How generations balance work and private life

A study of different generations and their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance and the impact of support and work-life practices in a multinational organization

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Abstract

In this study the relationship between different generations and their perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance was examined. The research answers the question: to what extent do members of the baby boom generation, X generation and Y generation differ in their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance? In addition, the influence of work-life practices offered by the organization and the extent of support that the employees received from managers, colleagues and the organization was examined. Data was collected among 267 employees of a Dutch multinational organization with the use of a questionnaire and was analyzed with multiple regression analysis. The results showed that support had a direct positive effect on the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance, whereas the intention to use work-life practices did not lead to a larger perceived ability to experience a work-life balance. The hypothesis that the younger generation, the less they feel able to experience a work-life balance was not supported in this study. Also the moderator effects of support and work-life practices were not found to be significant.

Key concepts: generations, perceived ability to experience a work-life balance, work-life practices, support
1. Introduction

In the current labour market people from different generations are working together (Glass, 2007; Wong, Gardner, Lang & Coulon, 2008). However, in the coming period some important developments will take place. A large part of the working population, also named the baby boom generation (born between 1946 - 1964) will retire. The early baby boomers (boomers) will reach their retirement age this year, 2011 (CBS, 2011b). As a consequence of the baby boom generation reaching their retirement, younger people (members of generation X, born between 1965 - 1979 and generation Y, born after 1980) will be prevalent in today’s workforce and will gain important roles (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). For instance, they will increasingly take over management positions (Houlihan, 2008; Kowske, Rasch & Wiley, 2010; Trunk, 2007).

Beside the changes in the labour market other developments in family life are visible. For instance, the movement of women to the workforce (CBS, 2011c), the rise of single-parent families (Allen, Herst, Burck & Sutton, 2000; Cinnamon & Rich, 2002) and the fast increase of dual-earner households (CBS, 2011c). These developments may create more pressure on employees and effect difficulties for them in order to find an appropriate balance between work and private life. Though will these developments have different impact on the different generations as the assumption is made that generations significantly differ in the work values, goals and expectations they set (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Previous studies gave an insight in the effects of work-life balance and the preferences of the different generations (e.g. Carlson, Czyrwacz & Zivnuska, 2009; Greenhaus, Colling & Shaw, 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Experiencing a right balance can increase wellbeing, quality of life and satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Valcour, 2007).

The baby boom generation can be characterized by being hard-workers and loyal to the organization (Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Gibson, Greenwood & Murphy, 2009). Although work was for male major in their life, family was just as important. The Dutch women most of the time stayed at home and took care for the children (CBS, 2011b). In comparison, generation X also values working hard, but they seek more family-time (Kowske et al. 2010). Figures show that male and female increasingly spend time with their children (CBS, 2011b). Generally, members of generation X are more likely to strive for a balance between work and family (Bickel & Brown, 2005; Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Kowske et al., 2010). Even more than with members of generation X, members of generation Y highly value a work-life balance. They are continuously seeking job opportunities that allow them to achieve a balance between work and their private life. Examples of this can be seen in flexible working hours and working from home. Generation Y is forcing companies nowadays to
think creatively about becoming a supportive employer in order to make themselves more attractive for the new generation (Trunk, 2007).

Existing literature thus suggest that different generations differ in their search for ways to balance their work and family life (Bickel & Brown, 2005; Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Gibson et al. 2009; Kowske et al. 2010). However, to what extent the different generations feel able to experience a work-life balance still is unknown. As current research suggests, members of generation Y are more demanding in setting their expectations regarding their work-life balance, then what does this mean for the degree to which they differ in the ability to experience a work-life balance? And are organizations able to contribute to that ability of experiencing a balance of their employees?

Organizations try to find ways to accommodate their employees in finding the right balance by offering successful work-life practices (i.e. family-friendly policies) while still aiming for high performance and economic success (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills & Smeaton, 2003). These work-life practices include, amongst others, working from home (teleworking), family leave programs (e.g. adoption leave and parental leave), flexible working hours (e.g. flextime or a compressed work week) and part-time work (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Lazar, Osoian & Ratiu, 2010). Besides the presence of work-life practices, also the extent to which employees receive support from the supervisor and/or colleagues with regard to their family-life is important (Allen, 2001; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999; Thompson & Pottras, 2005). The question raises as to what extent each generation benefit from the presence of work-life practices and delivering of supervisor- and colleague support in the ability to experience a work-life balance. One can think of that members of generation X, with generally young children, do want to make use of other practices in comparison to the other generations.

Based on the elaboration above the following research questions can be given:

1) To what extent do members of the baby boom generation, X generation and Y generation differ in their perceived ability to experience of work-life balance?

2) To what extent do work-life practices and support have an influence on the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance for the different generations?

In order to find an answer to these research questions, a quantitative study is conducted in a multinational high-tech company. In the following, the definitions of the different variables and the relation between these variables will be elaborated based on existing literature. Further, hypotheses will be formulated and visualized in a conceptual model which will give direction to this research.
2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Generations and Work-Life balance

Generations

The concept of generations dates back to the year 1952 to the work of Karl Mannheim (Mannheim, 1952). In previous research the term generation was used to refer to an identifiable group of people who are born and raised in the same time. Because of the same background of each group they share key life experiences (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002). While different cohorts are distinguished in generational research, most studies focus on three different generations: generation baby boom, generation X and generation Y (e.g. Alch, 2008; Murphy, Gibson, Greenwood, 2010; Twenge, 2010). The baby boom generation is, despite the fact that they will quickly approach retirement, the largest group in the current workforce, followed by generation X (gen X’ ers) (Kowske et al., 2010; Trunk, 2007). The Y generation, also named the millennials, is the latest generation currently entering the workforce (Kowske et al., 2010; Murphy et al., 2010). It is difficult to exactly delimitate the boundaries of the different generations. In the above mentioned studies the boundaries of each generation differ and these studies had primarily been conducted in the US and the UK. There was no general delimitation found which is characteristic for generations in the Netherlands. Therefore in this study the delimitation of the cohorts is based on the average of the delimitation used in the majority of articles. In this study the year of birth between 1946 and 1964 is used for the baby boom generation, which is also used in studies of Alch, 2008; Egri and Ralstone, 2004; Gibson et al., 2010; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Straus and Howe,1997 and Twenge, 2010. For the X generation the parameter 1965 – 1979 is used (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Gibson et al., 2009; 2010; Straus & Howe, 1997) and the Y generation can be defined as the population who is born in and after 1980 (Eisner, 2005; Gibson et al., 2009; Gibson et al., 2010).

External forces (e.g. environment, social events, economic situation and media) influence the different generations and provide them with a common value system that distinguishes them from members of other generations (Twenge, 2010; Twenge, Campell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010). Work values are part of that value system and describe how people view their work (Twenge et al. 2010). They focus on the workers’ attitudes of what can be expected from the workplace and these values determine the decisions and actions people take towards the organization (Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989 as cited in Gibson et al. 2009; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002).
In general the baby boomers cover the senior positions in organizations and are resistant to authority. They are loyal to the organization and hard-working (Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Gibson et al., 2009). Managers can motivate them with money (Gibson et al., 2009). Gen X members can be characterized as modest and down to earth. This generation is the new leading generation which has a strong focus on bridging differences on a constructive way (Bontekoning, 2007). Moreover, people of this generation are very comfortable with diversity, change and competition according the study of Kupperschmidt (2000). In addition, they are continually seeking for new career options and want meaningful work (Gibson et al., 2009). Gen Y is the digital generation, who grew up with technology, constant connectedness and social networking (Gibson et al., 2009; Wong, et al. 2008). They are networking with people from all ages and cultures and are multicultural (Bontekoning, 2007). Members of gen Y value freedom and leisure relative highly in comparison to the other two generations (Gibson et al., 2009; Twenge, 2010; Twenge, et al., 2010) although they are highly motivated in making career advancement in comparison to the other generations (Wong et al. 2008). Health and family security is highly valued for all the three generations (Gibson, et al., 2009).

**Work - Life balance**

Because of changes in the labour market and developments in family life such as movement of women to the workforce and the increasing dual earner households, work-life balance became an actual topic (Allen et al., 2000; CBSc, 2011). The generations show differences in how they value work (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008) and have different preferences and expectations in how they can experience an appropriate balance between work and private life (e.g. Carlson et al., 2009; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

Work-life balance is frequently investigated in previous studies, but the definitions are diverse. Historically, work-life balance has been conceptualized in terms of work-family conflict (Carlson, et al., 2009; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). The *conflict approach* is based on the assumption that work-roles and family-roles can be in conflict due to limited time and energy (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Studies of Greenhaus et al. (2003) and Higgens, Duxbury and Johnson (2000) define work-family balance as the absence of, or the experience of low levels of work-family conflict. Other studies define work-family balance in terms of enrichment based on the *enrichment approach*.

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1 The concepts work-life balance and work-family balance are compatible with each other in the literature and will therefore be seen as the same in this paper.

The term work-life balance is used instead of work-family balance because this has a broad focus. Also people with no family/household do set value on time next to work for friends or hobbies.
(Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hill, 2005; Wayne, Randel & Stevens, 2006). This approach argues that family involvement can lead to enrichment instead of conflict and vice versa. People can get energy from their family-life, which they can use in their work-life and vice versa. Another definition of work-family balance used in the literature comes from Voydanoff (2005) who conceptualized it as “a global assessment that work and family resources are sufficient to meet work and family demands such that participation is effective in both domains” (p. 825) or Kahn et al. (1964) as cited in Gröpel and Kuhl (2009) who defined the concept as “integration of work demands with family roles” (p.365).

Important for the conceptualization of the term work-life balance is the meaning of the term balance. Balance can be linked to the term equilibrium. Poelmans (as cited in Poelmans, Kalliath & Brough, 2008) refers to the definition of balance as “two elements are in equilibrium because they have the same weight” (p.228). However, Poelmans is not convinced of the term ‘balance’. Taking a critical stance towards the concept, people can experience a perfect balance if they work for 80% and spent 20% towards their private life. For others a different partition of time between work and private life is desired. Most people will experience balance if they are satisfied with the distribution between their work life and private life. For that reason many articles define work-life balance in terms of satisfaction (e.g. Beham & Drobnic, 2010; Valcour, 2007). In contrast to this, the researchers Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) are skeptical about defining work-life balance in terms of satisfaction because it is not only the subjective perception of individuals that determines if there is a satisfied balance. There is also a role for organizations and families in which the activities are performed because the satisfaction of experiencing a work-life balance of individuals is often at the expense of others. To avoid this problem the authors of the article suggest an alternative definition of work-life balance, namely “the accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the work and family domain” (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007, p. 458). This definition focuses mainly on the perceived ability to accomplish work and private related role expectations and is an estimation of feeling able to experience a work-life balance by the person itself. Moreover it uncouples satisfaction in the definition.

**Generations and the ability to experience a work-life balance**

How generations value and approach their work is an important question nowadays (Levenson, 2010). Especially their approach with regard to their work differs (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002).
Baby boom

With regard to the extent to which they feel able to experience a work-life balance, the baby boomers, especially male boomers are characterized as hard-workers who are loyal to the organization (Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Gibson, et al., 2009). Cennamo and Gardner (2008) support this by concluding that baby boomers are focused on traditional work models which result in hard-working and they are eager for extrinsic work values such as salary, benefits and status. The first signs of strain between work-and family roles were recognizable as the boomers became increasingly family-oriented due to change in roles from a traditional family towards new social roles for men and women by entering women to the workforce (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008). Because of the gradually shift of traditional role patterns, the gap in economic independency became smaller. The economic independency increased in the period 2000 – 2009 for Dutch male (51% to 62%) as well as for female (15%-30%) (CBS, 2011b). Moreover, the boomers feel the pressure of take care of their own children (late boomers) and their ageing parents (early boomers) (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Nevertheless, they do not set such as high expectations with regard to their work-life balance since baby boomers are considered as workaholics and thus tend to put their work on the first place (Crampton & Hodge, 2007).

Generation X

Members of generation X were raised with the experience of a shift away from the traditional family roles towards new kinds of family households. Examples are one person households, single-parent families, because of the high divorce rates and dual-career families as a result of women entering the workforce (CBS, 2011b). Likely through these experiences the members of the X generation seek for more family-time as they did not experience this in their own youth (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Bickel & Brown, 2005; Gibson, et al., 2009). As figures show, male and female increasingly spend time with their children (CBS, 2011b). In general X’ers are less loyal to the organization and less fixated in titles and status compared to the boomers, although they are hard-working. Due to the attendance of wireless connection they were able to work everywhere (Glass, 2007). For fear of working all the time, they increasing set value on achieving a work-life balance (Glass, 2007) and actively start try to accomplish their role-related expectations that are shared in their private,-and work domain (Bickel & Brown, 2005; Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Kowske et al. 2010). They were likely convinced that work should not be the most important part of one’s life (Smola & Sutton, 2002).
**Generation Y**

In contrast to the women from the baby boom generation, the young women from gen Y are focused on economic independency and are very career oriented (CBS, 2011b). The young millennials are more used to the differences in family households in comparison to the X’ers (Alch, 2008; Gibson, et al. 2009). They continue with search for balance and want to be independent (Gibson, et al. 2009). They value a meaningful life everywhere, at work and at home. Work becomes less central in their life and leisure and freedom becomes more and more important for them (Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al. 2010). This is in line with the studies of Smola and Sutton (2002) and Yeaton (2008), who stated that generation Y wants a life outside work and prefer flexible work (arrangements).

The new generation is ‘the talents of the future’ but is difficult to recruit and retain. Characteristics as high volunteer turnover rates, leaving the organization if their job is not challenging them, seeking job opportunities that balance their lives such as flexibility and teleworking and lack of motivation through salary and secondary benefits only, confirm that difficulty (Kowske, et al., 2010; Martin 2005; Yeaton, 2008).

Taken together, these studies suggest that employees of generation Y are setting high expectations in order to find an appropriate balance between their work and their private life in comparison to gen X members, through which it is likely difficult for them to actually experience a work-life balance. Gen X members following are more actively seeking for balance in contrast to baby boomers. The boomers in general are not actively searching for a balance; they only feel the strains of combining work and private life but do not set high expectations in for instance flexible work opportunities or more free days. They feel in general common with the division of work and private responsibilities through which they easily experience an appropriate work-life balance. This will lead to the following hypothesis:

*H 1: The younger the generation, the less they feel able to experience a work-life balance.*

**2.2 Generation and Work-life balance moderated by Work-life practices** and Support

**Work-life practices**

A way for employers to help their employees in finding the right balance between work and private life is offering successful work-life practices (i.e. family-friendly policies). With these practices the

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2 In the literature also referred to as family-friendly policies/benefits or work-home arrangements.
organization offers support for (child) care, family, - or personal leave and flexible work options (Estes & Michael, 2005 as cited in Beaugard & Henry, 2009). Besides benefits for employees, the organization provides these practices in order to attract and retain employees and maintain a competitive advantage (Allen, 2001; Beaugard & Henry, 2009). The different practices are designed for employees in order to help them to balance different roles of work and private life (Allen, 2001; Pedersen, Minnotte, Kiger & Mannon, 2008). The study of Beaugard and Henry (2009) also stated that the implementation of work-life practices reduces the level of work-life conflict and lead to a proper balance. It is then hypothesized:

H2: The higher the intention to use work-life practices, the more people feel able to experience a work-life balance.

In the Netherlands the amount of people who work part-time increases (CBS 2011b). Part-time work is commonly used as family-friendly policy, although it is also popular for people without a household (CBS, 2009; CBS 2011b; Remery, Doorne-Huiskes & Schippers, 2003). Despite the success of the part-time work arrangements, an increasing number of workers require other practices in order to experience a work-life balance (Remery, et al., 2003). Work-life practices can be broadly distinguished in two categories (Dikkers et al. 2007; Dikkers, van Engen & Vinkenburg, 2010; Remery, et al., 2003). The first category represents flexible work-life practices which increase the flexibility regarding work time, - and place (e.g. flextime, compressed work week, part-time work, working from home). The second category represents the care-related work-life practices which include childcare facilities that help employees with balancing their work and the care of raising children (e.g. parental leave, maternity leave) and leave options (e.g. short-, and long term care leave).

Allen (2001) argued that flexible facilities are more often used than care-related facilities. Dikkers (2008) and Remery et al. (2003) on the other hand stated that not all facilities are eligible to all employees. Child-care facilities are only relevant to working parents. It is therefore likely to assume that there is gradation in preferences of making use of flexible and care related facilities. This assumption is based on the existed literature that stated that generations set different expectations with regard to work.

In general the baby boomers feel pressure to take care for children or grandchildren and ageing parents at the same time (Kupperschmidt, 2000). They would be supported by care-facilities as for instance care leave. However, they would not be keen on the use of flex opportunities as working from home because that is quite new for them. Members of generation X are generally struggling with challenges of raising young children and achieving the balance between work and
private life. Childcare facilities such as pregnancy and maternity leave, maternity nursing and parental leave are useful for them even as flexible arrangements as part time work and flexible work hours. The study of Golden (2008) concluded that having pre-school children increases the probability of likely working at home. Ten Brummelhuis and van der Lippe (2010) argue on the other hand that working from home is less efficient for employees with children as they have more interfering family tasks. Generation Y members will presumably prefer flex facilities more because they put high value on freedom and leisure (Twenge, 2010). Members of generation Y are just entering the labour market and generally do not have children but primarily focus on learning and development (Levenson, 2010). Most of them work fulltime and want to make advancement in their careers (Wong et al., 2008). Based on this elaboration the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H 3a: The relationship between the membership of a generation and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance is moderated by the presence of flexible work-life practices in such a way that the younger the generation, the more they will benefit from the perceived existing flexible work-life practices.

H 3b: The relationship between the membership of a generation and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance is moderated by the presence of care-related work-life practices in such a way that members of generation X will benefit more from the existing care work-life practices than members of generation baby boom, whereas members of generation baby boom will benefit more than members of generation Y.

The intention to use work-life practices in relation to the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance is often confounded with having young children. Especially care-related practices (childcare facilities) are eligible for parents with young children. Having children at home follows important changes in care-related tasks and therefore has influence on combining work and family life (Reynolds & Aletratis, 2009). For that reason parenthood (having children at home) will be taken into account as control variable in the relation to the perceived ability of experiencing work and private life.

Support
As mentioned above, organizations offer work-life practices in order to support employees in achieving a work-life balance. However, even when employees are fully aware of the available practices the organization offers, they are hesitant to make use of them (Beaugard & Henry, 2009;
Dikkers, 2008; McDonald, Guthrie, Bradley & Shakespear-Finch et al., 2005). A possible explanation can be the impact on the career possibilities (Eaton, 2003; Thompson et al., 1999). The notion exist that making use of work-life practices may lead to reduced career possibilities. Second explanation can be the negative perception from managers and colleagues towards the employees which make use of the practices (Beaugard & Henry, 2009). It can be seen that people who make more use of work-life practices are less committed to the organization (Allen & Russell, 1999). The study of Thompson et al. (1999) stated moreover that organizational support have a strong influence on the use of practices. When the organization has a positive attitude towards combining work and private demands by use of practices, employees are less afraid of reducing their career opportunities. Also Lazar, Osoian and Ratiu (2010) and Allen (2001) found that the success of work-life practices largely depends on the extent of support from the organization.

Thompson et al. (1999) were among the first who emphasize the important role of support from the organization and referred to this with the concept of ‘work-life culture’, which can be defined as “the shared assumptions, beliefs and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees’ work and private lives” (p. 394). Dikkers et al. (2007) expand the work-life culture construct of Thompson et al. (1999) and assigned it to two general dimensions. The first is ‘support’: “reflecting employee’s perceptions of organization’s, supervisor’s, and colleagues’ responsiveness to work-family issues and the use of work-home (WH) arrangements” (Dikkers et al. 2007, p.157) and the second is ‘hindrance’: “reflecting employees’ perceptions and career consequences and organizational time demands that may prevent them from using WH arrangements” (p.157). This study has a focus on the ‘support’ dimension that consists of three constructs based on the perception of the employee regarding: a) organization’s support (how family-supportive is the organization?) b) supervisor’s support (how well does the supervisor understand the desire of the employee in balancing work and personal life?) c) colleagues’ support (how supportive are the colleagues regarding balance work/family life?). This support will lead to less conflict between work-roles and private-roles (Thompson & Pottras, 2005), whereby especially manager support is a key determinant for employees to manage the integration of work and private life (Anderson, Coffey & Byerley, 2002). Indeed, several studies suggest that the support from the organization and the supervisors are more important for employees than the offered work-life practices (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). When managers support employees in putting effort to balance work and family responsibilities, it is assumed that they can easily experience a work-life balance. Especially members of generation Y will benefit from support as they are just entering the labour market and set high expectations which they will accomplish more easily with support from their manager and colleagues. The baby boom generation will benefit less likely
from support as they are resistant to authority and meddlesomeness (Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Gibson et al., 2009). Taken together, this leads to the following hypotheses:

**H4:** The higher the level of support employees receive, the more they feel able to experience a work-life balance.

**H5:** The relationship between the membership of a generation and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance is moderated by the level of support, in such a way that the younger the generation, the more they will benefit from a higher level of support.

### 2.3 Research Model

In Figure 1 the different hypotheses that are explicated above are illustrated in a conceptual model.

*Figure 1: Research Model*
2.4 Organizational Context

The research site is Philips, a global company with manufacturing sites in 28 countries and sales outlets in 150 countries. In 1891 the organization started with 6 divisions; however since 2001 Philips underwent a radical transformation which reduced its divisions to 3, namely Healthcare, Lighting and Consumer Lifestyle.

This research is conducted in the divisions Lighting and Healthcare because the topic work-life balance has a high priority on the agendas of both divisions. In order to operate in a global marketplace, a diverse workforce and inclusive working environment is needed if the organization wants to create a high performance work culture which is based on engaged people, innovation and better understanding of the markets and customers. For that reason the topic work-life balance is included in the Collective Labour Agreement of Philips with providing arrangements such as teleworking. In addition, in the yearly global Engagement Survey of 2010 also the indicator work-life balance is included. From this it can be concluded that work-life balance is an increasingly important topic for Philips.

Prior to the start of this study, Philips already did some explorative (non-scientific) research. The first research is a study done by the Benelux Talent Management Team on generational differences in the workforce. They organized lunches and workshops with people from Gen Y where they tried to find answer on the question: ‘What do Gen Y employees need in order to attract and retain them?’ The conclusion was that these young talents are looking for enough development/learning opportunities, personal attention and transparency.

The second initiative was conducted by the Recruitment Department and consists of a PHI panel. This panel included third and fourth year students (thus belonging to Generation Y) and focused on the question how students view Philips as a future employers. The conclusion from the panel shows that students have high expectations of Philips. They expect to offer them broad career and development possibilities without considering what they should give Philips in return.

Shortly after the launch of these initiatives, the Philips Employment Centre started with a new program: Workshop Working Parent(s) Program. This workshop is especially created for employees with children who are seeking for the right balance between work and their private life. Data in preparation of these workshops clearly indicated that for Philips the turnover rates among 30-40 year employees is higher in contrast to other age groups. A possible explanation can be the phase of life between 30 and 40 years old, in which these employees get quite often children. The new generation of highly educated employees set different demands of the combination work-life and in the war for talent it is crucial for organization to be an attractive organization.
3. Methods

3.1 Research design

Previous research of generations at work often relies on qualitative methods (Twenge, 2010; Wong et al. 2008). In this study data was collected in a quantitative way by making use of an online questionnaire at one moment in time. Therefore the research design can be characterized as cross-sectional. The unit of analysis and unit of observation are both on individual level as all variables are also defined on the level of the individual.

3.2 Data collection

Data has been collected with a questionnaire among employees of different departments within one multinational organization. In order to create commitment for the research within the organization, presentations and meetings were held with different human resource managers. When the managers were convinced of the value of the research, they motivated their team to participate in the research. Furthermore, Philips Employability Centre organized work-life balance workshops for managers and employees, supported by the head of HR Benelux, to which this research is closely related. While visiting working parents program workshops, managers were persuade to invite their teams to act as respondent. The questionnaires and a brief explanation of the research were distributed by e-mail to the participating managers. These managers subsequently distributed these questionnaires in their team/department. The anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed as the questionnaires were filled out online and no names were asked. Moreover, the completed questionnaires were only visible for the researcher.

3.3 Sample strategy

Several departments and business groups within Philips Lighting and Healthcare were selected to participate in this research. The division Lighting was most represented because work-life balance is a topic that has a high position on the management agenda and the HR director of Lighting supported this research. All the departments were part of the Corporate Philips organization. The different departments were selected by means of convenience sampling which led to a non-probability sample design.

A total of 663 surveys were distributed within the organization, 436 surveys were returned. This gave a response rate of 65.8 percent. However, 169 participants were excluded because of non-completed surveys. The response rate decreased therefore to 40.3 percent. In total 267 completed surveys were used in this study. Of all respondents, 62.5 percent was men and 37.5 percent was
women. The majority (67.4 percent) was highly educated; 33 percent university/master, 34.5 percent bachelor, whereas 14.2 percent has had higher vocational education and 14.2 percent secondary school. With regard to marital stage, 61.4 percent was married, 24.3 percent lived together with a partner, 11.2 percent was single, 2.6 percent was divorced and 0.4 percent (1 person) was widowed. Participants ranged in ages from 21 to 63 year with an average of 42 years old. Concerning nationality, 84.3 percent of the respondents had the Dutch nationality and 15.7 percent indicated to have another nationality than Dutch.

This study included three generational subgroups. The first group was the baby boomer generation which contained 35.6 percent of the total sample. 44.6 percent of the total sample belonged to the X generation and 19.5 percent belonged to the Y generation. The demographic characteristics per subgroup were presented in Table 1.
Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of employees per generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Generation Baby Boom (n=95)</th>
<th>Generation X (n=119)</th>
<th>Generation Y (n=52)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>n=74</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>n=60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>n=21</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>n=59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>µ=53</td>
<td></td>
<td>µ=40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational grade:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University/Master</td>
<td>n=15</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>n=44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>n=34</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>n=39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher vocational educated</td>
<td>n=16</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>n=19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>n=22</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>n=14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>n=8</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>n=3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>n=8</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>n=7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>n=76</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>n=74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living together with partner</td>
<td>n=9</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>n=34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced/Separated</td>
<td>n=3</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>n=4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>n=0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>n=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contract hours</strong></td>
<td>µ=39.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>µ=33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working hours</strong></td>
<td>µ=42.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>µ=40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenthood – Children at home</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children at home</td>
<td>n=39</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>n=30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 child</td>
<td>n=18</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>n=24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 children</td>
<td>n=24</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>n=48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 children</td>
<td>n=12</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>n=12</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 children</td>
<td>n=1</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>n=4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 children</td>
<td>n=0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>n=1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Measures
The researched variables in this study are generation, ability to experience a work life balance, work-life practices and support (see Figure 1). These variables were measured by means of a self-reported questionnaire. The questionnaire can be found in Appendices A, B and C.

Generation was measured by asking respondents in which year they were born. Data was analyzed splitting the respondent into different generation groups: born in 1946 – 1964 (baby boomers), 1965 – 1979 (generation X) and born after 1980 (generation Y). Two dummy variables were needed in this case. The X generation acted as the referent group as this was the largest group.

Perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was measured with a 6-item scale created by Grzywacz and Carlson (2007). Work-life balance was defined in this study in terms of accomplishment of role-related expectations in work and family domain (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007, p. 458) which is an estimation of feeling able to experience a work-life balance by the person itself. An example of an item is ‘I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me at work and in my family’. The six items belonging to this scale were rated on a five-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

The KMO value for this scale was .910, the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant on the .000 level and all correlations in the matrix were $r = > .3$. These values indicated that the scale was suitable for factor analysis. The factor analysis (PCA) showed a one component solution for the scale. The one-component solution explained a total of 71.1 percent of the variance. The reliability of the scale was tested and gave a Chronbach’s alpha of .915, thereby suggesting a very good internal consistency and a good reliability for this scale.

Work-life practices offered by Philips were examined. Some of these practices were initiated by the government (e.g. maternity leave), others were mentioned in the collective labour agreement of Philips (e.g. working from home). Furthermore, some practices were examined which were not (yet) offered by the organisation (e.g. compressed workweek, 4*9 hours). By doing so it was possible to determine employees’ preferences in the use of new offered work-life practices which would help them in experiencing a work-life balance. The practices were divided in two parts, flexible arrangements and care-related arrangements (Dikkers et al. 2007; Dikkers, van Engen & Vinkenburg, 2010; Remery, et al., 2003). Respondents were able to answer the question: ‘To what extent should this work-life practice help you to accomplish your role expectations of your work and personal life?’ This question was answered using a five-point Likert-scale ranging from ‘to not at all’ (1) to ‘a large
A confirmative factor analysis was used to confirm the differences between subcomponents.

For this scale the KMO value was .845 and the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity valued significant of .000. These values indicated that the scale was suitable for a factor analysis. The first factor analyses with both rotations, Oblimin and Varimax, revealed a three-component solution for the scale. After factor and reliability analysis, 3 items were left out of the scale which resulted in a scale with the highest reliability of Chronbach’s alpha of .895. The three-component solution explained a total of 78.7 percent of the total variance, with Component 1 contributing 52.3 percent, Component 2 contributing 14.1 percent and Component 3 contributing 12.3 percent. Component 1 (item 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) were all related to parenthood (e.g. parental leave, maternity leave). Component 2 (item 6, 7, 8) were related to a kind of leave (e.g. short-term care leave, long-term care leave, sabbatical) and Component 3 (item 2, 3) indicated some flexible practices.

Based on the theory and the stated hypotheses a distinction in two kind of practices was made: flexible and care related. For practical reasons the dichotomy as made in theory was continued in order to test the stated hypotheses which means: flexible practices (item 2, 3, 4, 6) and care-related practices (item 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). Practices are independent arrangements, initiated by public government or negotiated in the collective labour agreement and were grouped by the researcher on a rational way. For that reason the practices were not that intercorrelated as was needed for a good result of a factor analysis.

Support is the moderator variable and is incorporated into the research design with a part of the WH culture scale developed by Dikkers et al. (2007). The WH culture scale of Dikkers et al. (2007) consists of two dimensions, support and hindrance. In this study only the support dimension is used, consisted of three relevant subcomponents: a) organizational support (item 1-4), b) colleague support (item 5-8) and c) supervisor support (item 9-11). The reliability of these subscales is tested and gives respectively alpha’s of .80, .71 and .77. An example of an item is ‘In this organization it is considered important that, beyond their work, employees have sufficient time left for their private life’. Respondents were able to answer based on the five-point Likert-scale ranged from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (5).

The KMO value of the support scale was .830 and Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant on the .000 level. These values indicated that the scale was suitable for factor analysis. The first principal component analysis revealed the presence of three components, explaining 44.6 percent, 11.8 percent and 9.1 percent. However, the items belonged to each subcomponent as mentioned in theory were not exactly recognized in the three components. Component 1 consisted of item 5, 6, 9,
Component 2 (item 7, 8, 11) and Component 3 (1, 2, 3, 4). However, because this ‘support scale’ was part of a larger WH culture scale, originally consisted of two parts and in this study no hypothesis was indicated with a distinction in different subscales, a factor analysis with one fixed component was therefore suitable for this study. For the one-factor solution 44.6 percent of the variance was explained. No items were left out the scale as the correlations were almost all \( r > .3 \). Moreover, Chronbach’s alpha if item deleted were all below the Chronbach’s alpha of the scale (.873). These results suggested a very good internal consistency of the scale.

**Control variables**

**Parenthood** was taken into account because it was expected that this follows important changes in care-related tasks and therefore has influence on combining work and family life (Reynolds & Aletratis, 2009). The variable was measured by asking one questions: ‘How many children do you have living at home’? This was answered with an open question.

**Gender:** gender effects were incorporated into this study because traditional gender role norms have influence on the work-family balance. Women were expected to spend more time in households and caretaking whereas men can be seen as traditional breadwinners (Voydanoff, 2002; Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer & Robinson, 2000). However, this trend tends to be changed by emerging Y generation employees (Allen et al. 2000). Gender was measured by asking the respondents; Are you...? with answer categories male or female. Gender is a dummy variable coded 0 =men and 1=women.

**Nationality** is also used as a control variable in this research. Philips is an international organization where people work with different nationalities. The variable is measured with 1 item: 1)’ What is your nationality’? The answer possibility was open.

**Contract hours:** this variable was measured by asking: How many contract hours do you have per week?

**Working hours:** this variable was asked as a proxy for work demands and was measured as the absolute number of working hours per week including overtime. This may have influence on the degree of work-life balance accomplishment. The study of Brett and Strohe (2003) concluded in their research that employees who work long hours report low levels of family-work stress.

**Marital status:** This variable was used as control variable because singles may face other demands in personal life than couples. Ten Brummelhuis and van der Lippe (2010) found that employees with a family and couples benefit more from a work-family culture in contrast to single employees. Singles can feel themselves discriminated because the practices and culture are primarily been focused on employees with a family. On the other hand, the use of flexible work arrangements
benefits singles more in comparison to couples and parents. For that reason the following question was asked: Are you: single (=1), married (=2), living together with a partner (=3), divorced/separated (=4), widowed (=5)?

3.5 Analyses
After the reliability analysis and factor analysis, a multiple regression analysis was used in order to test the hypotheses. This type of analysis is suited because it is able to test the predictive ability of the model and tests if other variables, incl. moderator effects contribute to the predictive validity when they are added (Pallant, 2007). In the following chapter the results of the regression analyses are presented.
4. Results

4.1 Descriptive analysis and correlation

Before starting the multiple regression analysis to test relationships between the dependent and independent variables, a preliminary analysis was done in order to test some basic assumptions.

Multiple regression analysis makes a number of assumptions about the data which do not necessarily contribute to a good regression model (Pallant, 2007). Three assumptions were taken into account: multicollinearity, singularity and outliers. “Multicollinearity refers to the relationship among independent variables and exists when these are high correlated” \( r = .9 \) and above) (Pallant, 2007, p. 149). As can be seen in Table 1, the independent variables do not correlated above .45. “Singularity occurs when one independent variable is a combination of other independent variables” (Pallant, 2007, p. 149). In this study only the total scores are included in the analysis, which means that no subscale scores are used and therefore no singularity could be occurred. The last assumption, outliers, is checked with a frequency table. If there were extreme scores they should be removed from the dataset. In this dataset no outliers were found.

After checking the three assumptions, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done to examine if the three generation groups are significantly different from each other in the scores on perceived ability to experience a work-life balance. There were no statistically significant differences at the \( p < .05 \) level in work-life balance scores for the three generation groups: \( F (2, 263) = .92, p = .4 \). For that reason the continuous variable ‘age’ was also taken into account. Table 2 summarizes the mean, standard deviation, sample size and correlations of the independent, dependent and control variables (Pearson’s \( r \)).
Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
<th>(9)</th>
<th>(10)</th>
<th>(11)</th>
<th>(12)</th>
<th>(13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gen. BB</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.480</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.666**</td>
<td>-.365**</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>-.406**</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-.236**</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.138*</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-1.56*</td>
<td>.797**</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gen X</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.441**</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>.242**</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>.301**</td>
<td>.237**</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>.132*</td>
<td>-.217**</td>
<td>-.027</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gen Y</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>.198**</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>-.383**</td>
<td>.126*</td>
<td>.148*</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>-.692**</td>
<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. W/L balance</td>
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<td>.686</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.537**</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<td>5. W/L practices</td>
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<td>.925</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.213**</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>-.134*</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>-.388**</td>
<td>.007</td>
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<td>6. Support</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>-.071</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>-.063</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>.019</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Gender</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.439**</td>
<td>-.327**</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>-.137*</td>
<td>-.112</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Children at home</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.132</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>-.153*</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.176**</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Contract hours</td>
<td>36.02</td>
<td>7.780</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.481**</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.076</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Working hours</td>
<td>41.62</td>
<td>8.897</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>-.108</td>
<td>-.116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Marital status</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Age</td>
<td>41.94</td>
<td>9.724</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Nationality</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>267</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations do only have relevant meaning for the interval/ratio combination.
4.2 Regression analysis

When interpreting the outcomes of the regression analysis, generation X is considered as reference group, meaning that input of generation baby boom and generation Y has to be seen in comparison to generation X.

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to estimate the ability of the independent variables i.e. generations, work-life practices and support and the moderator effects, to predict the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance. In Step 1 the control variables were added and subsequently in Step 2 the independent variable generation (dummy 1 baby boom generation and dummy 2 generation Y). After adding these variables the total variance explained by this model was 2.3% $F(8, 246) = .718$, $p = .767$. In Step 3 the independent variables work-life practices and support were added. These variables had a statistically significant contribution ($p = .000$) and explained an additional variance of 28.2% ($R^2$ change) of the variance in work-life balance when the effects of generations and the control variables were statistically controlled for. Model 3 as a whole was found significant, $F(10, 244) = 10.7$, $p = .000$. The interaction effects were added in Step 4. These effects had no statistically significant contribution $F(6, 238) = 1.25$, $p = .283$, however the model as a whole was found significant $F(16, 238) = 7.19$, $p = .000$. The results are demonstrated in Table 3. The control variables did not have any significant contribution. For that reason they are not mentioned in Table 3.

Concluded from these results, Hypothesis 1, which assumes that the younger the generation, the less they feel able to experience a work-life balance can be rejected. Generation baby boom was not statistically significant related to perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance ($\beta = .678$, $p = .089$), although was generation Y statistically significant related ($\beta = .894$, $p = .035$). There was a negative tendency expected; generation Y would feel less able to experience a work-life balance in comparison to generation X. However, a positive significant relationship was found, which implies that members of generation Y feel more able to experience a work-life balance in comparison to generation X. This contradicted the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2, which assumes that the higher the intention to use the work-life practices, the more people feel able to experience a work-life balance, was not supported. The variable work-life practices was not statistically significant related to perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance ($\beta = -.066$, $p = .425$). The intention to use work-life practices will not have an influence on perceived ability to experience a work-life balance.

Hypothesis 3a, which assumes that the relationship between the membership of a generation and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance is moderated by the presence of flexible work-life practices in such a way that the younger the generation, the more they will
benefit from the existing *flexible* work-life practices, can be rejected. The interaction effect of *flexible* work-life practices on the relationship between the baby boom generation (in comparison to generation X) and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.187, p = .375$), neither it was for the relation between the Y generation (in comparison to generation X) and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance ($\beta = -.161, p = .641$). Also the interaction effect of *care-related* work-life practices on the relationship between the baby boom generation (in comparison to generation X) and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was not statistically significant ($\beta = .101, p = .480$), neither it was for the relationship between the Y generation (in comparison to generation X) and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance ($\beta = -.052, p = .818$). Hypothesis 3b, which assumes that the relationship between the membership of a generation and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance is moderated by the presence of *care-related* work-life practices in such a way that members of generation X will benefit more from the existing care work-life than members of generation baby boom, whereas members of generation baby boom benefit more than members of generation Y, can therefore also be rejected.

Support on the other hand did have a significant effect on perceived ability to experience a work-life balance through which Hypothesis 4 was supported ($\beta = .668, p = .000$). This implies that the higher the level of support the employee receives, the more he feels able to experience a work-life balance.

Hypothesis 5 expected that the relationship between the membership of a generation and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance is moderated by the level of support, in such a way that the younger the generation, the more they will benefit from a higher level of support. Even this hypothesis was not supported. The interaction effect of support on the relationship between the baby boom generation (in comparison to generation X) and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.622, p = .081$), neither it was for the Y generation (in comparison to generation X) ($\beta = -.659, p = .093$).
Table 3: *multiple regression for the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generations D1 Baby boom</td>
<td>-.010 (.888)</td>
<td>-.020 (.755)</td>
<td>.678 (.089)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation D2 Generation Y</td>
<td>.103 (.178)</td>
<td>.059 (.361)</td>
<td>.894 (.035)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life practices</td>
<td>-.070 (.244)</td>
<td>-.066 (.425)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>.538 (.000)**</td>
<td>.668 (.000)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 BB * flex work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.187 (.375)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 Gen Y * flex work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.161 (.641)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 BB * care work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.101 (.480)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 Gen Y * care work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.052 (.818)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 BB * support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.622 (.081)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 Gen Y * support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.659 (.093)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δ R²</td>
<td>.010 (.300)</td>
<td>.282 (.000)**</td>
<td>.021 (.283)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>.553 (.768)</td>
<td>.718 (.767)</td>
<td>10.69 (.000)**</td>
<td>7.19 (.000)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*, P < .05
**, P < .01

In the above mentioned elaboration of the results, only one hypothesis is significant (H4). Some other analyses were done in order to gain more insights in the relationships between the variables.

First of all the relationship between the independent variable generations and dependent variable perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance (H1) was not confirmed. The ANOVA test showed that there were no significant differences between the three generations in their scores on the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance. Because of the discrepancy in the literature about the delimitation of the different generations, a new regression analysis was conducted with continuous variable ‘age’ as independent variable. The results are demonstrated in Table 4. The analysis showed also a significant supportiveness of Hypothesis 4; support had a statistically significant effect on the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance ($\beta = .488, p = .047$) but the beta value and alpha level recorded lower in comparison to the analysis with generation groups. The other hypotheses were still not supported. The control variable ‘working hours’ did have a significant contribution to the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance ($\beta = -.140, p = .036$). This implies that the less hours people actually work, the more they feel able to
experience a work-life balance. The other control variables were not significantly related to the variable work-life balance and therefore not mentioned in Table 4.

Table 4: multiple regression for perceived ability to experience a work-life balance with continuous variable age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.079 (p = .231)</td>
<td>-.062 (p = .301)</td>
<td>.915 (p = .915)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life practices</td>
<td>-.075 (p = .202)</td>
<td>-.061 (p = .826)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>.533 (p = .000)**</td>
<td>.488 (p = .047)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * flex work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.159 (p = .191)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * care work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.064 (p = .781)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age * support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.094 (p = .813)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.187 (p = .016)*</td>
<td>-.164 (p = .013)*</td>
<td>-.140 (p = .036)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(R^2\) | .022 | .028 | .305 | .316 |
\(\Delta R^2\) | .006 \(p = .231\) | .278 \(p = .000\)** | .011 \(p = .276\) |            |
\(F\) | .927 \(p = .476\) | 1.00 \(p = .431\) | 11.91 \(p = .000\)** | 9.29 \(p = .000\)** |

*, \(P < .05\)

**, \(P < .01\)

With regard to the intention to use work-life practices, there was no statistically significant relation to the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance, as hypothesized in H2. When the work-life practices were divided into two groups, the flexible work-life practices such as working from home and flexible working hours, were statistically significant related to the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance \(\beta = -.159, p = .01\). However a negative relationship was found whereas a positive tendency was expected. The care-related work-life practices were not statistically significant related to the perceived ability of experiencing of work-life balance \(\beta = .031, p = .471\).

Because a large part of the respondents in each generation does not have children at home, this is filtered out the analysis. A new regression analysis is done with only respondents which do have children at home. In Step 1, the control variables were entered and in Step 2 the independent variable generation (dummy 1 Baby boom generation and dummy 2 generation Y). In Step 3, the variables work-life practices and support were entered and in Step 4 the interaction effects. The results of these analyses are demonstrated in Table 5. Because only the control variable working
hours was statistically significant related to perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance, this variable is mentioned in the table. Based on the results in Table 5, Hypothesis 4 is supported and implies, the higher the level of support employees receive, the more they feel able to experience a work-life balance, regardless if these employees have children at home or not ($\beta = .643$, $p = .000$). This finding contributes to the robustness of the significant effect of H4 mentioned earlier. Beside it, the interaction effect of care-related work-life practices on the relationship between members of the baby boom generation with children at home (in comparison to generation X) and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was statistically significant ($\beta = .372$, $p = .033$). However, the relationship between the members Y generation with children at home (in comparison to generation X) and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.058$, $p = .903$). This implies that members of the baby boom generation with children at home would or had benefit more from care-related work-life practices in the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance in comparison to X members with children at home. Also the control variable working hours was significantly related to the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance ($\beta = -.278$, $p = .004$). This implies that the less hours people with children at home work, the more they feel able to experience a work-life balance. This result was not found for people with no children at home ($\beta = -.027$, $p = .775$).

Table 5: multiple regression for the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance with only respondents with children at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generations D1 Baby boom</td>
<td>-.007 ($p = .942$)</td>
<td>.038 ($p = .632$)</td>
<td>.033 ($p = .951$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation D2 Generation Y</td>
<td>.040 ($p = .637$)</td>
<td>.067 ($p = .327$)</td>
<td>-.122 ($p = .795$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td>.0034 ($p = .655$)</td>
<td>-.101 ($p = .290$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>.537 ($p = .000$)**</td>
<td>.643 ($p = .000$)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 BB * flex work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.170 ($p = .615$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 Gen Y * flex work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.103 ($p = .835$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 BB * care work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.372 ($p = .033$)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 Gen Y * care work-life practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.058 ($p = .903$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 BB * support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.541 ($p = .220$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 Gen Y * support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.045 ($p = .931$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours</td>
<td>-.281 ($p = .016$)*</td>
<td>-.270 ($p = .004$)**</td>
<td>-.278 ($p = .004$)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) is conducted for control variable nationality. This test indicated that there were no significant differences in the mean scores on the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance for the Dutch respondents and respondents with ‘other’ nationalities $F(1, 265) = .002, p = .97$. In sum, this means that respondents with another nationality than Dutch do not significantly score differently on their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance in comparison to respondents with the Dutch nationality.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

5.1 Conclusion

The aim of the current research was to study generational differences in the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance of employees and how these differences can be explained. To do so, the following main research questions are investigated: To what extent do members of the baby boom generation, generation X and generation Y differ in their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance? And to what extent do work-life practices and support have an influence on the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance for the different generations? Data was gathered in a single organization by making use of quantitative surveys and was analyzed by means of a multiple regression analysis. The results showed that members of generation baby boom and generation X do not differ in their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance whereas members of generation Y feel more able to experience a work-life balance in comparison to generation X. Regarding support, this study concluded that when employees receive support from the organization, manager or colleagues, they feel more able to experience a work-life balance, regardless if these employees have children or not. Interestingly, the presence of care-related work-life practices did have a positive effect on the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance for members of the baby boom generation with children at home in comparison to members of the X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R²</th>
<th>.048</th>
<th>.050</th>
<th>.392</th>
<th>.421</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Δ R²</td>
<td>.002 ($p = .885$)</td>
<td>.342 ($p = .000$)**</td>
<td>.029 ($p = .366$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>1.45 ($p = .209$)</td>
<td>1.061 ($p = .392$)</td>
<td>9.95 ($p = .000$)**</td>
<td>6.44 ($p = .000$)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $P < .05$
** $P < .01$
generation. Although it was expected that members of generation X, who in general have young children, will benefit more from care-related practices. Furthermore, it was found that the less hours people with children at home work, the more they feel able to experience a balance between work and private life. This effect was not found for people who do not have children at home.

5.2 Discussion

Several studies showed the different expectations and characteristics of members of different generations with regard to their work (e.g. Bickel & Brown, 2005; Crampton & Hodge, 2007; Gibson, et al., 2009). Based on these studies the hypothesis was formulated; the younger the generation, the less they feel able to experience a work-life balance. However, a positive significant effect of generation Y on the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was found, which implied that the Y generation would feel more able to experience a balance between work and private life in comparison to generation X members. Hypothesis 1 was therefore rejected. It is imaginable that generation Y members indeed set high expectations on the search for balance in comparison to the other generations but that they will also be more conscience of their expectations and therefore better able to manage them, which results in a greater perceived ability to experience a work-life balance. Aside from that, the expected positive relation between the baby boom generation and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance was not significantly supported. Members of generation baby boom feel not significantly more able to experience a work-life balance in comparison to generation X members. A possible explanation can be the change to a 24-hours economy and developments in the workplace like virtualizing, project based working and rapidity. These developments increase the workload for many employees and make the work environment uncertain and unpredictable (Davis & Blass, 2007). For that reason, mainly older employees may experience difficulties in feeling able to experience a work-life balance which could even result in problems concerning the acceptance of increased workload. Moreover, baby boomers may have to deal with care of their parents, their children and/or their grandchildren at the same time, even if these children do not live at home, which results in more pressure in combing both lives (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Hypothesis 2 assumed a positive relationship between the intention to use work-life practices and the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance. However, a negative tendency was found. This implied that the more employees have the intention to use work-life practices, the less these employees feel able to experience a work-life balance. Based on the results of earlier research, work-life practices are designed for employees in order to help them to balance different roles between work and private life (Allen, 2001; Beaugard & Henry, 2009). To a certain degree,
practices will help people to close the gap between what people expect in terms of work-life balance and what they really experience; but a small part of that experiencing is depending on an intrinsic feeling of a person. It is imaginable that people do not have the intention to make (much) use of these practices. A reason might be the hesitancy of people to use available practices because this can lead to negative perceptions of their environment (Eaton, 2003; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999). Moreover, there was no clear distinction found in two kinds of practices (flex and care). A possible explanation can be found in the operationalization of the variable work-life practices. A list of independent practices, initiated by the government or negotiated in the collective labour agreement of the organization, was composed by the researcher and grouped in a rational way, based on literature including Dikkers et al. (2007); Dikkers, van Engen and Vinkenburg (2010) and Remery, et al. (2003). Because the list was composed by the organization itself and the practices were not all related to each other, this might be a possible explanation that there is no distinction found in these two kind of practices.

Although the interaction effects of the presence of flexible and care-related work-life practices were not significantly related to the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance, the effect was significant for care-related work-life practices on the relation between baby boom members and the perceived ability of experiencing a work-life balance for people who do have children at home. This implied that members of the baby boom generation with children at home would benefit more from care-related work-life practices in order to feel able to experience a work-life balance in comparison to members of generation X with children at home. This is a surprising finding as the baby boom generation represents people who are currently between 47 and 65 year old. In general, these people do not have young children at home who need care, in contrast to the X generation. In addition, people without children at home do not profit by the presence of these care-related practices. When the work-life practices were divided more specifically into three different groups, as pointed out in the factor analysis, the practices related to parenthood (for instance paternity leave and parental leave) gave statistically significant results. The most plausible explanation is the weak conceptualization of the work-life practice scale as mentioned earlier. Moreover, the work-life practices scale measured the extent the practices should help in feeling able to experience a work-life balance, not the actually use. For the baby boom generation it was found to be quite common to make use of the offered work-life practices, especially parenthood-related practices for women. Making use of these practices was commonly accepted during that time and did help that generation in balancing their work and private life. The younger generations with young children nowadays are likely to be more hesitating to use the practices as they are afraid for their impact on career possibilities (Eaton, 2003; Thompson et al. 1999) and the negative perception
they will receive from the organization (Beaugard & Henry, 2009). Another possible explanation could be the care baby boomers have to take for their own parents (Kupperschmidt, 2000) and for their grandchildren. This was not measured in this study but could have an important effect on the use of care-related practices. Furthermore, the age of the children at home was not measured, but this information could have given us more insight in the search for an explanation of the above mentioned finding.

As hypothesized, support has a significant relationship with the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance (H4). This is also confirmed in studies of Thompson and Pottras (2005) and Anderson et al. (2002). The results corroborate that support from managers, colleagues and the organization provides people in their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance. This support can for example be the sensitivity that managers shown towards the work-life responsibilities of their employees or the understanding and helping behavior of colleagues that contributes in integrating work and private lives. Also the organization can be supportive by stating a family-supportive philosophy.

Support however does not have a significant interaction effect on the relationship between generations and the perceived ability to experience a balance between work and private life (H5). There is thus no difference between members of different generations and the extent to which each generation benefits from the presence of work-life practices and delivering of organization,-supervisor,-colleague support in order to feel able to experience a work-life balance.

5.3 Limitations and further research

This study is not without limitations. Six limitations and suggestions should be mentioned for further research. First, the response rate was quite high (65.8%) but declines due to excluding 169 participants to an also considerable high rate of 40.3%. These excluded participants did not fill out a large part (>50%) of the survey. When closely reviewing the excluded participants, it became clear they did only fill out the simple questions and left open the questions with a Likert-scale answer category. A simple explanation can be the time to fill out these questions. It seems clear that although people are interested in the research and therefore start filling out the questionnaire, they are too busy to take enough time to fully complete the questionnaire.

A second issue concerns the sample of this study. The returned amount of completed surveys is quite large (N=267); however in comparison to the Philips workforce of Lighting and Healthcare the sample is not that representative. A convenience sample was used to approach respondents. Managers were asked to motivate their team to fill out the questionnaire. Because the researcher is working for Philips Lighting, the majority of the questionnaires were distributed there.
It would be better to have equal groups of respondents from each different sector (Lighting, Healthcare, and Consumer Lifestyle) in order to set statements representative for the total Philips workforce. In addition, nationality was included in the research as a control variable, because the organization is operating globally. However, the majority (84.3%) of the respondents had the Dutch nationality due to the use of a convenience sample. Future research should make use of more different ethnicities or focus only on the Dutch nationality.

Another limitation related to the sample is the use of a cross-sectional design. This design makes it impossible to make any causal interpretations about the relations among the different variables. It could be possible that the ability to experience a work-life balance would have implications for the degree of support the manager or colleagues will deliver to the employees or practices these employees will use. When people experience that the ability to experience a work-life balance is largely dependent on support the organization delivers, they will probably make more use of this support. A future longitudinal study makes it possible to collect evidence for such possible causal relationships.

Third, this study relied exclusively on self-reported or subjective measures. This could have implications for method variance, which is the variance attributable to the method of collecting data. If the same method is used for assessing two variables they will share variance (common method variance) which will inflate the observed correlations among these variables (Spector & Brannick, 2010). Although the use of self-reports would not completely bias the findings, the use of more ‘objective’ indicators of, for instance work-life support and the use of work-life practices could be better and provide interesting insights in future research (Dikkers et al. 2007).

Fourth, in consideration of the generational cohorts there is much controversy found in the literature. The delimitation of the different cohorts differs in studies as it is very difficult to point out these cohorts exactly. It is strange that two different persons, one born in 1979 and therefore belonging the X generation, the other born in 1980 and therefore belonging to the Y generation, do have different habits and expectations. Further research should therefore take the different life stages into account. Generations pass these life stages on different times and therefore create or adjust their attitudes towards and decisions about work and family life during that period (Levenson, 2010). Especially parenthood is an important indicator for a life stage. In this study, only the amount of children at home was measured because that would follow important changes in care-related tasks and therefore has influence on combining work and family life (Reynolds & Aletratis, 2009). However, future research should also measure the age of children because people can have children who need care but are not living at home. One can think of divorced parents or older children who are not living at home anymore. Furthermore, a longitudinal design could be more appropriate for
generational research, indicating life cycles (Cennemon & Gardner, 2008). Finally, most generational research had been conducted in the UK and US. External forces (e.g. environment, social events, economic situation, media) in a country have great impact on the values the generations developed during the years. For that reason, more research is needed for specific delimitation of generations in the Netherlands with in consideration the events which have impact on these Dutch generations.

Fifth, the conceptualization of work-life practices scale could be discussed. The factor analysis showed that the scale consisted of three components. The results of this analysis showed that one component is related to parenthood. Different arrangements concerning getting children are clustered. The second component is related to four different kind of leaves: purchase days, sabbatical leave, short-term care leave and long-term care leave. Based on theory, a strong distinction in kind of leave can be made in care-leave and leave for flexible reasons. The last component is related to flexible work arrangements. Remarkable is the positioning of working part-time in the ‘leave’ component instead of the flexible arrangements component. The practices are independent arrangements, initiated by public government or negotiated in the collective labour agreement of this organization and are grouped by the researcher in a rational way. The practices are for that reason not that connected as needed for a good result of a factor analysis. Further research should focus on developing a reliable scale for general work-life practices.

Finally, the conceptualization the scale to measure support could be improved. The subscales as elaborated in theory were not found in this study. The relative small and heterogeneous sample could had a large effect on this finding. Besides, the attitude of the respondents could have had effect on the results. In general, people do not have time and energy to fill out a survey consequent and in detail. Because of the response behavior of the people it is plausible that there was not much variance found in the answers of the support scale. It would be interesting for future research to investigate which kind of support, (support from managers, colleagues or the organization) would have the largest effect on the experienced work-life balance.

5.4 Contributions and practical implications
Based on the elaboration mentioned above it becomes clear that work-life balance is not only an individual issue, but also an organizational issue. A practical implication of this study for the researched organization is the important contribution of (work-related) support from the organization, managers and colleagues towards the employees in order enable these employees to experience a work-life balance. The organization should spread a family-responsive philosophy throughout the organization. And when managers give recognition and are more sympathetic towards their subordinates the same as colleagues should do, people will feel more able to
experience a work-life balance. Moreover, the results imply that members of generation baby boom and generation X do not differ in their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance whereas members of generation Y feel more able to experience a balance between work and private life in comparison to generation X. The work-life practices offered by the organization and support delivered from managers and colleagues does not influence the perceived ability of different generations in experiencing a greater work-life balance. For the organization this implies that no different policies are needed for different generations. One policy on work-life balance is still sufficient. Above all, the policy should not only focus on employees with children, but also on employees without children. Finally, Dutch employees and employees with an other nationality did not significantly differ in their perceived ability to experience a work-life balance. This result contradicts therefore the notion that work-life balance is a typical ‘Dutch topic’.
References


Appendices

Appendix A:
Scale of the perceived ability to experience a work-life balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do you agree with the following statements?</th>
<th>1 = Totally disagree</th>
<th>2 = Disagree</th>
<th>3 = Neither disagree/agree</th>
<th>4 = Agree</th>
<th>5 = Totally agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me at work and in my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do a good job of meeting the role expectations of critical people in my work and family life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are close to me would say that I do a good job of balancing work and family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to accomplish the expectations that my supervisor and my family have for me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My co-workers and members of my family would say that I am meeting their expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is clear to me, based on feedback from co-workers and family members, that I am accomplishing both my work and family responsibilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B:
Scale of support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do you agree with the following statements?</th>
<th>1 = Totally disagree</th>
<th>2 = Disagree</th>
<th>3 = Neither disagree/agree</th>
<th>4 = Agree</th>
<th>5 = Totally agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers in this organization are generally considerate towards the private life of employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this organization, people are sympathetic towards care responsibilities of employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this organization it is considered important that beyond their work, employees have sufficient time left for their private life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This organization is supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for private reasons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues support employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for private reasons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues support employees who (temporarily) want to reduce their working hours for private reasons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable in discussing aspects of my private life with my colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues help me out when I am (temporarily) preoccupied with my care responsibilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My superior supports employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for private reasons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My superior supports employees who (temporarily) want to reduce their working hours for private reasons

I am comfortable in discussing my private life with my superior

---

### Appendix C:

#### Scale of work-life practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent should this work-life practice help you to accomplish your role expectations of your work and personal life?</th>
<th>1= No extent</th>
<th>2= Limited extent</th>
<th>3= Not sure</th>
<th>4= Certain extent</th>
<th>5= Large extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part time work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working from home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible working hours</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4*9 workweek</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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Appendix D: Cover letter questionnaire

Dear colleague,

I would like to inform you about my research (master thesis) in cooperation with Tilburg University. This research is focused on the generation differences (baby boom, generation X and generation Y) and the relation with preferences and expectations from employees in balancing work and private life.

Due to the changing labour market and the ageing population a challenge “how to balance work and private life” for employee and the organization, comes up.

The purpose of my research is to find answers on questions what do our employees need and expect in terms of work-life balance and how can Philips as company be supportive?

In order to give answer on these questions it is important to get more insight in how you think as a Philips employee.

Philips as global company gives high priority to this topic as the item work-life balance is included in the EES survey this year and the pilot work-life program is included in the e-miles portfolio.

I would kindly invite you to fill out the questionnaire. Anonymity will be guaranteed as the completed questionnaires will only be visible to the researcher.

Thank you,

Anique van de Ven