

Work arrangements: 1995 overview

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In November 1995, Statistics Canada, with financial support from Human Resources Development Canada, conducted the second Survey of Work Arrangements (SWA) of Canadian workers. The objectives of this survey were to update 1991 SWA data relating to business practices, juggling work and school, balancing work and family, and job quality; to fill in data gaps in the earlier survey; and to extend coverage to the self-employed (see *Data source*).

This overview presents some of the findings and highlights conspicuous relationships. Fuller analysis will appear in future issues of *Perspectives* and elsewhere.

Business practices

While much has been heard or written about ongoing corporate restructuring (for example, contracting out, relocation, mergers, downsizing), not much is known, statistically speaking, about changes in the work arrangements of employees.¹ A comparison of the results from the 1991 and 1995 Surveys of Work Arrangements (both held in November to eliminate the effects of seasonality) provides some of the missing information. However, since there are only two observation points, and because the two surveys took place at different phases of the business cycle, it is not clear to what extent the changes observed reflect real trends as opposed to cyclical patterns. It is also unclear to what extent shifts in industries and occupations may have contributed to revised practices;

such effects, if any, are likely to be small during the short interval between the two surveys.

Since most findings will be presented in percentages, it is worth noting that employees aged 15 to 69 in 1991 counted 10.8 million,² and in 1995, 11.1 million. The self-employed in that same age group in 1995 totalled 2.1 million. Unless otherwise stated, this paper refers to paid workers (employees) only.

Changes

A comparison of the 1991 and 1995 data reveals the following:

- The proportion of employees aged 15 to 69 usually working a five-day, Monday-to-Friday schedule (that is, no weekends) was around 60% for both surveys.
- However, weekend work has increased considerably. In 1991, approximately 10% of employees reported usually working on Saturdays, and 4% on Sundays; in 1995, the proportions had risen to 14% and 8%.
- The proportion of workers with a regular daytime schedule, the so-called "9 to 5" schedule, was little changed – it was 70% in 1991 and 68% in 1995. Though the percentage who had a shift, irregular, on-call or casual schedule also remained fairly stable, the proportion for whom such an arrangement was a requirement of the job (no choice) went up from 69% to 78%.
- The proportion of workers with a flexitime work arrangement (that is, an arrangement that permitted, within limits, some variation of work start and end times) rose from 16% to 24% (to 2.6 million).

Data source

The 1991 Survey of Work Arrangements (SWA), a supplement to the November Labour Force Survey (LFS) of the same year, gathered data on work schedules, shift work, flexitime, on-call work, working from home, and moonlighting. The November 1995 survey extended coverage to the self-employed and added new information on job quality, among other topics. Included in both surveys are questions on rates of pay, union membership and paid overtime. Combined with the LFS data on the personal and family characteristics of workers, the SWA offers a wealth of information on these issues, as well as on the broader topics of business practices, balancing work and family, and juggling work and school.

- Similarly, work at home saw an increase. The proportion of employees who regularly did some or all of their paid work at home rose from 6% to 9% (to one million).

New data

Among the new key findings are the following:

- Approximately 8% (171,000) of all part-time employees shared their job with another worker in November 1995. Close to 84% of all job-sharers were women.
- The survey asked the one million respondents who did all or part of their work from home if they were provided with certain equipment to help them carry out their duties. Approximately 22% of these employees said they were issued a computer; 14%, a modem, and 11%, a fax machine.

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- Roughly 14% of employees usually worked paid overtime each week, for an average of about 6 hours. This finding may be useful in discussions on the redistribution of paid overtime as a means of reducing unemployment.
- Approximately 12% of respondents (1.3 million) described their job as non-permanent.³ Of this group, close to one-half described their job as term, contract or temporary; another one-third, as casual, and the rest, as seasonal or other.
- On average, employees' hourly earnings were \$15.01.⁴
- In addition, over one-half of workers (51%) were covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan or group RRSP; 59%, by a health plan, and 55%, by a dental plan. Furthermore, 57% of employees were entitled to paid sick leave, and 73%, to paid vacation leave.⁵
- Only one-quarter (26%) of young employed students had a regular daytime work schedule, compared with 60% of non-students. Shift, irregular, on-call or casual work schedules were the norm for students; 71% working these schedules did so to accommodate their school demands.
- In terms of work arrangements, only a small fraction of young students and non-students worked from home (3% each), although a higher proportion of the former enjoyed a flexitime work arrangement (18% versus 13%). Also, the incidence of non-permanent employment among students (31%) was almost double that of non-students (17%).
- As expected, the volume of work was much heavier among non-students. Only 18% worked part time, compared with 89% of students. Approximately 25% of employed young people in school worked less than 10 hours each week: hardly any of those not in school put in so few hours. In contrast, 16% of employed non-students worked more than 40 hours each week, compared with almost no students. Finally, 16% of non-students usually worked paid overtime, three times the incidence among working students.

The differences in work schedules, volume and arrangements lend some support to the view that the need to balance work and school plays a crucial role in the decisions of young students.

Balancing work and family responsibilities

Balancing work and family also presents challenges (Marshall, 1994). While family demands come in all forms and affect workers of all ages and both sexes, this overview looks at female workers aged 25 to 44 with pre-school aged children,

a group with particularly high work absence rates owing to family demands (Akyeampong, 1995).⁶ In November 1995, these women numbered 788,000, while their counterparts without pre-schoolers totalled 2,259,000. How did these two groups compare with respect to work schedules, volume and arrangements?

- Employed women aged 25 to 44 with pre-school aged children were only slightly less likely to have a Monday-to-Friday inclusive work schedule (59% versus 64%) than those without. Though they were also only slightly more likely to work shift, irregular, on-call or casual schedules (29% versus 25%), about one-quarter cited care for children as the main reason for doing so. In terms of weekend work the two groups were identical: about 10% worked on Saturdays and about half that proportion (5%) on Sundays.
- Some 12% of both groups described their job as non-permanent.
- As expected, the volume of work provided by employed women with pre-schoolers was lower than that of their counterparts without young children. Approximately 31% of the former worked part time, compared with 21% of the latter. Also, the proportion working under 10 hours each week (4%) was double that of the other group, and the percentage working over 40 hours (7%), about half.
- Employed women with pre-schoolers were also slightly more likely to have work arrangements that helped to balance work and care of children. Approximately 28% had flexitime arrangements, compared with 25% of their counterparts without pre-schoolers. Some 13% worked from home, compared with 11%.

Juggling school and work

Balancing work and school is a persistent issue (Sunter, 1992). This overview examines the extent to which the work arrangements of youths (15 to 24 year-olds) in full- or part-time school attendance (736,000) differ from those of their counterparts not in school (1,060,000), and whether the differences demonstrate an attempt by students to strike a better balance between the competing demands.

- As one would expect, the Monday-to-Friday inclusive work schedule is rare among employed youths in school. Only 9% had this schedule in 1995, compared with 51% of their counterparts not in school. In contrast, weekend work was more common among students (43% for Saturday work and 29% for Sunday work). Only 19% of young non-students worked on Saturdays, and 10% on Sundays.

Job quality

There is a growing public perception that the “quality” of jobs is deteriorating. Advocates of this thesis argue that good jobs – as judged by such attributes as wage rate, availability of employer-sponsored pension, health and dental plans, and entitlement to paid sick and vacation leave, to name a few⁷ – are being replaced by not so good ones. They often note that in absolute and relative terms, temporary jobs are increasing (Krahn, 1995), part-time jobs are growing (Statistics Canada, 1996a), public sector⁸ employment is declining (Statistics Canada, 1996b), and small businesses have become key players in employment growth (Picot, Baldwin and Dupuy, 1994). In effect, they are saying that, looked at in isolation, permanent jobs seem better than non-permanent ones, full-time better than part-time, public sector better than private sector, and jobs in large firms better than those in small firms.⁹ Data from the 1995 SWA shed some light on this debate (Appendix). Among the major findings are the following:

- Average hourly earnings in permanent jobs in November 1995 (\$15.39) were almost three dollars better than those in non-permanent jobs. The difference between full-time (\$16.05) and part-time jobs was around five dollars.
- Employees with permanent, with full-time, or with public sector jobs had greater access to non-wage benefits. For example, on average, 60% of employees in permanent or full-time jobs were covered by an employer-sponsored pension, health or dental plan, compared with about 20% in non-permanent or part-time jobs. The corresponding proportion in public sector jobs was even higher, at around 80%. The picture was similar for paid sick leave entitlement.

- The likelihood of being covered by non-wage benefit plans and of having paid sick leave entitlement also increased with firm size – from around 30% in the smallest firms to approximately 80% or more in the largest. Hourly earnings also rose by firm size – from \$12.16 in firms with under 20 employees to a little over \$20.00 in those with more than 500.
- The proportion of employees entitled to paid vacation leave was generally higher than that with paid sick leave entitlement. Again, coverage was higher in permanent, full-time, or public sector jobs and in those in larger firms: about 80% or more of these employees enjoyed such benefits.
- In a world of increasing stress and conflicting demands, a flexitime work arrangement offers some relief: it is a good job attribute, more likely to be found in permanent, full-time or public sector jobs: about one in four such workers had this privilege compared with one in five in non-permanent, part-time or private sector jobs. Very large firms seem to offer greater opportunities for flexitime work arrangements.

Self-employment

Approximately 2.1 million people aged 15 to 69 were self-employed¹⁰ in their main job in November 1995. This was 15% higher than the level in November 1991. This growth was greater than that among paid workers (just 3%). Following are some key findings of the 1995 SWA:

- As expected, working from home is very common among the self-employed. Over half (53%) of the 2.1 million operated their businesses from home.
- The main reasons for engaging in self-employment were enjoy-

ment of independence (42%), carrying on a family business (17%), no other work available (12%), and a desire to make more money (10%).

About 184,000 moonlighters, some of whom were employees in their main job and some who were self-employed in their main job, worked for themselves in the second job. Most (78%) operated these second jobs from home.

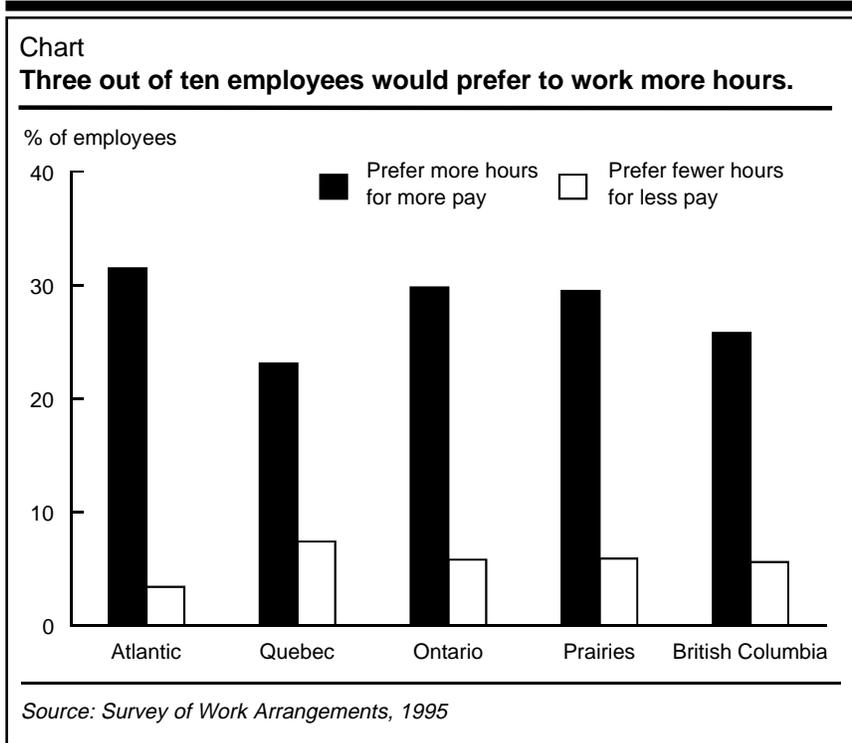
Work hour preferences of employees

One question in the 1995 SWA sought information on the work hour preferences of Canadian paid workers. The question read: “At this job, given the choice, would [you] at [your] current wage, prefer to work (mark one only)

1. Fewer hours for less pay?
2. More hours for more pay?
3. The same hours for the same pay?”

Answers to this question, along with information collected in other parts of the survey, would be of interest to people concerned with issues of underemployment, overemployment, and redistribution of work.¹¹ A few findings are presented here:

- Approximately two in three paid workers (66%) preferred to work the same hours for the same pay.
- About 6% of paid workers (the majority being women) indicated a preference for fewer hours for less pay.
- About 28% preferred to work more hours for more pay. However, almost 50% of youths, of part-timers and of persons in non-permanent jobs preferred to work more hours.
- Except for Quebec, higher than average proportions of workers preferring more hours were observed in slack labour market



regions (that is, areas with unemployment rates higher than the national average). The proportions declined as one moved west: from 32% of workers in the Atlantic region to 26% in British Columbia (Chart). In Quebec, only 23% of workers indicated such a preference.

- Similarly, only 3% of workers in the Atlantic region preferred fewer work hours, compared with about 6% in Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia. In Quebec, the percentage was a bit higher, over 7%.

A public-use microdata file of SWA survey results is available for \$1,500.00 (product number 71M0013XDB). To order, please contact Mike Sivyer at 1 800 461-9050 or (613) 951-4598; fax (613) 951-0562.

■ Notes

- 1 The distribution between full- and part-time jobs and, to some extent, temporary and non-temporary jobs (as defined by the General Social Survey) are exceptions.
- 2 Unlike the previously published figure (10.3 million), this count was reweighted to the 1991 Census and includes 65 to 69 year-olds.
- 3 The SWA definition of a non-permanent job went beyond the restrictive definition of temporary job used in the General Social Survey (that is, a job with an end date) or by several past household-based surveys such as the Labour Market Activity Survey (that is, a job lasting less than six months). It was based simply on the agreement when the job began, irrespective of a specified end date or duration.
- 4 This figure is the derived average for all respondents, whether they are salaried or paid by the hour.
- 5 Although federal and provincial employment standards and labour laws generally entitle employees to at least two weeks of

paid vacation, some workers do not enjoy such a benefit. These include some contract, term, on-call and casual workers. It is also conceivable that some workers who are expected to take pay in lieu of vacation time may have responded negatively to the related survey question. A close examination of the profile of respondents who indicated they were not entitled to paid vacation is under way.

6 Working men of the same age in similar family situations lost hardly any work time for this reason.

7 Other relevant job characteristics, not covered by the SWA, include the degree of stress associated with the job, promotion prospects, boredom and repetitiveness.

8 The public sector includes employees working for the federal government, provincial or local governments, agencies or other government bodies, Crown corporations, or government-owned institutions such as schools or hospitals. The private sector includes all other employees and the self-employed.

9 There is doubtless a high correlation between these job types. For example, public sector jobs are more likely to be permanent and full-time. These factors have not been controlled for in this overview.

10 Self-employed workers include working owners of incorporated or unincorporated businesses who work for themselves, with or without paid help.

For another look at SWA data on the self-employed, see "Key labour and income facts" in this issue.

11 A detailed analysis of data pertaining to this question, including differences in proxy/non-proxy responses, is planned for release sometime in 1997.

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		Job type *						
		All	Permanent	Non-permanent	Full-time	Part-time	Public sector	Private sector
Number of employed	('000)	11,084	9,683	1,272	8,968	2,116	2,058	9,016
Hourly wage rate	(\$)	15.01	15.39	12.42	16.05	11.01	19.46	13.97
Coverage in employer-sponsored		%						
Pension plan/group RRSP		51	55	20	59	19	83	44
Health plan		59	64	19	69	18	79	54
Dental plan		55	60	17	64	16	72	51
Paid sick leave entitlement		57	62	19	66	18	83	51
Paid vacation leave		73	78	28	82	31	78	71
In flexitime work arrangement		24	24	21	25	19	27	23
		Firm size (number of employees)						
		Under 20	20-99	100-500	Over 500			
Number of employed	('000)	11,084	3,799	3,507	2,292	1,178		
Hourly wage rate	(\$)	15.01	12.16	14.76	17.37	20.16		
Coverage in employer-sponsored		%						
Pension plan/group RRSP		51	25	54	75	85		
Health plan		59	34	64	80	85		
Dental plan		55	31	59	74	81		
Paid sick leave entitlement		57	38	60	74	79		
Paid vacation leave		73	59	73	85	89		
In flexitime work arrangement		24	24	20	24	33		

Source: Survey of Work Arrangements
 Note: A worker is considered full-time if he or she usually works 30 hours or more a week at the main job. Part-timers usually work less than 30 hours. For other definitions see notes 3 and 8.
 * These job types are not mutually exclusive of each other.