislation in the early 1970s (Gregory and Duncan 1981). Health insurance is mainly funded through employer contributions in America; where a national tax-payer funded system exists in Australia, effectively raising the fixed cost of full-time employment in America. Another difference is that Pension benefits are often tied to employment in the United States for full-time employees (although this is greatly decreasing). In Australia pro-rated and portable pension payments are typically provided to part-time employees (Drago and Wooden 2006).

Because there is not much net-gain in using part-time employment both countries attempted to reduce the amount of part-time employment that occurred. Of American women employed, 27.7% work part-time compared to 44% in Australia. Part of this disparity could be because the strategies used to decrease part-time employment were very different in each country. In the United States, unions aimed to make part-time employment economically unattractive to employees. This attempt resulted in lower wages, absence of job security, and widespread shortfall of health care and pension

benefits for part-time employees in America (Williams 1999). Also, many collective bargaining agreements have historically restricted the amount of part-time positions an employer may allow and create (Drago, Varner and Scutella 2006, p. 9). The opposite was done to keep part-time work down in Australia.

In Australia, trade unions strove to make part-time employment unattractive to employers through the casual loading, a wage premium (typically 20%) paid to most casual employees and to most part-time employees in lieu of vacation, sick time, and other benefits. Reduced-hours arrangements are relatively attractive in Australia. As briefly mentioned before, reduced-hour employees in Australia receive full health care benefits and pensions are not related to employment history. These differences have contributed to a much higher use of part-time work in Australia (Drago and Wooden 2006).

While Australians may appear to have some better flexible policies in place Bourke (2004) found through a survey regarding pregnant or potentially pregnant employees or apprentices, which was administered at a major construction site in Queensland, that although these somewhat 'forward-thinking' flexibility policies exist they may not have the effect that they are supposed to. It appears that Bourke detected some discrimination in order to avoid having to cope with these generous flexible work-life options. "Forty-five percent of the respondents said if they were a trade employer they would be less likely to employ a tradeswomen or female apprentice of child-bearing age; 20% were of the opinion that on becoming pregnant an apprentice should be made to discontinue her apprenticeship; and 22% thought it was a waste of time for a woman to do an apprenticeship if she has future plans to have children". Because it is difficult to

quantify, it can be challenging for an employer to successfully mount the argument that inflexibility is efficient, reasonable and justifiable. Still, Bourke (2004) predicts that work/life balance will be the top future challenge for Australian managers.

## **V. The Field of Human Resource Management**

The field of human resources is an ever-changing field that started out small and has recently grown into a strategic and vital business partner. Human resources is a general term that is used to cover a wide range of activities. HR does not consist of a single activity or function but a huge network of systems. Human resources refers to everything related to the employer/employee relationship. Some of the work that falls under the field of HR includes hiring and firing employees, creating organizational charts and shaping corporate culture after a merger or acquisition, managing employee communications, settling employee disputes, creating benefits programs, navigating government regulations, dealing with legal issues such as sexual harassment and occupational safety, and setting up policy and programs for measuring performance, compensating, recognizing, and training employees. This field contains both specialists and generalists, with specialist tracks ranging from training to pension plan administration to legal compliance (Mondy 2007). Human resources deals with unionized companies (where there is shared control through a collective agreement that management and a union negotiate to decide the terms and conditions of employment) as well as non-unionized companies (where management has control). The objective of human resources is to maximize the return on investments from the organization's human capital (Mondy 2007).

HR practices that create supportive environments for employees and strong corporate cultures can lead to superior returns for shareholders by being more innovative, efficient, and productive than their peers. Globalization has complicated the role of HR, creating new challenges, such as managing employees and overseeing employee

regulations in different countries and cultures. Also, technology has created a new array of opportunities for streamlining HR administration and practices. These opportunities include everything from putting benefits programs online and e-learning to automating payroll and other administrative HR tasks (Mondy 2007).

It is also worth mentioning the field of Diversity and Work-life as two fields that are often found under the human resource department umbrella. Work-life professionals aim to help people manage a work-life balance, improve the policies that exist and improve the culture. Diversity professionals also are often known to be involved in the creation of work-life policies and ensuring that people are able to maintain healthy lives in the workplace.

The function of human resources has been part of business and organizations since the first days of work. However, the modern concept of human resources started in reaction due to the theory x style of management that Taylorism brought about in the early 1900s. The movement of Scientific Management (also referred to as Taylorism) was lead by the beliefs that workers were inherently lazy and they tried to do the least work they could for the money they were given. Fredrick Taylor came up with a way for companies to be more efficient by managing people as if they were machines to get the very most out of them. However, this was a flop because exhaustion, stress and severe health problems set in. Due to do this occurance, psychologists and employment experts stepped in and started the human relations movement in the 1920's demonstrating that there was no science to Taylors theory. This brought psychology into the picture and workers were viewed in terms of their fit with companies, rather than as interchangeable

parts. This movement, which focused on effective leadership, treating people fairly, cohesiveness and loyalty, grew throughout the middle of the 20th century. During this time, the HR professionals, known as Personnel, were more involved in administrative tasks like payroll and keeping track of absenteeism. Personnel employees were not found on the executive leadership team as is seen today. These ‘soft management’ techniques were challenged by more quantitative styles of management in the 1960s and beyond. This developed the field into its current role and function—a more involved and engaged function that integrates high-level policies, compensation structures, training and development techniques and many other crucial areas of business into a company’s culture, mission and vision. The modern view of human resource management first gained prominence in 1981 with its introduction on the prestigious MBA course at Harvard Business School (Fulmer 2001). The field of HR has proven itself as a necessary business function and has gained a permanent role within organizations around the world.

While this field is gaining much respect and has pushed its way to the top of organizational charts not everyone understands or appreciates the value of human resources. Though managers cite HR as a firm’s most important asset, many organization decisions do not reflect this belief. When organizations require cost cutting, they look first to investments in the firm’s employees who are involved with training, wages, and headcounts which all lie under the domain of HR (Barney 1998).

While there have been many studies conducted regarding reduced hours in a wide variety of professions, there has not been any research about reduced hours in the field of human resource management. Do HR professionals get to use the flexible policies they

create and execute? Is a reduction of hours possible in the field of human resources? Do human resource professionals desire or have the opportunity to use the policies some of them deal with on a daily basis? The answers are yet to be determined.

## Chapter 3

### Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** Women human resource professionals are relatively more likely than men human resource professionals to use reduced hours policies, to want to use but are unable to use reduced hours policies and to believe reduced hours policies should be made more available.

Men are more likely to be “bread winners” and more likely to work longer hours in a full-time position. In other professions, men use reduced hours less than women so it is likely that the statistics would be similar in the field of HR as well.

**Hypothesis 2:** Relatively more reduced hour policies for human resource professionals exist in Australia than exist in the United States.

Australia’s government has more part-time benefit options and is considerably more supportive of new mothers. For example, Australian women who have government jobs are given paid maternity leave for a year. Australian policies seem to be more flexible than United States policies and that most likely will carry over to the HR field as well.

**Hypothesis 3:** A larger proportion of human resource professionals in Australia take advantage of reduced hours polices than in the United States.

Because hypothesis two predicts that more flexible work options are available in Australia, that means more employees are also more likely to use these options. Also, the breadwinner family structure is more frequent in Australia. This indicates that it is more regular and acceptable for women to stay home or work less than women in America. Also, their more generous maternity leave policies suggests more openness and acceptance to flexible options. This openness breaks down some of the barriers that may deter United States HR professionals from using reduced hours.

**Hypothesis 4:** A larger percentage of human resource professionals will want to use reduced hours policies than the number who actually use them.

In professions other than human resources, the reduced hour policies available do not meet the demand for them. There are many barriers to reduced hours in other professions that discourage employees from using these policies. Some of these barriers include the belief that this option leads to a “dead-end job”, the infamous “mommy-track” (a second-rate career, women held back because of the time they dedicate to their children), little or no support from management, the difficulties of implementing reduced hours and that no flexible work policies exist. It is logical to think these barriers carry over into the field of human resources.

**Hypothesis 5:** A larger proportion of human resources professionals with children will want and value reduced hour options more than human resources professionals without children.

Managers, co-workers and subordinates without children may not thoroughly understand the time and effort it takes to raise a child. They may be frustrated if more of the work falls on their shoulders when they see an employee with children getting to work less hours and do less work. It is reasonable to assume that human resources professionals with children will think there should be more reduced hour policies because they will have a real need for them. Employees with children will most likely look at options to make work more flexible so they can ‘properly’ raise their children.

**Hypothesis 6:** A larger percentage of human resource professionals in a dual-earner family will want reduced hours than human resource professionals who are not in a dual-earner family.

A single mother working in human resources most likely is not able to afford to reduce her hours because she needs the income to support her children. However, a family with two earners often can afford to have one of the earners reduce his/her hours. A couple with one person as the sole bread winner will most likely not opt for reduced hours options because the other partner is free to take care of the domestic chores and child care. They do not have the same needs and are able to create a more harmonious work-life balance if they can afford to have someone at home and if the individual is content not being employed.

**Hypothesis 7:** Most human resources professionals will feel that reduced hours options should be expanded.

Across many other professions employees seem to believe companies need to provide more flexible options for employees. It is reasonable to assume that this will be similar in the field of human resources.

## Chapter 4

### Method

To gather this information, the researcher created a survey tailored to Australia (Human Resources/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements) and a survey tailored to America (Human Resources/Diversity and Reduced Hours) aimed to find out how often HR professionals use reduced hours and their opinions about reduced hours.

In the literature and through discussion with professionals in the field, the researcher learned that America termed this flexibility option “reduced hours” while in Australia this option is termed “part-time work arrangements” (which means something different in America). This is the reason for the necessary use of different terms.

A total of 316 United States HR Professionals in a variety of HR disciplines participated in the United States Human Resources/Diversity and Reduced Hours survey and a total of 96 Australian Human Resources/Diversity Professionals completed the Australian Human Resources/Diversity and Part-Time Work Arrangements survey.

To conduct this research the researcher contacted relevant Human Resource and Work-Life organizations and sent out e-mail invitations to invite the HR, Work-Life and Diversity Professionals to take the survey. The Australian survey was sent out prior to the American survey, in August 2007, due to the fact that the researcher was studying abroad in Australia for four and a half months. The decision to spend time in Australia was made so that the researcher could have more leverage for a larger sample size and a better understanding of the Australian system. The researcher administered the HR/Diversity and Reduced Hours survey in America in February 2008.

To gather survey participants in the United States the principle investigator contacted over 110 SHRM chapter leaders located in the major United States cities including the local Pennsylvania chapters as well as the Appalachian Health Care Human Resources Society (AHCHRS). The Australian groups that participated in this survey include the Work Life Association, the Equal Employment Opportunity Network of Australasia, the New South Wales Equal Employment Opportunity Practitioners' Association Member, the HR Manager readers of HR Development at Work Newsletter and HR/Diversity Professionals in the researcher's Work-Family and Life Master's Class at Monash University. The surveys can be viewed on pages 91-98 of the Appendix.

The researcher gained participants in this study primarily by having the President of each group send out one invitation email and one reminder email informing group members about the study and giving members the link to the survey. Also, a HR Development at Work Newsletter writer invited HR/Diversity Professional readers to the survey in an article in the newsletter. Another means of increasing the sample size was that the Professor of the Work and Family Life course, and President of the Work-Life Association, Dr. Anne Bardoel, allowed the researcher to announce the study during class and invite the HR/Diversity Professionals to take the survey. The researcher sent a follow-up e-mail to the HR/Diversity professionals with the survey link and all the necessary information. The invitation e-mails/news article sent to the different groups can be viewed on pages 90-98.

## Chapter 5

### Results

The statistical results are presented below in order of the hypotheses. This section describes HR professionals' cumulative use and opinions about reduced hours; the key demographics such as gender, having children, and living in a dual-earner household and their effect on reduced hours opinions and use; and the differences between the Australian and American survey results.

**Hypothesis 1:** Relatively more women HR professionals will use reduced hours policies, want to use reduced hours policies but are not able to and believe reduced hours should be expanded than male HR professionals.

**Table 1**

<b>Comparison of Gender Means &amp; P-Values: Reduced Hour Use and Opinions</b>			
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	
<b><u>Total Men vs. Women</u></b>			
Use reduced hours	0.1518	0.3423	** <.01
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.3077	0.5736	*** <.001
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	2.9733	3.2894	** <.01
<b><u>America Men vs. Women</u></b>			
Use reduced hours	0.0938	0.2165	* <.05
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.2698	0.6129	*** <.001
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	2.9194	3.1597	* <.05
<b><u>Australia Men vs. Women</u></b>			
Use reduced hours	0.4	0.7468	** <.01
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.4667	0.4487	
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	3.2308	3.7123	* <.05

\* weak significance

\*\*moderate significance

\*\*\*strong significance

Every gender comparison except one is statistically significant. Therefore, we can reject the null hypotheses and accept that women are relatively more likely to use reduced hours, to want to expand reduced hours and are more likely to have wanted to use reduced hours but believed they were not able to. By running t-tests on the total sample, the United States sample separately and the Australian sample separately, we can compare the different relationships and how they play out differently in each country, which is explained further below. The relationships between gender and reduced hour use and opinions were the most significant when both samples were put together. There were strong and moderately strong statistically significant relationships between gender and using reduced hours ( $t=2.229$ ;  $p < .01$ ), gender and professionals that would like to use reduced hours but did not ( $t=4.309$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and gender and the belief that reduced hours should be more common and made more available ( $t=2.931$ ;  $p < .01$ ). As was predicted, these results indicate that a larger percentage of women than men use reduced hours, more women would like to use reduced hours but did not and more women than men believe reduced hours should be expanded.

In the United States the significance was not as strong as the total sample, yet it was still statistically significant regarding the difference in gender regarding use of reduced hours ( $t=2.24$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and the belief that reduced hours should be expanded ( $t=1.977$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The relationship between gender and professionals wanting to use reduced hours but not use the policies ( $t=5.064$   $p < .001$ ) was stronger in America than the total American and Australian sample and the Australian sample.

The results show that in Australia women and men's answers and views are more similar. The difference in Australian means are overall more trivial than in the U.S, yet still significant. Australia's results are statistically significant when comparing gender and use of reduced hours ( $t=2.743$ ;  $p<.01$ ) indicating that women use them relatively more than men, as well as the opinions on whether or not reduced hours should be made more available ( $t=2.469$ ;  $p<.05$ ). However, with a  $t$  of  $-.127$  ( $p=.90$ ), one can see that the relationship between gender and professionals who would like to use reduce hours but have not is not statistically significant.

**Hypotheses 2:** Relatively more reduced hours policies exist for HR professionals in Australia than for HR professionals in the US.

**Hypotheses 3:** A larger percentage of HR professionals in Australia take advantage of reduced hours polices than in the US.

**Table 2**

<b>Percentages of American &amp; Australian Reduced Hours Use, Opinions &amp; Availability</b>	<b>America</b>	<b>Australia</b>
Believe reduced hours should definitely be expanded	34.20%	64.20%
Believe reduced hours should in some cases be expanded	50.20%	26.30%
Professionals working for a company that has reduced hour policies	29.90%	73.80%
Use reduced hours	19.20%	69.90%
Would like to use reduced hours but were unable to	52.90%	45.40%

**Table 3**

<b>Comparisons of American and Australian Means &amp; P-Values: Reduced Hour Use &amp; Opinions</b>				
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	
	<b>America</b>	<b>Australia</b>		
Employer has reduced hours	0.3053	0.7677	***	<.001
Professionals used reduced hours	0.1927	0.699	***	<.001
Professionals want to use reduced hours but did not	0.5426	0.3697	***	<.001
Professional believes reduced hours should be expanded	3.113	3.6264	***	<.001

\* weak significance      \*\*moderate significance      \*\*\*strong significance

All of the main United States and Australia comparisons that this study addressed generated statistically significant relationships in the predicted directions. Therefore, for all of these variables, we can reject the null hypotheses and declare that the predictions are supported by the results. The results indicate that a larger proportion of Australian employers offer reduced hour policies, a larger proportion of Australian professionals use reduced hours policies and relatively more Americans want to use reduced hours policies but do not. There was a small difference between the beliefs of Americans and Australians regarding the need to expand reduced hours policies. Australians indicated that they are relatively more favorable towards expanding reduced hours, although a majority of both countries' professionals either strongly agree or agree that reduced hours should be expanded.

Taking a closer look at the t-tests, with a t of 8.881 ( $p < .001$ ) there is a strong relationship between Australia and the United States regarding the availability of reduced hours policies. This difference demonstrates that relatively more Australian employers offer reduced hours policies than American employers. A t of 15.392 ( $p < .001$ )

demonstrates that there is a statistically significant relationship between Australia and the United States concerning the amount of professionals that use reduced hours in both countries. The difference in the mean displays a strong relationship indicating that it is much more common for Australians to use reduced hour policies.

There is also a statistically significant relationship between America and Australia and the number of professionals who wanted to use reduced hours but did not, with a  $t$  of 14.06 ( $p < .001$ ). Although there is not a substantial difference between the number of United States and Australian professionals who wanted to but did not use reduced hours, the results still indicate that relatively more American professionals have wanted to use reduced hours but did not for various reasons.

With a  $t$  of 5.2834 ( $p < .001$ ) there is a statistically significant relationship between the opinion of HR professionals and whether or not the use of reduced hour policies should be increased in America and Australia. The relationship indicates that both Australian and American professionals agree that reduced hours policies should be expanded, with Australia expressing this belief a bit more strongly.

The following table showcases the different means across the American and Australian samples that were previously reviewed as well as other demographic variables.

**Table 4**

<b>Comparison of American &amp; Australian Means</b>		<b>America</b>	<b>Australia</b>	
Employer has reduced hours		0.3053	0.7677	***
Professional used reduced hours		0.1927	0.699	***
Professional wanted to use reduced hours but did not		0.5426	0.3697	***
Professional believes reduced hours should be expanded		3.113	3.6264	***
Age		3.3899	3.1158	*
Dependents		0.7387	1.0105	*
Diversity		0.1013	0	**
Education		4.1804	4.1368	
Professional living with a partner		0.8182	0.7579	**
Professional speaks English as first language		0.975	0.9255	*
Gender		0.7962	0.8404	
Professionals did not use reduced hours because their fear of adverse career consequences		0.2515	0.4146	*
Professionals did not use reduced hours because they could not afford to		0.3952	0.5122	
Professionals did not use reduced hours because the process was too complicated		0.0838	0.1707	
Professionals did not use reduced hours because there was no employer policy		0.515	0.3171	*
Professionals did not use reduced hours because they have no support from management		0.3234	0.3904	
Professionals who have a partner that works		1.2808	2.6111	***
Positive opinions towards reduced hours		1.3394	2.4719	***
Negative opinions towards reduced hours		NA	NA	**
	* weak significance	**moderate significance	***strong significance	

**Hypotheses 4:** A larger proportion of HR professionals will want to use reduced hours policies than the amount of who actually use them.

**Table 5**

<b>Comparison of HR Professionals Who Wanted to Use Reduced Hours and Did Not vs. Professionals Who Used Reduced Hours Means &amp; P-Values</b>			
	<b>Mean</b>		<b>P-Value</b>
Total wanted to use reduced hours but did not	0.4562	***	<.001
Total use reduced hours	0.4459		
America wanted to use reduced hours but did not	0.5426	**	0.01
America used reduced hours	0.1927		
Australia wanted to use reduced hours but did not	0.3697	**	<0.01
Australia used reduced hours	0.699		

\* weak significance

\*\*moderate significance

\*\*\*strong significance

Note: T-test= Total Sample; Chi-square= American and Australian Sample

In both America and Australia there were relatively more HR professionals who wanted to use reduced hours but were not able to than HR professionals that were able to use reduced hours. We can reject the null hypotheses.

However, it is important to note that some of the respondents who wanted to use reduced hours but were not able to at one point in time, were in fact able to use them at some other point (20% of those wanting to but not using reduced hours). But the other 80% of respondents who at some point wanted to use reduced hours but did not were in fact never able to use reduced hours. These results in the total population are similar across America and Australia.

A  $t$  of 15.392 ( $p < .001$ ) indicates that there is a strong statistically significant and inverse relationship in the total sample between respondents who wanted to use reduced hours but did not and ones that used reduced hours.

With a chi-square value of 6.339 ( $p = 0.01$ ), one can see that there is a moderate statistically significant and inverse relationship between Americans who wanted to use reduced hours but did not and Americans who used reduced hours.

A chi-squared value of .0979 ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicates that there is a moderate statistically significant and inverse relationship between Australians who wanted to use reduced hours and did not and Australians who used reduced hours.

Respondents indicated that many barriers kept them from using reduced hours. In order of relationship strength, American barriers included the absence of employer policies (51.5%), financial difficulties due to reduced pay for reduced hours (39.5%), unsupportive managers and supervisors (32.3%), adverse career consequences (25.1%), the stereotyping of reduced hours employees (14.4%) and in a few cases the policies were simply too complicated to be practical (8.4%).

In Australia, the barriers included financial difficulties (51.2%), adverse career consequences (41.5%), managers and supervisors who were not supportive (39%), no employer policy (31.7%), stereotyping (17.1%), and complicated policies (17.1%).

**Hypotheses 5:** A larger proportion of HR professionals with children will want and value more reduced hours options than human resources professionals without children.

**Table 6**

<b>Comparison of Professionals With vs. Without Children Means &amp; P-values: Reduced Hour Use and Opinions</b>				
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>		<b>P-Value</b>
	Children	No Children		
<b>Total Children Effect</b>				
Use reduced hours	0.456	0.1861	***	<0.001
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.5531	0.5		0.289
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	3.3314	3.1651		0.053
<b>America Children Effect</b>				
Use reduced hours	0.2782	0.1297	**	<0.01
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.6	0.5028		0.09
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	3.2016	3.0625		0.163
<b>Australia Children Effect</b>				
Use reduced hours	0.9388	0.413	***	<0.001
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.4286	0.4889		0.563
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	3.6889	3.5952		0.514

\* weak significance

\*\*moderate significance

\*\*\*strong significance

When comparing the use and opinions of reduced hours of professionals with children and ones with no children the results are similar across the total sample, the American sample and the Australian sample. There is a significant relationship between the use of reduced hours and whether professionals have children or not (Total Sample:  $t= 6.167, p<.001$ ; United States Sample:  $t=3.365, p<.01$ ; Australia Sample:  $t=6.608, p<.001$ ). As predicted, HR professionals with children are relatively more likely to use reduced hours than HR professionals without children. We can only reject part of the null hypothesis because not all of the results are statistically significant. Whether a professional has children and the belief that reduced hours should be expanded (Total Sample:  $t=1.938, p=.053$ ; United States Sample:  $t=1.399, p=.163$ ; Australia Sample:  $t=.655, p=.514$ ) as well as the variable regarding whether professionals would like to use reduced hours but did not (Total Sample:  $t=1.061, p=.289$ ; United States Sample:  $t=1.7,$

$p=.09$ ; Australia Sample:  $t=-.581$  ,  $p=.563$ ) are not statistically significant. The hypothesis predicted that professionals with children will both want and value the policies relatively more. Though the means indicate a slight divergence in the predicted direction, the difference fails to achieve statistical significance. The fact that professionals with children do use reduced hours more does indicate that they value them more than professionals without children. However, the majority of people with children and without children seem to vote similarly regarding their desire to see reduced hours expand as well as wanting to take advantage of reduced hours and not using them.

**Hypothesis 6:** A larger percentage of HR professionals in a dual-earner family will want reduced hours than human resource professionals not in a dual-earner family.

**Table 7**

<b>Comparison of Dual Earners vs. Single Earners Means &amp; P-Value: Reduced Hour Use and Opinions</b>			
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
	<b>Dual Earner</b>	<b>Single Earner</b>	
<b><u>Total Dual Earner Effect</u></b>			
Use reduced hours	0.3193	0.2469	0.206
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.5413	0.4615	0.206
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	3.2468	3.1733	0.501
<b><u>America Dual Earner Effect</u></b>			
Use reduced hours	0.2115	0.1034	0.059
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.5625	0.4727	0.226
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	3.1347	3.0182	0.364
<b><u>Australia Dual Earner Effect</u></b>			
Use reduced hours	0.7083	0.6087	0.376
Would like to use reduced hours but did not	0.4648	0.4348	0.804
Believe reduced hours should be expanded	3.6567	3.6	0.74

\*weak significance

\*\*moderate significance

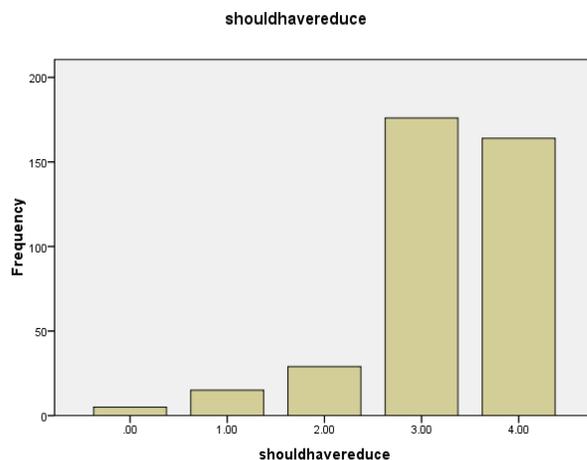
\*\*\*strong significance

According to the results, whether a professional has a dual earner or single earner household seems to have no impact on his or her use of reduced hours, wanting to use reduce hours but not using them or believing reduced hours should be expanded in the total sample, a finding that holds in both the American and the Australian samples. It appears that dual earners and single earners have similar views and actions regarding these variables. The null hypothesis stands. Refer to Table 7 for means and p-values.

**Hypothesis 7:** Most HR professionals will feel that reduced hours options should be expanded.

As hypothesized, the majority of HR professionals surveyed believed that reduced hours should be expanded. Of the total sample, 34.4% said that they definitely think that reduced hours should be expanded, 36.9% said that in some cases they believe reduced hours should be expanded, 6.1% were neutral, 3.1% said they do not think reduced hours is usually a good idea, and 1% said reduced hours should definitely not be expanded.

**Figure 1: Percentage That Feel Reduced Hours Should Be Expanded**



Looking at the results separately for Australia and the United States, the majority of HR professionals surveyed believed that reduced hours should definitely (America-34.2%, Australia-64.2%) or at least in some cases (America-50.2%, Australia-26.3%) be made more widely available to HR professionals. It is also evident that Australia's respondents are stronger advocates of reduced hour policies. Due to this, we can reject the null hypothesis and affirm that HR professionals would like to see reduced hours expanded as well as the fact that Australians are more favorable of these policies.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion**

This research demonstrates that there is a need to expand reduced hours in the field of Human Resources. The survey answers indicate that the vast majority believe the availability and use of reduced hours should be increased. There were more professionals who wanted to use reduced hours but were unable, then professionals who were able to use reduced hours. Demand far exceeds supply. Additionally, barriers were identified that explained why reduced hours are not used more frequently. Many of these barriers can be eliminated to make reduced hours more accessible.

The field of human resources is an ideal one to lead the way in promoting and increasing the use of reduced hours. HR professionals are often the ones who create flexible work options and implement them in a company. If HR professionals use the policies they create, it could have a trickle affect, allowing other employees in the organization to enjoy reduced hours as well. As previously mentioned, there are substantial benefits that flow from companies offering and allowing reduced hour working options. This is something employers should encourage. Giving employees the opportunity to have a more balanced and less stressed life, when needed, will create employees who have high job satisfaction, good performance, and are loyal to the company. Also, customers appreciate businesses that treat their employees well. Encouraging reduced hours not only can bring additional business to a company, but also attract talent and reduce turnover. Everyone deserves the chance to experience work-life balance and to live the life they want to live. Companies who do not offer reduced hour

policies are missing out on these advantages until they begin encouraging and implementing these policies.

There are several implications of the research that will be discussed. First, the results showed that Australians are stronger advocates for reduced hours. A higher percentage of Australian participants indicated that they have used reduced hours (50% difference between Australian and United States results) and a higher percentage of Australians indicated that they work for a company that offers reduced hour policies (40% difference between Australian and American results).

These differences may follow from the Australian government being more proactive in helping its people maintain work-life balance. Also, there seems to be a greater awareness of flexible work options in Australia. If people in America were more favorable and supportive of reduced hour policies, Americans might have more reduced hour policies available and more people might take advantage of these options. It would be beneficial for America to take a closer look at Australia's government laws and employment practices.

Second, the results indicated that women are relatively more likely to use reduced hours, to want to expand reduced hours policies and to have wanted to use reduced hours but believed they were not able to in both America and Australia. These findings demonstrate the need women have during certain periods of their lives to meet responsibilities such as child-care and elder-care that, for the most part, continue to fall on the shoulders of women. Though reduced hours are typically offered in a gender neutral fashion, women often have a greater need to use these policies. It is impractical to expect a woman to work a full time job, raise children, clean the house, take care of

her parents, etc. This type of life style is not healthy for the individual or good for the company.

Part of the problem of women needing and using reduced hours more than men can be solved if men take on more of women's traditional responsibilities. This change seems to be occurring more often in younger generations as men indicate they want to play a larger role in raising a family. Another issue may be that men are more likely to refrain from using reduced hours because they are afraid of the stereotypes that can be associated with reduced hour work. Men typically view themselves as the breadwinner of a family and it may hurt their ego to use flexible work options, even if it is necessary.

Third, the results show that in Australia women and men's answers and views tend to be relatively more similar than in the United States. The difference in the Australian means are overall more trivial than in America, yet still significant. Australian men may be more supportive of reduced hours because Australia as a whole is more favorable of flexible work options due to the reasons previously discussed.

Fourth, HR professionals with children are relatively more likely to use reduced hours than HR professionals without children. However, professionals without children are equally as supportive of reduced hours policies as professionals with children. This finding indicates that American and Australian people understand the need for reduced hours for employees who are not able to have a healthy and balanced life working full time. Though these policies are not only applicable to people with children, there is a real and desperate need for people in certain stages of their lives to have the opportunity to use reduced hours. The government and companies should recognize this need and respond appropriately.

Fifth, respondents indicated that many barriers kept them from using reduced hours. Identifying the major barriers in America and Australia will help us to eradicate these barriers so that more companies and professionals can benefit from reduced hours. The barriers that affected Americans the most included the absence of employer policies, financial difficulties due to reduced pay for reduced hours, managers and supervisors who were not supportive of these policies, adverse career consequences and the fear of being stereotyped. Some of these barriers can be tackled relatively easy. To remove these barriers the government/employers needs to create more reduced hour policies. In addition, managers and supervisors need to be encouraged by senior leaders to allow and promote reduced hours. It should also be made clear to employees that reduced hours will not have adverse career consequences. The employee and the American people should be more informed about reduced hours so that some of the negative stereotypes will disappear.

In Australia, the major barriers included financial difficulties, adverse career consequences, managers and supervisors who were not supportive, no employer policies, stereotyping, and complicated policies. There really is no solution for the barrier of financial difficulties. If an employee can not afford to reduce their pay and reduce their hours of work, this will always remain a barrier. However, as mentioned for the United States, managers can be trained and encouraged to support reduced hours and work with employees to develop plans that work for everyone. More employers should create reduced hour policies and make them as clear and uncomplicated as possible. Also, awareness should increase in order to reduce negative stereotypes as well as the fear of being stereotyped.

In sum, these findings suggest that reduced hours options should be expanded in America. If that claim is accepted, then there are several parties that should be involved in any expansion of reduced hours. These parties include the United State's government, American employers and the people. Reduced hours is not just something a company should offer, it is something that needs to be available in every company. Reduced hours has the potential to solve the child-care and elder-care gap problems that were previously discussed. These problems are the government's concern. The government has the power to radically change and improve things by creating laws that require companies to be flexible with their employees. The government's involvement will most likely be the quickest and most successful way to get America where it needs to be regarding the use and availability of flexible working options.

Also, it is up to the HR professionals as well as the executive board of directors to encourage employees to have work-life balance and to make it part of the organization's culture. HR professionals have the power to take action and improve our society by creating, promoting and using these policies. Employers and employees need to be made aware of these work options and the benefits they can bring to companies and employees alike. Reduced hours should be a regular subject of discussion and study at professional conferences such as the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) annual conference. Knowledgeable speakers could inform participants of the benefits of reduced hours, how to put policies together and how to encourage and implement those policies.

Reduced hours options have the potential to improve the lives of many Americans as well as a majority of businesses. The widespread availability and use of reduced hour

flexible working options is something that will hopefully one day be part of the American culture and way of life.

## Chapter 7

### Limitations

There are several limitations that may affect the accuracy of this study. These limitations include the sample size difference between the United States and Australia, the sample size difference between men and women and the fact that more HR professionals were surveyed in Pennsylvania than in any other state.

The United State's sample size is larger than the Australian sample size. There were 316 participants that completed the survey in America but only 96 participants completed the survey in Australia. This difference may affect the country comparisons. If more Australians were willing to participate, the study might have revealed a more accurate picture of Australia's HR professional population and provided reliable comparisons. Having said that, the Australian sample is in fact more representative, given that the nation has less than one-twentieth the population found in America, and the Australian sample was around one-third the size of the American sample.

Also, far more women than men participated in this study in both the United States and Australia. In Australia, 15 men and 79 women participated in the survey while in the US, 65 men and 254 women participated in the study. The samples are therefore not gender neutral so may not accurately reflect men's views. If more men had participated in the survey, there is a chance that the results would change (ie. the use of reduced hours might decrease and the belief that reduced hours should be expanded might decrease as well). However, most studies dealing with the HR field will probably run into this gender problem because the field currently has more women than men.

There was also a large proportion of respondents who reside in Pennsylvania. Almost every SHRM chapter in Pennsylvania participated in the survey, while in the other states only the major city SHRM chapters were targeted to participate. Like every state and area of the country, the east coast and Pennsylvania have sub-cultures that could affect participants' beliefs and ideas about flexible work options. The data might look different and would be more generalizable to the United States, if the sample was instead taken from HR professionals stratified by population across all US states.

## Appendix

### American Data

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
What are your major job responsibilities? (Please select all that apply.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
HR in a hospital setting	11.1%	34
HR Generalist	42.5%	130
HR Manager	44.4%	136
Work-life	8.2%	25
Diversity	10.1%	31
Organizational Design and Development	11.1%	34
Labor Relations	11.1%	34
Compensation	30.1%	92
Benefits	34.6%	106
Training	26.8%	82
Organizational Development	18.6%	57
Employee Relations	41.8%	128
Recruiting	37.6%	115
Staffing	31.0%	95
HRIS	16.7%	51
Industrial Organizational Practitioner	0.7%	2
	Other (please specify)	50
	<b><i>answered question</i></b>	<b>306</b>
	<b><i>skipped question</i></b>	<b>50</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Does your current employer have reduced hour work arrangements for people in your position and similar positions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	29.9%	98
No	68.0%	223
I do not know	2.1%	7
<i>answered question</i>		<b>328</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>28</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Have you used a reduced hours work arrangement?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	19.2%	63
No	80.5%	264
I do not know	0.3%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>328</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>28</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
For how long did you use a reduced hours option?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1 to 6 months	29.0%	18
7 months to 1 year	8.1%	5
over 1 year to 3 years	35.5%	22
over 3 years to 6 years	14.5%	9
over 6 years	12.9%	8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>62</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>294</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Was there a time in your career, including the present, when you would have liked to but did not use reduced hour work arrangements?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	52.9%	172
No	44.6%	145
I do not know	2.5%	8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>325</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>31</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Why did you not use reduced hours?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
adverse career consequences	25.1%	42
could not afford it	39.5%	66
no employer policy	51.5%	86
too complicated to work out	8.4%	14
managers/supervisors were not supportive of these policies	32.3%	54
did not want to be stereotyped	14.4%	24
Other (please specify)		20
<i>answered question</i>		<b>167</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>189</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
In your employing organization, how are (or would) reduced hours employees typically be viewed? (Please select all that apply.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Talented	24.8%	68
Committed to the organization	31.0%	85
Second class citizens	9.5%	26
Lazy	6.2%	17
Hard working	16.8%	46
Dependable	28.1%	77
Undependable	12.0%	33
Uncommitted to the organization	31.8%	87
Boss's pet	11.3%	31
Deserving	16.4%	45
Undeserving	4.4%	12
Available	16.8%	46
Unavailable	42.7%	117
	Other (please specify)	50
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>274</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>82</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Sex:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
M	20.4%	65
F	79.6%	254
	<i>Answered question</i>	<b>319</b>
	<i>Skipped question</i>	<b>37</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Is English the first language you learned to speak as a child?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97.5%	312
No	2.5%	8
<i>Answered question</i>		<b>320</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>36</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Age:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
18-25	3.5%	11
26-35	18.6%	59
36-45	30.5%	97
46-55	31.1%	99
56-65	15.7%	50
66 and above	0.6%	2
<i>answered question</i>		<b>318</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>38</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Highest education completed:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Some high school	0.0%	0
High school	7.3%	23
Associates degree (2-year)	6.3%	20
Bachelors degree	49.1%	155
Masters degree	35.8%	113
Doctoral degree	1.6%	5
<i>answered question</i>		<b>316</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>40</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
How many dependent children under the age of 17 live with you at least half of the time?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0	58.3%	186
1	18.5%	59
2	16.3%	52
3	5.6%	18
4	0.6%	2
5 or more	0.6%	2
<i>answered question</i>		<b>319</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>37</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
Have you lived with a partner or spouse for at least the last six months?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	81.8%	261
No	18.2%	58
<i>answered question</i>		<b>319</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>37</b>

American HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours		
What best describes your partner's or spouse's employment situation?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
full-time	80.4%	209
part-time	11.2%	29
not currently employed	8.5%	22
<i>answered question</i>		<b>260</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>96</b>

### Australian Data

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
<b>What are your major job responsibilities? (Please select all that apply.)</b>		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
HR Generalist	38.1%	37
HR Manager	30.9%	30
Work-life	22.7%	22
Diversity	26.8%	26
Organisational Design and Development	16.5%	16
Labour Relations	11.3%	11
Compensation	12.4%	12
Benefits	13.4%	13
Training	28.9%	28
Organisational Development	23.7%	23
Employee Relations	16.5%	16
Recruiting	24.7%	24
Staffing	15.5%	15
HRIS	11.3%	11
Industrial Organisational Practitioner	8.2%	8
	Other (please specify)	12
	<b><i>answered question</i></b>	<b>97</b>
	<b><i>skipped question</i></b>	<b>23</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Does your current employer have part-time working hours for people in your position and similar positions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	73.8%	76
No	22.3%	23
I do not know	3.9%	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>103</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>17</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Have you used a part-time/flexible work arrangement?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	69.9%	72
No	30.1%	31
I do not know	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		<b>103</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>17</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
For how long did you use a part-time option?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1 to 6 months	24.6%	16
7 months to 1 year	20.0%	13
over 1 year to 3 years	27.7%	18
over 3 years to 6 years	9.2%	6
over 6 years	18.5%	12
<i>answered question</i>		<b>65</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>55</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Was there a time in your career, including the present, when you would have liked to but did not use part-time options?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	45.4%	44
No	53.6%	52
I do not know	1.0%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>97</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>23</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Why did you not use this flexible work arrangement?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
adverse career consequences	41.5%	17
could not afford it	51.2%	21
no employer policy	31.7%	13
too complicated to work out	17.1%	7
managers/supervisors were not supportive of these policies	39.0%	16
did not want to be stereotyped	17.1%	7
Other (please specify)		9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>41</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>79</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
In your employing organization, how are (or would) part-time employees typically be viewed? (Please select all that apply.)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Talented	40.4%	36
Committed to the organization	46.1%	41
Second class citizens	11.2%	10
Lazy	2.2%	2
Hard working	47.2%	42
Dependable	49.4%	44
Undependable	7.9%	7
Uncommitted to the organization	21.3%	19
Boss's pet	1.1%	1
Deserving	25.8%	23
Undeserving	1.1%	1
Available	38.2%	34
Unavailable	30.3%	27
	Other (please specify)	19
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>89</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>31</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Sex:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
M	16.0%	15
F	84.0%	79
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>94</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>26</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Is English the first language you learned to speak as a child?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	92.6%	87
No	7.4%	7
<i>answered question</i>		<b>94</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>26</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Age:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
18-25	8.4%	8
26-35	17.9%	17
36-45	37.9%	36
46-55	25.3%	24
56-65	10.5%	10
66 and above	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		<b>95</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>25</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Highest education completed:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Some high school/secondary school	0.0%	0
High school/Secondary school	3.2%	3
Associates degree (2-year)	13.7%	13
Bachelors degree	40.0%	38
Honors degree	11.6%	11
Masters degree	29.5%	28
Doctoral degree	2.1%	2
<i>Answered question</i>		<b>95</b>
<i>Skipped question</i>		<b>25</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
How many dependent children under the age of 17 live with you at least half of the time?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0	48.4%	46
1	11.6%	11
2	32.6%	31
3	6.3%	6
4	0.0%	0
5 or more	1.1%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>95</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>25</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
Have you lived with a partner or spouse for at least the last six months?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	75.8%	72
No	24.2%	23
<i>answered question</i>		<b>95</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>25</b>

Australian HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements		
What best describes your partner's or spouse's employment situation?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
full-time	78.0%	64
part-time	8.5%	7
not currently employed	13.4%	11
<i>answered question</i>		<b>82</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>38</b>

United States HR and Reduced Hours Survey

1. What are your major job responsibilities? (Please select all that apply.)

HR in a hospital setting  
Work-life  
Diversity  
HR Manager  
HR Generalist  
Organizational Design and Development  
Labor Relations  
Compensation  
Benefits  
Training  
Organizational Development  
Employee Relations  
Recruiting  
Staffing  
HRIS  
Industrial Organizational Practitioner  
HR Specialist  
Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify.)

2. Does your current employer have reduced-hours options for people in your position and similar positions?

Yes.  
No.  
I do not know.

3. Have you used a reduced hours policy?

Yes.  
No.  
I do not know.

[If Yes, go to #4; if No, proceed to #7.]

4. For how long did you use a reduced hours option?

1 to 6 months  
7 months to 1 year  
over 1 year to 3 years  
over 3 years to 6 years  
over 6 years

5. What were the advantages and disadvantages you found using this option?
6. Did you encounter any adverse or positive career repercussions because of using this option?
7. Was there a time in your career, including the present, when you would have liked to but did not use reduced hours options?

Yes.

No.

I do not know.

[If Yes, go to #8; if No, skip to #9.]

8. Why did you not use reduced hours?

adverse career consequences

could not afford it

no employer policy

too complicated to work out

managers/supervisors were not supportive of these policies

did not want to be stereotyped

Other\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify.)

9. Do you think, all in all, that reduced hours options should be expanded or not?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Yes	In some cases	Neutral	Not usually a good idea	Definitely Not

10. In your employing organization, how are (or would) reduced hours employees typically be viewed? (Please select all that apply.)

Talented

Committed to the organization

Second class citizens

Lazy

Hard working

Dependable

Undependable

Uncommitted to the organization

Boss's pet

Deserving

Undeserving

Available  
Unavailable  
Other\_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify.)

11. How many hours on average have you worked in the last four weeks, including all jobs but excluding vacations or sick days?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

12. What is the main type of product or service produced at your main workplace?

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Are there specific aspects of your job that would make reduced hours options particularly easy or difficult to use? If so, please specify what these are:\_\_\_\_\_

14. Sex:

M

F

15. Race:

Hispanic

African-American

Caucasian

Asian

Indian

Other\_\_\_\_\_

16. Age:

18-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56-65

66 and above

17. Highest education completed:

Some high school

High school

Associates degree (2-year)

Bachelors degree

Masters degree

Doctoral degree

18. How many dependent children under the age of 17 live with you at least half of the time?

0

1

2

3

4

5 or more

19. Have you lived with a partner or spouse for at least the last six months?

Yes.

No.

[If selected Yes to #19, go to #20; otherwise skip #20.]

20. What best describes your partner's or spouse's employment situation?

full-time

part-time

not currently employed

Australia Human Resources and Part-Time Work Survey

1. What are your major job responsibilities? (Please select all that apply.)

HR in a hospital setting  
 Work-life  
 Diversity  
 HR Manager  
 HR Generalist  
 Organisational Design  
 Labor Relations  
 Compensation  
 Benefits  
 Training  
 Organisational Development  
 Employee Relations  
 Recruiting  
 Staffing  
 HRIS  
 Industrial Organisational Practitioner  
 HR Specialist  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify.)

2. Does your current employer have part-time work arrangements for people in your position and similar positions?

Yes.  
 No.  
 I do not know.

3. Have you used part-time work arrangements?

Yes.  
 No.  
 I do not know.

[If Yes, go to #4; if No, proceed to #7.]

4. For how long did you use a part-time work arrangements?

1 to 6 months  
 7 months to 1 year  
 over 1 year to 3 years  
 over 3 years to 6 years  
 over 6 years

5. What were the advantages and disadvantages you found using this option?
6. Did you encounter any adverse or positive career repercussions because of using this option?
7. Was there a time in your career, including the present, when you would have liked to but did not use part-time work arrangements?

Yes.

No.

I do not know.

[If Yes, go to #8; if No, skip to #9.]

8. Why did you not use part-time work arrangements?

adverse career consequences

could not afford it

no employer policy

too complicated to work out

managers/supervisors were not supportive of these policies

did not want to be stereotyped

Other\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify.)

9. Do you think, all in all, that part-time work arrangements should be expanded or not?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Yes	In some cases	Neutral	Not usually a good idea	Definitely Not

10. In your employing organization, how are (or would) part-time employees typically be viewed? (Please select all that apply.)

Talented

Committed to the organization

Second class citizens

Lazy

Hard working

Dependable

Undependable

Uncommitted to the organization

Boss's pet

Deserving

Undeserving

Available  
 Unavailable  
 Other\_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify.)

11. How many hours on average have you worked in the last four weeks, including all jobs but excluding vacations or sick days?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

12. What is the main type of product or service produced at your main workplace?

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Are there specific aspects of your job that would make part-time work arrangements particularly easy or difficult to use? If so, please specify what these are:\_\_\_\_\_

14. Sex:

M  
 F

15. Is English your first language?

Yes  
 No

16. Race:

Hispanic  
 African-American  
 Caucasian  
 Asian  
 Indian  
 Other\_\_\_\_\_

17. Age:

18-25  
 26-35  
 36-45  
 46-55  
 56-65  
 66 and above

18. Highest education completed:

Some high school  
High school  
Associates degree (2-year)  
Bachelors degree  
Honors degree  
Masters degree  
Doctoral degree

19. How many dependent children under the age of 17 live with you at least half of the time?

0  
1  
2  
3  
4  
5 or more

20. Have you lived with a partner or spouse for at least the last six months?

Yes.  
No.

[If selected Yes to #20, go to #21; otherwise skip #21.]

21. What best describes your partner's or spouse's employment situation?

full-time  
part-time  
not currently employed

## WLA Invitation E-mail

**Are you an HR/ Diversity Professional?** The following research project will be of interest.

It is common for HR/Diversity departments to be responsible for part-time work arrangement policies, but we do not know how HR/Diversity professionals view these policies or whether they personally use them.

To fill these knowledge gaps, Erika Kern, an honors student at Penn State University and currently an exchange student at Monash University, is conducting a survey on **HR/Diversity Professionals and Part Time Work Arrangements** that will give us insight into the availability, problems and potential benefits of part-time work options. The survey results will be written up as part of her Honors/Masters' Thesis and a summary will be sent by email to all of you receiving this note.

You can **complete the survey in about five minutes** by clicking on the link below.

<http://surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eQJZtyHiosYTixG8%2fBH6uw%3d%3d>

Most research about part-time hours concerns individuals who are physicians, police officers, lawyers, and academics. No one has researched this topic in relation to HR/Diversity professionals and completing this survey will contribute to our understanding.

Sincerely

Anne Bardoel  
President  
Work/Life Association  
[www.worklifeassociation.org](http://www.worklifeassociation.org)

**WLA: Reminder E-mail**

Dear Work-Life Association Member,

If you have not yet filled out the HR/Diversity Professional and Reduced Hours survey and you would like to participate please do so now or at your earliest convenience.

If you have already filled out the survey please do not fill it out a second time.

You can complete the survey in about five minutes by clicking on the link below.

<http://surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eQJZtyHiosYTIxG8%2fBH6uw%3d%3d>

Thank you for your time and your help to take steps forward to improve the field of HR/Diversity.

Sincerely, Anne Bardoel, President

**EEONA Invitation E-mail:**

Dear Equal Employment Opportunity Network of Australasia Member,

It is common for HR/Diversity departments to be responsible for any reduced hours policies, but we do not know how HR/Diversity professionals view these policies or whether they personally use them. To fill these knowledge gaps, Erika Kern, an honors student at Penn State University, is conducting a survey on HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours that will give us insight into the availability, problems and potential benefits of reduced hours options. The survey results will be written up as part of her Honors/Masters' Thesis and a summary will be sent by email to all of you receiving this note.

You can complete the survey in about five minutes by clicking on the link below.

<http://surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eQJZtyHiosYTIxG8%2fBH6uw%3d%3d>

Thank you for your time. Sincerely, **Juliet Bourke**

**NSW EEOPA Invitation E-mail:**

Dear New South Wales Equal Employment Opportunity Practitioners' Association Member,

It is common for HR/Diversity departments to be responsible for any reduced hours policies, but we do not know how HR/Diversity professionals view these policies or whether they personally use them. To fill these knowledge gaps, Erika Kern, an honors student at Penn State University, is conducting a survey on HR/Diversity Professionals and Reduced Hours that will give us insight into the availability, problems and potential benefits of reduced hours options. The survey results will be written up as part of her Honors/Masters' Thesis and a summary will be sent by email to all of you receiving this note.

You can complete the survey in about five minutes by clicking on the link below.

<http://surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eQJZtyHiosYTIxG8%2fBH6uw%3d%3d>

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Juliet Bourke

**HR Development at Work Newsletter Survey Invitation:**

It is common for HR/Diversity departments to be responsible for part-time work arrangement policies, but we do not know how HR/Diversity professionals view these policies or whether they personally use them. To fill these knowledge gaps a survey, HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements, is being conducted that will give us insight into the availability, problems and potential benefits of part-time work options in the field of HR/Diversity.

Most research about part-time hours concerns individuals who are physicians, police officers, lawyers, and academics. No one has researched this topic in relation to HR/Diversity professionals and completing this survey will contribute to our understanding.

<http://surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eQJZtyHiosYTIxG8%2fBH6uw%3d%3d>

[Bridget Hogg" <bh@developmentatwork.com>](mailto:bh@developmentatwork.com)

**Work-Family and Life Course Invitation E-mail:**

Hello classmates!

This is Erika Kern from your MGX5220 Unit. Thank you for giving me your email address and for taking interest in the HR/Diversity and Part Time Work Arrangements survey.

I would really appreciate if you would forward this on to other HR/Diversity professionals that you know and also copy me so I have a list of the emails so I can send everyone the results!

The results will be sent to anyone asked to participate in this survey by May 2008.

Thank you so much for your time and help! :)

Sincerely,

Erika Kern

Here is an invitation to send out explaining the survey if you decide to pass this along:

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Are you an HR/Diversity Professional? The following research project will be of interest.

It is common for HR/Diversity departments to be responsible for part-time work arrangement policies, but we do not know how HR/Diversity professionals view these policies or whether they personally use them.

To fill these knowledge gaps, I, Erika Kern, an honors student at Penn State University and currently an exchange student at Monash University, am conducting a survey on HR/Diversity Professionals and Part-Time Work Arrangements that will give us insight into the availability, problems and potential benefits of part-time work options. The survey results will be written up as part of my Honors/Masters' Thesis and a summary will be sent by email to all of you receiving this note.

You can complete the survey in about five minutes by clicking on the link below.

<http://surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=eQJZtyHiosYTIxG8%2fBH6uw%3d%3d>

Most research about part-time hours concerns individuals who are physicians, police officers, lawyers, and academics. No one has researched this topic in relation to HR/Diversity professionals and completing this survey will contribute to our understanding.

Sincerely,  
Erika Kern

Student

Penn State University

eok5000@psu.edu

Monash University

eker1@student.monash.edu

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