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**CUSTOMISING WORK THROUGH SOCIAL  
EXCHANGE: AN EXAMINATION OF HOW  
MANAGER RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR  
FLEXIBLE WORK IMPACT ON  
WORK–HOME INTERACTION AND WORK  
ENGAGEMENT**

**Sylvia Elsa Roux**  
**Master of Business Administration**  
**Bachelor of Psychology (Hons)**

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## **Keywords**

Customised work arrangements, developmental culture, negative work–home interaction, positive work–home interaction, reciprocity, social exchange theory, work engagement, work–life flexibility culture.

# Abstract

The ageing population, more women entering the workforce, and increased economic pressures all prompt renewed interest in examining flexible work practices that help meet the evolving needs of employees, their managers and organisations. While the work–life balance research has focused on the longer term and more standard forms of flexible work, it has neglected the many shorter term, occasional, and ad hoc arrangements that support many workers in managing their day-to-day work and nonwork responsibilities (Lawler, 2011). Consequently, much of what we know of work–life balance is based around more standard forms of flexibility. Drawing from a similar narrow scope of flexible work arrangements, research shows that flexible work arrangements are often not used to offset work–life conflict (Skinner & Pocock, 2011a). Australia’s *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) ‘right to request’ and parental leave policies support workers in recognition of their nonwork roles and responsibilities; however, employees are not taking advantage of these provisions to resolve work–life conflicts (Skinner & Pocock, 2011). Policy-practice gaps have been explained as inadequate manager support (e.g. Skinner & Pocock, 2011). The objective of this thesis was to address the problem, that although manager support is considered critical for the uptake of flexible work, flexible work has been narrowly defined and operationalised, and the nature of the social exchange process which occurs during employee requests and manager responses, is not well understood.

The research question guiding this study is: What types of customised work arrangements, and mechanisms for requests for these arrangements, optimise work–life balance for employees? This thesis sought to investigate the broad range of modifications

to work that employees requested and to test the impacts of managers' responses to requests on individual and business-related outcomes. This thesis also sought to understand the effects of the workplace cultural environment on those outcomes. The thesis used a cross-sectional design to examine 797 employees' responses from across four divisions in a large Australian financial services organisation. A self-report questionnaire was used to address the three research aims, examined in three research subquestions. A review of the work–life balance literature relevant to the research aims was also conducted.

The lenses of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and norm of reciprocity (Molm, 2010) were used to address three aims of this research. The first aim was to examine the extent to which flexibility and developmental customised work arrangements (CWAs) were requested and responses to those requests (fully granted, partly granted, declined) were examined. CWAs include formal, standard forms of flexible work as well as shorter term, ad hoc, and informal modifications to work (McDonald & Townsend, 2012). CWAs accommodate employees' nonwork roles and responsibilities as well as developmental opportunities that help shape their careers, but which may also lead to tensions within the work–life interface. Results indicated that CWAs were requested much more often, and by many more employees, than was expected. The types of CWAs requested by men, women, and parents followed patterns observed in previous studies. Of the numerous requests, the majority were approved or partially approved.

The second aim was to examine the impacts that responses to CWA requests had on positive and negative work–home interactions and on work engagement. Results indicated support for positive impacts of fully approved requests on work–home interactions and work engagement. Consistent with expectations that positive manager–employee social exchange relationships would benefit employees, manager support

helped employees maintain their positive work–home interaction (PWHI) and work engagement when their requests were only partially approved. At the same time, employees whose requests were partially approved, or declined on occasion, had significantly higher negative work–home interactions (NWHI).

The third aim of the research was to examine the influence of the workplace cultural environment (work–life flexibility culture and developmental culture) on relationships between responses to CWA requests and employees’ work–home interactions and work engagement. Results indicated some support for a positive workplace cultural environment. Consistent with expectations, organisation and manager support buffered employees from NWHI when their requests were partially approved or declined. Contrary to expectations, coworker support, time demands, and career consequences did not influence work–home interactions or work engagement. Implications of findings for research and practice are discussed, together with suggestions for future research into work–life balance and customised work arrangements.

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# List of Abbreviations

- ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics
- AHRI – Australian Human Resources Institute
- ATSI – Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- AWALI – Australian Work and Life Index
- CFA – confirmatory factor analysis
- CWAs – customised work arrangements
- DV – dependent variable
- EFA – exploratory factor analysis
- EM – expectation maximization
- FWAs – flexible work arrangements
- HMR – hierarchical multiple regressions
- HR – human resource
- HRM – human resource management
- I-deals – idiosyncratic deals
- ILO – International Labour Organization
- IV – independent variable
- MAR – missing at random
- MCAR – missing completely at random
- MI – multiple imputation
- ML – maximum-likelihood
- MV – missing values
- NES – National Employment Standards



NWHI – negative work–home interaction

OCB – organisational citizenship behaviour

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PCA – principal component analysis

POS – perceived organisational support

PWHI – positive work–home interaction

SWING scale - Survey Work-home Interaction-NijmeGen, the SWING

WE – work engagement

WIF – work-in-family

WLC – work life conflict

# Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: QUT Verified Signature

Date: May, 2017

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

As significant global demographic and economic shifts change the landscape of work, workforces in most developed economies have seen an increase in the way work is adjusted, shaped, or customised to meet the needs of employees and organisations. Customised work arrangements (CWAs), the focus of this study, involve modifications to the timing and location of work, on-the-job tasks, and opportunities for skill development, as well as training and career enhancement (Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, 2014; McDonald & Townsend, 2012; Rousseau, 2001). CWAs include provisions typically addressed in studies of workplace flexibility (e.g., part-time work, parental leave) as well as other less examined adjustments (e.g., start and finish times). Additionally, CWAs can also include accommodations around travel requirements, start and finish times, and job-specific responsibilities, all of which may be adopted by multiple employees (Dick, 2009; McDonald & Townsend, 2012; Rousseau, 2001b; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Broader social phenomena, such as an ageing workforce, a growing skills shortage, and more women entering the workforce, have changed the face of the organisational recruitment pool (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Pocock, Skinner, & Pisaniello, 2010; Skinner & Pocock, 2011) and, consequently, the needs and expectations of the workforce (Organisation for economic cooperation and development [OECD], 2011a). Organisations and managers aim to build workforce efficiencies but retain valued employees (Liao et al., 2014; Rousseau, 2001a; Strack et al., 2014), while employees often seek work arrangements that accommodate their nonwork lifestyles and responsibilities, and their aspirations for development (Chapman, Skinner, & Pocock,

2014; Kulik, Ryan, Harper, & George, 2014; Skinner, Hutchinson, & Pocock, 2012). CWAs provide a mechanism for tailoring suitable solutions to meet the needs of both employees and businesses (Liao et al., 2014; McDonald & Townsend, 2012). A key rationale of this thesis is to explore how employees request CWAs to optimise their work–life balance, against a backdrop of wider social change affecting the composition of the workforce and working environments (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Pocock, Skinner, & Pisaniello, 2010; Skinner & Pocock, 2011; Kulik et al., 2014).

Substantial shifts in social and workplace dynamics and subsequent demand for personalised work arrangements have shaped policy development and a vast literature on what can be generically described as ‘work–life balance’, or, more central to the current research, working arrangements that are personalised or tailored to individual employees’ needs. In Australia, for example, the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) and the *Fair Work Act Amendment Bill 2013* (Cth) allow employees to request flexible work arrangements, and impose obligations on employers to consider them. However, employers may still refuse requests for flexible work arrangements on reasonable grounds (*Fair Work Act Amendment Bill 2013*). Central themes in this wide body of literature include: work intensification, being pressured for time, and policy–practice gaps. Other areas include antecedents and outcomes, the gendered nature of flexible work, and workplace cultural issues that affect the utilisation of flexible work practices.

Mismatches between available flexible work and the needs of workers are evidenced by more than one in six Australian workers experiencing work–life conflict (Skinner & Pocock, 2010). Thus, time-based and strain-based pressures are placed on workers using flexible work, which may lead to work intensification and negative work–life outcomes (Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Hargis, Kotrba, Zhdanova, & Baltes, 2012; OECD, 2011b; Skinner & Pocock, 2011). The uptake of available flexible work is also

low, and recent figures indicate that 39% of workers reported work–life conflict, but only 21% of workers use flexible work to resolve the conflict (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2013). Low uptake has been attributed to anticipated negative career consequences, stigma, and organisational resistance (Fursman & Zodgekar, 2009b; Skinner et al., 2012; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999; Williams, 2012).

Despite the regulatory reforms in Australia, provisions have fallen short of enacting amendments that facilitate development and training opportunities for workers. Such opportunities would have the effect of increasing earnings potential and would thereby potentially reduce work intensification. The overarching organisational context of flexibility and developmental cultures further prejudices decisions arising from manager–employee interactions that determine ‘responses to requests’ for CWA, and directly affect workers’ attempts to mitigate conflict between their work and nonwork lives.

Scholarship on CWAs has yielded important knowledge but remains limited in four ways. First, it has a narrow focus on standard terms of flexible work arrangements; second, it concentrates on women and mothers to the exclusion of men; third, it devotes little attention to the circumstances in which ‘manager support’ becomes available to employees; and fourth, there is a limited understanding of developmental opportunities and constraints in the context of CWA uptake. Areas covered in the broader work–life and flexible work literature that will not be a focus for this research include: women in leadership, and pay inequities. In addition to a focus on longer term, substantive forms of flexibility, the extant literature addressing the balance between work and family and work and life has focused on skilled and white-collar workers (Chang, McDonald, & Burton, 2010), who are better placed to take up flexible options or CWAs due to demand for their skills and the nature of their work (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). The literature has also focused on larger and public sector organisations where relative job security, bureaucracy,



and more job specialisation has been the norm (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011).

In contrast to the literature on flexible work, which has had a narrow focus on standardised forms of work arrangements such as part-time work, flexitime, telecommuting, and leave arrangements, CWAs, as defined here, expand upon the notion of flexible work. CWAs capture a broader range of flexibility and developmental adjustments to work that may be short-term or unplanned and tailored to workers' needs (Lawler, 2011; McDonald & Townsend, 2012). A key point of difference for CWAs is that they are tailored to individuals, in all forms of flexible work. CWA is a more comprehensive term which encompasses forms of flexible work enshrined in national legislative frameworks and organisational policy as well as those informal, occasional and ad hoc arrangements that are negotiated with supervisors and tailored to individual needs. Hence, despite the important role of micro-level manager–employee interactions in providing benefits to both employees and firms, there have been very few studies that have examined the relative frequency with which employees request different CWAs, and what the responses to those requests are, especially in the context of social exchanges that take place within Australian employment.

Employees seeking CWAs are attempting to accommodate the needs of their work and nonwork lives. Employers, by contrast, are motivated to optimise employee productivity. This thesis takes an employee perspective and adopts a social exchange framework, to examine the extent to which, and how, responses to requests for a broad range of CWAs affect outcomes for businesses and individuals. Although employers offer CWAs for the purpose of attracting and retaining skill and talent, this study focuses on employee-initiated CWAs, in order to examine work engagement as a business-related outcome (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004; Saks, 2006). The work engagement-performance

link is explained by Bakker (2009) in terms of four characteristics common to engaged workers which are absent in non-engaged workers. The characteristics are (i) often having positive emotions, (ii) experiencing better health, (iii) they create their own job resources, and (iv) transfer their engagement onto others. Where work engagement has been used as a general wellbeing indicator, it is consistently found to be positively related to individual job performance (Bakker, 2009; Demerouti & Bakker, 2006). Work engagement measures employees' own perceptions about how they engage with work (by having a positive motivational reaction toward the job, characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In this research, employees self-report their perceptions of work engagement which are then analysed in relation to the requests and responses to requests for CWAs (see Section 1.2).

The outcomes of employees' requests for CWAs directly affect their abilities to manage their work and nonwork lives, and also reflect employees' efforts to resolve those conflicts. This focus also allows for observations on the current state of Australia's family-friendly policies (*Fair Work Act 2009*); that is, legislation supporting right-to-request flexible work arrangements, from an employee perspective. A secondary focus of the research is that outcomes for employees inevitably, though sometimes indirectly, affect organisations via employees' workplace experiences.

The following literature review synthesises previous work on CWAs. Broadly, this work encompasses theoretical, empirical and practitioner scholarship on flexible work arrangements (FWAs), idiosyncratic deals (I-deals), and other work customisations (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Dick, 2009; Lawler, 2011; McDonald & Townsend, 2012; Rousseau, 2001a; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Although these studies have provided a detailed picture of how family-friendly work arrangements affect employee and business outcomes, they neglect a range of potential modifications to work that are frequently

requested in contemporary workplaces. Previous studies in the area have also failed to examine this broader range of CWAs and in the context of responses to requests effects, on both work–home interaction and work engagement, and influences of the organisational cultural context. The central problem is that although manager support is considered critical for the uptake of flexible work (e.g. Skinner & Pocock, 2011), flexible work has been narrowly defined and operationalised, and the nature of the social exchange process which occurs during employee requests and manager responses, is not well understood. To address this limitation, the study will approach the central research problem by conceptualising the uptake of flexible work arrangements as a social exchange process which is facilitated or hindered by the organisational cultural context and which affects employees’ work–home interaction and work engagement.

In addition to CWAs, other key concepts in this thesis are: work–home interaction, work engagement, work–life flexibility culture, and developmental culture. Brief definitions for these concepts are explained here in advance of the more detailed discussion in the literature review (Chapter 2). Personal outcomes consequential to responses to CWA requests test employees’ positive work–home interaction (PWHI) and negative work–home interaction (NWHI) (Geurts et al., 2005). These positive and negative work–home interactions have been used in other studies examining the work–life interface and FWAs (Chapman, et al., 2014; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009; Mostert, Peeters, & Rost, 2011). Work–home interaction is defined as “the bidirectional influences of work and home domains on each other, including positive and negative spillover effects from one domain to the other” (Geurts et al., 2005).

Business-related outcomes consequential to responses to CWA requests test employees’ engagement at work, key determinants of which are job resources and job control (e.g., negotiating flexibility arrangements) (Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen,

2007; Timms et al., 2015). Work engagement has been defined most often as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004; Saks, 2006).

Finer grained analyses examined moderating effects of work–life flexibility culture (Bradley, McDonald, & Brown, 2010; Thompson et al., 1999) on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs, and work–home interaction and work engagement. Flexibility culture, defined as the shared assumptions, beliefs and values regarding organisational support of employees’ work and family lives (Thompson et al., 1999), influences negotiations for flexible work arrangements.

Similarly, moderating effects of developmental culture (Bal, De Jong, Jansen, & Bakker, 2012; Kooij, 2010) examined relationships between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and work–home interaction and work engagement. Developmental culture, defined as a workplace culture that stresses employees’ continuous development, improves both employees’ and organisational functioning and performance (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, & Bravo, 2011).

## **1.2 SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY AND THE RULE OF RECIPROCITY**

The broad research question guiding this study is: What types of customised work arrangements, and mechanisms for requests for these arrangements, optimise work–life balance for employees? The research examines the extent to which employees request different customised work provisions, what responses are made, and how the influence of flexibility and developmental cultures affects the relationship between the managers responses to requests’ and the employees’ work–home interaction and work engagement. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is social exchange theory (Blau, 1964): CWAs are positioned as the medium of exchange for sustainable employment relations (Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan & Wu, 2013). Responses to CWA requests result from micro-level manager–employee interactions that transpire via discussion or negotiation. Here, these

requests are examined through the lenses of social exchange and the rule of reciprocity (Molm, 2010): When employees perceive that their organisations are helping them to manage their work and family responsibilities, the norm of reciprocity obliges employees to return favourable treatment with more positive feelings about their job and the organisation (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005; Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006).

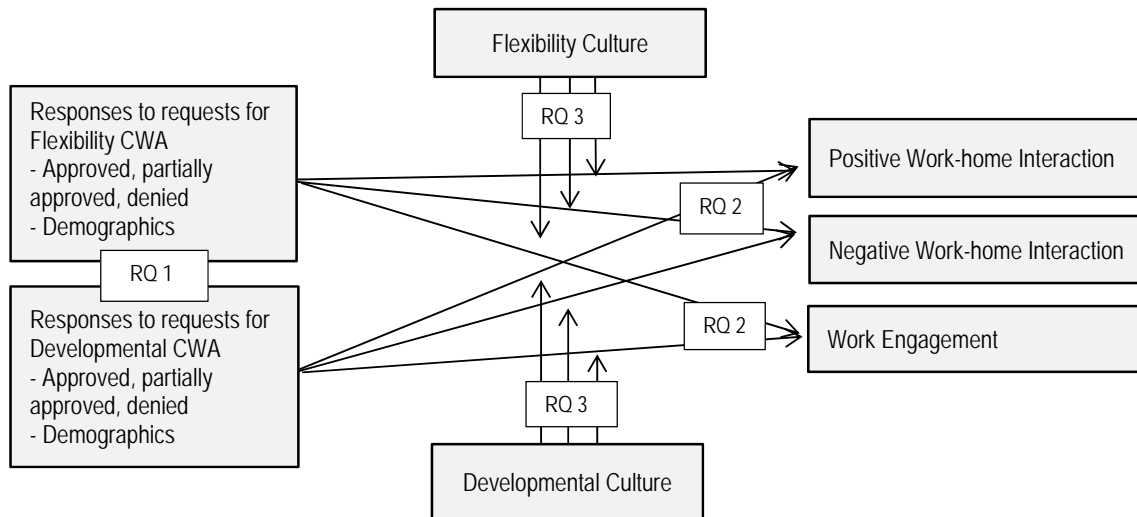
### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research problem is that although manager support is considered critical for the uptake of flexible work, flexible work has been narrowly defined and operationalised, and the nature of the social exchange process which occurs during employee requests and manager responses, is not well understood. The study approaches this problem by conceptualising the uptake of flexible work arrangements as a social exchange process which is facilitated, or hindered, by the organisational cultural context and which affects both employees' work-home interaction and work engagement. The overarching research question is, 'What types of customised work arrangements, and mechanisms for requests for these arrangements, optimise work-life balance for employees?' The study asks a range of more specific questions in order to extrapolate differences between responses to requests for customised work, and how those outcomes affect employees' work and nonwork lives. Furthermore, the study examines flexibility and developmental requests separately. For finer grained analyses of the effects of CWAs, the thesis investigates moderating influences of work-life flexibility and developmental cultures.

The three research subquestions shown in Figure 1.1 are examined as:

1. *What types of customised work arrangements do employees request, and what are supervisors' responses to those requests?*
2. *What are the individual and business-related impacts of different 'responses to requests' (approved, partially approved, denied)?*

3. *What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between 'responses to requests' for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?*



Research questions (RQ) 1 to 3 depicted in the research model. Arrows denote relations tested.

Figure 1.1. Research model reflecting research questions and variables examined.

#### 1.4 CONTEXT, METHOD, AND SCOPE

The research approach utilises a cross-sectional survey of a large Australian financial services and insurance organisation (FinanceCo). The organisation's policy documents set out a range of options for flexible work arrangements, providing adequate scope for examining a broad range of customisations that are (in theory, at least) available in the organisation. FinanceCo's webpage further positions itself in the marketplace as being an employer of choice insofar as it facilitates work–life balance for its employees.

The study examines how responses to requests for CWAs affect work–home interaction and work engagement, and how flexibility and developmental culture moderate those relationships. The research aims to develop a better understanding of how the supervisors in the organisation respond to requests for customised work, and how

those outcomes affect employees' work–life balances and organisational engagement. The research contributes to understanding how policies at the national and organisational levels may affect responses to requests for CWAs.

The theoretical lens of social exchange theory is used as a framework for the thesis, to understand micro-level interactions between managers and employees that lead to responses to requests for customised work. The research contributes to the literature on CWAs in extending an understanding of reciprocal social exchanges in manager–employee relationships and, ultimately, to improving overall work–home interaction and work engagement, which are positive outcomes for both individuals and businesses.

## **1.5 THESIS OUTLINE**

The subsequent chapters build the case for the thesis, detail the methodology used, and present results from a series of analyses. The discussion of the results is framed by previous research and the context of national and organisational policies. Conclusions are drawn that offer new insights into the uptake of CWAs in large, white-collar organisations, management responses to requests (approved, partially approved, or denied), their impact on individual or personal and business-related outcomes, and the influence of the workplace cultural context on those outcomes.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review. It situates the study within the work–life balance literature relevant to the Australian policy context and justifies CWAs as suitable to address the research problem, using a social exchange framework. Additionally, consequences of utilising CWAs on individual or personal and business-related outcomes are examined, as well as the overarching influence of the workplace cultural context.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology and context. This chapter is structured into three subsections, which align with the research questions and the corresponding

stage of the area researched, within each methodologic stage. Measures and analyses used to address the research questions and subsequent hypotheses are set out.

Chapter 4 provides results including data preparation, and descriptive and inferential statistics. Chapter 5 forms the discussion chapter that addresses issues arising from results in the context of FinanceCo and in relation to the extant body of literature. Chapter 5 also presents the contributions. Finally, Chapter 6 articulates the overall conclusions, limitations and future research possibilities.



# Chapter 2: Literature Review

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## 2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

### 2.1.1 Regulatory and policy context

This section provides the regulatory and policy context in Australia in which the research was undertaken. Australia is one of many nations that are signatories to the International Labour Organization (ILO) agreement (C156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 [No. 156] Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities [Entry into force: 11 Aug 1983], C156 C.F.R. [1981]). This agreement sparked a new emphasis on the provision of opportunities for flexible work in Australian organisations.

Australia's National Employment Standards (NES) and *Fair Work Act 2009* provide employees with right-to-request provisions for flexible work, under recently expanded legislation. Figure 1.1 shows the conditions under which the range of flexible work requests are entitled under the Act (*Fair Work Act 2009*), and for whom, though the legislation has been criticised because managers are able to refuse requests on a wide range of business grounds. Right-to-request legislation and the parental leave provisions are relevant to the research undertaken here.

The types of flexible work utilised by employees are affected by national and organisational-level policies. A small group of studies have examined Australian flexible work policies: Chapman, et al., 2014; Pocock and Clarke, 2005; Pocock, et al., 2010; Skinner, et al., 2012; Skinner and Pocock, 2010; Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI); and New Zealand studies of public service workers (Donnelly, Plimmer, & Proctor-Thomson, 2012). These studies provide insight into the state of flexible work

legislation, and highlight shortcomings, especially the right-to-request legislation because of the ease with which employers may decline requests. Skinner and Pocock (2011) see this as a ‘light touch’ measure to support employees seeking flexibility. Similar to extant laws in the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Germany and New Zealand (Skinner & Pocock, 2011), refusals can be based on reasonable business grounds and the employer has very limited obligations to defend their decision-making. There are instances where there is a lack of uptake of flexible work practices across organisations where it is available, as well as a lack of worker–organisation fit to the flexibility offered (Donnelly et al., 2012; Skinner & Pocock, 2011). For example, in a study of 933 business and human resource (HR) professionals exploring the impact of the *Fair Work Act 2009* within Australian workplaces, almost half of respondents were unsure whether it would improve their work–life balance practices over the next three years (AHRI, 2012).

Opportunities to use flexible work are possible via right-to-request and parental leave legislation, under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, but in many cases are conditional on managers’ approval. The central interest of management is to improve productivity, while employees seek to manage their work and nonwork lives, which may be facilitated by using developmental or flexibility arrangements. A key problem for those requesting flexible work is that the Fair Work policies’ provisions for worker flexibility have limitations in protecting users’ rights (Morrison & Milliken, 2003). A second problem of requesting and using flexible work lies in the potential negative consequences and backlash and their association with the level of manager support (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Mauno, Kiuru, & Kinnunen, 2011; Peeters, Watez, Demerouti, & de Wietski, 2009).

While the literature that addresses flexibility in employment is both large and conceptually diverse, research that has addressed changes to the timing, content and

location of work to match the diversity of worker's needs (Clark, 2000) has concentrated on what have become narrowly defined forms of flexible work, including part-time work, parental leave and flexitime. For example, successive rounds of the Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI) measure the state of work-to-life interference across Australian workplaces, with a focus on just four types of flexible work (part time, working from home, work-time scheduling and work hours).

This chapter is set out in six major sections. Section 2.1 provides the regulatory and policy context in Australia in which the research was undertaken. Sections 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 review the literature aligning with the three major research questions for the study: (a) What types of flexibility and developmental CWA requests are sought by different employees and what are the subsequent responses from managers?, (b) How do responses to requests affect individual and business outcomes?, and (c) What are the moderating influences of work–life flexibility culture and developmental culture on individual and business outcomes? The research questions refer to customised work arrangements (CWAs); however, the literature primarily uses the term *flexible work arrangements* (FWAs). As will be noted in section 2.2, the broad range of flexibility sought by employees is reviewed as flexible work arrangements and a component of FWAs, idiosyncratic deals (I-deals). This section uses the term FWAs before adopting the term CWAs. The section also argues for using the term CWAs because it encompasses modifications to work, which include flexible work arrangements as well as short-term, ad hoc, and developmental opportunities changes, which are negotiated between managers and employees, and are not always understood as FWAs. At the end of each of these three major sections, the relevant hypotheses for the study will be articulated. Section 2.5 then details social exchange theory, which is the theoretical lens used for the

research. Section 2.6 sets out the research design and, finally, section 2.7 concludes the chapter.

## **2.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: REQUESTS FOR CUSTOMISED WORK ARRANGEMENTS AND RESPONSES TO THOSE REQUESTS**

This section reviews the literature relevant to the first research subquestion, which is:

**R1:** *What types of customised work arrangements do employees request and what are supervisors' responses to those requests?*

### **2.2.1 Flexible work**

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) are characterised by changes to standard terms and conditions of work and cover a range of different adjustments, not all of which are formal or long term. FWAs include arrangements that are classified as entitlements (such as sick leave and annual leave), as well as those that are individually negotiated at the local workplace level and not aligned with minimum employment standards (such as adjustments to start and finish times). Research in the field has been conducted primarily in developed nations with studies that look at Australia, Scandinavia and Western Europe, and North America. Social exchange theory is a useful lens through which to understand processes of FWA utilisation (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009), because even entitlements require a process of social exchange, for example, the timing of return from parental leave or timing of annual leave.

Research on FWAs examines types of agreements, utilisation, antecedents, and outcomes. The research has focused primarily on standard forms of work flexibility in examining established links between workplace flexibility and a range of work-related outcomes, which include job satisfaction, organisational performance, and work–life balance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). The research generally explains positive outcomes

from flexible work practices as occurring through social exchange processes (Blau, 1964), in particular, reciprocity (Molm, 2010) (e.g., C. D. Allen, 2003; Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

### **2.2.2 Idiosyncratic deals**

Idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) are characterised as tailored work arrangements that are made available to select valued employees by their managers through social exchange processes (e.g., Rousseau, Hornung, & Kim, 2009). The I-deals literature is a component of the FWA literature in the sense that it refers to individualised FWAs that are tailored to fit workers' needs, through a process of social exchange (Rousseau, 2001b). Flexibility, task, and development I-deals may be offered to select employees, depending on their value to managers (Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). However, as those work arrangements become commonplace, they no longer constitute an I-deal (Rousseau et al., 2006), thereby limiting the focus of customisations to those that are unique or idiosyncratic to valued individual employees.

I-deals are said to have emerged as a response to deregulated employment relationships, rapid technological change, and a strategic need to attract and retain a qualified workforce, from a managerial perspective (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2008). I-deals are used as rewards and incentives to employees based on their worth to organisations and also demonstrate manager support to recipient employees and coworkers. As such, precursors to I-deals are important to understanding how employee–manager relationships are interdependent (Liao et al., 2014), but also how the provision and utilisation of CWAs may function. I-deals research is based in North America and has more recently expanded to other nations (Rousseau, 2001b; Liao et al., 2014).

I-deals research has focused on different types of agreements, their antecedents, and their relationships with outcome variables that affect employee outcomes. I-deals

research has also explored the roles of social exchange processes. From an employee perspective, antecedents of I-deals are their heightened expectations of flexibility and developmental opportunities at work, and their desire to have a voice on matters affecting them at work (Freeman & Rogers, 1999). Employee perceptions of the external labour market also influence how willing employees are to negotiate flexible terms of work (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Flexibility I-deals, also referred to as ‘hard’ I-deals, are objectively measured concrete agreements, such as flexibility in work hours. Hard I-deals have fixed metrics, for example, number of hours worked (Bal et al., 2012). Developmental I-deals are referred to as ‘soft’ I-deals that are offered as training or development opportunities, where recipient employees may vary in their experience of value and in perceptions of development. Accordingly, soft I-deals derive their value from the relationship between the giver and receiver (Rousseau, Hornung, & Kim, 2009), are more subjective in nature, and hence are likely to need a supportive environment to be effective (Ng, 2015).

I-deals are framed here as a component of the broader flexible work literature, but they are defined and explored differently from FWAs. I-deals are explored in the literature in terms of individualised FWAs that are negotiated explicitly through social exchange processes which facilitate I-deal arrangements (Rousseau, 2001b). On the other hand, FWAs generally do not refer to the social exchange processes, but do assume flexible work adjustments are negotiated in the workplace.

The focus of this thesis is on CWAs to examine how employees use flexibility at work to balance work and life. CWAs are conceptualised according to five clusters outlined in the next section. The literature is reviewed on who asks for flexible work. Next, the section reviews the literature on which requests are approved.

### 2.2.3 Types of flexible work

The extant research on flexible work is large and encompasses a range of different types of flexibility in terms of changes to the standard terms and conditions of work arrangements. FWAs can be thought about along the dimensions of adjustments to work hours, time off, adjustments to work tasks, working off site, and developmental opportunities. This section articulates prior work in these five areas of flexible work and examines the range of modifications used by employees to balance work and life.

#### *What types of flexible work are requested?*

This subsection examines the types of modifications to standard terms and conditions of work arrangements. The majority of work–life balance literature examining flexible work focuses on changes to timing (or scheduling), location, and content (Chang, McDonald, & Burton, 2010; Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood & Lambert, 2007; Allen, Johnson, Kiburz & Schockley, 2013; Ichniowski et al., 1996).

In the literature, the terms *timing* and *scheduling* are used interchangeably, and include adjustments to work hours and time off. This thesis distinguishes between these two types of CWAs because adjustments to work hours have strong ties to social exchange processes, whereas time off has many links with work entitlements.

Working flexibly at locations other than the normal place of work is well researched in the flexible work literature (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Chang et al., 2010). Studies show that offsite work (such as telecommuting) is commonly used to help workers manage competing demands of work and nonwork responsibilities. Organisations may also benefit from offsite workers through reduced overheads (e.g., C. D. Allen, 2003). Location flexibility also attracts research interest because in spite of benefits there are negative perceptions associated with lack of face-time, such as negative career penalties and lack of coworker support (e.g., Hill, Glaser, & Harden, 1998; Lewis, 1997).

The literature on location of flexible work is included in this thesis in discussion of offsite CWAs.

FWAs concerning content include work roles and tasks, in the literature (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010; Molleman & van den Beukel, 2007). Flexible work content is less prominent in the work–life balance literature, than flexible timing or location studies (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Estes & Michael, 2005). Content is examined here as ‘adjustments to work tasks’ CWAs. This thesis views adjustments to work tasks as theoretically distinct from developmental opportunities (reviewed in the next section). Flexible work content is also studied in the I-deals literature as task I-deals, linked with work redesign (Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, Angerer, & Weigl, 2010), job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti, Bakker, de Jonge, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001), and social exchanges (Blau, 1964). Research has found that tailored job tasks provide workers with job resources (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, et al., 2010).

Flexibility CWAs are requested by employees to accommodate their nonwork activities. The four types of flexibility CWAs (adjustments to work hours, time off, offsite work, adjustments to work tasks) are theoretically linked to work–life literature in terms of the common ways in which they assist employees to balance work and life, through accommodative family-friendly practices (e.g., Dick, 2009; Rousseau, 2001b; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This thesis examines employees’ CWA requests and managers’ responses to requests – it is the social exchange (Blau, 1964) that matters, in terms of outcomes, not the type of CWA. Though some forms of CWAs requests are covered by worker entitlements, they are included in the scope of this study and there is overlap between some requests being covered by entitlements, and under right to request provisions (*Fair Work Act 2009*). CWAs include formal FWAs covered by entitlements



(including the right to request provisions) as well as informal and ad hoc arrangements (not necessarily covered by entitlements or organisational policy frameworks).

The fifth cluster of CWAs examined in this thesis is developmental opportunities. In terms of flexible work research, the majority of developmental opportunities are examined in the I-deals (e.g., Rousseau, 2001a) literature – as noted earlier, a subset of the flexible work literature. Development I-deals (or soft I-deals), refer to the uniqueness of tailored professional development opportunities negotiated with select valued employees (Rousseau et al., 2006). Both quantitative and qualitative studies have found that developmental opportunities benefit workers through energy and economic resources, subject to demand, resources, and support (e.g., (O'Donohue, Sheehan, Hecker, & Holland, 2007). However, studies also have also found that employees who use substantive flexibility at work can be excluded from training opportunities (e.g., Crowley & Kolenikov, 2014; McDonald, 2003).

Justification for categorising ‘developmental opportunities CWAs’ as an additional and distinct cluster of ‘flexibility CWAs’ is on theoretical grounds, set out previously. Developmental CWAs are theoretically linked to the work–life balance literature in terms of the advantages and conflicts they present for employees who try – or not – to blend professional development with other types of flexible work (Hornung, Glaser, & Rousseau, 2010; Rousseau, 2005). In terms of balancing work and life, the literature finds that utilising developmental opportunities impacts work–life facilitation – which flexible terms of work attempt to ameliorate (e.g., O'Donohue et al., 2007). Developmental opportunities are known to increase employees’ negative work–home interaction (e.g., Armstrong-Stassen, 2008) or, conversely, may be made unavailable to workers who use substantive FWAs like those themed in this thesis as ‘flexibility CWAs’ (e.g., Bal et al., 2012; Geurts et al., 2005).

### *Who asks for flexible work?*

This subsection reviews the literature examining who uses modifications to standard terms and conditions of work arrangements. The flexible work literature which examines who requests flexible work is very narrow. Flexible work ‘requesters’ are less researched in the literature, with most studies examining flexible work as being available, used, or not used – and/or making comparisons between them (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Skinner & Pocock, 2011). However, the literature focusing on flexible work availability and utilisation does not directly address the question, ‘who asks?’ The narrow range of studies has paid particular attention to gender and parents with dependent children (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009), at the expense of other demographics. The literature shows that flexible work utilisation is gendered depending on parent status, reviewed here.

There are a number of key differences in the ways in which men and women engage with flexible work provisions. Women use formal, long-term FWAs, such as part-time work, more because of their roles as main caregivers. However, it has been noted that men and their choices around care and paid work are the unspoken flipside of the choices made by women (Stephenson, 2010, p. 237). While women have traditionally accounted for the majority of employees who adjust their work to accommodate caring commitments, the growing numbers of sole parents and single parent households may necessitate further workplace flexibility requirements for men (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2011b). Illustrating the increasing importance of men’s access to CWAs are Australian gender indicators, which report that 16.3% of employed men feel their work and family responsibilities are rarely/never in balance (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2013). Moreover, 34.9% of all Australian men always/often feel rushed or pressed for time (ABS, 2013). Evidence of low uptake of

flexible work is illustrated by reports that only 13% of men who worked long hours (48 hours or more) sought flexibility, compared to 31% of women (Skinner & Pocock, 2011). However, women report daily unpaid work of over five hours – almost double that of men (ABS, 2013).

Taken together, though, men and women utilise flexibility differently for their different needs (Noback, Broersma, & van Dijk, 2013; Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Stephenson, 2010). Evidence indicates that work arrangements do not always match employees' needs. The next paragraphs outline why barriers to flexible work utilisation exist, despite flexible work provisions.

Research has found that men experience backlash for using flexible work traditionally used by women for caregiving activities, and so men who wish to take time for their nonwork activities tend to use other forms of flexibility, such as annual leave, to avoid career consequences (McDonald & Jeanes, 2012; Williams et al., 2013). Research has also shown there are time- and strain-based conflicts associated with men's attempts to negotiate boundaries of work and life demands, which lead to work intensification, increased stress levels, and poor health outcomes (Azmat, & Haertel, 2013; Clark, 2000; Fujimoto, Kinnunen, Geurts, & Mauno, 2004; Snape & Redman, 2010).

Recent evidence shows that Fair Work (*Fair Work Act 2009*) policies have led to low and gendered uptake of worker flexibility (ABS, 2013, 2016) despite amendments to the Act (AHRI, 2012; Pocock, Charlesworth & Chapman, 2013). These studies find disparities in employees' reported work–life conflict (ABS, 2013, 2016; Pocock et al., 2013; Skinner et al., 2012), along with organisational resistance and negative employee consequences (AHRI, 2012; Kattenbach, Demerouti, & Nachreiner, 2010; Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson, & Siddiqi, 2013).

Studies clearly show, however, that men use developmental opportunities more than women do (e.g., McDonald & Jeanes, 2012). Developmental opportunities are well researched in the I-deals literature and in terms of being negotiated between managers and select valued employees (e.g., Rousseau, 2001a), and provide insights into particular demographics of employees. Receipt of I-deals depends on the perceived value of workers by their managers. In this regard, employees who receive I-deals are valued for their skill sets more than other employees (e.g., Rousseau et al., 2006).

The concept of flexible work emerged to support working mothers' return to work (C156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 [No. 156] Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities [Entry into force: 11 Aug 1983], C156 C.F.R. [1981]). Research continues to show wider use of flexible work by parents (e.g., Beaugard & Henry, 2009) than nonparents. Furthermore, mothers – as primary caregivers – use accommodative forms of FWAs more than fathers do (e.g., McDonald, Brown & Bradley, 2005).

#### ***Which requests are approved?***

Use of flexible work varies depending on where one works (Baltes et al., 1999; Sweet, Pitt-Catsouphes, Besen, & Golden, 2014) and the position one holds within the organisation. This subsection reviews the literature about which CWA requests are approved. However, much of the work–life balance literature dealing with flexible work has had a narrower focus on its availability, in contrast to utilisation (e.g., Vidyarthi, Chaudry, Anand, & Liden, 2014). Although the literature offers insights in terms of informing which modifications to work are approved or not approved, it does not specify partial approvals and consequences (e.g., Skinner & Pocock, 2010). Moreover, studies (e.g., Skinner and Pocock, 2011) have also found that workers' decisions to ask for FWAs

depend on anticipated responses to requests and perceived levels of support. Research shows the different types of flexibility that are used (or approved) are framed in terms of gender, parent status, valued skill sets, and statutory entitlements (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Butts et al., 2013), and are reviewed here. The flexible work and I-deals literature and studies on customised work provide the basis for examining the five types of CWAs examined here.

*Adjustments to work hours* relates to flexible scheduling and is commonplace in the work–life balance literature. Requests for adjustments to work hours help facilitate work and nonwork requirements, but approvals may depend on the type of work, responsibilities, and changes requested (Kelly & Moen, 2007). Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2012) report that less-skilled workers have both less scope to increase earnings, and less schedule flexibility. Furthermore, full-time workers had more say in start-finish times and being able to choose to work extra hours (in order to take time off), than part-timers. However, flexible work hours agreements were less common for full-time employees (29%) than for part-timers (34%) (ABS, 2012).

Use of flexible work for time off may reflect statutory entitlements (National Employment Standards [NES], *Fair Work Act 2009*), such as for annual leave, which do not depend on the social exchange process for approvals, except where timing of leave is an issue.

Caillier (2013) reports telework or offsite work as the most commonly used alternative work schedule in (United States) public organisations. ‘Telecommuters’ are assumed to be ‘relocating’ their work hours usually spent onsite, in order to offset work–life conflict (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). However, more recent quantitative and qualitative research has shown that salaried telecommuters work additional hours to

accommodate increased demands of work, while attributing extra efforts to ‘legitimacy’ of professional time norms (e.g., Noonan & Glass, 2012; Stone & Hernandez, 2013). Still, a longitudinal study (1997 to 2004) using North American census data has shown that telecommuting is used similarly by men and women (e.g., Noonan & Glass, 2012), but showed older cohorts (32 to 40 in 1997) of college-educated men in managerial or professional roles do this more often than parents.

*Adjustments to work tasks* relates to work roles or responsibilities, and is researched as: customised job crafting, task I-deals, and flexible work content. Studies have researched flexible work content more often in terms of job redesign or crafting, job control, and job autonomy (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, Weigl, Muller, & Glaser, 2014). A three wave study (Weigl, Hornung, Parker., Petru, Glaser, & Angerer, 2010) shows that control over work tasks provides task-related gain spirals, which expand job control and thereby provide a job resource for employees (e.g.; Grant & Parker, 2009; van der Doef & Maes, 1999). In concert with their managers, task changes (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, Weigl, Muller, & Glaser, 2014) are used by employees who seek greater competence, autonomy, and to promote their health and wellbeing, and – in particular – those who seek social relatedness (Hornung, Glaser, & Rousseau, 2010). A recent longitudinal study supports these findings (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2013).

The literature finds flexible work, which accommodates caregiving activities, is utilised primarily by women and mothers. Yet other studies have found accommodative arrangements (adjustments to work hours, time off, offsite work, adjustments to work tasks) are used for lifestyle activities, reflecting an ageing workforce and population (e.g., Kulik et al., 2014; Skinner & Pocock, 2011).

*Developmental opportunities* relates to requests for professional development activities, which are customised to individuals. Men have been continually shown to use

training opportunities more often than women or mothers, reasoned on grounds of their (women and mothers) leadership inadequacies, work–life balance priorities, and stereotyping of perceptions of low career commitment (e.g., Kottke & Agars, 2005). Furthermore, the I-deals literature shows that select valued workers are singled out and enabled by managers to use professional development opportunities to a greater extent than less-skilled workers are (e.g., Liao et al., 2014; Rousseau et al., 2006).

In summary, linkages between flexible work requests, requesters, and those who requests are approved, utilise the flexible work literature and its component, I-deals literature. The limited research on CWAs also provides insight into tailored adjustments to work that are requested through social exchanges and extend to all types of formal or informal, long- or short-term or occasional flexible and developmental work arrangements. Most requests examined have been in terms of scheduling, location and, to a lesser extent, content and developmental opportunities. The extant research links scheduling and location requests with women, while requests for developmental opportunities are linked with men. The extant literature measures ‘approvals’ in terms of ‘utilisation’. Some types of flexible work utilisation are also a measure of an employee’s value to their manager.

Consequently, the quality of manager–employee interactions and the developmental cultural context is strongly linked to responses to requests for developmental CWAs. Developmental and flexibility arrangements are strongly linked to CWAs examined in this study, in respect to how they are negotiated and their varying forms, but unlike I-deals, CWAs are broadly available to encompass all employees.

#### **2.2.4 Rationale for use of the term customised work arrangements**

Customised work arrangements (CWAs) can be characterised as tailored work arrangements of any kind, which are broadly available and utilised as part of a manager–

employee social exchange process. CWAs include a broad range of options for utilising nonstandard work arrangements, and are agile in the sense that they can be used to refer to unplanned and short-term situations (Lawler & Finegold, 2000; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). CWAs are defined as all forms of tailored modifications to standard terms and conditions of work arrangements, which are available to all, and include the formal and longer term modifications to work as well as the shorter term and ad hoc work arrangements (Lawler & Finegold, 2000). A key point of difference for CWAs is that they are tailored to individuals, in all forms of flexible work. CWA is a more comprehensive term which encompasses forms of flexible work enshrined in national legislative frameworks and organisational policy as well as those informal, occasional and ad hoc arrangements that are negotiated with supervisors and tailored to individual needs. Furthermore, in order for changes to work arrangements to be tailored, employees request CWAs in manager–employee social exchanges, where they are fashioned to suit the needs of both.

CWAs employ manager–employee social exchanges as a medium through which employees initiate requests. Tailored individualised work arrangements can also fulfil needs of workers outside of the more standard and longer term forms of flexibility at work (e.g., Putnam, Myers, & Gailliard, 2014). Australian studies have argued for the versatility of CWAs, as opposed to FWAs (e.g., McDonald & Townsend, 2012).

Research on CWAs has spanned Dutch, North American (e.g., Dorenbosch, Bakker, Demerouti, & van Dam, 2013; Lawler, 2011) and Australian studies, and is aligned with the relevant country-specific legal framework (e.g., McDonald & Townsend, 2012).

The rationale for using the term CWAs in this research is that, in contrast to ‘flexible work’, it encompasses *all types* of work arrangements, which are modified from



the standard terms and conditions of work (Lawler & Finegold, 2000). CWAs have the potential to accommodate the needs of both workers and organisations in the context of conciliatory manager–employee exchanges, thereby enabling the study to encapsulate a broad range of flexibilities including those that are formal, short term and longer term, occasional, and ad hoc. The broad range of CWAs provides both employees and managers with options to negotiate best-fit adjustments to work that also encompass training and development opportunities (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Hence, employers can build business efficiencies through customised work. Furthermore, at an individual level, through manager–employee interactions, CWAs can be negotiated to facilitate positive business outcomes through work engagement and by minimising employees’ negative work–home interaction (NWHI).

The broad range of CWAs examined in this research have been relatively neglected in studies of work–life balance (Liao et al., 2014). CWAs are important to the work–life literature because they furnish a more complete understanding of how employees request modifications to standard terms of work in order to balance their work and nonwork lives.

This study quantitatively examines the scope of CWAs requested, the types of requests, who made those requests, and whether those requests were fully approved, partially approved, or declined.

### **2.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: CONSEQUENCES OF FLEXIBLE WORK UTILISATION FOR INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESS-RELATED OUTCOMES**

This section reviews the literature relevant to the second research question, which is:

**R2:** *What are the individual and business-related impacts of different ‘responses to requests’ (approved, partially approved, denied)?*

The utilisation of CWAs in any given work context has consequences for individual workers, as well as the organisations that employ them. Employees’ use of flexibility and/or developmental oriented adjustments to standard working arrangements has numerous documented advantages as well as drawbacks (McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010; Michel et al., 2011; Whitman, Van Rooy, & Viswesvaran, 2010). Likewise, business efficiencies are affected by employees’ experiences of developmental and/or flexible work utilisation (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; Parkes & Langford, 2008; Subramony, 2009).

Flexibility CWAs are geared towards creating greater flexibility for the employee, and particularly for women (Skinner & Pocock, 2008), who are currently the predominant users of CWAs (ABS, 2013). Research has shown that women seek adjustments to work primarily for reasons of caregiving, whereas men seek out adjustments primarily to pursue skills development and advancement (Carreiras, 2006; Harris, 2009; Skinner et al., 2012). For example, personalised adjustments to the timing, tasks, and location of work represent an opportunity for workers to align their paid work responsibilities with those in their personal sphere (Lawler, 2011). Moreover, it may allow some employees to remain in the labour force, who would otherwise have to forego employment to mitigate demands of their nonwork lives. It also facilitates positive work–home interaction (PWHI) for those who want to, or have to, stay in the workforce (McNall et al., 2010). In this study, individual and business benefits are characterised in three ways: PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement. The following section addresses these consequences.

### 2.3.1 Work–home interaction

A key driver for flexible work is the potential benefit for employees, having evolved from facilitating the needs of working mothers to attempting to resolve issues of conflicted work and home demands for a wider range of employees (Kerrane, 1994). Both flexibility and developmental work arrangements have positive impacts for employees' work and home integration (McNall et al., 2010). The evidence for this link is set out following an initial explanation of the work–home interaction construct. A smaller body of literature examines positive influences from work arrangements that accommodate employees' attempts to balance their work and nonwork lives, and includes constructs such as work–family enrichment (WFE), work–family facilitation, and positive spillover (McNall et al., 2010).

Work–home interaction (WHI) – or the capacity to integrate paid work and nonwork responsibilities – refers to the bidirectional influences of positive and negative spillover between work and home domains (Geurts et al., 2005). WHI is a key outcome variable in the flexible work literature and is of central interest to the current study. One lens through which WHI can be examined is that of effort-recovery. Effort-recovery (E-R) theory was developed to understand the impact of work characteristics on work behaviour, and health and wellbeing (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). The theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) proposes that exposure to workload requires effort which is associated with short-term psychophysiological reactions, which are adaptive and reversible except where excessive strains do not allow recovery and subsequently develop into negative reactions when the exposure period is inadequate (Geurts et al., 2005).

The four dimensions of WHI, as defined by Geurts and colleagues (2005), are positive work–home interaction, negative work–home interaction, positive home–work interaction and negative home–work interaction. The construct emphasises both positive

and negative aspects of work and nonwork activities and their effect on each other (Schabracq, Winnubst, & Cooper, 2003). PWHI and NWHI are defined as load reactions developed at work that facilitate or hamper functioning at home (Geurts et al., 2005). While on the one hand spillover of good mood and skills benefits workers, on the other hand, job strain and pressure can lead to poor health and wellbeing (Geurts et al., 2005). The work–home interactions (PWHI and NWHI) are most relevant to this research for several reasons. First, investigation of work–home interactions is more prevalent (Wilcox, 2005), having been explored extensively in the flexible work literature. Second, it is associated with organisational outcomes such as organisational commitment (Cohen, 2007), job control, and job support (X.-a. Zhang, Cao, & Tjosvold, 2011). Third, work-to-home interactions are more applicable to the narrow focus on short-term and ad hoc modifications to work within the flexible work literature, and how approved, partially approved, or declined responses to requests for CWAs, in the current context, affect employees' personal lives.

The availability of worker flexibility, such as flexitime and compressed work weeks, benefits employees through positive work-to-home interaction (McNall et al., 2010), higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions. For example, Bal and colleagues (2012) found that workers were motivated to continue working after retirement because it fulfilled their needs for FWAs. Positive influences between employees' work and nonwork domains lead to improved health and wellbeing for employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2009; McNall et al., 2010; Rothbard, 2001; Wayne, Matthews, Casper, & T. D. Allen, 2013).

Much of the literature on the work–life interface has focused on the negative aspects of spillover influences between employees' work and life domains and includes constructs in the extant literature of work–life conflict (WLC), work–home interference

and work-in-family interference (WIF) (Michel et al., 2011). These varying terms in the literature reflect the previously defined construct of negative work–home interaction (NWHI), used in this study. Employees’ work and nonwork and family responsibilities are increasingly conflicted in contemporary workplaces, and have been shown to affect employees’ health and life quality (Byron, 2005; Ford et al., 2007; McNall et al., 2010; Michel et al., 2011). For example, employees report negative psychophysiological effects of lower levels of health, increased strain and lower quality of life (T. Allen & Armstrong, 2006; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Beham & Drobnič, 2011; Brown & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2013; Byron, 2005). Hence, employees who are offered poorly suited flexibility endure further negative outcomes.

Employees’ work–life conflict is unlikely to be attenuated without perceived support from their organisation or managers. By managers interacting constructively with employees to arrive at suitable CWAs, improved outcomes are realised (McDonald & Townsend, 2012). Invoking social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), studies have shown how managers have used their positions to create loyalty and commitment from employees by offering worker flexibility (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2006; Rousseau & Hornung, 2007; Rousseau, Hornung & Kim, 2009).

Developmental CWAs are sought by employees driven to develop their careers and enhance their skill sets through tailored arrangements that accommodate their nonwork requirements (Bal et al., 2012; Demerouti et al., 2004). Thus, employees granted developmental CWAs are helped with securing future employability, through job control and job support, shown to spill over into their nonwork lives (Geurts et al., 2005). However, it is not known to what extent responses to requests for CWAs – whether they are approved, partially approved, or declined – have a positive impact on employees’ nonwork lives.

Training and development opportunities used in flexible work can also negatively affect employees, despite obvious advantages. Developmental work arrangements are used to tailor work hours to improve the employee's career path and may include working longer hours as well as (or to facilitate) study or career development activities (Hornung, Glaser, & Rousseau, 2010). An example of a developmental work arrangement is a training opportunity. However, such opportunities are positively related to work–family conflict and working unpaid overtime (Hornung et al., 2008). Hence, negative individual outcomes from utilising the available flexible work arrangements lead to lower levels of take-up (ABS, 2013). However, where manager–employee interactions lead to successful negotiation for tailored developmental adjustments to work, the positive social exchange process facilitates lower levels of NWHI for employees (Liu et al., 2013a).

Work–home interaction is measured on four dimensions: two for PWHI, comprising mood spillover and skill transfer; and two for NWHI, comprising work-based strain and time-based strain. The dimensions are further explained in the methods chapter.

Work–home interaction is grounded in effort-recovery (E-R) theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), which draws on the demand-control-support model (DCS-Model) (Demerouti et al., 2004; Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek, 1998). The DCS-Model postulates that control over and support in an environment are key determinants of psychological health and active behaviour or learning (Karasek, Brisson, Kawakami, Houtman, Bongers, & Amick, 1998). In the model, job demands are considered instigators of action, and when demands are too high, they lead to stress reactions and health complaints (Karasek, 1979). Effort recovery (E-R) theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) holds that negative and positive loadings transferred to employees result from demands of and control over work, which spill over to their home lives (Geurts et al., 2005). Therefore, employees need to recover from negative load reactions to return to a

baseline, and job control can facilitate this recovery (Geurts et al., 2005). Positive load reactions also spill over from work to the home domain and challenge demands such as training opportunities facilitate this process (Geurts et al., 2005).

Manager–employee social exchanges (Blau, 1964) provide opportunities for employees to exert control in their work and receive social support known to reduce NWHI (Johnson & Hall, 1988). Based on E-R theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), employees who receive positive responses to requests for flexibility CWAs are able to better integrate work and life, and have sufficient energy reserves to transfer positive spillover from work to home.

Furthermore, where employees are able to successfully negotiate developmental opportunities CWAs that mesh with their nonwork lives, they will also have higher reserves of positive load reactions of positive affect and using skills learned at work in their home lives, compared to those who cannot successfully negotiate terms of CWAs. Moreover, successful negotiations of flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs allow employees to experience less work–life conflict from job pressure and fatigue, compared to those who cannot successfully negotiate terms of CWAs.

This thesis tests four hypotheses (1 to 4), formulated from Research Question 2, which predict that employees whose CWA requests are approved will report higher PWHI and lower NWHI, compared with those who are partially approved or declined.

**H1:** Employees whose requests for flexible CWAs are approved will be more likely to report higher levels of positive work–home interaction (PWHI), than those whose requests are partially approved, and/or denied completely.

**H2:** Employees whose requests for flexible CWAs are approved will be more likely to report lower levels of negative work–home interaction (NWHI) than those whose requests are partially approved, and/or denied completely.

**H3:** Employees whose requests for developmental CWAs are approved will be more likely to report higher levels of positive work-home interaction (PWHI) than those whose requests are partially approved, and/or denied completely.

**H4:** Employees whose requests for developmental CWAs are approved will be more likely to report lower levels of negative work-home interaction (NWHI) than those whose requests are partially approved, and/or denied completely.

### **2.3.2 Work engagement**

Engagement at work has long been used as a core high-performance HR measurement (Saks, 2006; Salanova, Schaufeli, & Bakker, 2006; Sawang, 2012) and many organisations measure work engagement on a regular basis. This section outlines positive and negative effects of work engagement for core business, and management's role in facilitating optimal workplace functioning for employees.

In recent times, the work engagement construct has been popular in theory and in academia (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004), where it is generally defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort that employees apply to their work (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004). In this thesis, employee work engagement is understood as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind” that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) that is “a persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behaviour” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In sum, work engagement is conducive to workers' wellbeing and productivity at work and leads to business efficiencies. A multidimensional review on the body of work engagement literature (Ahuja & Modi, 2015) highlights crossover effects among leaders, employees, coworkers,



and positive associations with work–family facilitation, and urges further research examining relationships with work–life balance, which is one of the aims of this research.

From a business efficiency perspective, CWAs represent opportunities to attract, retain, and utilise workers in ways that fit the needs of the organisation. High-performance work systems use human resources as a means to maximise the firm’s competitive advantage through improving workforce competence, attitudes, and motivation and through HR-based efficiencies (Finegold, Lawler, & Conger, 2001; Huselid, 1995). Similarly, organisations attempt to mitigate turnover and personnel shortages by offering flexibility (Almer, Cohen, & Single, 2003; Haar & Roche, 2010). A recent representative study by Bal and Dorenbosch (2015) found support for relationships between individualised HR practices and organisational performance. From an organisation’s perspective, CWAs represent a medium through which managers have an improved capacity to achieve increased business efficiencies through higher levels of work engagement. Work engagement is shown to precede organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), reduced staff turnover and wellbeing at work (Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, & Kühnel, 2011; Boles, Dudley, Onyemah, Rouziès, & Weeks, 2012; Cohen, 1992; Saks, 2006; Zahra, Shataw, Kamran, & Mostafa, 2012). It is expected here, however, that employee experiences of high levels of work engagement are dependent on positive management responses to requests for CWAs.

Employees utilising flexible developmental work opportunities have advantages for organisations. Studies have shown that mutually beneficial FWAs or developmental CWAs lead to enhanced employee engagement (Cardador & Rupp, 2010; Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser, et al., 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Swanberg, McKechnie, Ojha, & James, 2011). Further, opportunities to tailor work arrangements through manager–employee exchanges foster mutually beneficial work arrangements.

Thus, responses to CWA requests – examined in this thesis – are anticipated to affect work engagement.

Employees who are unable to integrate their work and nonwork lives through flexible or developmental opportunities at work suffer outcomes that affect their work performance, and/or they may revert to negative workplace behaviours (Paulsen, 2015). Employees who suffer work intensification and/or live lower quality lives, due to NWHI, are less able to engage at work (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Geurts, Kompier, & Hooff, 2006; Kattenbach et al., 2010; Peeters et al., 2009). As a consequence, disengaged employees have reduced OCB and commitment, and higher turnover (Körner, Reitzle, & Silbereisen, 2012; Wollard, 2011). That said, when alternative work is difficult to find, disengaged employees may revert to previously outlined counterproductive work behaviours that cause ongoing business inefficiencies (Ariani, 2013; Paulsen, 2015).

The existing legislation is widely criticised by both employers and employee rights groups because of the burden of implementation and on costs of FWAs. A joint study by Deakin University and Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI, 2012) found negative impacts of the *Fair Work Act 2009* generally included increased financial costs (record-keeping, industrial relations), time losses (bargaining, formulating employment contracts), and increased labour costs among the challenges faced by organisations. For employee rights groups, the *Fair Work Act 2009* is perceived to increase the complexity of employment relationships because of the increased difficulties and complexities in managing work arrangements, under the provisions. Thus, concerns remain for perceived manager or organisational support in relation to the value of FWAs in promoting work-home balance, despite legislative provisions. Continued evidence indicates low uptake of available policies and low manager support. Accordingly, the

manager–employee discussions necessary to negotiate CWAs require manager support to facilitate higher levels of work engagement, despite additional costs of implementation.

Manager–employee discussions for CWAs initiated by employees provide peak opportunities for managers to express organisational strategies and negotiate employees’ alignment with business needs (Sweet, Besen, Pitt-Catsouphes, & McNamara, et al., 2014). This process helps employees contend with competing business requirements, helps build long-term employment relationships, and reduces expectations of managers during negotiations (Chalofsky, 2009; Liao et al., 2014; Sweet, Besen, et al., 2014). The extent to which responses to requests for CWAs – whether they are approved, partially approved or declined – affect employees’ engagement at work is not yet known. This thesis also answers a call for further research (Liao et al., 2014) to examine flexibility and developmental CWAs to determine the various outcomes for employees of different types of CWAs and responses to those requests.

Manager–employee social exchanges (Blau, 1964) facilitate forums for supervisor support, performance feedback and coaching, all of which are shown to precede work engagement (Demerouti, Bakker, de Jong, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001; Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martinez, & Schaufeli, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Taris & van Rhenen, 2003). Additionally, requests for CWAs provide opportunities for employees to ask for work arrangements that accommodate their needs for job autonomy, task variety, and training facilities, which also precede work engagement (Sonnetag, 2003; Demerouti Bakker, de Jong, Janssen, & Schaufeli, 2001; Salanova et al., 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, et al., 2003). Moreover, there are contagion effects of work engagement crossover (Bakker & Demerouti, 2009; Bakker, Demerouti & Dollard, 2008) between employees’ work and home social relationships (Montgomery et al., 2003).

Based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the rule of reciprocity (Molm, 2010), and also the crossover theory of work engagement (Bakker, Demerouti & Dollard, 2008; Bakker & Demerouti, 2009), it is anticipated that successful requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs will lead to higher work engagement because of less work–life conflict and fewer imbalanced job demands and resources (Bakker, Westman & Emmerik, 2009). Further, they will want to engage more than those whose requests are not fully approved, because of felt ‘indebtedness’ (Molm, 2010) towards the organisation.

This thesis tests two hypotheses (5 and 6) from Research Question 2, which predict that employees whose CWA requests are approved will have greater engagement at work than those whose requests are partially approved, or declined.

**H5:** Employees whose requests for flexible customised work (CWAs) are approved will be more likely to report higher levels of engagement at work than those whose requests are partially approved, and/or denied completely.

**H6:** Employees whose requests for developmental customised work (CWAs) are approved will be more likely to report higher levels of engagement at work than those whose requests are partially approved, and/or denied completely.

The next section reviews the literature relevant to the third research question. It examines work–life flexibility and developmental cultural environments and their influences on employees’ attempts to utilise CWAs.

## **2.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 3: FLEXIBLE WORK AND WORKPLACE CULTURAL CONTEXT**

This section reviews the literature relevant to the third research question, which is:

**R3:** *What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between ‘responses to requests’ for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?*

This study's specific focus is on contextual opportunities and constraints of organisational culture in respect to work–family culture and developmental cultures that are shown to support employees' work–life integration and engagement at work (Bal et al., 2012; Snape & Redman, 2010; Thompson et al., 1999). There are distinct definitions of organisational culture and organisational climate, although the terms are often used interchangeably in the literature. In this thesis, the term *organisational culture* is used, as it is the more frequently found in the conceptual work–life literature and in empirical studies examining organisational dynamics and work–life outcomes. Organisational culture is analogous to an 'organisational mindset' (Holbeche, 2012). Any organisation that aims to support sustainable high performance must have flexibility built into it, must be reinforced by its organisational culture, and accordingly must attempt to balance the organisation's requirements with employees' needs (Holbeche, 2005). Employees need to align their work and nonwork responsibilities without sacrificing work that is meaningful and that creates opportunities for professional development.

Organisational culture is defined as:

A pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein 1985, p. 9)

Employees' perceptions of their organisational culture influence their attitudes and behaviours (Baltes et al., 1999) at work, and are shown to alter relationships between work environment and employees' job performance, negative work behaviours, and wellbeing (Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeShon, 2003; James et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2003).

The next sections concentrate on examining the literature on work–life and developmental cultures and their underlying dimensions. Work–life flexibility culture and developmental culture are important, in respect to their influences on responses to requests for CWAs and employees’ work–life integration and work engagement, and their influence within the larger organisational context.

The dimensions of work–life culture derive from the items of the survey on work–life flexibility culture (Bradley et al., 2010): manager support, organisational support, time demands, career consequences, and coworker support. The developmental culture literature is examined in terms of organisational and supervisor support and links to requests for CWAs and outcomes, work–home interaction and work engagement.

#### **2.4.1 Work–Life (flexibility) culture**

Within the workplace cultural context, work–family culture (Bradley et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 1999), and developmental culture (Bal et al., 2012; Bal, Kooij, & De Jong, 2013) are central to measuring the separate influences of responses to requests for CWAs on work–home interaction and on work engagement. Both work–life and developmental cultures draw from perceived organisational support (POS) theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986), which is underpinned by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employee perceptions of support are generated through communications in social exchange processes (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). The dimensions of work–family culture and developmental culture are dealt with separately here.

*Work–family culture* refers to a work culture that is supportive of the work–home interface. Thompson and colleagues (1999) define it as ‘the shared assumptions, beliefs and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees’ work and family lives’ (p. 394). An organisational culture that

is supportive of flexible work practices plays an important role in the context of successful integration of flexible work practices and can confer a competitive advantage for the organisation (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). For example, Haar and Roche's (2010) research on 373 employees from 40 New Zealand firms found strong evidence for organisational support of work–family issues that led to employees reciprocating with increased life satisfaction, increased job satisfaction, decreased turnover intentions, and decreased job burnout. Haar and Roche found that life satisfaction mediated job satisfaction and negatively influenced turnover intentions and job burnout, illustrating the important role of organisations in providing a supportive work–family culture that contributes to employee outcomes. Conversely, organisations or managers who were perceived to provide lower support for flexible work transmitted this lack of support to their employees (Haar & Roche, 2010).

In the context of maximising workplace effectiveness and efficiencies, work practices that support flexibility and the work–life interface provide a platform for enhanced productivity through a culture of flexibility. Flexibility work practices are also commonly applied where a reduction in workload occurs within the organisation (Blake-Beard, O'Neill, Ingols, & Shapiro, 2010; Carter et al., 2011). Although flexible work practices are legislated and promoted in organisations, their uptake is contingent upon employees' perceptions of support from supervisors and the organisation (Donnelly et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 1999). There are five dimensions of work–life flexibility culture (Bradley et al., 2010): manager support, organisational support, coworker support, career consequences, and time demands.

### ***Dimension 1: Manager support***

The literature agrees that the first dimension of work–life culture, managerial support, is the key cultural factor influencing the uptake of FWAs (Armstrong-Stassen &

Schlosser, 2008; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Berkman, Buxton, Ertel, & Okechukwu, 2010; McDonald et al., 2005; McDonald, Pini, & Bradley, 2007). The central role of managers in the approval process is enshrined in the right-to-request provisions of FWAs (*Fair Work Act 2009*, Fair Work Amendment Bill 2013). Accordingly, managers' views of the availability of FWAs influence employees' propensity to make requests and affect micro-level interactions between managers and employees (Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, 2016). Positive work-life practices enhance organisational outcomes of commitment, loyalty, citizenship behaviours, and performance, but only to the extent that employees feel free to use FWAs without negative consequences (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Employee work engagement depends on supervisors' support for work arrangements that are well-matched to employees' work-life requirements. Bakker and Bal (2010) found employees who had autonomy, exchanges with their supervisor, and opportunities for development, had higher levels of work engagement and job performance. Swanberg, et al., (2011) found direct and mediating effects of schedule control, schedule flexibility, schedule satisfaction, and supervisor support on work engagement for hourly workers. Perceived supervisor support is positively related to perceived control over schedule modifications and perceived work hours satisfaction and work engagement. Additionally, work hours satisfaction mediates the relationship with perceived supervisor support (Swanberg et al., 2011).

Senior managers also facilitate the behaviour of line managers who are dually tasked with gatekeeping roles in supporting worker flexibility as well as one-on-one negotiations with employees for CWAs (McDonald & Cathcart, 2015). Furthermore, managers' support for worker flexibility is contingent on their people management skills, insight into best organisational interests, and motivation to support employees (Knies, 2011). For example, Sweet, Besen and colleagues (2014) found that employees reduced



their expectations of managers in negotiations for flexibility when they aligned themselves with strategic goals of the organisation, during a time of economic downturn, as explained to them by their manager. Consequentially, constructive conversations and manager support helped employees accept, and be happy with, less.

Top-down support for managers in facilitating worker flexibility also includes structuring and monitoring FWAs, and role modelling (McDonald & Cathcart, 2015). In this context, managers who negotiate with employees are constrained by their capabilities to deliver and manage CWAs, in light of their responsibilities to higher-ups and equity among other employees (Batt & Valcour, 2003), and by example of their own use of CWAs (Michielsens, Bingham, & Clarke, 2014). For example, Batt and Valcour (2003) found that work design attributes such as autonomy, team collaboration, and information technology assisted work–life integration more than other HR policies, while particular management activities such as meeting schedules and effective communications with telecommuters are sympathetic to flexible work design (Buck, Lee, & MacDermid, 2002; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Although managers can better support worker flexibility through specific strategies, top managers (McDonald & Cathcart, 2015) must enable them. Closely linked to manager support is organisational support, which reflects the broader values and assumptions held by the organisation.

### ***Dimension 2: Organisation support***

Organisational support represents the broader organisational ‘mindset’ pertaining to family-friendly practices, and is distinct from managerial support, illustrated by instances where the organisational and managerial views on family-friendly work arrangements do not align. Organisational support has strong associations with the provision and uptake of flexible work. At the individual level, Beaugard and Henry’s (2009) narrative review of the literature from a broad range of disciplines found strong

support for links between perceived organisational support of work–life balance practices and OCB and improved job-related attitudes (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010). A study of hospitality workers showed that organisational support is positively related to the work environment for knowledge sharing, motivation, and promotion (Tsai, Horng, Liu, & Hu, 2015). On the other hand, a longitudinal study of heterogeneous Australians showed that workplace cultural norms strongly influence the negative relationship between using flexible work and work engagement, over time (Timms et al., 2015). The study highlights how low organisational support can diminish the level of engagement that results from the use of flexible work arrangements.

Family friendliness of the organisation is related to employees' wellbeing, where work–family conflict is diminished by a positive work–family culture, which contributes directly and indirectly to employees' wellbeing (Mauno, Kinnunen, & Pyykkö, 2005). Such outcomes underline the importance of regular manager–employee communications that contribute to resolving employees' work–life conflicts. Furthermore, perceptions of manager and organisational support for flexible work influence how coworkers view colleagues' uptake of different forms of work flexibility.

### ***Dimension 3: Coworker support***

Coworker support of FWAs is influenced by perceptions of organisational and manager support and equity (Blake-Beard et al., 2010; Lai, Rousseau, & Chang, 2009; Lewis & Smithson, 2001). A review of the literature shows that coworkers experience contagion effects of approval or disapproval for work–life practices, dependent on perceived organisational or manager support (Agresti, 2010; Kamdar, McAllister, & Turban, 2006; Liao et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2007; Sherony & Green, 2002).

Hence, the overarching cultural context affects coworkers' citizenship behaviours and, in particular, the extent to which they consider helping each other out. For example,

when a coworker may need to attend to caring responsibilities on one occasion, that ‘helpful’ worker may return the favour on another occasion (Kamdar et al., 2006). However, where low supports for FWAs are perceived, coworkers may be unsupportive of flexible work practices, particularly if unfair work distribution is perceived (Fursman & Zodgekar, 2009a). Haggerty and Wright (2010) propose that ‘informal’ processes in the organisation are powerful signals that alter employee behaviour. Where employees seek flexible work, initially they look to significant others in the workplace for cues on whether to initiate requests, or not (Bourne, McComb, & Woodard, 2012; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999). Additionally, employees who use FWAs are known to be perceived by coworkers as less committed and not as hard-working, in spite of performance ratings to the contrary (Hoyle, Harris, & Judd, 2009), which may have negative implications for their careers. Hence, another reason that perceptions of the organisational cultural context may prevent employees utilising flexible work is fear of negative consequences.

#### ***Dimension 4: Career consequences***

Fears of career consequences for using flexible work practices and of gender role expectations are also obstacles to the uptake of flexible work practices (Thompson et al., 1999). The literature reports benefits for flexibility culture including flexibility I-deals being positively related to motivation to continue working (Bal et al., 2012) and negatively related to work–family conflict (Hornung et al., 2008; Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2013). However, statistics show that employees who use FWAs have lower rates of promotion and advancement and, consequently, use of flexible work practices is low among staff with career aspirations (Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Stone & Hernandez, 2013; Williams et al., 2013). Among men, this is particularly marked, due to the stigma of flexibility (Coltrane, Miller, DeHaan, & Stewart, 2013; Vandello et al., 2013). However, in a similar fashion to the ‘invisible daddy track’, it is well documented that women who

use FWAs also suffer lost opportunities for advancement (Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2013), and, hence, reduced earnings potential. Furthermore, time spent at the workplace is often used as an indicator of employee commitment (Ballinger, Lehman, & Schoorman, 2010), while offsite FWAs are associated with lower performance evaluations and career consequences (Lau & Liden, 2008). Thus, depending on perceptions of organisational culture, employees may be reticent to utilise available FWAs (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). This denies them the opportunity to align their work and nonwork lives, leading to work intensification, increased strain and, as a result, lower levels of work engagement (Kattenbach et al., 2010; Michel et al., 2011; Zhang, Griffeth, & Fried, 2012).

#### ***Dimension 5: Time demands***

Time demands are a key consideration for employees utilising FWAs and have repercussions for employees' work-home interaction and work engagement. Time demands are defined as the extent to which an organisation expects an employee to put work before their family responsibilities (Thompson et al., 1999). The literature shows that women can reduce the time strain of caregiving by reducing work hours but they are then prejudiced against when pursuing development opportunities (Brescoll, Glass, & Sedlovskaya, 2013; Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2013; Stone & Hernandez, 2013). This consolidates pressure to continue working longer hours, leading to work intensification and negative health outcomes (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010).

Support for work-family culture (Thompson et al., 1999) shown through the organisation, managers, and coworkers helps employees integrate work and life and is reinforced through flexibility CWA approvals, which help engage workers. On the other hand, an absence of work-family support may signal a hindrance such as career penalties for those who would request or use flexibility CWAs. Work-family culture hindrances, such as career consequences and time demands, harm employees' attempts to integrate

work and life, which inhibits engagement. Cultural hindrances illustrate the difficulties that requesting or using flexibility CWAs create for employees. However, supportive managers promote employee flexibility through granting requests during socioemotional exchanges, which have contagion effects that also operate for career consequences and time demands.

This thesis tests the following hypotheses (7 to 9) from Research Question 3. On the basis of perceived organisation support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), it is predicted that a supportive work–life flexibility culture will improve employee outcomes, in terms of relationships between responses to CWA requests and work–home interaction and work engagement.

**H7:** A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and positive work–home interaction (PWHI), such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive flexibility cultures

**H8:** A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and negative work–home interaction (NWHI), such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive flexibility cultures.

**H9:** A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive flexibility cultures.

#### **2.4.2 Developmental culture**

The ageing workforce and skills shortage (ABS, 2012; The Treasury, 2015), has led to growing pressure on organisations to become more competitive in the marketplace. A developmental culture enhances an organisation’s ability to attract and retain staff by

offering its workers opportunities to learn and develop. Developmental culture refers to the values and beliefs that a workplace holds for the supportive development of its workers (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008). Developmental culture has two dimensions: managerial support and unit-level support (Boswell et al., 2012). A supportive developmental culture has been found to be related to job development culture and, in turn, related to employees' attachment to the organisation (affective commitment) and intention to remain with the organisation (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Ng, Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, & Wilson, 2006; Ng & Feldman, 2007).

A study of development I-deals found positive effects on motivation to continue working only when the organisation supports the employee in using the skills learned through developmental opportunities (Bal et al., 2012). Further, development I-deals were associated with motivation to continue working, only when a flexibility culture was absent or when a developmental culture was present (Bal et al., 2012).

Manager support for employees' requests for training or development opportunities is linked to organisational commitment (Ng et al., 2006). However, where employees experience negative responses to requests for developmental CWAs, which occur when there are prejudices against employees utilising FWAs, there are negative career consequences for employees (Vandello et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2013). This in turn has implications for work-home interaction and work engagement. The extant literature demonstrates strong links between lack of manager support for developmental CWAs and employees' career consequences (Butts et al., 2013; Ng et al., 2006) and reduced commitment. Thus, an unsupportive developmental culture is associated with poor career consequences, low organisational commitment, and reduced work engagement (Bal et al., 2013; Jefferson, 2013; McDonald & Jeanes, 2012; Parkes & Langford, 2008; Saks, 2006; Stone & Hernandez, 2013).

There are common links between the dimensions of developmental culture, outlined here, and work–life flexibility culture, outlined earlier, and are illustrated by recent meta-analytic research (Butts et al., 2013). Yet very little is understood about the effects of interaction between the flexibility and developmental cultural dimensions. One study (Bal et al., 2012) does show a significant interaction between the developmental and accommodative climate scales. However, the accommodative climate scale (Kooij, 2010) was constructed around older workers who were being encouraged to disengage from their work. There has been no consideration of the interaction effects of developmental and work–life flexibility culture that have an impact on relationships between employees’ responses to requests for CWAs and work–home interaction and work engagement.

Based on the argument that employees benefit most from developmental opportunities that minimise associated work–life conflicts (Geurts et al., 2005), organisation and manager support in a developmental culture needs to accommodate employees’ developmental CWA requests (Liao et al., 2014). Management approvals of developmental CWAs support employees’ career development without creating work–life conflict, and in this way enable work engagement. Moreover, approved developmental CWA requests assist employees with improved earning capacity, life quality, and commitment that is symptomatic of work engagement – all of which help facilitate work–life balance (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Ng & Feldman, 2007; Ng et al., 2006).

This thesis tests hypotheses (10 to 12) from Research Question 3, which, on the basis of perceived organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986), predict a supportive developmental culture will improve employee outcomes, in terms of

relationships between responses to CWA requests and work–home interaction and work engagement.

**H10:** A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for development CWAs and positive work–home interaction (PWHI), such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive developmental cultures.

**H11:** A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and negative work–home interaction (NWHI), such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive developmental cultures.

**H12:** A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for development CWAs and work engagement, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive developmental cultures.

In summary, the presence of an organisational cultural context that supports family-friendly practices, without sacrificing developmental opportunities for employees who practice flexible work, can create HR opportunities for OCB, organisational commitment, reduced turnover and greater organisational performance benefits (Andreassi & Thompson, 2008; Beaugard & Henry, 2009). Furthermore, an organisational cultural context that fosters work–family and developmental cultures can create positive relationships between managers' favourable responses to requests for CWAs with work–home interaction and work engagement. Significantly, manager–employee interactions that promote the use of CWAs as a form of reciprocal exchange (Molm, 2010) currency have a key influence on the positive employee outcomes.



## **2.5 SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY**

This thesis primarily used social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) as the theoretical framework to understand the process through which employees request terms of their (modifications to) work. The social justice and employee voice literature support the social exchange framework used to examine how adjustments to the timing, content, location, and developmental opportunities of work evolve in the context of interdependent employment relationships. Drawing on empirical research addressing FWAs, I-deals, and work customisations (which all utilise social exchanges to varying extents), the thesis seeks to elucidate, in the context of a financial services organisation, the precursors and outcomes of manager–employee exchanges and how orientations towards the employment relationship may alter through the interactions (Liao et al., 2014).

The notion of customised work explored in this study, all I-deals and many FWA studies, are underpinned by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Social exchange theory refers to the reciprocal trust in supervisor–subordinate relationships when negotiating terms of arrangements (Seppälä, Lipponen, Pirtila-Backman, & Lipsanen, 2011). Social exchange theory also proposes that employees gain economic and socioemotional resources through their relationships in the workplace (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005). Reciprocal exchange is a gradual process whereby as the quality of employees’ social exchange relationships becomes more positive, they will return that positive treatment as benefits to the organisation through, for example, increased commitment (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Social exchange theory holds that obligations are generated through a series of interactions between parties in a reciprocal exchange of interdependence (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005). This interdependence is in line with Robinson et al.’s (2004) description of work engagement as a two-way relationship between employer and

employee. As such, employees may repay obligations to the organisation through engagement. Reciprocal exchange and norm of reciprocity refers to how employees react to manager–employee exchanges and repay indebtedness. In this thesis, reciprocal exchange is understood to take place between managers and employees during CWA requests. Another type of social exchange is *negotiated exchange*, which is a common way to negotiate I-deals, according to the literature. Negotiated exchange refers to arrangements that are organised between managers and employees as an agreement of terms of I-deals, which do not necessarily generate a cycle of reciprocity between the parties (Molm, 2010). Therefore, it should be noted that there is a different understanding of the term negotiated exchange used in I-deals, and the verb *negotiate*, which refers to the process of organising work arrangements in social exchange interactions, such as for CWAs.

Negotiating CWAs through reciprocal exchanges is said to contribute to employees' motivation. Negotiating reciprocal exchanges for flexibility customised work, in the context of Indian IT professionals, has recently emerged as a way in which managers can motivate employees. A study by Vidyarthi and colleagues (2014) found that employees have the highest levels of motivation either when they receive highly tailored work arrangements or, conversely, when the work arrangements are only slightly tailored to suit them. It is suggested that work customisations are optimally effective at high and low levels of flexibility (Vidyarthi et al., 2014). At these levels, CWAs fulfills employees' socioemotional needs of affiliation through bonding with the organisation, and self-actualisation through career satisfaction (Vidyarthi et al., 2014). However, when manager–employee exchanges fail to negotiate terms of flexibility that accommodate employees' work and nonwork requirements, employees who would otherwise consider leaving the organisation may, in times of economic downturn, engage in

counterproductive work behaviours such as withdrawal, absenteeism, tardiness, lower productivity, and reduced OCB (Ariani, 2013; Coralia et al., 2012; Creed, Wamelink, & Hu, 2015).

Employees request CWAs in micro-level interactions directly through negotiated exchange (Molm, Peterson, & Takahashi, 1999), where parties negotiate terms. Negotiated exchange is usually enacted in addition to reciprocal exchange and can increase conflict and perceptions of inequality by disadvantaged parties where there is perceived procedural unfairness (Molm, Collett, & Schaefer, 2006). CWAs that are available to all employees support procedural justice in this regard.

Social exchanges are linked with perceptions of social justice. Social justice theories predict that employees perceive organisations as more favourable when employees are treated with fairness (Greenberg, 1990), for example during social exchanges. In cases where employees have been able to customise work through manager–employee exchanges, they have been able to optimise their work and nonwork responsibilities, a situation that has been associated with distributive justice (Cinamon & Rich, 2010; Hornung, Glaser, & Rousseau, 2010; Lawler, 2011). On the other hand, perceptions of injustice are found to inhibit constructive communications about worker flexibility and reduce take-up of flexibility and development opportunities (Ng & Feldman, 2015).

For employees, the social justice paradigm encompasses the grounds on which arguments are based against workplace inequities, and in respect to flexible work, the arrangements that have attempted to assist employees mesh their work and nonwork responsibilities (Correll, 2007; Van Acker, 1999). In a narrative review of the literature, Beauregard and Henry (2009) found that the availability and practice of flexible work and family-friendly policies generated more positive employee attitudes and feelings of

legitimacy toward organisations. However, asserted inequities also include prejudices against those who use substantive flexible work, in terms of provision of training and developmental opportunities (Liao et al., 2014). Such career consequences that shape future earnings potential and financial security (Skinner & Pocock, 2008; Van Acker, 1999; Williams, et al., 2013), generate social justice violations (Mauno, Kiuru, & Kinnunen, 2011), that impact employees' nonwork lives.

Perceptions of social justice are prerequisites to work engagement (Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014), and where I-deals are perceived negatively, and employees experience lower levels of engagement at work (Liao-Holbrook, 2012), that affects business-related outcomes. In line with social exchange theory, employees' positive relationships and feelings of obligation towards their managers may operate to foster OCB (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005). Conversely, where manager–employee relationships have not achieved optimal outcomes, alternative employee outcomes may apply, such as reduced work engagement and work–life conflict.

Managers can facilitate social justice for the workplace through manager–employee social exchanges. For example, using this medium, managers can reduce the felt stigma of worker flexibility that currently pervades the utilisation of flexible work (Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Stone & Hernandez, 2013; Vandello et al., 2013). However, poorly managed flexible and developmental work arrangements negatively affect employees' perceptions of equity and social justice in the workplace (Blake-Beard et al., 2010; Liao-Holbrook, 2012; Williams, 2012). Rousseau (2001a) found that poorly managed I-deals have negative impacts on employees' perceptions of social justice.

Employee voice is key to the quality of manager–employee social exchange relationships. The quality of social exchanges is important to provide employees with a voice and managers with an opportunity to show legitimate employee support, thereby

cultivating further organisational commitment and OCB, and reducing turnover intentions (Lam, Huang & Snape, 2007). Employee voice is conceptualised here as prosocial voice, characterised as expressing suggestions to the organisation, where there is a supportive environment (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998; Van Dyne, Soon & Botero, 2003; Lam, et al., 2007). Voice behavior is defined as a form of OCB that involves constructive change-oriented communication intended to improve the situation (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998, p. 326). Voice behaviour is related to negotiated and reciprocal exchange (Molm et al., 2006; Van Dyne, Soon, & Botero, 2003). Ng and Feldman (2015) found that increases in I-deals were positively related to positive job attitudes and behaviours, suggesting that employees do reciprocate the receipt of I-deals (Ng & Feldman, 2015). Employees were more flexible in their task-level work roles, increased internal social networking behaviour, and had greater organisational trust and organisation-level voice behaviour. Additionally, Ng and Feldman (2015) showed that, when controlling for initial (perceived distinctiveness and resources) levels of I-deals and changes in I-deals over time, these work roles can also positively affect employees' attitudes and behaviours.

The current study frames CWAs as currency, and like rewards in other contexts, responses to requests are negotiated as social exchanges. Approvals are largely contingent on perceived managerial support (Kou, 2012; Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan, & Wu, 2013) for CWAs. Perceived managerial support leads to outcomes of work engagement (Coralia et al., 2012; Kou, 2012) and PWHI (Dikkers et al., 2007; Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Kraimer et al., 2011; Millea, 2010; Swanberg et al., 2011). Among workplace culture dimensions (career consequences, time demands, organisational support, and coworker support), managerial support is key to influencing the supportiveness of the workplace culture towards flexibility or developmental CWAs

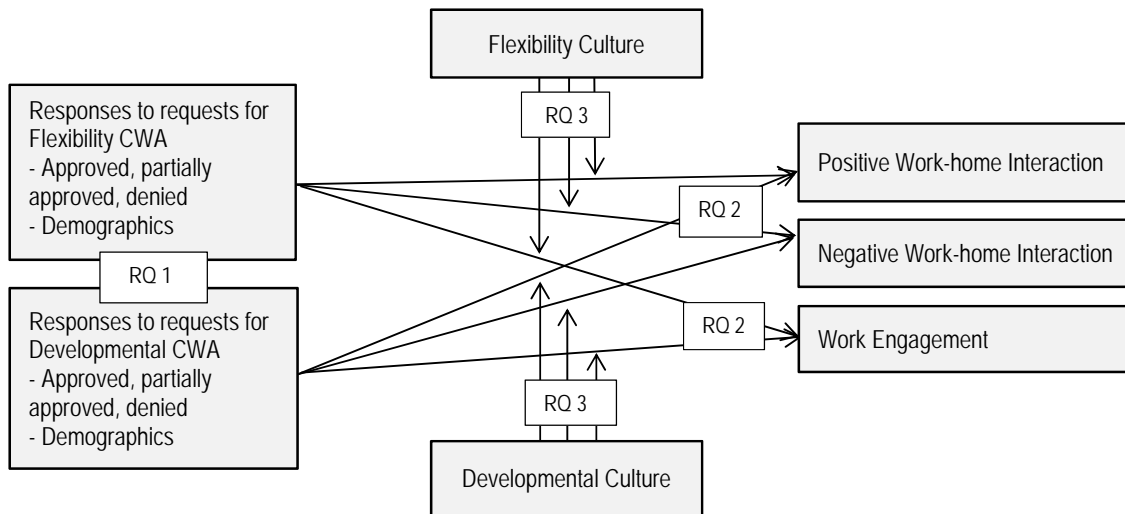
(Dijkers, Geurts, den Dulk, Peper, & Kompier, 2004; Dijkers et al., 2007; Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan, & Wu, 2013; Peeters et al., 2009; Thompson et al., 1999).

## **2.6 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research problem is that although manager support is considered critical for the uptake of flexible work, flexible work has been narrowly defined and operationalised, and the nature of the social exchange process which occurs during employee requests and manager responses, is not well understood. The study approaches this problem by conceptualising the uptake of flexible work arrangements as a social exchange process which is facilitated, or hindered, by the organisational cultural context and which affects both employees' work-home interaction and work engagement.

The overarching research question is: 'What types of customised work arrangements, and mechanisms for requests for these arrangements, optimise work-life balance for employees?'

The research model is illustrated in Figure 2.1, showing the statistical relationships relevant to each research question that will be tested. The research questions are detailed in Table 2.1 with corresponding hypotheses.



Research questions (RQ) 1 to 3 depicted in the research model. Arrows denote relations tested.

*Figure 2.1.* Research model reflecting research questions and variables examined.

Table 2.1.

*Summary of Research Questions With Corresponding Hypotheses*

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Primary research question: ‘*What types of customised work arrangements, and mechanisms for requests for these arrangements, optimise work–life balance for employees?*’

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1. *What types of customised work arrangements do employees request and what are supervisors’ responses to those requests?*

Descriptive analysis: What were types and frequencies of CWAs requested? What were the responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs?

2. *What are the individual and business-related impacts of different ‘responses to requests’ (approved, partially approved, denied)?*

**H1:** Employees *approved* requests for flexibility CWAs will be more likely to report *higher* levels of PWHI, than those whose requests were *partially approved*, and or *denied* completely.

**H2:** Employees *approved* requests for flexibility CWAs will be more likely to report *lower* levels of NWHI than those whose requests were *partially approved*, and or *denied* completely.

**H3:** Employees *approved* requests for developmental CWAs will be more likely to report *higher* levels of PWHI than those whose requests were *partially approved*, and or *denied* completely.

**H4:** Employees *approved* requests for developmental CWAs will be more likely to report *lower* levels of NWHI than those whose requests were *partially approved*, and or *denied* completely.

**H5:** Employees *approved* requests for flexibility CWAs will be more likely to report *higher* levels of engagement at work than those whose requests were *partially approved*, and or *denied* completely.

**H6:** Employees *approved* requests for developmental CWAs will be more likely to report *higher* levels of engagement at work than those whose requests were *partially approved*, and or *denied* completely.

3. *What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between ‘responses to requests’ for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?*

**H7:** A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and PWHI, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive flexibility cultures.

**H8:** A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI, such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive flexibility cultures.

**H9:** A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive flexibility cultures.

**H10:** A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for development CWAs and PWHI, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive developmental cultures.

**H11:** A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for development CWAs and NWHI, such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive developmental cultures.

**H12:** A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for development CWAs and work engagement, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive developmental cultures.

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*Notes.* CWAs = Customised work arrangements. PWHI = Positive work–home interaction. NWHI = Negative work–home interaction. H = Hypothesis.

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## 2.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a number of key themes that have emerged from the literature. First, there is a need to broaden the definition of, and attention to, FWAs. The literature to date has strongly emphasised formal, longer term forms of FWAs at the expense of occasional, short-term, and ad hoc modifications to work. Second, there is a need to consider more closely the important role that manager–employee interactions have on the uptake of flexible work, including how managers respond to specific requests and how these responses affect individual and business-related outcomes. Third, there is a need to study the influence of the workplace culture on management responses to CWA requests and employee experiences of work–home interactions and work engagement.

The first conclusion is that FWAs have been narrowly defined and that has led to very narrow research focusing (almost entirely) on formal work arrangements, such as part-time work and work from home. The focus on the narrow forms of flexible work in the work–life balance literature was reviewed and led to the rationale for using the term CWAs to include all types of flexible work that are requested by employees. Here, the term CWAs was used as a broader, more inclusive framework to encapsulate forms of flexibility including a broader range of both flexibility and developmental adjustments to work that may be short-term or unplanned and tailored to workers’ needs (Lawler, 2011; Lawler & Finegold, 2000). Because flexible work is commonly researched in terms of formalised arrangements, less is known in the extant literature about how the short-term and ad hoc adjustments to work affect business and individual outcomes (Lawler, 2011).

The second conclusion is that the reported standard terms of flexible work do not necessarily fulfil the requirement of helping employees integrate work and life. This is illustrated by the limited uptake of FWAs to alleviate work–life conflict, despite provisions in the Act (*Fair Work Act 2009*), and negative consequences for employees

who do utilise them (AHRI, 2012; Skinner & Pocock, 2011). CWAs are requested during manager–employee exchanges, where employees can communicate their work arrangement needs and negotiate modifications that are aligned with managers’ requirements. Manager–employee negotiations for CWAs assist employees and provide them with opportunities to navigate the pitfalls of ill-fitting work arrangements and shortfalls in policies, and affirm their perceptions of manager support for changes to standard work hours. Moreover, through manager–employee exchanges during negotiations for CWAs, managers can help employees strategically align themselves with the organisation. However, it is not known how manager–employee interactions and responses to requests for CWAs affects employees’ work–home interactions and work engagement.

The third conclusion is that the influence of workplace culture on responses to CWA requests and employee outcomes of work–home interactions and work engagement has yet to be examined. The workplace culture (in terms of both work–life flexibility and development) can help reduce NWHI and enhance PWHI through supportive practices. Organisational cultural support of flexibility practices, communicated and provided for by managers, also help employees integrate their work and nonwork lives, to the extent that they can achieve higher levels of engagement with their work.



# Chapter 3: Methodology

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## 3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the methodology used to answer the research questions and hypotheses outlined in the literature review. The analyses were organised around three primary themes: (a) the nature and frequency of requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs and management responses to those requests (i.e., approved, partly approved, denied); (b) the personal and business outcomes of responses to requests (i.e., PWHI, NWHI, work engagement); and (c) the moderating influence of flexibility and developmental culture on relationships between responses to requests and personal and business outcomes.

The chapter is organised into nine subsections detailing the methodology used in the research. Section 3.1 includes an introduction to the methodology and research design. Section 3.2 includes details of the industry and organisational context and participants. Section 3.3 outlines materials, and section 3.4 explains the survey measures. Section 3.5 outlines the research design and section 3.6 provides an overview of the procedure and timeline. Section 3.7 outlines the quantitative analyses, in three stages that follow the conceptual logic of the thesis (i.e., descriptive statistics, inferential analyses related to the impact of responses to requests for CWAs, and inferential analyses related to the moderating influence of workplace culture on relationships between responses to requests for CWAs and work–home interaction and work engagement). Section 3.8 provides an overview of the limitations of the study. Section 3.9 concludes the chapter.

## **3.2 PARTICIPANTS**

### **3.2.1 Industry context**

The organisation targeted for the research is part of the larger and highly regulated financial services and insurance industry sector in Australia (ABS, 2013), employing 400,100 people (46% male,  $n = 184,700$ ); 322,100 on a full-time basis (53% male,  $n = 171,100$ ) and 78,100 employees on a part-time basis (17% male,  $n = 13,600$ ). The industry is known for its high turnover, culture of long hours of work (Furtmueller, Dick, & Wilderom, 2011a, 2011b), and wage disparity, where men's wages are 32% higher than women's (ABS, 2013).

Although the ABS classifies FinanceCo within the financial services sector, FinanceCo's core business is insurance. Within this sector, excellent customer relationship management is essential because employees' networks and customer relationships are the greatest source of competitive advantage for organisations in the industry, and the greatest threat is from deregulation and small enterprises (Chia, 2013).

The key to value creation in Australia's financial sector is intellectual capital created by employees, who are fundamental to competitive advantage (Joshi, Cahill, Sidhu, & Kansal, 2013). Thus, employers must balance employee needs and ensure their sustained efforts for organisational success (Burgess, Henderson, & Strachan, 2007; Burke & Cooper, 2007; Rothbard, 2001). For example, the managing director of Boston Consulting Group (Strack et al., 2014) called out the financial services industry as being in crucial need of re-engaging their frontline employees, citing trust issues, and commitment of senior leadership. The report highlighted relative levels of urgency rankings among 15 human resource (HR) subtopics, taken from a global survey of around 3,500 respondents of HR and non-HR executives at leading companies. Insurance organisations required the most urgent attention in relation to (in descending order): talent

management, employer branding and leadership, however financial institutions ranked leadership, talent management, and employee engagement as most urgent. Behaviour and culture were also rated urgent at fifth and sixth, respectively (Strack et al., 2014). Thus, the sample organisation operates in an industry sector that is challenged by talent management and leadership. Managers' responses to requests for flexibility are an integral component of talent management and leadership.

### **3.2.2 Organisational context**

Participants comprised employees from four different business divisions within a single large Australian financial services and insurance organisation, referred to throughout this thesis as FinanceCo.

FinanceCo is a large, publicly listed organisation which comprises a number of core businesses supported by corporate and shared service divisions. FinanceCo has numerous retail sites and employs more than 10,000 Australians (Chia, 2013).

The organisation is overtly supportive of workplace flexibility, as demonstrated by its reference to flexible work offerings on its website as a way of attracting talent. The organisation also has flexible work policy documents that facilitate a range of flexible work options. Moreover, FinanceCo projects an image of facilitating work–life balance for its employees. For example, it promotes itself as an organisation fostering an 'agile', 'performance', and 'supportive' cultural combination, and emphasises that it is not hierarchical.

HR records provided by FinanceCo suggest the organisation practises a wide range of FWAs and cultivates knowledge workers within the industry (Chia, 2013). Hence, the organisation is an ideal one in which to explore the nature of, and the extent to which, flexibility is requested, how managers respond to requests, and the individual and

business outcomes (PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement) of responses to requests for CWAs.

### 3.2.3 The sample

A response rate of 63% ( $n = 797$ ) across four organisational divisions (Division A,  $n = 318$ ; Division B,  $n = 95$ ; Division C,  $n = 224$ ; Division D,  $n = 160$ ) was elicited from a targeted sample of 1,272 employees. The four business divisions were sourced from within the same business area at FinanceCo and shared the same HR arrangements and policies. Employees from the divisions performed similar types of work and worked similar hours. The demographic descriptions for the four divisions are shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. The sample was examined as a whole by combining the four divisions into one. The employees and managers from each of the divisions are expected to be comparable in terms of their requests for CWAs, responses to requests and their relationships with work–home interactions and work engagement, and the influence of the work environment.

Respondents worked primarily full time ( $n = 1129$ ) and a small proportion worked part time ( $n = 108$ ). Despite reassurances that responses to the e-survey were anonymous, around 11% of respondents ( $n = 88$ ) declined to indicate demographic characteristics. Of those completing all demographic questions, 44% were males, and 56% were females. Sixty-eight percent of employees were aged between 30 and 50 years ( $M = 39.96$ ,  $SD = 10.51$ ) and leadership responsibilities were borne by 23.9%. Most employees were employed full time (87.8%,  $n = 612$ ), 9% ( $n = 63$ ) were permanent part-time, with the remaining 3.1% ( $n = 22$ ) employed casual full-time, consultant or contractor or other. The average length of employment was 8.21 years ( $SD = 7.59$ ). Respondents worked an average of 40.1 ( $SD = 8.36$ ) hours weekly. The majority of respondents had two dependent children in care ( $n = 658$ ) and provided care (e.g., to an elder or person with a

disability, excluding their own children) to two others ( $M = 1.58$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). Household types included couples with children 43.5% ( $n = 299$ ), couples without children 30.6% ( $n = 210$ ), singles without children 19.7% ( $n = 135$ ), and singles with children 5.5% ( $n = 38$ ).

### **3.3 MATERIALS**

An online survey was developed that comprised questions measuring customised work arrangements, work–life flexibility culture, developmental culture, NWHI, PWHI, work engagement, and demographics. Screenshots of the e-survey are provided in Appendix A.

### **3.4 MEASURES**

#### **3.4.1 Demographics**

The survey measured a number of demographic characteristics including gender, job title, leadership responsibilities, tenure, employment status, hours worked, union membership, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) status, education level, age, household status, number of children, age of youngest child, and number of other dependents (see Appendix A for screenshots of e-survey). These measures were included because they are theoretically relevant to the exploration of the frequency of, nature of, and responses to requests for customisations.

#### **3.4.2 Customised work arrangements**

Customised work arrangements (CWAs) were measured using a 28-item scale comprising five CWA types: adjustments to work hours, time off, adjustments to work tasks, offsite work, and developmental opportunities (see Appendix A) The five types of CWAs are drawn from the work–life and flexible work literature, reviewed in Chapter 2 (see sections 2.2 and 2.3). Adjustments to work hours CWAs included 10 items: change from full-time to part-time hours, change from part-time to full-time hours, change to



start and finish times, compressed work week, working term time (i.e., not working during school holidays), changes to the amount of flexibility in working times, decrease in work hours, working paid overtime, how you are notified of your work hours, and other changes to working times. Time-off CWAs included seven items: timing of annual leave or holidays, sick leave, carer's leave (for sick children or family), timing of parental leave (maternity or paternity), flexible leave days, volunteer leave, and other leave (e.g., study leave, compassionate leave). Adjustments to work tasks CWAs included three items: reduction or increase in workload, altered duties (e.g., a change in roles, tasks or responsibilities), and another issue. Working off site CWAs included: working from home, taking work home after hours, and another offsite arrangement. Developmental opportunities CWAs included four items: promotion to a more senior position, career development, training or skills development, and more challenging work. The last question item for each CWA-type grouping included an open-ended response field asking if a different form of CWA type was requested. The final list of customisations assessed changes to work arrangements around five themes: work hours, time off, development opportunities, changes to work duties, and working off site.

The survey used for this thesis was developed iteratively from a range of FWAs identified in the literature, then from discussions and consultations with the sample organisation, FinanceCo, followed by a pilot study.

McDonald and Townsend (2012) conducted the pilot study by distributing surveys to either (but not both) parent of children who attended community-based early childhood education centres across Australia. The survey asked a series of questions about manager-employee exchanges at work in the previous 12 months. These were defined as situations where the respondent informally or formally discussed an issue, signed a contract, in relation to their pay, working hours, or job conditions with their manager, supervisor or

employer. Eligibility for the survey required respondents to be employed for a minimum of 10 hours per week and to be responsible for at least one dependent child.

The overall response rate was 15% or 432 parents of children attending the nominated early childhood education centres. A sample of 354 women and 78 men from metropolitan (70%) and regional areas (30%) were asked about their flexible work arrangements. The sample identified men as working approximately twice the number of hours as women, with almost all households comprising two parents. A little over half of respondents were employed as professionals/ managers. The sample was asked about manager-employee exchanges in terms of an issue, or signed contract, in relation to their pay, working hours or job conditions with their manager or supervisor during the previous 12 months. Key results were that over three quarters of individuals customised work arrangements in their workplaces, averaging 5.2 changes in the previous year.

In terms of working hours, changes most often requested were to ‘hours of work’ which included changes to; ‘required days’, ‘start/finish times’, ‘flexibility in working times’, ‘full-time to part-time’ or vice versa, ‘overtime’ and ‘notification of working hours’. Employees also requested changes to different forms of ‘time off’ (72%) and ‘job tasks’ (72%). The findings suggest employees from a range of organisations and locations request many forms of customised work arrangements to balance work and life. The knowledge gained from the pilot study highlighted high approval rates for parents’ requests for CWAs, but identified that mothers and fathers tended to make requests for different types of customisations as well as the forms of CWAs requested.

The questions used in the pilot survey were adapted, for example, by adding in additional categories of CWAs where they had been noted in the ‘other’ category, and also refining the survey for FinanceCo specifically by including CWA options that were idiosyncratic to the company.

This thesis incorporates a broader view of flexibility at work, conceptualised as CWAs, and includes formal as well as informal, ad hoc types of work customisations in recognition of the fact that the distinction is often blurred. The question items were informed by the Australia Work And Life Index (AWALI) (Pocock et al., 2010; Skinner & Pocock, 2008, 2010), in addition to typical provisions described in literature addressing flexible work arrangements, and other forms of flexibility and developmental requests, developed from those identified in previous studies in the field (Almer & Kaplan, 2002; Bradley et al., 2010; McDonald & Townsend, 2012; McNall et al., 2010). In addition, organisation-specific flexibility categories were identified through communication with HR contacts in FinanceCo.

The inclusion of developmental opportunities CWAs – in addition to the accommodative, flexibility CWA types – is important in order to understand how workers request different types of flexibility in manager–employee social exchanges to help balance work and life. However, developmental opportunities CWAs are theoretically distinct (see section 2.3) from flexibility CWAs. Whereas developmental opportunities are requested to assist with career progression, flexibility CWAs are requested to accommodate nonwork responsibilities. Flexibility CWAs have more regulatory support, such as right-to-request provisions in the *Fair Work Act 2009*, and other provisions in the National Employment Standards (*Fair Work Act 2009*), such as parental leave and carer’s leave. However, flexibility and developmental CWAs are also inextricably linked. For example, work–life conflict can occur where developmental opportunities are used (e.g., Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2013), such as when additional commitments lead to work intensification and, conversely, the substantive use of accommodative flexibility can obstruct opportunities for professional development (e.g., Thompson et al., 1999). Furthermore, the developmental CWA types included in the survey did not apply

uniformly to all individuals in the organisation. Rather, subordinates had to make a request for a CWA to a line manager and such requests could be approved, partly approved or declined. Hence, both flexibility and developmental CWAs were customised or tailored to individuals, within the broader context of the workplace. The key to modifying work arrangements, without work–life conflicts, is through manager–employee exchanges. Given that flexibility and developmental CWAs have mutually supporting roles in workers’ attempts to facilitate obligations and goals related to work (including career progression) and life, workers have to negotiate their options with managers based on the tensions between work and home. In other words, flexibility and developmental CWAs are in tension in some circumstances. Examining both flexibility and developmental CWAs allows for a more complete picture of how employees attempt to optimise work and life outcomes.

Four different developmental CWAs were included in the survey. An additional 19 different flexibility CWAs were also included and these were clustered around four different types according to adjustments to work hours, time off, working off site, and adjustments to work tasks. The survey ordered the items for CWA types as: adjustments to work hours, time off, developmental opportunities, adjustments to tasks, and offsite work (see Appendix A). At the end of each group of question items about particular CWA types (set out in earlier paragraphs and Appendix A), an item asked whether employees had requested another CWA of that type, which had not been asked by the items.

The survey items asked whether, in the previous 12 months, respondents had initiated requests with their manager or supervisor on each of these items. The e-survey items prompted a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. A yes response prompted a drop-down box with further options: ‘fully granted’, ‘partly granted’, and ‘declined’. After indicating one of those three responses, or alternatively by indicating no, the respondent was progressed to

the next question item. This thesis examined employees' choices for CWA requests which align with their needs and are not chosen by their managers. Open-ended responses were dealt with by coding into existing categories or by creating a new category. New categories extended the original list of work customisations from 23 to 36. Where respondents indicated yes to CWA question items, the e-survey asked whether requests were fully granted, partly granted or declined.

The 36 work customisations were categorised under the two flexibility and developmental CWA types. Responses to requests were aggregated across the two major categories. All responses to requests for flexibility CWAs were aggregated, and then all responses to requests for developmental CWAs were aggregated. Responses to requests (fully granted, partly granted, declined) were prepared for further analysis by an aggregate measure of responses to CWAs for all 31 flexibility CWA types. To be classified as 'approved', responses to requests for flexibility CWAs were always 'fully granted'. To be classified as 'partially approved', responses to requests for flexibility CWAs were partly granted at least once, but never declined. To be classified as 'declined', responses to requests for flexibility CWAs were declined at least once. The same process of response classification (approved, partially approved, and declined) was applied to create an aggregate response measure for all five developmental CWA types.

### **3.4.3 Work-home interaction**

Work-home interaction was measured using two of the four subscale, 22-item SWING Work Home Interaction questionnaire (Geurts, et al., 2005), where questions were anchored with 0 (*never*) and 3 (*always*).

The SWING measures negative and positive dimensions of work-home and home-work interactions. NWHI (six items) and PWHI (four items) subscales were utilised to measure the work-to-home directional spillover that was relevant to the impact of CWAs

in this study. NWHI dimensions measured ‘strain’ (3x items) and ‘time’ (3x items), with an internal consistency of .84. PWHI dimensions included ‘skill transfer from work’ (3x items), and ‘mood spillover’ (1x item), with internal consistency of .75. The one-item dimension of mood spillover was also used as a single item in the original measure (Geurts et al., 2005). A sample item for NWHI was: ‘You are irritable at home because your work is demanding’. A sample item for PWHI was: ‘You are better able to keep appointments at home because your job requires you to do this as well’. The original measure included a financial consultancy firm among its validation samples.

#### **3.4.4 Work engagement**

Work engagement was measured using the nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9) (Shortened version) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), which included white-collar workers, in the development of the questionnaire. Responses were assessed on a six-point Likert-type scale 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*), with internal consistency of .91. A sample item was: ‘At my work I feel bursting with energy’. The scale has been validated in two Australian work samples, including employees from insurance organisations (Salanova et al., 2006), with Cronbach alpha levels above .80.

#### **3.4.5 Organisational work–life (flexibility) culture**

Organisational work–life (flexibility) culture was measured using a 22-item work–life culture questionnaire using original and validated items (Bradley, McDonald & Brown, 2010). The questionnaire was developed from Thompson et al.’s (1999) (American) 20-item Work-Family Culture Scale, and used both (their) validated and adapted items. Adapted items were based on research from Australian workplaces and were validated in two pilot studies, published as conference proceedings. Items are anchored with 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 7 (*strongly agree*). A sample item was: ‘In this organisation employees can easily balance their work and family lives’. The 22-item scale

includes five dimensions of organisational support: organisational support, managerial support, time expectations, career consequences, and coworker support, with reliabilities of .85, .92, .88, .74 and .72, respectively. The original validation measure used sample figures from two pilot studies of parents with children in childcare (Study 1) and teachers (Study 2). As a result, the authors recommended organisational support and managerial support be combined as one dimension, 'organisational and managerial support' for clarity between dimensions and to avoid possible collinearity (Bradley, McDonald & Brown, 2010). This thesis used the combined dimension, organisational and managerial support, following recommendations.

#### **3.4.6 Developmental culture**

Developmental culture was measured using a six-item scale used by Bal and colleagues (2012), based on previous research on this subject (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Dikkers et al., 2004; Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003; Tracey & Tews, 2005). The responses were anchored on a five-point scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A sample item was: 'In this unit, workers are developed and encouraged to learn new things'. According to Bal and colleagues (2012), the developmental climate items have good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of .72.

### **3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The cross-sectional research used nonexperimental descriptive, between-groups, and moderation designs. The research was based on data collected via an online survey comprising a number of established and validated scales. The three research subquestions and corresponding three stages of analysis used a series of descriptive, between-groups, and moderation designs, respectively.

### **3.6 PROCEDURE**

A series of meetings between FinanceCo human resource (HR) representatives, and Queensland University of Technology and Griffith University staff were held to negotiate access to FinanceCo's employees. Ethical approval for the research was sought through the QUT Research Ethics Committee and was approved in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Approval No. 0800000251). Participants were provided with a participant information sheet and were advised that by submitting the survey they were consenting to participate in the research. Participants were recruited by email invitation from the HR manager, through their respective divisional managers (executive general managers [EGMs]). The emails forwarded to the employees contained a survey-link identifying their division. Regular (at least weekly) communications between the author researcher and the HR manager at FinanceCo ensured that a secure and seamless transfer of information was maintained throughout. Participants voluntarily completed e-surveys (using Key Survey software) (see Appendix A).

E-surveys were collated over a period of three months. The HR manager introduced the 'important' survey to the four divisional managers at a meeting before emailing each of them their survey invitation with a unique survey-link identifying each division. The survey's significant alignment with organisational goals and objectives was highlighted to divisional managers as a way to inform teams how the organisation was 'balancing employee flexibility and business efficiency'. The survey-link was distributed by divisional managers to divisional staff by email, together with an introduction and invitation, which explicitly stated that the completed online survey was secure, confidential, and de-identified. Additionally, the email informed staff that their responses would be accessible only by the researcher from a secure central database, and that the



results of the survey would be reported only in aggregate form. During the survey completion period, the divisional managers were emailed two reminders, to be forwarded to their staff. Electronic survey data returned using Key Survey was monitored, processed, and securely stored. Data collected through Key Survey was transferred to a SPSS v21 platform for further analysis.

### **3.7 ANALYSIS**

This subsection is structured around the three stages of analysis, aligning with the conceptual logic of the thesis. The first stage of analysis was descriptive, answering the first research question, which addressed the frequency and types of CWAs requested and management responses to these requests. The second stage of analysis was inferential, answering the second research question, which addressed the impact of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs and PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement. The third stage of analysis was also inferential, answering the third research question. Specifically, a series of hierarchical regressions with moderations examined the influence of workplace cultural context on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs and PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement.

#### **3.7.1 Stage 1: Descriptive analyses – Exploring types of customised work requests and responses to requests**

##### ***Preliminary analysis***

Preliminary data cleaning, screening, and analysis was conducted using SPSS (version 21) software. Missing data was dealt with by using pairwise analysis. Frequencies of scale and subscale constructs measures were checked for reliability that they fell into the 75% response rate cut-off for inclusion in analyses. Calculations of means for all subscales allowed for one missing item per respondent.

### ***Descriptive analysis***

The first set of analyses comprised frequencies and descriptive statistics that examined the nature and frequency of requests for CWAs and management responses to requests for CWAs.

Frequencies included the number of customisation requests made by employees in the previous year and whether they were approved, partially approved, or denied. Responses to requests for CWAs were divided into two main categories. The first category was flexibility CWAs and included adjustments to work hours, time off, adjustments to work tasks, and offsite work. The second category was developmental CWAs and included developmental opportunities. Responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs were aggregated and examined separately. Criteria for categorising responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs were defined by aggregating responses to requests for either flexibility or developmental CWAs into three levels. Recall that aggregate response measures by CWA type comprised circumstances where: (a) all requests were always fully granted, (b) requests were partly granted at least once but not declined, and (c) requests were declined at least once. Differences in the number of requests and responses to requests were tested across demographic groups (including gender, job title, leadership responsibilities, tenure, employment status, hours worked, union membership, ATSI status, education level, age, household status, number of children, age of youngest child, number of other dependents).

### ***Internal reliability***

As part of the preliminary data analysis, raw data was subjected to Cronbach's alpha tests for internal reliability. Tests were performed on screened and cleaned data, prior to multiple imputation. Reliabilities were calculated using means of data containing

a maximum of one missing item per scale or subscale item. All scale and/or subscale measures used in the analyses – PWHI, NWHI, work engagement (vigour, absorption, dedication), work–life (flexibility) culture (organisational and managerial support, career consequences, time demands, coworker support), and developmental culture – were subjected to tests of internal validity as shown in Appendix B.

### **3.7.2 Stage 2: Inferential analyses – Impact of responses to requests CWA on individual and business-related outcomes**

#### ***Treatment of missing data***

Prior to inferential analysis, missing data was identified, analysed, and substituted by multiple imputation. Missing data can be expected from real world research designs (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010). Raw data indicated a number of missing fields (11% of demographic data), which were tested for missing-values patterns using missing values analysis and revealed to be inconsequential to analyses, and were multiply imputed. The precise sequence and explanations of calculations for missing values analysis and multiple imputations are explained and results are presented in Chapter 4, section 4.5 and Appendices C, D, E and F. A missing values analysis and subsequent multiple imputation was the favoured form for missing data treatment, as opposed to the alternative, which was data deletion (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). It is important to note that multiple imputation substitutes values for continuous variables (e.g., age), but does not impute data for categorical variables (e.g., gender). Imputed values on continuous variables were scaled up or down to the nearest whole number.

To test the impact of substituted, imputed values on results for focal analyses, sensitivity analyses were also performed. The study used a sensitivity analysis to compare results of analyses before and after the multiple imputation treatment of the dataset. In the current context, sensitivity analyses used standard linear hierarchical multiple regression

analysis on data before and after the multiple imputation data treatment (Hair et al., 2014). The study compared results of focal analyses used in the research, for the raw and multiply imputed datasets. Results were interpreted in terms of their similarity (Hair et al., 2014) (see Appendix F). The comparative analyses highlighted any influence that multiple imputation may have had on analyses key to the research, as compared with analysing just the raw data.

For the purpose of comparing focal analyses before and after the multiple imputation treatment of the dataset, each form of work customisation (independent variable) was ‘clustered’ into five subgroups (adjustments to work hours, time off, offsite work, adjustments to work tasks, and developmental opportunities) to avoid multicollinearity. The five subgroups were then subjected to focal analysis of variables (dependent variables: PWHI, NWHI, work engagement), (moderators: work–life [flexibility] culture [subscales moderators: organisational and managerial support, time demands, career consequences, coworker support], developmental culture) using the preimputed dataset. Focal analyses were then repeated using the multiply imputed dataset using standard linear hierarchical multiple regressions to analyse relationships (see Appendix F).

#### ***Validity of work–life (flexibility) culture scale***

Data preparation for inferential analysis included the following tests of validity. The validity of the work–life (flexibility) culture scale measure (Bradley et al., 2010) was tested through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) utilising the maximum-likelihood (ML) estimation method, followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In order to test that the factor structure is consistent with what is expected, variables for work–life (flexibility) culture subscales were also factor analysed (see Appendix G). EFA followed preliminary tests for sample size adequacy (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin [KMO]) and normality

(Bartlett's sphericity), to assess suitability of data to a factor analysis. Further CFA tested whether the factor structure was consistent with what is expected, in terms of previous research findings and pilot studies (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) (see Appendix H).

### *ANOVAs*

The second set of analyses used a series of one-way ANOVAs with post hoc contrasts to examine differences between independent variables: flexibility CWAs responses to requests and developmental CWAs responses to requests (each with three levels: approved, partially approved and denied) and outcome variables (dependent variables): PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement.

Prior to analysis, assumptions of normality, independence, and Levene's homogeneity of variance were investigated and corrected by excluding outliers where necessary and by referring to test statistics where appropriate. Between-groups analysis tested differences between responses to CWA requests (approved, partially approved, denied) and outcome variables, for flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs. Post hoc power analysis was calculated using G\*Power web calculator (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996). Alpha levels of .05, .01 and .001 were used for one-way ANOVAs with post hoc contrasts (and hierarchical regression and moderation analyses used in inferential analyses, see section 3.6.5). Scheffe's test was applied to post hoc analyses to protect against Type 1 errors assuming unequal groups variance. Scheffe's test is known as the most cautious method for reducing the risk of Type 1 error (Pallant, 2007). However, the use of Scheffe's test reduces power and thus the likelihood of detecting a difference between groups.

The two CWAs types, flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs, were analysed separately in replicated series of one-way ANOVAs with post hoc contrasts. The two types of CWAs were formed by merging the five broader themes into two types:

flexibility CWAs (from hours of work, time off, tasks, and location) and developmental CWAs (from development opportunities). The four types of flexibility CWAs were merged together for reasons explained in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3) and earlier in this chapter (see section 3.4.2). Responses to requests for CWAs (independent variable) had three levels (approved, partially approved, denied). There were three individual and business-related outcomes (dependent variables): PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement. Employees who did not make requests (less than 2%,  $n = 14$ ), were excluded from analyses on theoretical grounds (Royston & Sauerbrei, 2008).

### **3.7.3 Stage 3: Inferential analyses – Moderating influence of workplace cultures on relationships between responses to requests for CWA with individual and business-related outcomes**

#### *Hierarchical regression with moderation analyses*

The third set of analyses tested the influence of flexibility culture and developmental culture on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs and PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement. Data preparation for the third stage of inferential analysis included assessing and, where appropriate, removing outliers in the data, in order to meet the assumptions of regression. Prior to standard linear hierarchical regression and moderation analyses, assumptions of linearity, normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance of variables were investigated and corrected by excluding outliers where necessary and by referring to test statistics where appropriate. For hierarchical regressions used in moderations, CWAs responses to requests were treated as a continuous scale (approved = 1, partially approved = 2, declined = 3).

A requirement of moderation is that IVs and DVs are continuous; however, in the current analyses, the IV is ordinal. Nevertheless, the IV will be treated as continuous

because, although ordinal, the underlying variable this scale seeks to measure is continuous (i.e., responses to requests can theoretically and realistically fall anywhere on the spectrum between being fully granted and declined). Although not without its detractors, the use of ordinal scales as proxies for underlying continuous variables is common in the social sciences (Royston & Sauerbrei, 2008). Nevertheless, to account for the somewhat contentious nature of using ordinal variables as proxies for continuous variables, a number of robustness tests were carried out.

#### *Robustness tests for moderated regressions*

In recognition of criticism directed at treating ordinal scales as continuous scales in regressions, this thesis has taken the additional step of testing robustness for a sample of the moderated regressions examined. Moderated regressions that were shown to be significant in analyses using the IV ‘responses to requests’ as a continuous variable were rerun using two dummy coded variables (see Appendix J for robustness tests).

#### *Assumptions, use of control variables and sequence of moderated regressions*

Prior to analysis, assumptions for moderated regression of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals were met, with outliers excluded where appropriate. To avoid multicollinearity in moderations, the interaction terms were created by mean centring the independent and dependent variables.

Control variables were used to rule out potential alternative explanations for the results (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010). For each hierarchical regression used in moderation analyses, both parent status and gender were used as control variables at Step 1. In order to address Research Question 3: ‘What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between “responses to requests” for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?’, a series of 36 moderation analyses were conducted. All moderation analyses were replicated using

gender and parent status as control variables in Step 1 of hierarchical regressions in order to control for their influence.

Family wise error rates for Type 1 errors were minimised by using an appropriate significance level, by ensuring statistical assumptions were met for each analysis, and by checking that a series of test statistics fell within tolerance levels. To protect against Type 1 errors, a significance level of .05 was used (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010). Additionally, for each regression analysis both univariate and multivariate outliers were identified and, where problematic, were excluded. Each moderated regression was subjected to model fitting to ensure assumptions were met for linearity, homoscedasticity, normality, and independence of residuals, which best reflected a normal distribution (Field, 2009). All moderated regressions were calculated on SPSS using studentised residuals. Nonnormality was checked by referring to scatterplots, boxplots, skewness, and kurtosis. Tolerance levels were also checked for collinearity statistics (tolerance and VIF), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Durbin-Watson test statistics (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). To further control for Type 1 errors, multivariate outliers were checked on SPSS by referring to Cook's *D*, Mahalanobis distance, and leverage values. Problematic outliers were excluded from analysis. The measures of protection taken against the occurrence of Type I errors also had to be balanced against the probability of a Type II error, since by over-ensuring that Type I errors are avoided, the probability of Type II errors occurring is increased (Field, 2009). The first sequence of analyses examined the moderating influence of flexibility culture (using four subscales as moderators: organisational and managerial support, career consequences, time demands, coworker support, coworker support – revised) on the relationship between (independent variable) responses to flexibility CWA requests (approved, partially approved, denied) with the dependent

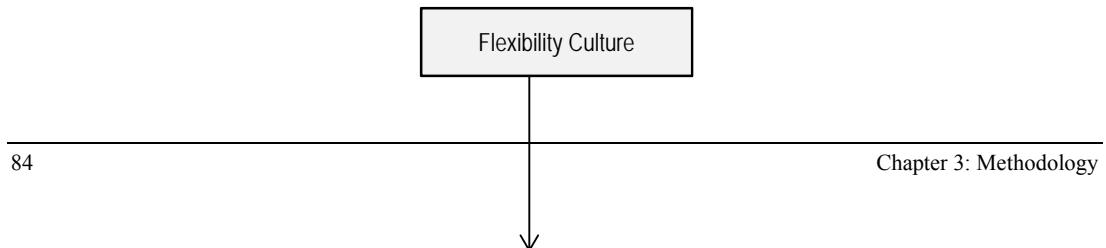


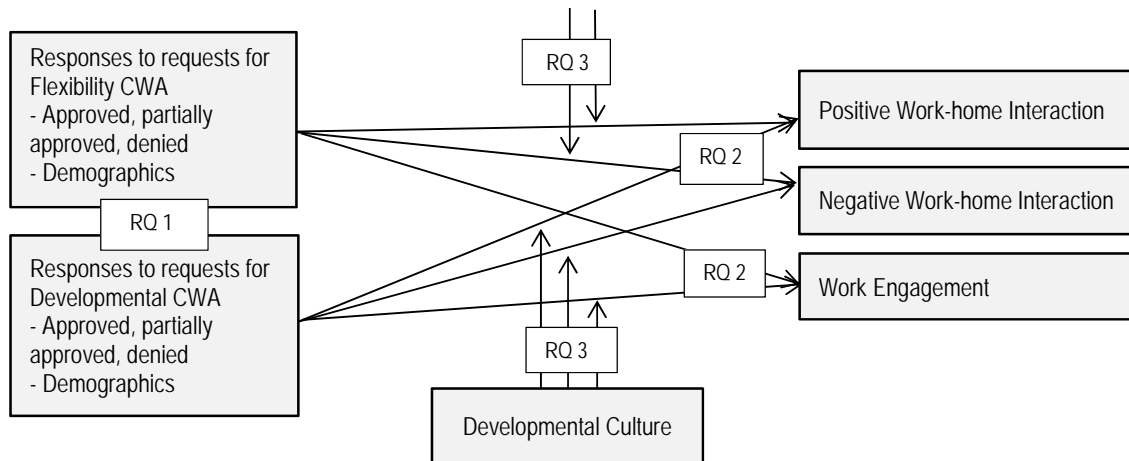
variables: PWHI and NWHI. The dependent variables were examined in separate analyses.

The second sequence of analyses examined the moderating influence of flexibility culture (using four subscales as moderators: organisational and managerial support, career consequences, time demands, coworker support, coworker support – revised) on the relationship between (independent variable) responses to flexibility CWA requests (approved, partially approved, denied) and the dependent variable: work engagement.

The third sequence of analyses examined the moderating influence of developmental culture on the relationship between (independent variable) responses to developmental CWA requests (approved, partially approved, denied) and the dependent variables: PWHI and NWHI. The dependent variables were examined in separate analyses.

The fourth and final sequence of analyses examined the moderating influence of developmental culture on the relationship between (independent variable) responses to developmental CWA requests (approved, partially approved, denied) and dependent variable, work engagement. Figure 3.1 illustrates the research model used for these combined analyses.





Research questions (RQ) 1 to 3 depicted in the research model. Arrows denote relations tested.

Figure 3.1. Research model reflecting research questions and variables examined.

### 3.8 METHODOLOGY LIMITATIONS

The study has several limitations. Limitations are associated with common method variance of cross-sectional data and self-report bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), which cannot show causality, although self-report is key to examining employee perspectives of how responses to requests affected their work and nonwork lives.

The study does not examine employee perceptions of work-home interaction, work engagement, flexibility culture, and developmental culture for those who did not request flexibility or developmental CWAs. As such, the study cannot account for mechanisms that deter employees from voicing such requests (Budd, 2004).

The research utilised a convenience sample of one organisation across four business divisions and hence, generalisability is restricted to large, white-collar organisations similar to those in publicly listed financial services sectors. Additionally, generalisability is restricted to organisation-level policies addressing flexibility and

developmental organisational concerns, but not other human resource management (HRM) issues such as recruitment, performance, or remuneration.

### **3.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The chapter outlined the research methodology in terms of research design and stages of analysis. Participants for the study were described following a summary of the industry and organisational context of FinanceCo. Measures used for constructs of interest were identified and explained in terms of dimensions and validity, and were located within the three stages of analysis. The research procedure and timeline were also addressed.

The sequence and scope of a range of data treatment and statistical analysis were framed in three stages. Stage 1 included descriptive analyses of types of, frequencies of, and management responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs. Stage 2 comprised inferential analyses examining the impact of responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs on personal/individual and business-related outcomes. Stage 3 comprised inferential analyses of contextual influences of workplace culture on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs and personal/individual and business-related outcomes. Appendix A provides screen shots of the customised work e-survey, which complements explanation of the research methodology and measures used. Additionally, Appendix B displays alpha reliabilities for the sample measures.

# Chapter 4: Results

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## 4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter is set out in five main sections that present the three main stages of analysis. The first section (4.2) sets out preliminary and descriptive analyses related to requests for customised work arrangements (CWAs) and responses to those requests. The section includes a summary of how the raw data was initially cleaned and screened. Reliability and validity testing (see section 4.2.3) of measures were also undertaken in the first stage of analysis. In section 4.2 all scale measures were subjected to tests of reliability.

The second stage of analysis tested Hypotheses 1 to 6. The volume of missing data warranted investigation, which is detailed in section 4.3.1. Missing data were estimated using multiple imputation, and sensitivity analyses informed the impact on subsequent analyses (see appendices associated with section 4.3.1). The work–life (flexibility) culture scale, an adapted and extended measure designed for Australian workplaces, was evaluated for reliability and validity (see section 4.3.2) using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Although results aligned with previous findings, use of control variables in core analyses sought to further validate construct validity of the scale, isolate related constructs, and further confirm its utility (see appendices associated with section 4.3.2). Key analyses undertaken in section 4.3.3 examined differences between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and individual and business-related outcomes, between groups and within groups. Next, differences between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and individual and business-related outcomes were examined, between groups and within groups.

Section 4.4, the third stage of analysis, tested Hypotheses 7 to 12. Initially, analyses tested the influence of work–life (flexibility) culture on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and outcomes for individuals and businesses. Next, sections (see sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4) present analyses examining the influences of developmental culture on relationships between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and outcomes for individuals and businesses. Section 4.4.5 details robustness checks.

## **4.2 PHASE 1 – DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES – EXPLORING TYPES OF CUSTOMISED WORK REQUESTS AND RESPONSES TO REQUESTS**

Research Subquestion 1: *‘What types of customised work arrangements do employees request and how do supervisors respond to those requests?’*

Results for the first stage of analysis answer Research subquestion 1. Preliminary analyses, descriptive analyses and reliability of scale measures are detailed.

### **4.2.1 Preliminary analysis**

All data analyses, including missing values analysis, were conducted using SPSS (version 21) statistical software. Missing data were estimated using multiple imputations and subjected to further sensitivity analysis, as detailed in section 4.3. The imputed dataset was used for the second and third stages of analysis. Data included in text fields were inspected for appropriateness and adjusted accordingly. Cohen’s (1988) subjective standards convention was used for all effect sizes, and was calculated using *t* values, as recommended when sample sizes are unequal (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996). Post hoc power analysis was calculated using G\*Power web calculator (Erdfelder et al., 1996). Significance levels of .05, .01 and .001 were used in analyses.

### *Response rates*

The sample comprised a total of 797 survey respondents across the four targeted commercial insurance divisions, within a large financial services organisation. The survey returned an impressive response rate of 63%, which is more than twice the reported average response rate for similar surveys (e.g., Liden, 2006). While response rates were high, 82 respondents (or 11% of the total sample) did not complete any demographic questions included in the survey. Overall demographic frequencies feature in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1.

*Frequencies for Demographic Descriptions of Sample and Split by Business Division*

Categorical variable	Totals	(%)	Div. A	(%)	Div. B	(%)	Div. C	(%)	Div. D	(%)
Gender										
Male	304	(38.1)	153	(48.1)	27	(28.4)	83	(37.1)	41	(25.6)
Female	387	(48.6)	120	(37.7)	55	(57.9)	118	(52.7)	94	(58.8)
Missing	106	(13.3)	45	(14.2)	13	(13.7)	23	(10.3)	25	(15.6)
Work role										
Team member	521	(65.4)	193	(60.7)	58	(61.1)	159	(71)	111	(69.4)
First line leader	140	(17.6)	59	(18.6)	16	(16.8)	42	(18.8)	23	(14.4)
Business leader	30	(3.8)	16	(5.0)	8	(8.4)	4	(1.8)	2	(1.3)
Strategic leader	4	(0.5)	2	(0.6)	2	(2.1)	-	-	-	-
Missing	102	(12.8)	48	(15.1)	11	(11.6)	19	(8.5)	24	(15)
Leadership responsibilities										
Yes	167	(21)	72	(22.6)	23	(24.2)	43	(19.2)	29	(18.1)
No	531	(66.6)	202	(63.5)	62	(65.3)	160	(71.4)	107	(66.9)
Missing	99	(12.4)	44	(13.8)	10	(10.5)	21	(9.4)	24	(15)
Employ. type										
Permanent full time	612	(76.8)	250	(78.6)	71	(74.7)	177	(79)	114	(71.3)
Permanent part-time	63	(7.9)	22	(6.9)	8	(8.4)	17	(7.6)	16	(10)
Casual full time	1	(0.1)	-	-	-	-	1	(0.4)	-	-
Consultant/contractor	14	(1.8)	1	(0.3)	4	(4.2)	6	(2.7)	3	(1.9)
Other	7	(0.9)	1	(0.3)	1	(1.1)	3	(1.3)	2	(1.3)
Missing	100	(12.5)	44	(13.8)	11	(11.6)	20	(8.9)	25	(15.6)
Union member										
Yes	81	(10.2)	35	(11)	4	(4.2)	25	(11.2)	17	(10.6)
No	616	(77.3)	241	(75.8)	80	(84.2)	176	(78.6)	119	(74.4)

Categorical variable	Totals	(%)	Div. A	(%)	Div. B	(%)	Div. C	(%)	Div. D	(%)
<i>Missing</i>	100	(12.5)	42	(13.2)	11	(11.6)	23	(10.3)	24	(15)
ATSI status										
Yes	3	(0.4)	2	(0.6)	-	-	1	(0.4)	-	-
No	685	(85.9)	270	(84.9)	83	(87.4)	197	(87.9)	135	(84.4)
<i>Missing</i>	109	(13.7)	46	(14.5)	12	(12.6)	26	(11.6)	25	(15.6)
Ed. level										
Junior high school	26	(3.3)	5	(1.6)	4	(4.2)	10	(4.5)	7	(4.4)
Senior high school	157	(19.7)	58	(18.2)	19	(20)	47	(21)	33	(20.6)
Vocational qualification	24	(3)	6	(1.9)	1	(1.1)	11	(4.9)	6	(3.8)
Associate diploma	158	(19.8)	64	(20.1)	17	(17.9)	46	(20.5)	31	(19.4)
Undergraduate diploma	47	(5.9)	24	(7.5)	4	(4.2)	15	(6.7)	4	(2.5)
Bachelor degree	169	(21.2)	77	(24.2)	17	(17.9)	42	(18.8)	33	(20.6)
Post grad. diploma	61	(7.7)	23	(7.2)	6	(6.3)	16	(7.1)	16	(10)
Higher degree (MA, PhD)	49	(6.1)	16	(5)	13	(13.7)	14	(6.3)	6	(3.8)
<i>Missing</i>	106	(13.3)	45	(14.2)	14	(14.7)	23	(10.3)	24	(15)
Household type										
Single no children	131	(16.4)	15	(16.4)	12	(12.6)	46	(20.5)	21	(13.1)
Single with children	32	(4)	8	(2.5)	3	(3.2)	14	(6.3)	7	(4.4)
Couple no children	210	(26.3)	85	(26.7)	20	(21.1)	63	(28.1)	42	(26.3)
Couple with children	288	(36.1)	119	(37.4)	39	(41.1)	75	(33.5)	55	(34.4)
Other	27	(3.4)	7	(2.2)	7	(7.4)	4	(1.8)	9	(5.6)
<i>Missing</i>	109	(13.7)	47	(14.8)	14	(14.7)	22	(9.8)	26	(16.3)

Note. N = 797. Totals = numbers of respondents to question item categories. Div. = business division. Division A, n = 318; Division B, n = 95; Division C, n = 224; Division D, n = 160. *Missing* = missing data. Percentages used include missing data as a subcategory for demographic categories.



Table 4.2.

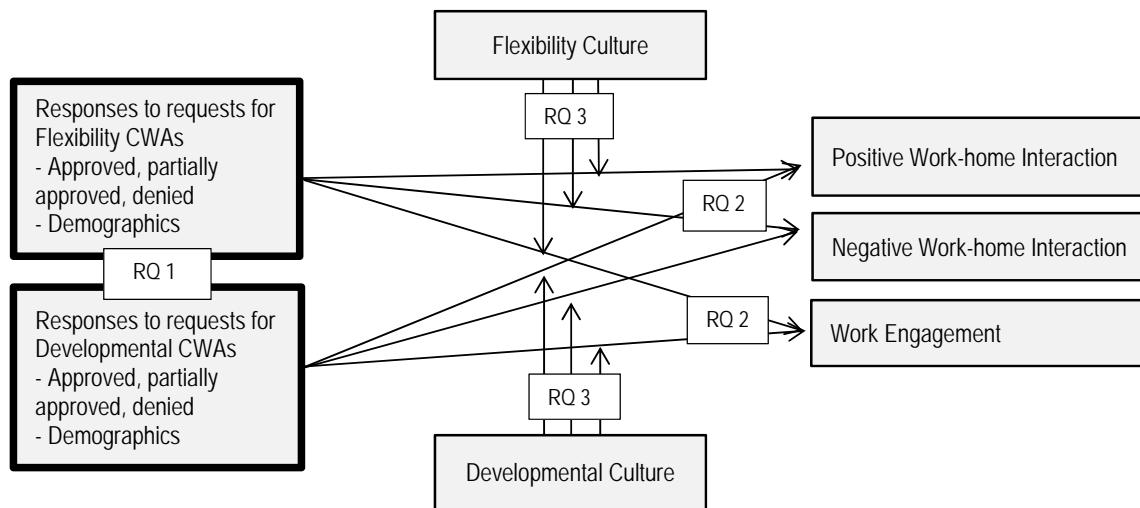
*Frequencies for Demographic Descriptions of Sample and Split by Business Division*

Continuous variable	Totals			Division A			Division B			Division C			Division D		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	( <i>SD</i> )	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	( <i>SD</i> )	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	( <i>SD</i> )	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	( <i>SD</i> )	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	( <i>SD</i> )
Age	615	39.96	(10.51)	246	40.22	(9.96)	74	37.18	(10.20)	180	40.54	(11.08)	115	40.27	(10.75)
Years employed	653	8.25	(7.61)	260	9.06	(8.58)	76	7.58	(4.58)	194	7.51	(7.69)	123	8.10	(6.63)
Months employed	482	5.22	(3.19)	181	5.07	(3.33)	70	5.59	(3.10)	132	5.10	(3.11)	99	5.57	(3.07)
Total years employed	681	8.21	(7.59)	269	9.04	(8.54)	82	7.42	(4.77)	199	7.59	(7.66)	131	7.95	(6.68)
Hours worked weekly															
Main job	666	39.37	(8.55)	261	40.38	(7.45)	80	40.01	(8.11)	197	38.68	(8.32)	128	37.96	(10.80)
All jobs	77	27.68	(21.67)	32	27.77	(21.97)	11	28.64	(23.70)	23	27.80	(20.10)	11	26.18	(24.88)
Total hours worked	663	39.92	(8.40)	262	40.66	(7.81)	80	40.41	(8.40)	194	39.57	(7.47)	127	38.61	(10.56)
No. dep. children	658	1.81	(1.10)	259	1.83	(1.10)	78	1.82	(1.04)	195	1.77	(1.10)	126	1.85	(1.14)
Age youngest child	386	10.18	(9.99)	154	9.66	(9.84)	49	9.57	(9.41)	108	10.46	(10.13)	75	11.21	(10.55)
No. others cared for	650	1.58	(1.00)	254	1.52	(0.96)	79	1.42	(0.79)	196	1.67	(1.05)	121	1.65	(1.10)

*Note.* *N* = 797. Division A, *n* = number of respondents to question items. *n* = 318; Division B, *n* = 95; Division C, *n* = 224; Division D, *n* = 160. Missing data in the continuous demographic fields shown in this table were multiply imputed before main analyses (ANOVAs and moderated regressions). Data shown here is preimputed.

## 4.2.2 Descriptive analysis

The first stage of analysis explored descriptive statistics and univariate analysis from the cleaned and screened dataset, prior to multiple imputation. The analysis was exploratory and has no distinct hypotheses. The bolded boxes in the research model are the focus of descriptive analysis that follows and which forms the basis for testing other relationships in the model. Figure 4.1 shows Research Question 1, the descriptive portion of the research model, in bold. The extent to which requests for CWAs were made, and who made those requests were examined, together with responses to requests for the different types and sub types of CWAs.



Research questions (RQ) 1 to 3 depicted in the research model. Arrows denote relations tested.

Figure 4.1. Research model reflecting research questions and variables examined.

## 4.2.3 Requests for customised work arrangements

The survey used for the thesis was structured around three separate sections. The first section asked participants whether they had made requests for 23 different types of customised work arrangements (CWAs) in the previous 12 months, and if so, whether

those requests had been fully granted, partly granted or declined. Respondents specified an additional 13 types of CWAs, raising the total CWA types requested to 36. The survey also asked for a range of demographic characteristics. These questions were placed at the end of the survey.

The seeking of adjustments to work arrangements was a majority experience in the organisation. Overall, 783 respondents, or 98.2% of the sample, made at least one request for a CWA in the previous year. In total, 5,865 requests were made. This equated to an average of more than seven ( $n = 7.49$ ) requests per employee. Of the five CWA category types, time off was requested most often (40%) followed by developmental opportunities (28%), adjustments to work hours (15%), offsite work (10%) and adjustments to work tasks (7%), as illustrated in the pie graph in Figure 4.2.

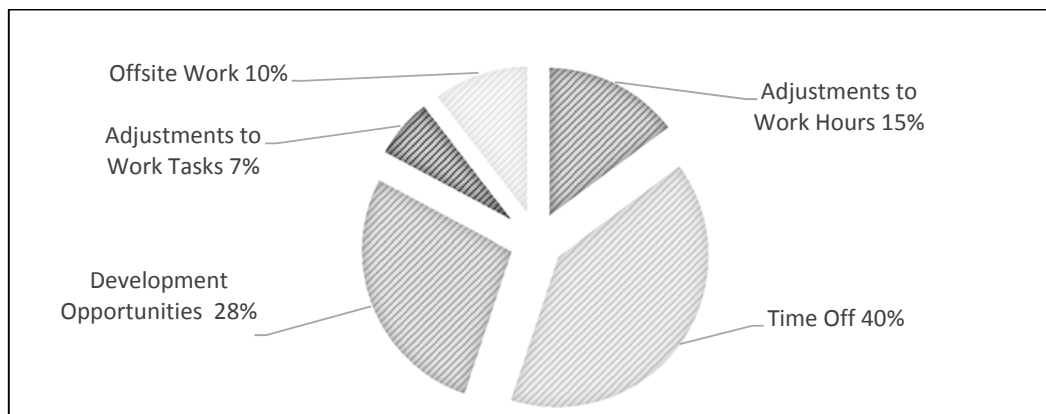


Figure 4.2. Types of customised work arrangements requested by employees.

#### 4.2.4 Employee responses to requests and nonrequesters

For the purposes of examining manager responses to CWA requests, respondents were categorised in four ways: (a) those who made requests which were always fully granted; (b) those who made requests which were partly granted at least once, but not declined; (c) those whose requests were declined at least once; and (d) those who did not

request. Descriptive statistics detail the numbers of employees in these four request response categories. Overall, a little over a third ( $n = 284$ ) of respondents were always fully granted their CWA requests, while 63.6% of employees were partly granted (34.1%,  $n = 267$ ) or declined (29.5%,  $n = 231$ ) on occasion. These figures are important to consider in terms of how responses to requests affect employees' experiences of work-home interactions and work engagement and influences of workplace cultures in sections 4.3 and 4.4. Table 4.3 shows the frequencies of responses to requests for CWAs. For example, a total of 413 employees made requests for work hours and of these, 266 (64.4%) of employees always received fully granted responses to requests, 72 (17.4%) employees experienced partly granted responses at least once, and 75 (18.2%) employees experienced declined responses at least once.

Table 4.3.  
*Percentages of Employees Receiving Different Responses to Flexibility Requests*

Main customised work types	Total employees <sup>a</sup>	Request responses					
		Fully granted (% of total responses)		Partly granted (% of total responses)		Declined (% of total responses)	
Work hours <sup>b</sup>	413	266	(64.4%)	72	(17.4%)	75	(18.2%)
Time off <sup>b</sup>	738	630	(85.4%)	68	(9.2%)	40	(5.4%)
Adjustments to work tasks <sup>b</sup>	307	118	(38.4%)	127	(41.4%)	62	(20.2%)
Offsite work <sup>b</sup>	463	276	(59.6%)	123	(26.6%)	64	(13.8%)
Development opportunities <sup>c</sup>	645	297	(46%)	242	(37.5%)	106	(16.4%)

*Note.*  $N = 797$ . <sup>a</sup> $n = 783$ ; Total employees<sup>a</sup> = total number of employees who were responsible for the CWA requests. Fully granted = requested and always fully granted. Partly granted = requested, partly granted at least once, but not declined. Declined = declined at least once. Number of employees who were ever partly granted or declined requests: for any flexibility CWAs<sup>b</sup>  $n = 386$  (49%); for development opportunities<sup>c</sup>  $n = 348$  (44%). Employees who did not request any CWAs,  $n = 14$ . Valid percentages (%) used, calculated from total responses to question. Totals may not add up due to missing data.

Although the majority of employees lodged at least one request ( $n = 783$ , 98.2%), a proportion of employees did not make a request in each CWA category. Around three in five employees did not request accommodations in the adjustments to work tasks category ( $n = 490$ , 61.5%), around half did not request changes to work hours ( $n = 384$ , 48.2%), and two in five did not request offsite work ( $n = 334$ , 41.9%). This is compared to only

one in five employees who did not make a request for the category development opportunities ( $n = 152$ , 19.1%) and less than one in 10 who did not request time off ( $n = 59$ , 7.4%).

#### 4.2.5 Types of ‘responses to requests’ for customised work arrangements by demographic characteristics

Analyses that examined responses to requests by gender showed the majority of requests for both men and women were fully granted ( $n = 3707$ , 74%) (see Figure 4.3). For example, 72.7% of men’s requests for CWAs were fully granted, compared with 74.7% of women’s requests.

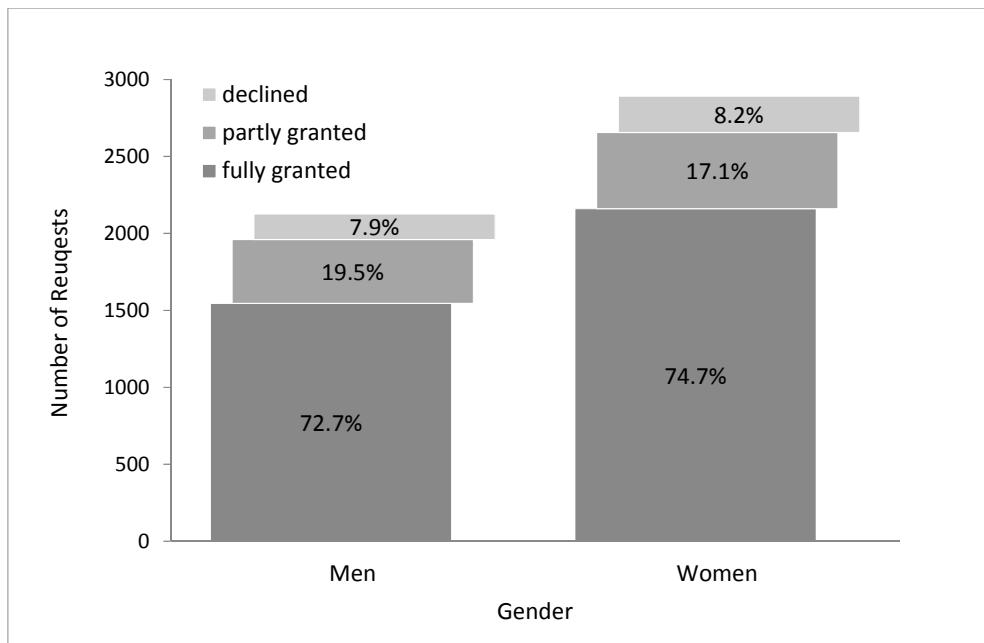


Figure 4.3. Proportions of employees’ requests in response categories by gender.

Because of differential findings for gender closer examination was warranted. Figure 4.4 and Table 4.4 show frequencies and percentages for CWA requests and responses to requests, by gender. Figure 4.4 shows that men requested more

developmental opportunities and fewer changes to work hours than women did. However, there were no gender differences for requests for time off, work tasks and offsite work.

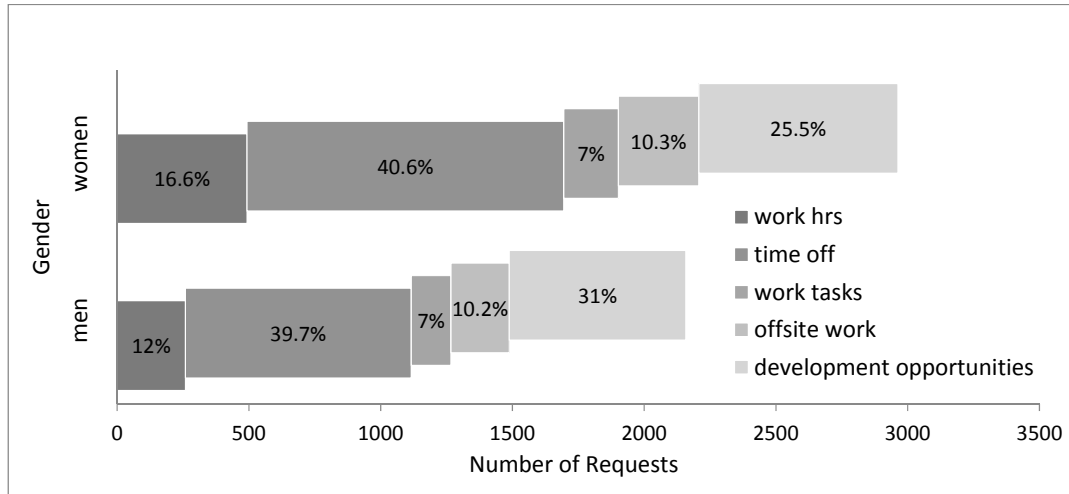


Figure 4.4. Proportions of employees' requests for CWA types by gender.

Table 4.4 shows that women made two thirds of requests for adjustments to work hours ( $n = 493$ ), 58% of requests for time off ( $n = 1,202$ ), adjustments to work tasks ( $n = 207$ ) and offsite work ( $n = 305$ ), and 53% ( $n = 756$ ) of developmental opportunities requests. However, proportionally, there were few differences between responses to requests for CWA types and gender. There was almost no gender difference between responses to requests for time off and minimal differences for developmental opportunities. Table 4.4 shows three notable gender differences in terms of responses to requests: women were declined requests for offsite work over 9% more often than men (14.4% compared to 5%), men were fully granted requests for offsite work more often than women (69% compared to 62.3%), and men were declined requests for changes to work hours more often than women (18.9% compared to 13%).

Table 4.4

*Proportions of Requests for Customised Work in Response Categories by Gender*

Customised work types	Request responses							
	Total responses		Fully granted (% of total responses)		Partly granted (% of total responses)		Declined (% of total responses)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Work hours	259	493	166 (64%)	335 (68%)	43 (16.6%)	73 (14.8%)	49 (18.9%)	65 (13%)
Time off	857	1,202	787 (91.8%)	1,113 (92.6%)	36 (4%)	44 (3.7%)	21 (2.5%)	17 (1.4%)
Adjustments to work tasks	151	207	56 (37%)	85 (41%)	63 (41.7%)	79 (38%)	29 (19.2%)	40 (19.3%)
Offsite work	221	305	153 (69%)	190 (62.3%)	54 (24.4%)	66 (21.6%)	11 (5%)	44 (14.4%)
Development opps.	670	756	384 (57%)	438 (58%)	218 (32.5%)	233(30.8%)	57 (8.5%)	70 (9.3%)

*Note.* Employees  $N = 797$ . CWA = customised work arrangements; Fully granted = requested and fully granted at least once; Partly granted = requested, partly granted at least once, and not declined; Declined = declined at least once. Request proportions for men are: adjustments to work hours 34%, time off 42%, adjustments to work tasks 42%, offsite work 42%, developmental opportunities 47%. Valid percentages (%) used, calculated from total responses to question. Totals may not add up due to missing data.

Figure 4.5 shows the proportions of responses to requests for CWAs by household type. For example, 53.1% of sole parents' requests were fully granted compared to 68.3% of coupled parents.

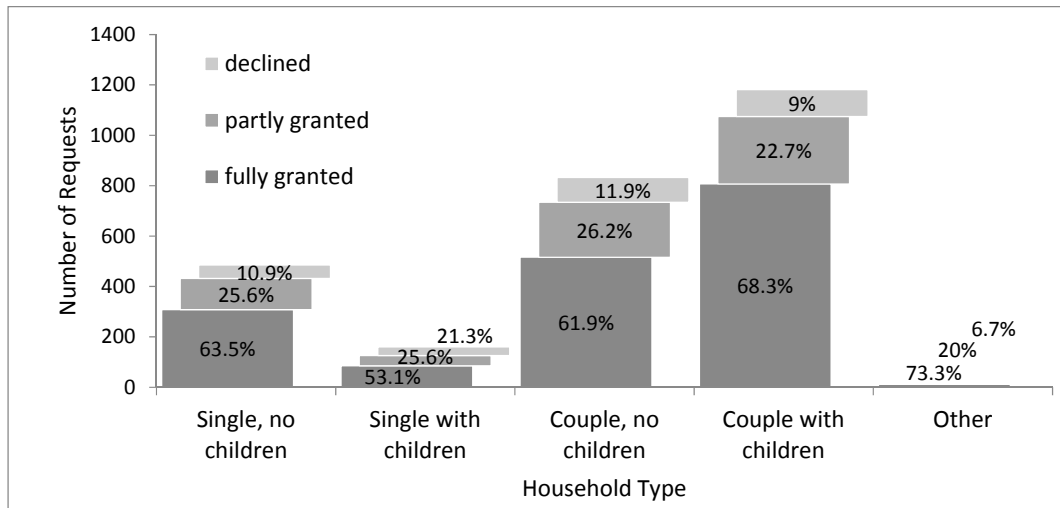


Figure 4.5. Proportions of employees' requests in response categories by household type.

Figure 4.6 shows the proportions of responses to requests for CWAs by parental status. For example, 76.7% of parents' requests were fully granted. For those who indicated their parent status, the majority of their requests were fully granted ( $n = 3686$ ; 73.8%), with parents indicating more fully granted responses and fewer declined responses than nonparents did.



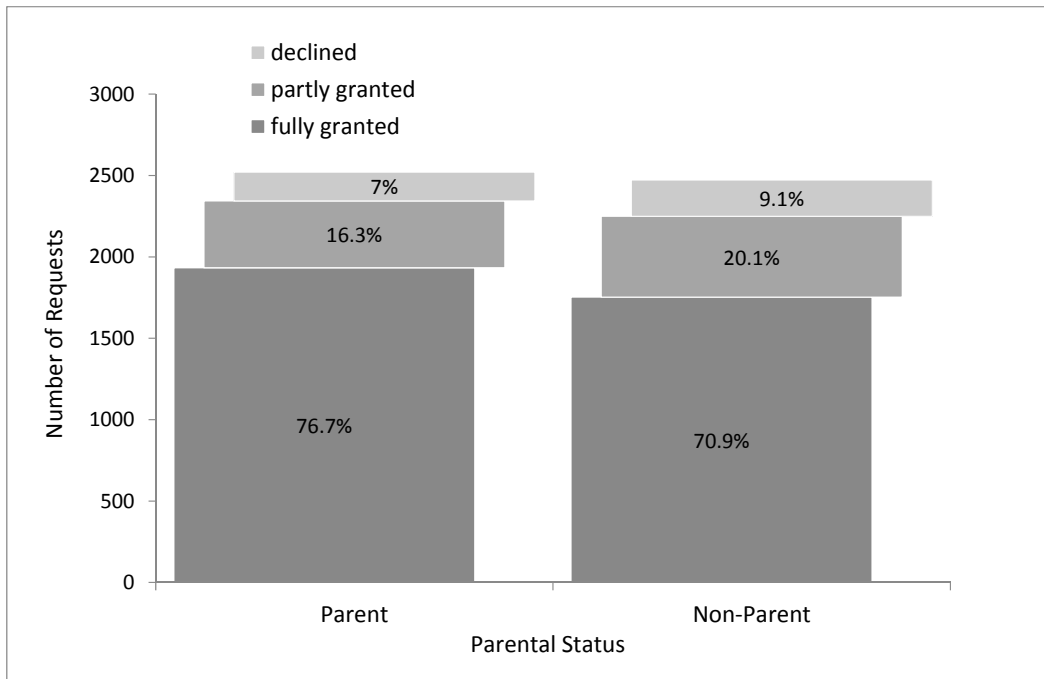


Figure 4.6. Proportion of employees' requests in response categories by parental status.

Because of differential findings for parent status, closer examination was warranted. Figure 4.7 shows percentages for CWA requests by parent status. Figure 4.7 shows that parents requested significantly fewer developmental opportunities and more offsite work and changes to work hours than nonparents did. However, there was little difference between parents' and nonparents' requests for time off and work tasks.

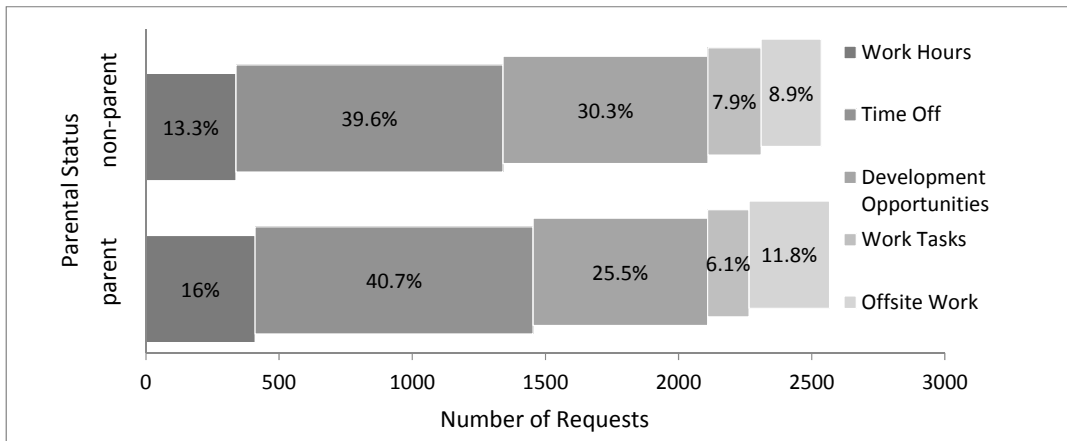


Figure 4.7. Proportions of employees' requests in CWA types by parental status.

Table 4.5 shows proportions of responses to requests for CWAs by parent status. Table 4.5 shows that parents were fully granted developmental opportunities ( $n = 411$ ) more often than nonparents ( $n = 404$ ), and were declined less often (7.9%) than nonparents (10.1%).

Table 4.5

*Proportions of Requests for Customised Work in Response Categories by Parent Status*

CWA type	Responses to requests							
	Total responses		Fully granted (% of total responses)		Partly granted (% of total responses)		Declined (% of total responses)	
	Parent	Nonparent	Parent	Nonparent	Parent	Nonparent	Parent	Nonparent
Work hours	410	338	279 (68%)	219 (64.8%)	64 (15.6%)	52 (15.4%)	52 (12.7%)	55 (16.3%)
Time off	1,044	1,003	973 (93.2%)	915 (91.2%)	39 (3.7%)	41 (4.1%)	18 (1.7%)	21 (2.1%)
Adj. to work tasks	156	200	73 (46.8%)	67 (33.5%)	55 (35.3%)	86 (43%)	26 (16.7%)	43 (21.5%)
Offsite work	302	226	197 (65.2%)	148 (65.5%)	69 (22.8%)	50 (22.1%)	29 (9.6%)	27 (11.9%)
Development opps.	655	769	411 (62.7%)	404 (52.5%)	184 (28.1%)	267(34.7%)	52 (7.9%)	78 (10.1%)

*Note.* Employees  $N = 797$ . *CWA* = customised work arrangements. *Fully granted* = requested and *fully granted* at least once; *Requested, partly granted* at least once, and not declined; *Declined*, at least once. Request proportions for parents are: adjustments to work hours 55%, time off 51%, adjustments to work tasks 44%, offsite work 57%, developmental opportunities 46%. Valid percentages (%) used, calculated from total responses to question. Totals may not add up due to missing data.

Figure 4.8 shows the proportions of responses to requests for CWAs by leadership status. For example, employees without leadership responsibilities had 71.4% of their requests for CWAs fully granted, compared to 80.2% of those with leadership responsibilities (see Figure 4.8).

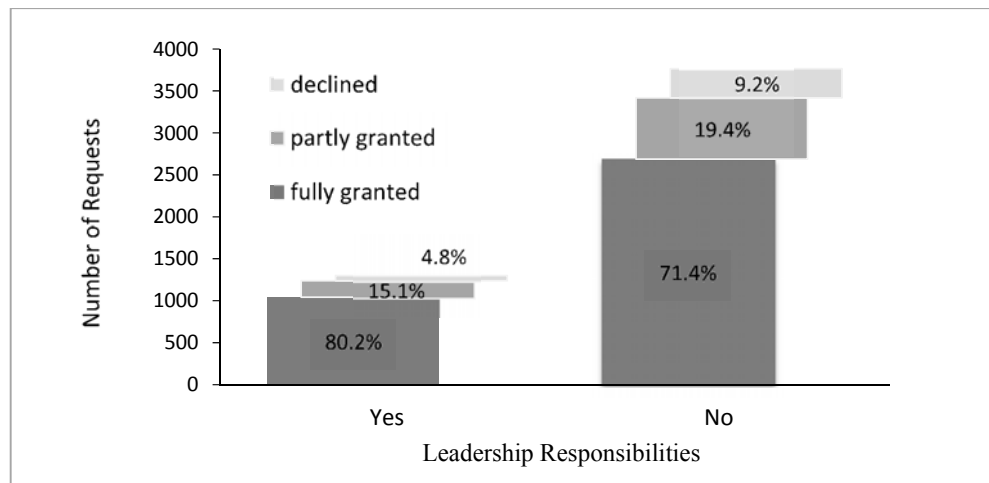


Figure 4.8. Proportions of employees' requests in response categories by leadership responsibilities status.

Overall, FinanceCo employees without leadership responsibilities made more than three times as many requests as their leader counterparts, but nonleaders requests were over 40% more likely to be declined than their more senior counterparts' requests. These results suggest that those with leadership responsibilities make fewer requests; however, they may have more task autonomy than their subordinates. It could be speculated that leaders are more skilled at negotiating through social exchange with one another, established through familiarity of prior exchanges, shared responsibilities, loyalty, and fairness, or that requests by leaders are received by even more senior leaders, who regard them as more important to satisfy. With respect to leadership responsibilities status, employees in nonleadership roles experienced the highest rates of declined requests, with

‘work tasks’ requests declined 22% of the time. However, these work tasks represented only 7% of all requests. Around 40% of all requests by nonleaders were for time off, and of these, only 2% were declined. Nine percent of requests by employee respondents without leadership responsibilities were declined. In terms of specific CWA categories: 2% of requests for time off were declined, 15% for work hours, 11% for developmental opportunities, 22% for work task, and 14% for offsite work.

#### **4.2.6 Types of ‘responses to requests’ for customised work arrangements**

In the following figures (see Figures 4.9 to 4.13) responses to requests for each of the types of CWAs are broken down into their respective subtypes, indicating the proportion of responses to requests that were fully granted, partly granted and declined.

##### ***Responses to requests for adjustments to work hours***

Overall, the CWAs most frequently requested were adjustments to work hours, in particular, changes to start and finish times and the amount of flexibility in work hours. These specific types of CWAs accounted for over half of all requests and were also the most often fully granted of all requests for adjustments to work hours. Other changes to work hours were more difficult to get approved, especially working paid overtime, switching from part-time to full-time work, and compressed work weeks. More than one third of requests for these CWAs were declined. This suggests that some adjustments to the terms and conditions of work were unproblematic while others were deemed to be more disruptive to the workflow of the particular workplace or simply less acceptable to managers.

Figure 4.9 shows that the majority of requests for different types of adjustments to work hours were fully granted ( $n = 586$ ). However, 14% of requests were only partly granted ( $n = 124$ ) and almost 18% ( $n = 154$ ) were declined. The 868 requests for adjustments to work hours were made by 428 employees, with an average of 2.03

requests per employee. Figure 4.9 sets out proportions of requests for adjustments to work hours subtypes by responses to requests. For example, 81.4% of responses to requests for adjustments to work from full time to part time were fully granted.

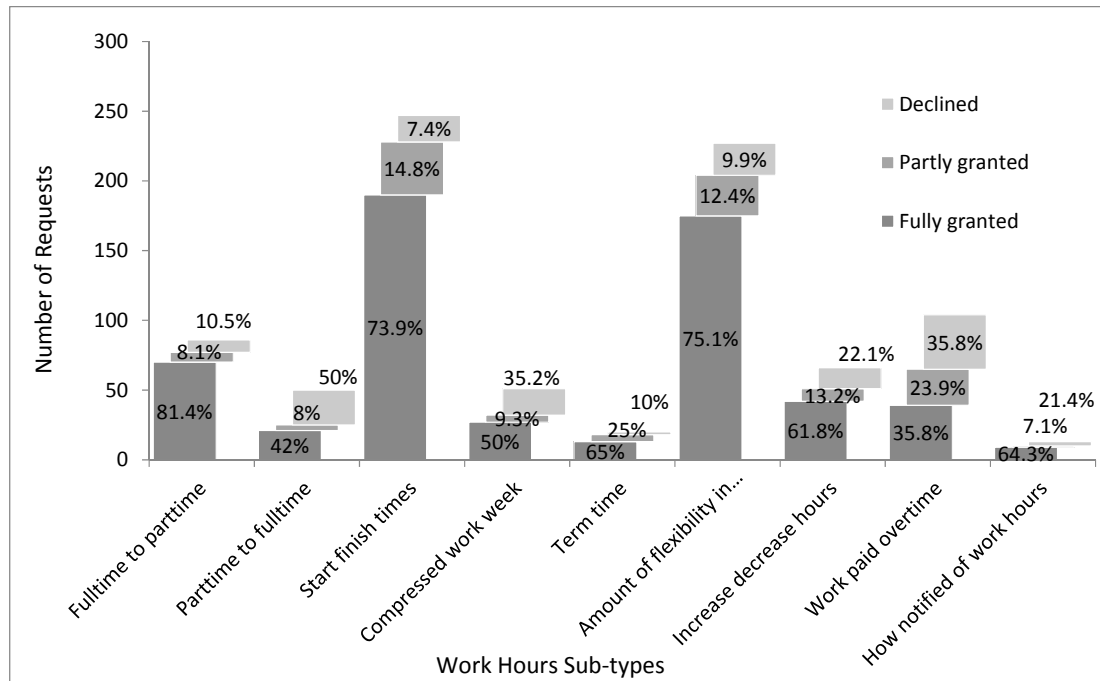


Figure 4.9. Responses to CWA requests for adjustments to work hours subtypes.

Proportionally, fully granted responses to requests occurred most often for full-time to part-time CWAs (81.4%), and least often for part time to full time (42%).

### ***Responses to requests for time off***

Around 4% of requests for time off were partly granted ( $n = 91$ ) and 2% of requests were declined ( $n = 45$ ). The 2,362 requests were made by 743 employees, with an average of 3.18 requests per employee in the previous year. Overall, requests for sick leave and flexible leave days accounted for about half of all requests for time off. Requests for various forms of time off were overwhelmingly approved, except for the timing of annual leave, which appears to be problematic for managers in that approvals

were granted in less than three quarters of cases. Figure 4.10 shows that the majority of requests for time off were fully granted ( $n = 2176$ ; 92%). Requests for carer's leave, sick leave, volunteer leave, and compassionate leave were more likely to be fully granted than requests for other types of time off. Figure 4.10 sets out proportions of requests for time off, including subtypes, by responses to requests. For example, 72.5% of responses to requests for the timing of annual leave or holidays CWAs were fully granted.

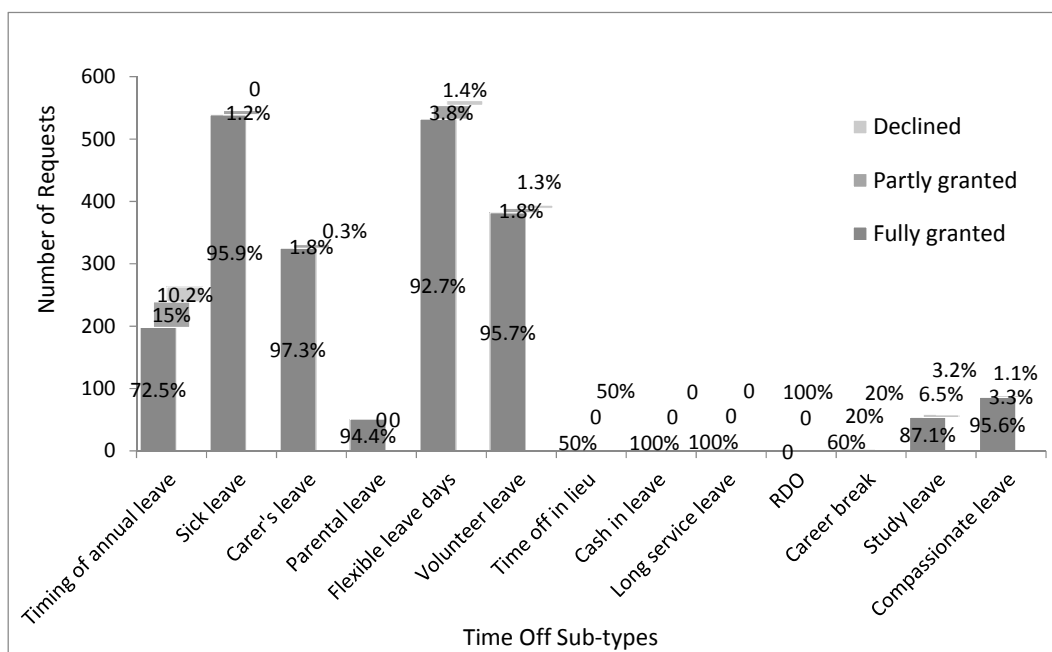


Figure 4.10. Responses to CWA requests for time off subtypes.

Proportionally, fully granted responses to requests occurred most often for carer's leave (97.3%), and least often for timing of annual leave (72.5%).

### ***Responses to requests for adjustments to work tasks***

Requests for adjustments to work tasks were made least frequently and, overall, fully approved responses to these requests were the lowest proportion of all customised work types. Less than half of requests were fully granted. However, as Figure 4.11 shows,

more than 50% of requests for adjustments to work tasks were fully granted. The 395 requests for adjustments to work tasks were made by 311 employees, with an average of 1.27 requests per employee. Analyses show that requests for adjustments to work tasks were around equally likely to be fully granted ( $n = 154$ ) as partly granted ( $n = 155$ ) (40% of the time in each response category). Around 20% ( $n = 77$ ) of requests were declined. Figure 4.11 sets out the proportions of requests for adjustments to work tasks by responses to requests. For example, 32.7% of responses to requests for reduction or increase in workload were fully granted.

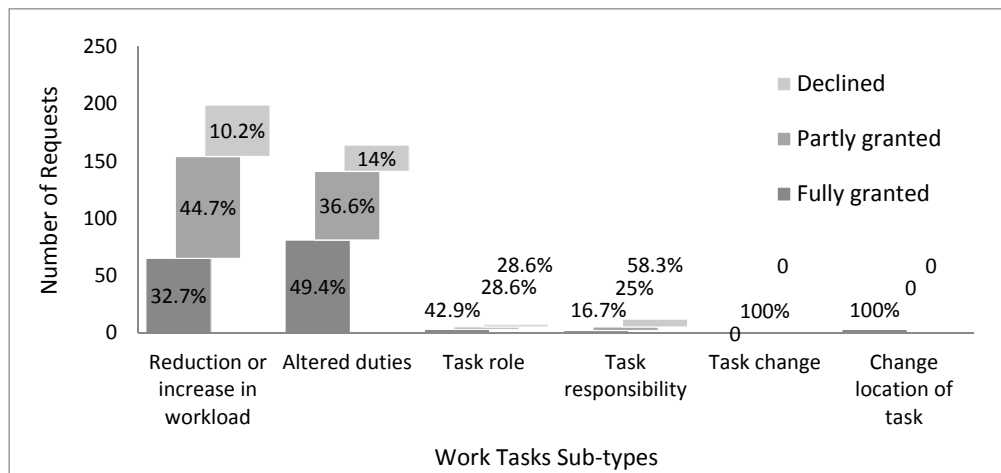


Figure 4.11. Responses to CWA requests for adjustments to work tasks subtypes.

Proportionally, fully granted responses to requests occurred most often for altered duties (49.4%), and least often for reduction or increase in workload CWAs (32.7%).

### ***Responses to requests to work off site***

Overall, requests to work from home and take work home after hours were popular among employees, but were fully approved less than three quarters of the time. When compared to other types of customised work, requests to work off site were approved much less often than requests for adjustments to work hours and time off.



However, as Figure 4.12 shows, more than 65% of requests to work off site were fully granted ( $n = 394$ ), while 22.8% ( $n = 137$ ) were partly granted and 11.8% ( $n = 71$ ) were declined. The 612 requests to work off site were made by 470 employees, with an average of 1.3 requests per employee in the previous year. Figure 4.12 sets out the proportions of responses to requests for work off site, including subtypes. For example, 62.3% of responses to requests to work from home were fully granted.

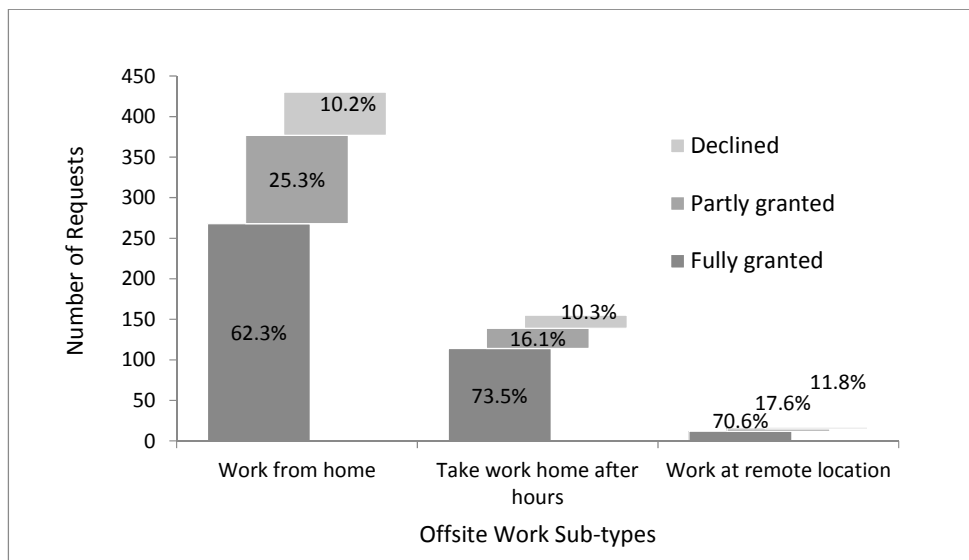


Figure 4.12. Responses to CWA requests to work off site subtypes.

Proportionally, fully granted responses to requests occurred most often for take work home after hours CWAs (73.5%) and least often for work from home (62.3%).

### ***Responses to requests for developmental opportunities***

Most requests for developmental opportunities were for training or skills development, and this type of accommodation was also the one that was most often approved. Other popular requests were for career development and more challenging work, although only around half of these requests were fully approved. Compared to other customised work types, responses to professional development requests had the

second lowest proportions of fully granted responses (after adjustments to work tasks), and partly granted responses (after requests for adjustments to work tasks). Figure 4.13 shows that just over half of requests for the different types of developmental opportunities were fully granted (57.4%, n = 934), while 32.8% (n = 513) were partly granted and 9.3% (n = 146) were declined. All 1,566 requests for developmental opportunities were made by 654 employees, with an average of 2.39 requests per employee in the previous year. Figure 4.13 sets out the proportions of requests for developmental opportunities subtypes by responses to requests. For example, 36.2% of responses to requests for promotion to a more senior position were fully granted.

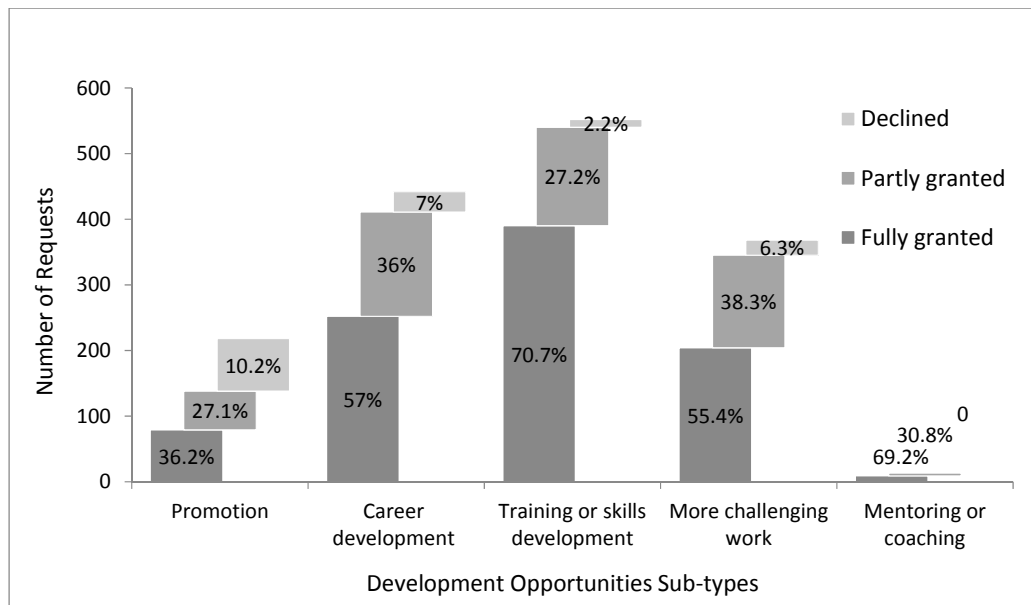


Figure 4.13. Responses to CWA requests for development opportunities subtypes.

Proportionally, fully granted responses to requests occurred most often for training or skills development CWAs (70.7%), and least often for promotion to a more senior position (36.2%).

#### **4.2.7 Reliability of scale measures**

All scales measures: positive work–home interaction (PWHI), negative work–home interaction (NWHI), work engagement (and subscales, vigour, absorption, dedication), work–life flexibility culture subscales (managerial support, organisational support, managerial and organisational support, time demands, career consequences, coworker support), and developmental culture showed high levels of internal consistency, indicated by Cronbach Alphas of .72 and above, as set out in Appendix B.

### **4.3 PHASE 2 – INFERENTIAL ANALYSES – IMPACT OF RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR CWAS WITH INDIVIDUAL AND BUSINESS-RELATED OUTCOMES**

Research Subquestion 2: *‘What are the individual and business-related impacts of different “responses to requests” (approved, partially approved, denied)?’*

Results for the second stage of analysis answer the second research subquestion. The next subsections detail findings of missing data treatment, validity of work–life (flexibility culture scale) and inferential ANOVAs that test the impact of responses to requests for CWAs with individual and business-related outcomes.

#### **4.3.1 Treatment of missing data**

On inspection of the raw data, a substantial number of missing values were apparent, requiring further investigation. Missing value analysis returned a significant MCAR statistic (Little’s MCAR test:  $\chi^2(94) = 413.092, p < .001$ ), and requisite comprehensive evaluation.

##### ***Missing values analysis – Descriptives***

On inspection of univariate statistics, all variables examined contained missing data, ranging from 51.6% age of youngest child (*AgeyoungestCh*) to 12.4% of (*Lshipyn*). The mean number of missing cases for variables examined was 17.55%.

### ***Missing values analysis – Missing patterns***

There were five patterns of jointly missing data that occurred in more than 1% of the cases in respect to demographic data, and these are reported in descending order. The first pattern of jointly missing data included all demographic variables ( $n = 89$ , 11.2%), and the second pattern of joint missing data ( $n = 21$ , 2.6%) occurred between *AgeyoungestCh* (age of youngest child) and *Age*. The third pattern of ( $n = 11$ , 1.4%), included *AgeyoungestCh* (age of youngest child), *ParwDepChstatus* (number of others some care is provided to) and *DepChildNo* (number of dependent children). The fourth pattern was *AgeyoungestCh* (age of youngest child), *DepChildNo*, *ParwDepChstatus* and *OtherCareNo*, (number of others you provide care to) ( $n = 10$ , 1.3%). The final pattern of joint missingness was *AgeyoungestCh* and *Totalhrswork* ( $n = 9$ , 1.1%).

All patterns were subjected to further analysis within their respective patterns and in respect to research questions and hypotheses that were tested in this thesis. Detailed analyses showed no problematic missing values patterns affecting the research conducted (see Appendices C and D). After examination of missing values analyses of tabulated patterns, univariate statistics, separate variance *t* tests, and crosstabulations of categorical versus indicator variables, it can be concluded that missing data were missing at random (MAR). However, due to the impact of missing data on sample size, multiple imputation (using expectation maximisation [EM] method, and statistical software SPSS v.21, MVA, EM), was used for replacement values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

### ***Multiple imputation process used with explanation***

No cases in the dataset were deleted. Prior to multiple imputation of data, additional variables were created and average scale scores and reliability analysis on those scores were conducted. Additionally, descriptive analysis of the raw data was used to examine connections between variables examined in central analyses. All missingness

in the dataset was treated with multiple imputation method (SPSS v.21) using EM. The method for data treatment followed the sequence as set out by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and in more detail as set out by Hair and colleagues (2014).

The original dataset was prepared for multiple imputation by first analysing patterns of missing values. Investigation of the patterns indicated as not missing completely at random (MCAR) (Little's MCAR test of significance) found missing data patterns were very small, as indicated by differences in the third decimal point and trivial correlational differences (between pairwise and listwise deletion) of  $R^2$  variance less than .067 between the variable combinations tested in this thesis. Data patterns were found to be MAR and not influential to further analysis. To preserve sample size for analysis, and as recommended by Hair and colleagues (2014), and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the missing data was dealt with by a model-based multiple imputation using EM, method (SPSS v.21), to replace missing data on continuous variables, with data based on existing data means and correlations.

Prior to imputation and to avoid biasing the dataset with respect to multilevel analysis (Hair et al., 2014) of developmental and flexibility culture, at organisational, departmental and individual perceptions levels, the dataset was ordered by *id* and then by *submit date*, with the *Division* variable removed. Additionally, the five 'clustered' CWA request response groupings (*hrs\_fgpgd*, *timeoff\_fgpgd*, *timeoff\_fgpgd*, *tasks\_fgpgd*, *wkoffsite\_fgpgd*, *devopps\_fgpgd*) were removed prior to imputing the dataset. The data was multiply imputed using the *EM* option in *Analyze -> Missing values Analysis* option in SPSS. After imputation was conducted, *Division* and the five clustered CWAs groupings variables were returned to the dataset to be incorporated into further analysis.

### *Sensitivity analysis*

In order to test possible distortion effects of multiple imputation (EM) treatment of missing data, sensitivity analyses were performed by comparing multiply imputed (EM) data with original data (using listwise deletion) results. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and Hair and colleagues (2014) assert that multiple imputation using EM method underestimates means based on existing data for replacement values; thus, results for imputed data are expected to be more conservative. Furthermore, due to preservation of sample size as is the purpose of multiple imputation, any significant results of analyses will have increased power (Hair et al., 2014). The ranges of analyses selected (hierarchical multiple regressions [HMR]) were drawn from variable combinations that are of interest to research questions and hypotheses and are represented in the research model. Results of the separate HMR analyses are reported for the nonimputed and imputed data in Appendix E.

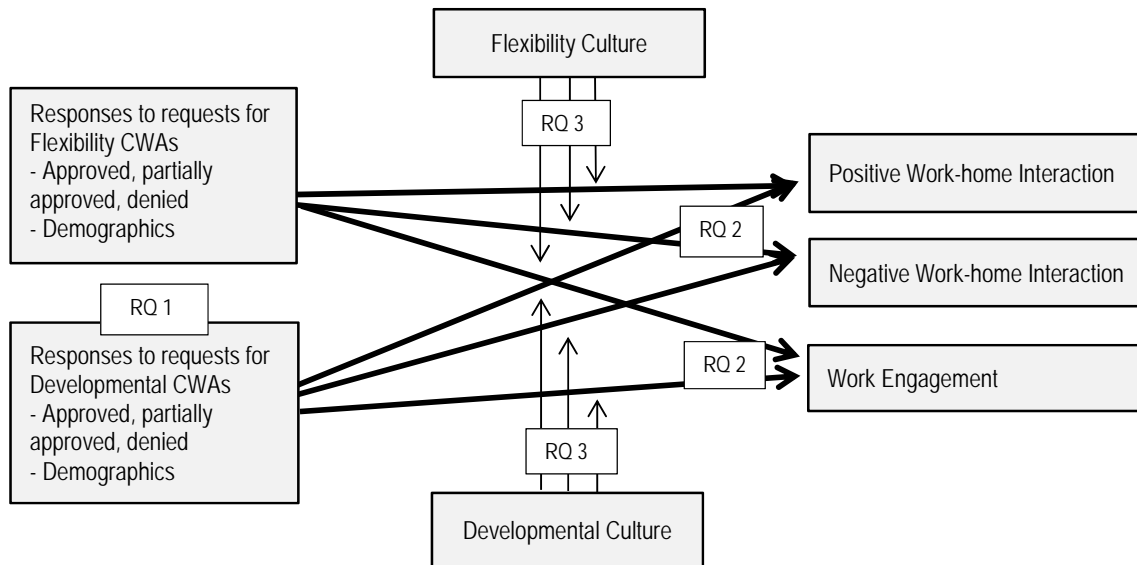
In summary, the imputed data increased the available sample size for flexibility CWAs relationships from a low of  $n = 125$  up to  $n = 131$ . For developmental CWAs relationships, imputed data increased the available sample size from  $n = 585$  to  $n = 643$ . Appendix F highlights similarities and differences within the separate regression analyses between nonimputed and imputed data. Overall, the vast majority of direct and moderated relationships remained unchanged. Increases in significance levels occurred for imputed data for direct relationships between flexibility CWAs responses to requests with both NWHI and PWHI. Similarly, the career consequences moderated relationship between flexibility CWAs responses to requests and NWHI increased to significance, with imputed data.

#### **4.3.2 Testing validity of scale measures – Work–life (flexibility) culture**

The Work–Life (Flexibility) Culture Scale was tested for validity using several measures, on account of its basis as a newer Australian adaptation (Bradley et al., 2010) of an established American work–life culture measure (Thompson et al., 1999). Tests of validity were conducted on the imputed dataset. Both exploratory (EFA), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) assessed discriminant and construct validity of the scale’s underlying structure (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010) (see Appendices G and H).

#### **4.3.3 Group differences in individual and business outcomes based on responses to requests for flexibility and developmental customised work arrangements**

This subsection answers the second research question by addressing each of its respective hypotheses (see Table 2.1), which are noted prior to each analysis. The bolded arrows shown in the research model (Figure 4.14) indicate the analyses tested in this section. First, between-groups and within-groups differences were tested on responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs with PWHI and NWHI (Geurts et al., 2005) (see subsection 1). Following on, differences between groups and within groups were tested on responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs with work engagement (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004) (see subsection 2).



Research questions (RQ) 1 to 3 depicted in the research model. Arrows denote relations tested.

Figure 4.14. Research model reflecting research questions and variables examined.

***Subsection 1: Group differences in individual outcomes based on responses to requests for flexibility and developmental customised work***

Research Subquestion 2 was: ‘*What are the individual and business-related impacts of different “responses to requests” (approved, partially approved, denied)?*’

The first part of Research Subquestion 2 is addressed in Hypotheses 1 to 4, by assessing whether responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs affect PWHI and NWHI.

***Hypothesis 1: Employees with fully granted requests for flexibility customised work (CWAs) will be more likely to report higher levels of positive work–home interaction (PWHI) than those whose requests were partly granted, and/or denied completely.***

A one-way ANOVA with post hoc comparisons tested the mean differences between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs on PWHI. The one-way ANOVA demonstrated statistically significant differences in participants’ PWHI scores, based on how their employers responded to requests for flexibility CWAs,  $F(2, 770) = 15.79, p <$



.001 (see Table 4.6). However, despite reaching statistical significance, actual differences in mean scores on PWHI between the groups was quite small, with a low effect size,  $\eta^2 = .041$  (Cohen, 1988).

Table 4.6.

Comparisons Between Flexibility CWA Responses to Requests With Negative Work–Home Interaction, Positive Work–Home Interaction and Work Engagement

Dependent variable	Request responses	N	Mean	SD	95% CI [LL, UL]	Within group comparisons between responses to requests		
						Fully granted and partly granted	Partly granted and declined	Fully granted and declined
					<i>p</i> , [95% CI; LL, UL]	<i>p</i> , [95% CI; LL, UL]	<i>p</i> , [95% CI; LL, UL]	
Positive work–home interaction – <i>BG</i> - $F(2, 770) = 15.79, p < .001, \eta^2 = .041, 4.1\%$ variance						.168, [-.03, .22]	.002**, [.06, .36]	.000***, [.17, .44]
	Fully granted	387	1.31	0.63	[1.25, 1.37]			
	Partly granted	218	1.21	0.57	[1.14, 1.29]			
	Declined	168	1.00	0.54	[0.92, 1.08]			
Negative work–home interaction – <i>BG</i> - $F(2, 770) = 39.22, p < .001, \eta^2 = .092, 9.2\%$ variance						.020*, [-.26, -.02]	.000***, [-.48, -.19]	.000***, [-.60, -.34]
	Fully granted	387	0.75	0.50	[0.70, 0.80]			
	Partly granted	218	0.89	0.56	[0.81, 0.96]			
	Declined	168	1.22	0.74	[1.11, 1.33]			
Work engagement – <i>BG</i> - $F(2, 770) = 20.74, p < .001, \eta^2 = .054, 5.4\%$ variance						.051, [-.00, .37]	.001**, [.12, .57]	.000***, [.33, .73]
	Fully granted	387	3.95	0.85	[3.86, 4.03]			
	Partly granted	218	3.77	0.85	[3.65, 3.88]			
	Declined	168	3.42	1.01	[3.27, 3.58]			

Note. Separate one-way analyses of variance used for each dependent variable. Analyses used Scheffe's test for post hoc comparisons, due to unequal group sizes. Mean difference significant at the .05 level. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . *BG* = between groups comparison. CI = confidence interval. LL = lower level. UL = upper level.  $\eta^2$  = eta squared effect size, strength of relationship measure (strength of relationship; effect size low = .01-.05, medium = .06-.137, large =  $\geq .138$  [Cohen, 1988]). Positive and negative work-home interaction SWING scale (Geurts et al., 2005) was anchored with 0 (*never*) to 3 (*always*). Work engagement (UWES-9 (Shortened version) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) was anchored with 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). CWA = customised work arrangements. Fully granted (requests always granted), partly granted (requests partly granted at least once, but not declined), declined (requests declined at least once).

Post hoc comparisons using Scheffe's test revealed that employees whose requests for flexibility CWAs were fully granted ( $M = 1.31$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) and partly granted ( $M = 1.22$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ) had significantly higher levels of PWHI than employees whose requests were declined ( $M = 1.00$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ). However, there was no difference between employees whose requests for flexibility CWAs were fully granted and those whose requests were partly granted. (Table 4.6 shows full details of one-way ANOVAs, together with post hoc comparisons.)

In other words, the FinanceCo employees who had their flexibility CWA requests fully or partly granted had significantly higher levels of positive spillover effects from work to their home lives than those whose requests were declined. However, there was no difference between employees whose requests were fully granted and those whose requests were partly granted on positive spillover effects from work to their home lives. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was partly supported.

*Hypothesis 2: Employees fully granted requests for flexibility customised work (CWAs) will be more likely to report lower levels of negative work-home interaction (NWHI) than those whose requests were partly granted, and/or denied completely.*

A one-way ANOVA with post hoc comparisons tested the mean differences between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI. The one-way ANOVA demonstrated statistically significant differences in participants' NWHI scores, based on how their employers responded to requests for flexibility CWAs,  $F(2, 770) = 39.22$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Table 4.6). Despite reaching statistical significance, actual differences in mean scores between the groups were moderate, representing 9.2% variance, with a medium effect size,  $\eta^2 = .092$  (Cohen, 1988).

Post hoc comparisons, using Scheffe's test, revealed that employees whose requests for flexibility CWA were fully granted ( $M = 0.75$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) and partly granted

( $M = 0.89$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ) had significantly lower levels of NWHI than employees whose requests were declined ( $M = 1.22$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). Furthermore, employees whose requests for flexibility CWAs were fully granted had significantly lower NWHI than those whose requests were partly granted. (Table 4.6 shows full details of one-way ANOVAs, together with post hoc comparisons.)

In other words, the FinanceCo employees whose CWA requests were fully or partly granted had significantly lower negative spillover effects from work to their home lives than those whose requests were declined. Moreover, employees whose requests were fully granted had significantly less negative spillover effects from work to their home lives than employees whose requests were only partly granted. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

*Hypothesis 3: Employees fully granted requests for developmental customised work (CWAs) will be more likely to report higher levels of positive work-home interaction (PWHI) than those whose requests were partly granted and/or denied completely.*

A one-way ANOVA with post hoc comparisons tested differences between mean responses to requests for developmental CWAs on PWHI. The one-way ANOVA demonstrated statistically significant group differences in PWHI, based on responses to requests for developmental CWAs,  $F(2, 642) = 11.78$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Table 4.7). Despite reaching statistical significance, actual differences in mean scores between the groups were quite small and represented 3.7% variance, with a low effect size,  $\eta^2 = .037$  (Cohen, 1988).

Post hoc comparisons, using Scheffe's test, revealed that employees whose requests for developmental CWAs were fully granted ( $M = 1.34$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) and partly granted ( $M = 1.23$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ) had significantly higher levels of PWHI than employees whose requests were declined ( $M = 1.02$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). However, there was no difference

between employees whose requests for developmental CWAs were fully granted and those whose requests were partly granted, on levels of PWHI (Table 4.7 shows full details of one-way ANOVAs, together with post hoc comparisons). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partly supported.

Table 4.7.

*Comparisons Between Developmental CWA Responses to Requests With Negative Work–Home Interaction, Positive Work–Home Interaction and Work Engagement*

Dependent variable	<i>Request responses</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% CI [LL, UL]	Within group comparisons between responses to requests			
						<i>Fully granted and partly granted</i>	<i>Partly granted and declined</i>	<i>Fully granted and declined</i>	
					<i>p</i> , 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>p</i> , 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>p</i> , 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>p</i> , 95% CI [LL, UL]	
Positive work-home interaction	– <i>BG</i> - $F(2, 642) = 11.78, p < .001, \eta^2 = .037, 3.7\%$ variance					.080, [-.01, .24]	.011*, [.038, .38]	.000***, [.16, .49]	
	Fully granted	297	1.34	0.62	[1.27, 1.41]				
	Partly granted	242	1.23	0.57	[1.15, 1.30]				
	Declined	106	1.02	0.57	[0.91, 1.13]				
Negative work-home interaction	– <i>BG</i> - $F(2, 642) = 19.49, p < .001, \eta^2 = .057, 5.7\%$ variance					.004**, [-.29, -.04]	.003**, [-.40, -.07]	.000***, [-.56, -.24]	
	Fully granted	297	0.76	0.53	[0.70, 0.82]				
	Partly granted	242	0.93	0.58	[0.85, 1.00]				
	Declined	106	1.16	0.69	[1.03, 1.29]				
Work engagement	– <i>BG</i> - $F(2, 642) = 14.20, p < .001, \eta^2 = .042, 4.2\%$ variance					.041*, [.01, .39]	.006**, [.08, .60]	.000***, [.29, .79]	
	Fully granted	297	3.99	0.88	[3.89, 4.09]				
	Partly granted	242	3.79	0.81	[3.69, 3.89]				
	Declined	106	3.45	1.16	[3.22, 3.67]				

*Note.* *BG* = between groups comparison. CI = confidence interval. LL = lower level. UL = upper level.  $\eta^2$  = eta squared effect size, strength of relationship measure (strength of relationship; effect size low = .01-.05, medium = .06-.137, large =  $\geq .138$  ([Cohen, 1988])). Positive and negative work-home interaction SWING scale (Geurts et al., 2005) was anchored with “never” (0) to “always” (3). Work engagement (UWES-9 (Shortened version) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) was anchored with 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). CWA = customised work arrangements: Fully granted (requests always granted), partly granted (requests partly granted at least once, but not declined), declined (requests declined at least once).

Separate one-way analyses of variance used for each dependent variable. Analyses used Scheffe’s test for post hoc comparisons, due to unequal group sizes. Mean difference significant at the .05 level. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

*Hypothesis 4: Employees fully granted requests for developmental customised work (CWAs) will be more likely to report lower levels of negative work–home interaction (NWHI) than those whose requests were partly granted and/or denied completely.*

A one-way ANOVA with post hoc comparisons tested differences between mean scores on developmental CWA responses to requests and NWHI. The one-way ANOVA demonstrated significant differences in participants' NWHI scores, based on how their employers responded to requests for developmental CWAs,  $F(2, 642) = 19.49, p < .001$  (see Table 4.7). Despite reaching statistical significance, actual differences in mean scores between the groups were quite small, representing 5.7% variance with a low-to-medium effect size,  $\eta^2 = .057$  (Cohen, 1988).

Post hoc comparisons, using Scheffé's test, revealed that employees whose requests for developmental CWAs were fully granted ( $M = 0.76, SD = 0.53$ ) and partly granted ( $M = 0.93, SD = 0.58$ ) had significantly lower levels of NWHI than employees whose requests were declined ( $M = 1.16, SD = 0.69$ ). Furthermore, employees whose requests for developmental CWA were fully granted had significantly lower NWHI than those whose requests were partly granted. (Table 4.7 shows full details of one-way ANOVAs, together with post hoc comparisons.)

In other words, the FinanceCo employees whose requests for developmental CWAs were fully or partly granted had significantly lower negative spillover effects from work to their home lives than those whose requests were declined. Moreover, employees whose requests were fully granted had significantly fewer negative spillover effects from work to their home lives than employees who only had part of their requests granted. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was fully supported.

***Subsection 2: Group differences in business outcomes based on responses to requests for flexibility and developmental customised work***

The second part of Research Subquestion 2 is answered in Hypotheses 5 and 6, addressing the impact of responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs on business-related outcomes, operationalised as work engagement.

*Hypothesis 5: Employees fully granted requests for flexibility customised work (CWAs) will be more likely to report higher levels of engagement at work than those whose requests were partly granted and/or denied completely.*

A one-way ANOVA with post hoc comparisons tested mean differences in engagement, based on responses to requests for flexibility CWAs. The one-way ANOVA demonstrated statistically significant differences in participants' work engagement scores, based on how their employers responded to requests for flexibility CWAs  $F(2, 770) = 20.74, p < .001$  (see Table 4.6). Despite reaching statistical significance, actual differences in mean scores between the groups were quite small, representing 5.4% of variance with a low effect size,  $\eta^2 = .054$  (Cohen, 1988).

Post hoc comparisons, using Scheffe's test, revealed that employees whose requests for flexibility CWAs were fully granted ( $M = 3.95, SD = 0.85$ ) and partly granted ( $M = 3.77, SD = 0.85$ ) had significantly higher levels of work engagement than employees whose requests were declined ( $M = 3.42, SD = 1.01$ ). However, there was no difference between employees whose requests for flexibility CWAs were fully granted and those whose requests were partly granted on levels of engagement. (Table 4.6 shows full details of one-way ANOVAs, together with post hoc comparisons.) Thus, Hypothesis 5 was partly supported.



*Hypothesis 6: Employees fully granted requests for developmental customised work (CWAs) will be more likely to report higher levels of being engaged at work than those whose requests were partly granted and/or denied completely.*

A one-way ANOVA with post hoc comparisons tested mean differences in engagement, based on responses to requests for developmental CWAs. The one-way ANOVA demonstrated statistically significant differences in participants' work engagement scores, based on how their employers responded to requests for developmental CWAs  $F(2, 642) = 14.20, p < .001$  (see Table 4.7). Despite reaching statistical significance, actual differences in mean scores between the groups were quite small, representing 4.2% variance with a low effect size,  $\eta^2 = .042$  (Cohen, 1988).

Post hoc comparisons, using Scheffe's test, revealed that employees whose requests for developmental CWAs were fully granted ( $M = 3.99, SD = 0.88$ ) and partly granted ( $M = 3.79, SD = 0.81$ ) had significantly higher levels of work engagement than employees whose requests were declined ( $M = 3.45, SD = 1.16$ ). Furthermore, employees whose requests for developmental CWAs were fully granted were significantly more engaged than those whose requests were partly granted. (Table 4.7 shows full details of one-way ANOVAs, together with post hoc comparisons.)

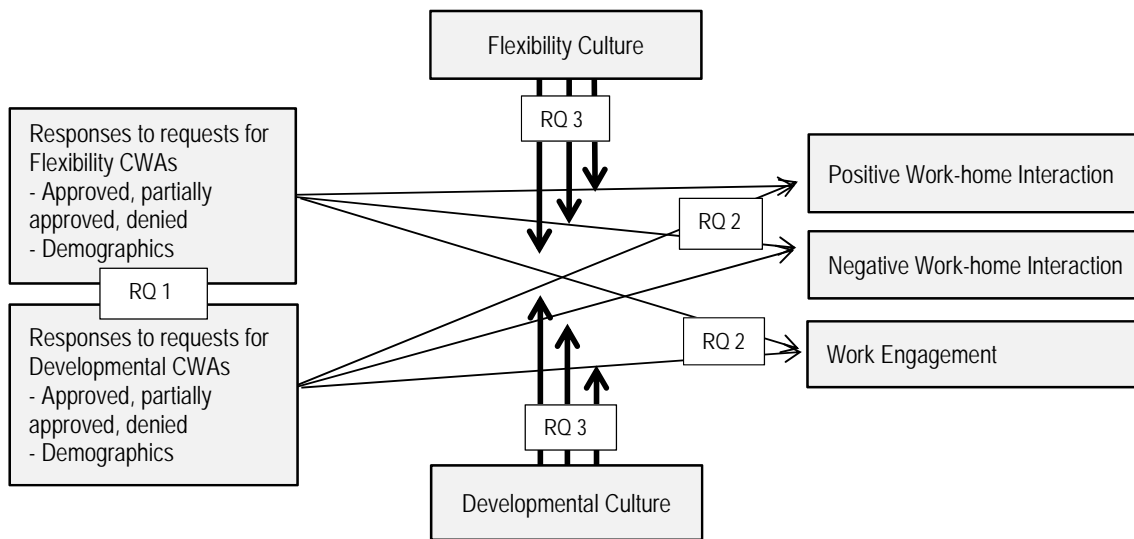
In other words, the FinanceCo employees whose requests for developmental CWAs were fully granted were significantly more engaged at work than those whose requests were declined. Moreover, employees whose requests were fully granted were more engaged at work than employees who had only part of their requests granted. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was fully supported.

#### **4.4 PHASE 3 – INFERENCE ANALYSES – MODERATING INFLUENCE OF WORKPLACE CULTURES ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR CWA WITH INDIVIDUAL AND BUSINESS-RELATED OUTCOMES**

Research Subquestion 3: *‘What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between “responses to requests” for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?’*

Results for the third stage of analysis answer the third research subquestion. The next subsections detail findings of inferential analyses that tested the moderating influence of workplace cultures on relationships between responses to requests for CWAs and individual and business-related outcomes.

This section explicitly answers the third research question by addressing each of its respective hypotheses (see Table 2.1), which are articulated before each analysis. In all, results that follow Hypotheses 7 to 12 are presented under their own subheadings. The research model, shown in Figure 4.15, illustrates the relationships tested in relation to research subquestions. Bolded arrows indicate analyses tested in this section.



Bolded arrows denote relationships examined in the following four subsections.

Figure 4.15. Research model reflecting research questions and variables examined.

The third phase of analysis (section 4.4) is structured around four main subsections outlined below, ordered respectively as: work–life flexibility culture influences on relationships between flexibility CWA responses to requests and individual (section 4.4.1) and business-related (section 4.4.2) outcomes, followed by developmental culture influences on relationships between developmental CWA responses to requests and individual (section 4.4.3) and business-related (section 4.4.4) outcomes.

The first subsection (section 4.4.1) presents statistical analyses for moderated relationships on individual outcomes, PWHI and NWHI. Each relationship between flexibility CWAs responses to requests and outcome variables (previously examined in the second stage of analysis) was further analysed for moderating influences of flexibility culture dimensions. All flexibility culture subscales were used as moderating variables. These include: organisational and managerial support, time demands, career consequences, coworker support and coworker support – revised (Bradley et al., 2010).

Each flexibility culture subscale was applied separately as a moderating variable examining the influence of each flexibility cultural dimension on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and individual outcomes.

The first subsection describes the moderating influences of flexibility culture subscales on relationships between the independent variable (IV) and dependent variables (DV). The first sequence of findings is the result of moderated relationships that tested the influence of work–life (flexibility) culture on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs with work–home interaction; the first set of analyses tested PWHI (section 4.4.1), and the second set of analyses tested NWHI (section 4.4.1). Both sets of moderation analyses were replicated with control variables.

The second subsection (section 4.4.2) analysed the moderating influences of flexibility culture subscales dimensions on relationships between the IV and DVs; that is, the moderated relationships that tested the influence that work–life (flexibility) culture has on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility customised work arrangements (CWAs) and work engagement (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004). Next, the moderation analysis was replicated with control variables.

The third subsection (section 4.4.3) analysed the moderating influences of developmental culture on the relationships between the IV and DVs. The second sequence of findings is the result of moderated relationships that tested the influence of developmental culture on relationships between responses to requests for developmental customised work arrangements (CWAs) and PWHI (section 4.4.3) and NWHI (Geurts et al., 2005) (section 4.4.3), respectively. Both moderation analyses were replicated with control variables.

The fourth subsection (section 4.4.4) analysed the moderating influences of developmental culture on relationships between the IV and DVs, that is, the moderated

relationships that tested the influence of developmental culture on relationships between responses to requests for developmental customised work arrangements (CWAs) and work engagement (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004). Next, the moderation analysis was replicated with control variables.

#### **4.4.1 Section 1: The moderating influence of flexibility culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for flexibility customised work and individual outcomes**

Research Subquestion 3: *‘What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between ‘responses to requests’ for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?’*

The first part of Research Subquestion 3 is answered in Hypotheses 7 and 8, addressing the moderating influence of flexibility culture on the relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and individual outcomes, operationalised as PWHI and NWHI.

##### ***Subsection 1: The moderating influence of flexibility culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for flexibility customised work and positive work–home interaction***

*Hypothesis 7: A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and positive work–home interaction (PWHI), such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive flexibility cultures.*

To test this hypothesis, each flexibility culture dimension was taken as a separate moderator, to test the influence of each aspect of flexibility culture on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and PWHI. Additionally, gender and parent status were added as control variables (as Step 1) to moderation analyses.

Results of moderation analyses are presented in Tables 4.8 to 4.12, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared semipartial correlations,  $sr^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step. Tables 4.8 to 4.12 also report the F test for each step, the change in variance ( $R^2$  change, i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with that step, and the final variance. To avoid multicollinearity or singularity, mean-centred versions of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and moderator variables were entered in the second step of the regression analysis. The  $\Delta R^2$  for each step in the model is located at the top of the table.

The Tables 4.8 to 4.12 show that for each dimension of flexibility culture (manager and organisation support, time demands, career consequences, coworker support, coworker support – revised), none were significant moderators of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and PWHI. With gender and parent status ‘statistically removed’ from the analyses as potential influencers, the presence of work–life flexibility culture at FinanceCo did not alter employees’ experiences of PWHI, dependent on responses to requests for flexibility CWAs. Thus, Hypothesis 7 was not supported. Stated simply, support for or hindrance of the work–life flexibility culture did not influence employees’ experiences of PWHI in addition to the impact of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs.

The first of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested Organisation and manager support as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and PWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for none ( $R^2 = 0$ ) of variability in PWHI (see Table 4.8). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and organisational and manager support) together accounted for 11.2% ( $R^2 = .112$ ) of

variability in PWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.8) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 1.744$ , *ns*, accounting for an additional 0.2% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .002$ ) of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 11.4% of the variability in PWHI,  $R^2 = .114$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .107$ ,  $F(5,637) = 16.465$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, organisational and managerial support was not a significant moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI.

Table 4.8.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Positive Work–Home Interaction Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture – Organisation and Manager Support

Variables added in each block	Positive work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.000, $F(2, 640) = 0.03$ , <i>ns.</i>					.112, $F(2, 638) = 40.10$ , $p < .001$ .					.002, $F(1, 637) = 1.74$ , <i>ns.</i>				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		-.01	.05	-.01		.02	.05	.02			.03	.05	.02		
Parent status (no/yes)		.02	.05	.02		.00	.05	.00			.00	.05	.00		
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.07	.03	-.09*	.01		-.08	.03	-.10*	.01	
Org. & mgr support						.18	.03	.29***	.07		.19	.03	.30***	.07	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Org. & mgr support											-.04	.03	-.05		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.092, $F(2, 770) = 38.99$ , $p < .001$ .					.001, $F(1, 769) = 0.44$ , <i>ns.</i>									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.07	.03	-.09*	.01	-.07	.03	-.10*	.01						
Org. & mgr support		.16	.02	.25***	.05	.16	.02	.26***	.05						
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
× Org. & mgr support						-.02	.03	-.02							

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .114$ , Adj  $R^2 = .107$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 16.47$ ,  $p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .092$ , Adj  $R^2 = .089$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 26.12$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



The second of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested time expectations as a moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for none ( $R^2 = 0$ ) of variability in PWHI (see Table 4.9). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (flexibility CWA request responses and time expectations) together accounted for 6% ( $R^2 = .060$ ) of variability in PWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.9) with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 0.424, ns$ , accounting for an additional 0.1% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .001$ ) of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 6.1% of the variability in PWHI,  $R^2 = .061$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .054$ ,  $F(5,637) = 8.274, p < .001$ . Thus, time expectations was not a significant moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI.

Table 4.9.

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Positive Work–Home Interaction Moderated By Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Time Expectations*

Variables added in each block	Positive work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.00, $F(2, 640) = 0.13$ , <i>ns.</i>					.06 $F(2, 638) = 20.35$ , $p < .001$ .					.001, $F(1, 637) = .42$ , <i>ns.</i>				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		-.01	.05	-.01		.00	.05	.00			.00	.05	.00		
Parent status (no/yes)		.02	.05	.02		.02	.05	.01			.02	.05	.01		
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.14	.03	-.18***	.03		-.15	.03	-.18***	.03	
Time expectations						-.06	.02	-.13**	.02		-.061	.02	-.13**	.02	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA $\times$ Time expectations											.02	.02	.03		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.06, $F(2, 770) = 22.45$ , $p < .001$ .					.001, $F(1, 769) = 0.82$ , <i>ns.</i>									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.12	.03	-.16***	.02		-.13	.03	-.17***	.03					
Time expectations		-.06	.02	-.14***	.02		-.07	.02	-.14***	.02					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
$\times$ Time expectations							.02	.02	.03	.00					

*Note.* Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with steps 1 through to 3, Total  $R^2 = .061$ , Adj  $R^2 = .054$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 8.27$   $p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses, Total  $R^2 = .056$ , Adj  $R^2 = .052$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 15.24$ , *ns.* RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The third of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested career consequences as a moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for none ( $R^2 = 0$ ) of variability in PWHI (see Table 4.10). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (flexibility CWA request responses and career consequences) together accounted for 6.7% ( $R^2 = .067$ ) of variability in PWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.10) with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 1.787, ns$ , accounting for an additional 0.3% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .003$ ) of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 6.1% of the variability in PWHI,  $R^2 = .070$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .062$ ,  $F(5,637) = 9.532, p < .001$ . Thus, career consequences was not a significant moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI.

Table 4.10.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Positive Work–Home Interaction Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Career Consequences

Variables added in each block	Positive work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.00, $F(2, 640) = 0.13$ , <i>ns.</i>					.07, $F(2, 638) = 22.77$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = 1.79$ , <i>ns.</i>				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		-.01	.05	-.01			-.01	.05	-.00			-.00	.05	-.00	
Parent status (no/yes)		.02	.05	.02			.02	.05	.01			.02	.05	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR							-.14	.03	-.17***	.03		-.15	.03	-.18***	.03
Career consequences							-.08	.02	-.15***	.03		-.08	.02	-.15***	.02
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Career consequences												.03	.03	.05	
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.06, $F(2, 770) = 26.09$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 769) = 1.82$ , <i>ns.</i>									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.12	.03	-.16***	.02		-.13	.03	-.17***	.03					
Career consequences		-.09	.02	-.17***	.03		-.09	.02	-.17***	.03					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
× Career consequences							.03	.02	.05						

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .070$ , Adj  $R^2 = .062$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 9.53$ ,  $p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .066$ , Adj  $R^2 = .062$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 18.02$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The fourth of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested coworker support as a moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for none ( $R^2 = 0$ ) of variability in PWHI (see Table 4.11). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (flexibility CWA request responses and coworker support) together accounted for 7% ( $R^2 = .070$ ) of variability in PWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.11) with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 2.952, ns$ , accounting for an additional 0.4% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .004$ ) of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 7.5% of the variability in PWHI,  $R^2 = .075$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .068$ ,  $F(5,637) = 10.341, p < .001$ . Thus, coworker support was not a significant moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI.

Table 4.11.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Positive Work–Home Interaction Moderated By Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Coworker Support

Variables added in each block	Positive work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.00, $F(2, 640) = 0.13, ns.$					.07, $F(2, 638) = 24.16, p < .001.$					.00, $F(1, 637) = 2.95, ns.$				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		-.01	.05	-.01			.01	.05	.01			.01	.05	.01	
Parent status (no/yes)		.02	.05	.02			.02	.05	.02			.02	.05	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR							-.14	.03	-.17***	.03		-.15	.03	-.19***	.03
Coworker support							.10	.02	.16***	.03		.10	.02	.16***	.03
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Coworker support												-.05	.03	-.07	
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.06, $F(2, 770) = 23.82, p < .001.$					.00, $F(1, 769) = 0.01, ns.$									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.12	.03	-.16***	.03		-.12	.03	-.16***	.03					
Coworker support		.09	.02	.15***	.02		.09	.02	.15***	.02					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
× Coworker support							.00	.00	-.00						

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .075$ , Adj  $R^2 = .068$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 10.34, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .058$ , Adj  $R^2 = .055$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 15.86, p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The fifth moderation, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested coworker support – revised as a moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for none ( $R^2 = 0$ ) of variability in PWHI (see Table 4.12). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (flexibility CWA request responses and coworker support – revised) together accounted for 5.9% ( $R^2 = .059$ ) of variability in PWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.12) with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 1.385$ , *ns*, accounting for an additional 0.2% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .002$ ) of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 6.1% of the variability in PWHI,  $R^2 = .061$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .054$ ,  $F(5,637) = 8.336$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, coworker support – revised was not a significant moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and PWHI.

Table 4.12.

*Results for the Hierarchical Multiple Regression With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) With Positive Work–Home Interaction and Moderator Work–Life Flexibility Culture – Coworker Support – Revised*

Variables added in each block	Positive work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.00, $F(2, 640) = 0.13$ , <i>ns.</i>					.06, $F(2, 638) = 20$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = 1.39$ , <i>ns.</i>				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		-.01	.05	-.01		.00	.05	.00			.01	.05	.00		
Parent status (no/yes)		.02	.05	.02		.02	.05	.02			.02	.05	.02		
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.16	.03	-.20***	.04		-.16	.03	-.20***	.04	
Coworker support – revised						.06	.02	.12**	.01		.06	.02	.12**	.01	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Coworker support – revised											-.03	.03	-.05		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.05, $F(2, 754) = 18.09$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 753) = 1.15$ , <i>ns.</i>									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.13	.03	-.17***	.03	-.13	.03	-.17***	.03						
Coworker support – revised		.06	.02	.12**	.01	.06	.02	.12**	.01						
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
× Coworker support – revised						-.03	.02	-.04							

*Note.* Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .061$ , Adj  $R^2 = .054$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 8.34$ , *ns.* Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .047$ , Adj  $R^2 = .043$ , Final model,  $F(3, 753) = 12.44$ , *ns.* RR = request responses. Coworker support – revised comprises items 20 and 22.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



***Subsection 2: Moderated relationships – The moderating influence of flexibility culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for flexibility customised work and negative work–home interaction***

Prior research suggests workplaces with positive *flexibility cultures* are likely to improve existing relationships between responses to requests for flexibility at work and work–life conflict. Where employees’ requests are responded to positively within the constraints of the workplace culture, employees are more likely to be able to integrate work and nonwork responsibilities, thereby reducing work-to-life conflict (Andreassi & Thompson, 2008). However, influences of workplace culture on the broader range of CWAs, which is tested in this thesis, has not been previously examined. Gender and parent status also feature in the flexible work, work–life flexibility culture (Beauregard & Henry, 2009) and NWHI (Geurts et al., 2005) literature; thus, the following hypothesis is tested.

*Hypothesis 8: A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and negative work–home interaction (NWHI), such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive flexibility cultures.*

In testing the hypothesis, each flexibility culture dimension is taken as a separate moderator, to test their influences on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI. Additionally, gender and parent status were added as control variables (as Step 1) to moderation analyses. To avoid multicollinearity or singularity, mean-centred versions of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and flexibility culture variables were entered in the third step of the regression analysis.

Results of moderation analyses are presented in Tables 4.13 to 4.17, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared

semipartial correlations,  $sr^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step. Tables 4.13 to 4.17 also report the F test for each step, the change in variance ( $R^2$  change, i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with that step, and the final variance. Tables 4.13 to 4.17 show that only organisational and managerial support significantly moderated the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI (see Table 4.2). A robustness test for this analysis is provided in Appendix J.

To test the hypothesis that work–life flexibility culture (organisational and managerial support dimension) moderates the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed. The results of the three steps are shown in Table 4.13. To avoid multicollinearity or singularity, mean-centred versions of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and organisational and managerial support variables were entered in the second step of the regression analysis. The  $\Delta R^2$  for each step in the model is located at the top of the table. The  $R^2$  for the model was large and significant,  $R^2 = .275$   $F(5, 637) = 48.25$ ,  $p < .001$ . The adjusted  $R^2$  was .269, and indicates that more than a quarter of the variability in employees' NWHI was accounted for by the variables. Specifically, control variables in Model 1 explained 0.1% of the variance (small nonsignificant effect). The second set of predictors in Model 2 at Step 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and organisational and managerial support) together added 25.1% (large effect). In Model 3 the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 14.42$ ,  $p < .001$ , accounting for an additional 1.6% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .016$ ), which was a significant (small effect) increase of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. Thus, organisational and managerial support was a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI.

Table 4.13.

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Negative Work–Home Interaction Moderated By Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Organisation And Manager Support*

Variables added in each block	Negative work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 640) = 2.28$ , <i>ns.</i>					.25, $F(2, 638) = 108.03$ , $p < .001$ .					.02, $F(1, 637) = 14.42$ , $p < .001$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.06	.05	.05		.01	.04	.01			.01	.04	.01		
Parent status (no/yes)		.09	.05	.07		.12	.04	.09**	.01		.12	.04	.10**	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						.10	.03	.13**	.01		.09	.03	.11**	.01	
Org. & mgr support						-.27	.02	-.44***	.15		-.24	.02	-.40***	.12	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA $\times$ Org. & mgr support											-.10	.03	-.14***	.02	
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.24, $F(2, 770) = 123.67$ , $p < .001$ .					.01, $F(1, 769) = 13.88$ , $p < .001$ .									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		.10	.03	.13***	.01		.08	.03	.11**	.01					
Org. & mgr support		-.27	.02	-.43***	.17		-.24	.02	-.40***	.13					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA RR $\times$ Org. & mgr support							-.09	.02	-.12***	.01					

*Note.* Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .275$ , Adj  $R^2 = .269$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 48.25$ ,  $p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .257$ , Adj  $R^2 = .254$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 88.45$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

The relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI varies with the level of organisational and managerial support, and is illustrated in Figure 4.16 at low (-1 SD), mean, and high (+1 SD) levels.

A follow-up test with simple slopes analysis was conducted using Johnson-Neyman analysis via PROCESS custom dialogue (Hayes, 2012). It was demonstrated that there was a significant positive relationship between declined responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI for employees, with organisational and managerial support scores of 5.2811 ( $b = .0652$ , 95% CI [.00, .13]  $t = 1.96$ ,  $p = .05$ ) or lower.

Simple slopes analysis shows that there is a significant positive relationship between declined responses to flexibility CWAs requests and NWHI for employees with organisational and managerial support at low levels, but not at high levels (see Figure 4.16).

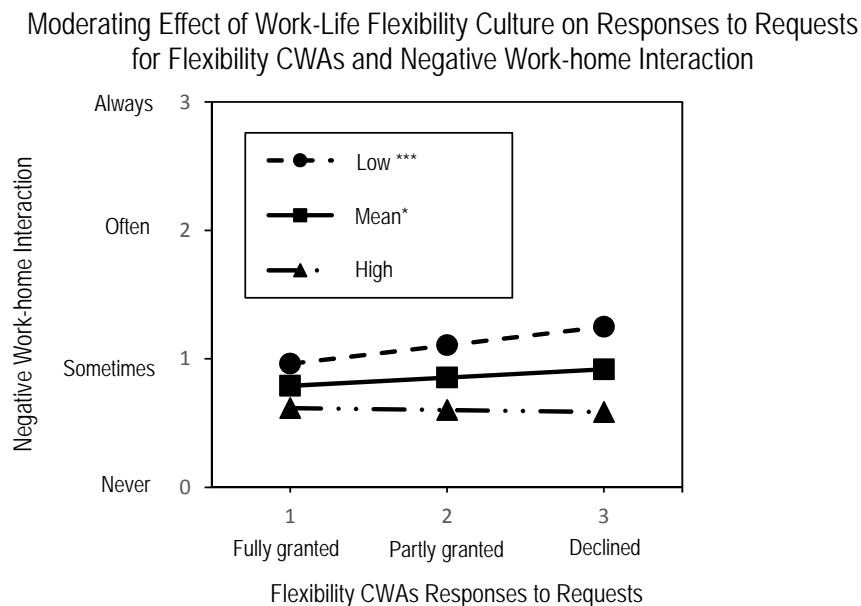


Figure 4.16. Simple slopes graph illustrating the moderating effect of organisational and managerial support dimension of work–life flexibility culture on the request responses to flexibility CWAs – negative work–home interaction relation at low (-1 SD), mean and high (+1 SD) levels of organisational and managerial support. \*denotes  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

For employees with organisational and managerial support scores above 5.28 (5 = *agree somewhat*) (see Figure 4.16), declined responses to requests for flexibility CWAs did not result in higher levels of NWHI (i.e., employees did not react to declined responses to requests for flexibility CWAs with increased work–life conflict if they believed they had the support of their organisation and managers). Thus, Hypothesis 8 was partially supported.

Stated simply, employees who were aligned with organisation and manager support for work–life flexibility culture experienced less NWHI when they were declined requests for flexibility CWAs.

The second of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested time expectations as a moderator of the relationship between Flexibility CWA request responses and NWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 0.7% ( $R^2 = .007$ ) of variability in NWHI (see Table 4.14). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (flexibility CWA request responses and time expectations) together accounted for 23.3% ( $R^2 = .233$ ) of variability in NWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.14) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 3.17$ , *ns*, accounting for an additional 0.4% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .004$ ) of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 24.3% of the variability in NWHI,  $R^2 = .243$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .238$ ,  $F(5,637) = 40.99$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, time expectations was not a significant moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and NWHI.

Table 4.14.

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Negative Work–Home Interaction Moderated By Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Time Expectations*

Variables added in each block	Negative work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 640) = 2.28, ns.$					.23, $F(2, 638) = 97.59, p < .001.$					.00, $F(1, 637) = 3.17, ns.$				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.06	.05	.05		.04	.04	.03			.04	.04	.03		
Parent status (no/yes)		.09	.05	.07		.10	.04	.08*	.01		.10	.04	.08*	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						.17	.03	.21***	.04		.16	.03	.20***	.03	
Time expectations						.18	.02	.38***	.13		.18	.02	.38***	.13	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA $\times$ Time expectations											.04	.02	.06		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.22, $F(2, 770) = 106.09, p < .001.$					.00, $F(1, 769) = 3.21, ns.$									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		.15	.03	.20***	.04		.15	.03	.19***	.03					
Time expectations		.18	.02	.37***	.13		.17	.02	.37***	.13					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA RR $\times$ Time expectations							.03	.02	.06						

*Note.* Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .243$ , Adj  $R^2 = .238$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 40.99, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .219$ , Adj  $R^2 = .216$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 72.00, p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The third of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested career consequences as a moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and NWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 0.7% ( $R^2 = .007$ ) of variability in NWHI (see Table 4.15). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (flexibility CWA request responses and career consequences) together accounted for 18.5% ( $R^2 = .185$ ) of variability in NWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.15) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 0.001$ , *ns*, accounting for no additional ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .000$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 19.2% of the variability in NWHI,  $R^2 = .192$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .185$ ,  $F(5,637) = 30.225$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, career consequences was not a significant moderator of the relationship between Flexibility CWA request responses and NWHI.

Table 4.15.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Negative Work–Home Interaction Moderated By Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Career Consequences

Variables added in each block	Negative work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 640) = 2.28$ , <i>ns.</i>					.19, $F(2, 638) = 72.89$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = .00$ , <i>ns.</i>				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.06	.05	.05			.06	.05	.05			.06	.05	.05	
Parent status (no/yes)		.09	.05	.07			.10	.05	.08*	.01		.10	.05	.08*	.01
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR							.19	.03	.24***	.05		.19	.03	.24***	.05
Career consequences							.16	.02	.31***	.09		.16	.02	.31***	.09
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Career consequences												.00	.02	.00	
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.17, $F(2, 767) = 77.71$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 766) = 0.16$ , <i>ns.</i>									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		.18	.03	.23***	.05		.18	.03	.23***	.05					
Career consequences		.15	.02	.29***	.08		.15	.02	.29***	.08					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA RR × Career consequences							.009	.02	.01						

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .192$ , Adj  $R^2 = .185$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 30.23$ ,  $p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .169$ , Adj  $R^2 = .165$ , Final model,  $F(3, 766) = 51.81$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



The fourth of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested coworker support as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 0.7% ( $R^2 = .007$ ) of variability in NWHI (see Table 4.16). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (flexibility CWA request responses and coworker support) together accounted for 15.4% ( $R^2 = .154$ ) of variability in NWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.16) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = .68$ , *ns*, accounting for an additional 0.1% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .001$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 16.2% of the variability in NWHI,  $R^2 = .162$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .156$ ,  $F(5,637) = 24.65$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, coworker support was not a significant moderator of the relationship between flexibility CWA request responses and NWHI.

Table 4.16.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Negative Work–Home Interaction Moderated By Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Coworker Support

Variables added in each block	Negative Work-home Interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 640) = 2.28$ , <i>ns</i> .					.15, $F(2, 638) = 58.64$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = 0.68$ , <i>ns</i> .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.06	.05	.05		.04	.05	.03			.04	.05	.03		
Parent status (no/yes)		.09	.05	.07		.09	.05	.07*	.01		.09	.05	.07*	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						.21	.03	.26***	.06		.20	.03	.25***	.06	
Coworker support						-.15	.02	-.24***	.06		-.15	.02	-.24***	.06	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Coworker support											-.02	.03	-.03		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.14, $F(2, 766) = 61.59$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 765) = 0.19$ , <i>ns</i> .									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		.18	.03	.25***	.06		.18	.03	.24***	.06					
Coworker support		-.14	.02	-.23***	.05		-.14	.02	-.23***	.05					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA RR × Coworker support						-.01	.03	-.02							

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .162$ , Adj  $R^2 = .156$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 24.65$ ,  $p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .139$ , Adj  $R^2 = .135$ , Final model,  $F(3, 765) = 41.08$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The fifth of the moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested coworker support – revised as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 0.7% ( $R^2 = .007$ ) of variability in NWHI (see Table 4.17). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and coworker support – revised) together accounted for 11% ( $R^2 = .110$ ) of variability in NWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.17) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988, 1992). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 0.80, ns$ , accounting for an additional 0.1% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .001$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 11.8% of the variability in NWHI,  $R^2 = .118$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .111$ ,  $F(5,637) = 17.09, p < .001$ . Thus, coworker support – revised was not a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI.

Table 4.17.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) With Negative Work–Home Interaction Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Coworker Support – Revised

Variables added in each block	Negative work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 640) = 2.28, ns.$					.11, $F(2, 638) = 39.77, p < .001.$					.00, $F(1, 637) = 0.80, ns.$				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.06	.05	.05			.05	.05	.04			.05	.05	.04	
Parent status (no/yes)		.09	.05	.07			.09	.05	.07			.09	.05	.07	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR							.24	.03	.30***	.09		.24	.03	.30***	.09
Coworker support – revised							-.06	.02	-.11**	.01		-.06	.02	-.11**	.01
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA $\times$ Coworker support – revised												-.02	.03	-.03	
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.08, $F(2, 754) = 32.12, p < .001.$					.00, $F(1, 753) = 0.56, ns.$									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		.17	.02	.24***	.06		.17	.02	.24***	.06					
Coworker support – revised		-.06	.02	-.12**	.02		-.06	.02	-.12**	.01					
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA RR $\times$ Coworker support – revised							-.02	.02	-.03						

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .118$ , Adj  $R^2 = .111$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 17.09, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .079$ , Adj  $R^2 = .076$ , Final model,  $F(1, 753) = .45, ns$ . RR = request responses. Coworker support – revised comprises items 20 and 22.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### **4.4.2 Section 2: The moderating influence of flexibility culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for flexibility customised work and business-related outcomes**

Research Subquestion 3: *‘What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between “responses to requests” for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?’*

The second part of Research Subquestion 3 is answered in Hypothesis 9, addressing the moderating influence of flexibility culture on the relationships between ‘responses to requests’ for flexibility CWAs and business-related outcomes, operationalised as work engagement.

##### ***Subsection 1: The moderating influence of flexibility culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for flexibility customised work and work engagement***

Prior research suggests that workplaces with positive *flexibility cultures* are likely to improve existing relationships between responses to requests for flexibility at work and engagement at work (Fursman & Zodgekar, 2009b). Where employees’ requests are positively responded to within the constraints of the workplace culture, employees are more likely to be satisfied at work, which enables engagement with their work (Abraham, 2012). However, the influence of workplace culture on the broader range of CWAs, which is tested in this thesis, has not been previously examined. Furthermore, gender and parent status, used as control variables, are key features in research on flexible work and work–life flexibility culture (Beauregard & Henry, 2009), as is the DV examined here, work engagement (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004). Thus the following hypothesis is tested.

*Hypothesis 9: A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive flexibility cultures.*

Results of moderation analyses are presented in Tables 4.18 to 4.22, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared semipartial correlations,  $sr^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step. The tables also report the F test for each step, the change in variance ( $R^2$  change, i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with that step, and the final variance.

The Tables 4.18 to 4.22 show that for each dimension of flexibility culture, while controlling for gender and parent status, which accounted for 1.4% of the variance (0.4% gender [*ns*], 1% parent status; *nonparent*,  $p = .009$ , *sig*), none of the dimensions of work–life flexibility culture moderated the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement (further details of analyses are provided in Tables 4.18 to 4.22). Thus, Hypothesis 9 was not supported.

The relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement was not influenced by employees' perceptions of the organisation's or managers' support for work–life flexibility.

Stated simply, supportiveness or hindrance of work–life flexibility culture did not influence employees' engagement at work (vigour, dedication, and absorption), dependent on responses to requests for flexibility CWAs, after gender and parent status were controlled for.

The first of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested organisation and manager support as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 1.3% ( $R^2 = .013$ ) of variability in work engagement (see Table 4.18). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and organisation and manager support) together accounted for 10.1% ( $R^2 = .101$ ) of variability in work engagement, which was highly significant (see Table 4.18) with a medium

effect size (Cohen, 1992, 1988). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 632) = 0.013$ , *ns*, accounting for no additional ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .000$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 22.3% of the variability in work engagement,  $R^2 = .223$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .217$ ,  $F(5,637) = 36.63$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, organisation and manager support was not a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement.

The second of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested time expectations dimension as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 1.4% ( $R^2 = .014$ ) of variability in work engagement (see Table 4.19). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and time expectations) together accounted for 10.7% ( $R^2 = .107$ ) of variability in work engagement, which was highly significant (see Table 4.19) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1992, 1988). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = .430$ , *ns*, accounting for an additional .01% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .001$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 12.2% of the variability in work engagement,  $R^2 = .122$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .115$ ,  $F(5,637) = 17.67$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, time expectations was not a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement.

Table 4.18.

Results for the Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Work Engagement Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Organisation and Manager Support

Variables added in each block	Work engagement														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 635) = 4.28, p = .014$					.10, $F(2, 633) = 36.26, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 632) = 0.02, ns$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.11	.04	.01		.15	.07	.08*			.15	.07	.08*		
Parent status (no/yes)		-.19	.04	-.11*		-.18	.07	-.10**			-.18	.07	-.10*		
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.23	.05	-.19***			-.23	.05	-.19***		
Org. & mgr support						.19	.03	.22***			.19	.03	.22***		
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Org. & mgr support											-.01	.04	-.00		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.20, $F(2, 766) = 98.31, p < .001$ .					.01, $F(1, 765) = 5.42, p = .020$ .									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.05	.04	-.04		-.06	.04	-.05							
Org. & mgr support		.41	.03	.43***	.16	.44	.04	.46***	.16						
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
× Org. & mgr support						-.09	.04	-.08*	.01						

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3. Total  $R^2 = .223$ , Adj  $R^2 = .217$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 36.63, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .210$ , Adj  $R^2 = .207$ , Final model,  $F(3, 765) = 67.73, p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



Table 4.19.

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Work Engagement Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Time Expectations*

Variables added in each block	Work engagement														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 640) = 4.55, p = .009$ .					.11, $F(2, 638) = 38.90, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = 0.43, ns$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.12	.07	.07		.14	.07	.08*	.01		.14	.07	.08*	.01	
Parent status (no/yes)		.19	.07	.10**	.01	.18	.07	.10*	.01		.18	.07	.10*	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.21	.05	-.18***	.03		-.22	.05	-.18***	.03	
Time expectations						-.16	.03	-.23***	.05		-.16	.03	-.23***	.05	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA $\times$ Time expectations											.02	.03	.03		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.09, $F(2, 770) = 38.06, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 769) = 1.12, ns$ .									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.20	.04	-.17***	.03	-.20	.04	-.18***	.03						
Time expectations		-.15	.03	-.21***	.04	-.15	.03	-.21***	.04						
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
$\times$ Time expectations						.03	.03	.04							

*Note.* Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .122$ , Adj  $R^2 = .115$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 17.67, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .091$ , Adj  $R^2 = .088$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 25.75, p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The third of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested career consequences dimension as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 1.4% ( $R^2 = .014$ ) of variability in work engagement (see Table 4.20). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and career consequences) together accounted for 13.5% ( $R^2 = .135$ ) of variability in work engagement, which was highly significant (see Table 4.20) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1992, 1988). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 0.00$ , *ns*, accounting for no additional ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .000$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 14.9% of the variability in work engagement,  $R^2 = .149$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .142$ ,  $F(5,637) = 22.26$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, career consequences was not a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement.

Table 4.20.

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Work Engagement Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Career Consequences*

Variables added in each block	Work engagement														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 635) = 4.28, p = .014$ .					.14, $F(2, 638) = 50.47, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = 0.00, ns$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.12	.07	.07		.13	.07	.07			.13	.07	.07		
Parent status (no/yes)		.19	.07	.10**	.01	.18	.07	.10**	.01		.18	.07	.10**	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.20	.05	-.17***	.03		-.20	.05	-.17***	.02	
Career consequences						-.22	.03	-.29***	.08		-.22	.03	-.29***	.08	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA $\times$ Career consequences											-.00	.04	-.00		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.12, $F(2, 770) = 52.61, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 769) = 0.00, ns$ .									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.18	.04	-.16***	.03	-.19	.04	-.16***	.02						
Career consequences		-.21	.03	-.27***	.07	-.21	.03	-.27***	.07						
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
$\times$ Career consequences						.00	.03	.00							

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .149$ , Adj  $R^2 = .142$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 22.25, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .120$ , Adj  $R^2 = .117$ , Final model,  $F(3, 769) = 35.03, p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The fourth of five moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested coworker support dimension as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 1.4% ( $R^2 = .014$ ) of variability in work engagement (see Table 4.21). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and coworker support) together accounted for 10.2% ( $R^2 = .102$ ) of variability in work engagement, which was highly significant (see Table 4.21) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1992,1988). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = .03$ ,  $ns$ , accounting for no additional ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .000$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 11.6% of the variability in work engagement,  $R^2 = .116$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .109$ ,  $F(5,637) = 16.72$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, coworker support was not a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement.

Table 4.21.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Work Engagement Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Coworker Support

Variables added in each block	Work Engagement														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 635) = 4.28, p = .014$ .					.10, $F(2, 638) = 36.78, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = 0.03, ns$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.12	.07	.07		.15	.07	.08*	.01		.15	.07	.08*	.01	
Parent status (no/yes)		.19	.07	.10**	.01	.19	.07	.10**	.01		.19	.07	.10**	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.23	.05	-.19***	.03		-.23	.05	-.19***	.03	
Coworker support (4x items)						.19	.03	.22***	.04		.19	.03	.22***	.04	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Coworker support											-.01	.04	-.01		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.10, $F(2, 750) = 39.46, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 749) = 0.26, ns$ .									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.22	.04	-.19***	.04	-.22	.04	-.19***	.04						
Coworker support (4x items)		.19	.03	.21***	.04	.19	.03	.21***	.04						
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
× Coworker support (4x items)						-.02	.04	-.02							

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .116$ , Adj  $R^2 = .109$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 16.72, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .096$ , Adj  $R^2 = .092$ , Final model,  $F(3, 749) = 26.37, p < .001$ . RR = request responses. Coworker support (4x items) includes items 19, 20, 21 and 22. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The fifth of the moderations, which tested the influence of flexibility culture dimensions, tested coworker support – revised dimension as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 1.4% ( $R^2 = .014$ ) of variability in work engagement (see Table 4.22). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and coworker support – revised) together accounted for 6.9% ( $R^2 = .069$ ) of variability in work engagement, which was highly significant (see Table 4.22) with a small effect size (Cohen, 1992, 1988). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 637) = 0.00$ , *ns*, accounting for no additional ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .000$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 8.3% of the variability in work engagement,  $R^2 = .083$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .075$ ,  $F(5,637) = 11.48$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, coworker support – revised was not a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement.

Table 4.22.

Results for the Hierarchical Multiple Regression With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Work Engagement Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Coworker Support – Revised

Variables added in each block	Work engagement														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 635) = 4.28, p = .014$ .					.07, $F(2, 638) = 23.87, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 637) = 0.00, ns$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.12	.07	.07		.14	.07	.08*	.01		.14	.07	.08*	.01	
Parent status (no/yes)		.19	.07	.10**	.01	.19	.07	.10**	.01		.19	.07	.10**	.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR						-.27	.05	-.23***	.05		-.27	.05	-.23***	.05	
Coworker support – revised						.08	.03	.11**	.01		.08	.03	.11**	.01	
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Flex. CWA × Coworker support – revised											.00	.04	.00		
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.06, $F(2, 765) = 25.88, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 764) = 0.38, ns$ .									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Flex. CWA RR		-.24	.04	-.22***	.05	-.24	.04	-.22***	.05						
Coworker support – revised		.08	.03	.11*	.01	.08	.03	.11**	.01						
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
× Coworker support – revised						-.02	.03	-.02							

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use coworker variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .083$ , Adj  $R^2 = .075$ , Final model,  $F(5, 637) = 11.48, p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .064$ , Adj  $R^2 = .060$ , Final model,  $F(3, 764) = 17.37, p < .001$ . RR = request responses. Coworker support – revised includes items 20, and 22.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### **4.4.3 Section 3: The moderating influence of developmental culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for developmental customised work and individual outcomes**

Research Subquestion 3: *‘What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between “responses to requests” for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?’*

The first part of Research Subquestion 3 is answered in Hypotheses 10 and 11, addressing the moderating influence of developmental culture on the relationships between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and individual outcomes, operationalised as positive work–home interaction (PWHI) and negative work–home interaction (NWHI).

##### ***Subsection 1: The moderating influence of developmental culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for developmental customised work and positive work–home interaction***

Thus the following hypothesis is tested.

*Hypothesis 10: A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and positive work-home interaction (PWHI), such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive developmental cultures.*

To test this hypothesis, gender and parent status were added as control variables (as Step 1) to moderation analyses. Results of moderation analyses are presented in Table 4.23, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared semipartial correlations,  $sr^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step (see Table 4.23) Table 4.23 also reports the F test for each step, the change in variance ( $R^2$  change, i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with that step, and the final variance.



Table 4.23 shows that developmental culture did not significantly moderate the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and PWHI (further details of analyses are provided in Table 4.23). Thus, Hypothesis 10 was not supported.

Stated simply, supportiveness or hindrance of the developmental culture did not influence employees' PWHI in addition to the impact of responses to requests for developmental CWAs.

The moderation tested the influence of developmental culture as a moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and PWHI using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 0.1% ( $R^2 = .001$ ) of variability in PWHI (see Table 4.23). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (developmental CWA request responses and developmental culture) together accounted for 7.8% ( $R^2 = .078$ ) of variability in PWHI, which was highly significant (see Table 4.23) with a small effect size (Cohen, 1992, 1988). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 534) = 2.31, ns$ , accounting for an additional 0.4% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .004$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 8.3% of the variability in PWHI,  $R^2 = .083$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .074$ ,  $F(5,534) = 9.61, p < .001$ . Thus, developmental culture was not a significant moderator of the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and PWHI.

Table 4.23.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions with Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Development Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Positive Work–Home Interaction Moderated by Developmental Culture

Variables added in each block	Positive work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.00, $F(2, 537) = 0.20$ , <i>ns.</i>					.08, $F(2, 535) = 22.60$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 534) = 2.31$ , <i>ns.</i>				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.00	.06	.00			-.01	.05	-.01			-.02	.05	-.01	
Parent status (no/yes)		.03	.06	.03			-.01	.05	-.01			-.01	.05	-.01	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Dev. CWA RR							-.10	.04	-.12**	.01		-.10	.04	-.12**	.01
Dev. culture							.18	.04	.22***	.04		.21	.04	.25***	.05
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Dev. CWA RR $\times$ Dev. culture												-.07	.05	-.07	
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.07, $F(2, 633) = 23.17$ , $p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 632) = 2.51$ , <i>ns.</i>									
Block 1 Independent variable and interaction variable															
Dev. CWA RR							-.10	.03	-.12**	.01		-.10	.03	-.12**	.01
Dev. culture							.20	.04	.20***	.04		.21	.04	.22***	.04
Block 2 IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Dev. CWA RR $\times$ Dev. culture							-.08	.05	-.07						

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .083$ , Adj  $R^2 = .074$ , Final model,  $F(5, 534) = 9.61$ ,  $p < .001$ . Blocks 1 and 2 that follow, use steps 1 and 2 omitting control variables in analyses Total  $R^2 = .072$ , Adj  $R^2 = .068$ , Final model,  $F(3, 632) = 16.32$ , *ns.* RR = request responses.  
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

***Subsection 2: The moderating influence of developmental culture on the effect of 'responses to requests' for developmental customised work and negative work-home interaction***

Thus the following hypothesis is tested.

*Hypothesis 11: A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and negative work-home interaction (NWHI), such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive developmental cultures.*

To test the influence of developmental culture, gender and parent status are controlled for in the following analyses. Thus, to enhance construct validity, gender and parent status were added as control variables (as Step 1) to moderation analyses.

Results of moderation analyses are presented in Table 4.24, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared semipartial correlations,  $s^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step (Table 4.24). The table 4.24 also reports the F test for each step, the change in variance ( $R^2$  change, i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with that step, and the final variance.

Table 4.24.

Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regression with Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Developmental Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Negative Work-Home Interaction Moderated by Developmental Culture

Variables added in each block	Negative work-home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.00, $F(2, 537) = 0.82$ , <i>ns.</i>					.107, $F(2, 535) = 32.18$ , $p < .001$ .					.007, $F(1, 534) = 4.28$ , $p = .028$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.07	.05	.06			.09	.05	.08			.09	.05	.07	
Parent status (no/yes)		.00	.05	.00			.06	.05	.05			.05	.05	.04	
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Dev. CWA RR							.17	.04	.20***	.03		.17	.04	.20***	.03
Dev. culture							-.17	.04	-.21***	.04		-.14	.04	-.17***	.02
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Dev. CWA RR $\times$ Dev. culture												-.10	.05	-.09*	.01

Note. Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .117$ , Adj  $R^2 = .109$ , Final model,  $F(5, 534) = 14.17$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The Table 4.24 shows that developmental culture significantly moderated the relationship between request responses for developmental CWAs and negative work-home interaction (NWHI). A robustness test for this analysis is provided in Appendix J.

The relationship between developmental CWAs responses to requests and NWHI varies with the level of developmental culture, as illustrated in Figure 4.15, at low (-1 SD), mean and high (+1 SD) levels.

A follow-up test with simple slopes analysis was conducted using Johnson-Neyman (J-N) analysis via PROCESS custom dialogue (Hayes, 2012). The test demonstrated there was a significant positive relationship between declined responses to requests for developmental opportunities and NWHI for employees with developmental culture scores of 4.45 ( $b = .0926$ , 95% CI [.00, .19]  $t = 1.96$ ,  $p = .05$ ) or lower.

Simple slopes analysis shows that there is a significant positive relationship between declined responses to developmental requests and NWHI for employees who were neutral or agreed with developmental culture.

At low and mean levels (see Figure 4.17) of developmental culture, it significantly influenced employees' NWHI, dependent on responses to requests for developmental opportunities, such that low (scores of 3.23) ( $b = .2814$ , 95% CI [.18, .38]  $t = 5.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and mean levels (scores of 3.97) ( $b = .1672$ , 95% CI [.09, .24]  $t = 4.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of developmental culture significantly predict higher levels of NWHI, for those who were declined requests for developmental CWAs.

For employees with developmental culture scores above 3.97 (4 = *agree*) (see Figure 4.17), declined responses to requests for developmental opportunities do not result in higher levels of NWHI (i.e., employees do not associate declined responses to requests for developmental opportunities with increased work-life conflict if they believe their

workplace culture encourages professional development). Thus, Hypothesis 11 was supported.

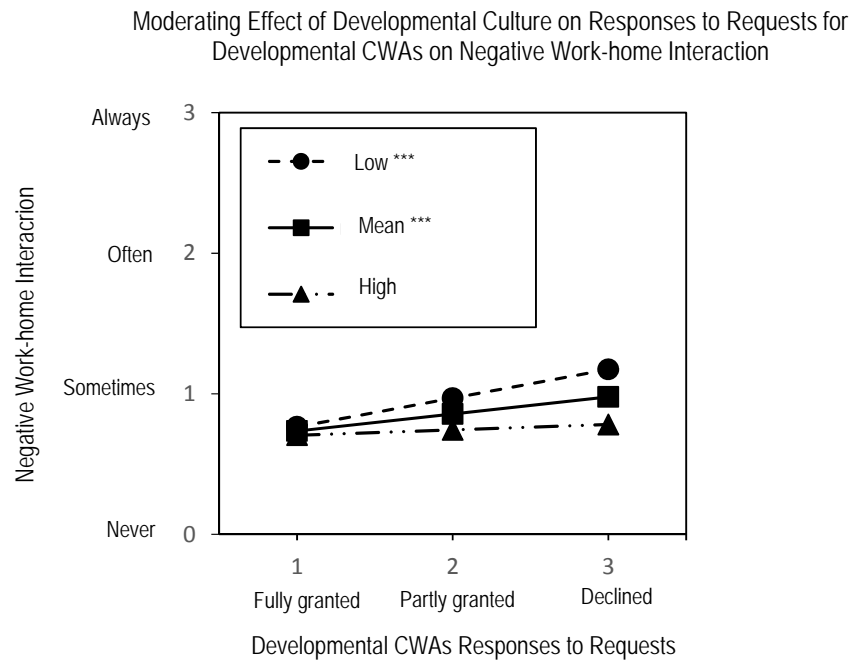


Figure 4.17. Simple slopes graph illustrating the moderating effect of developmental culture on the *request responses to development CWA – negative work-home interaction* relation at low (-1 SD), mean, and high (+1 SD) levels of developmental culture. \*denotes  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Stated simply, employees who were declined developmental CWA requests experienced less NWHI when they aligned with unit-level and supervisor-level supportiveness of developmental culture.

#### **4.4.4 Section 4: The moderating influence of developmental culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for developmental customised work and business-related outcomes**

Research Subquestion 3: *‘What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between “responses to requests” for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?’*

The second part of Research Subquestion 3 is answered in Hypothesis 12, addressing the moderating influence of developmental culture on the relationships between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and business-related outcomes, operationalised as work engagement.

##### ***Subsection 1: The moderating influence of developmental culture on the effect of ‘responses to requests’ for developmental customised work and work engagement***

Thus the following hypothesis is tested.

*Hypothesis 12: A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and work engagement, such that the negative relationship between these variables will be stronger in positive developmental cultures.*

Results of moderation analyses are presented in Table 4.25, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared semipartial correlations,  $sr^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step. Table 4.25 also reports the F test for each step, and change in variance ( $R^2$  change, i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with that step, and the final variance.

The Table 4.25 shows that developmental culture did not significantly moderate the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and work

engagement (further details of analyses are provided in Table 4.25). Thus, Hypothesis 12 was not supported.

Relationships between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and work engagement were not influenced by employees' perceptions of the organisation's or managers' support for their professional development.

Stated simply, developmental culture unit and supervisor support did not influence work engagement, in addition to the impact of responses to requests for developmental CWAs.

The moderation tested the influence of developmental culture as a moderator of the relationship between developmental CWA request responses and work engagement using a hierarchical multiple regression. The first set of predictors in Model 1 (gender and parent status control variables) accounted for 2.4% ( $R^2 = .024$ ) of variability in work engagement (see Table 4.25). The second set of predictors in Model 2 (developmental CWA request responses and developmental culture) together accounted for 20.2% ( $R^2 = .202$ ) of variability in work engagement, which was highly significant (see Table 4.25) with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1992, 1988). In Model 3, the interaction term between these two variables was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 534) = 0.00$ , *ns*, accounting for no additional ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .000$ ) variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2. In total, the predictor variables in Model 3 explained 22.6% of the variability in work engagement,  $R^2 = .226$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .219$ ,  $F(5,534) = 31.21$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, developmental culture did not moderate the relationship between developmental CWA responses to requests and work engagement.





Table 4.25.

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regression With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Development Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Work Engagement Moderated by Developmental Culture*

Variables added in each block	Work engagement														
	<i>Step 1</i>					<i>Step 2</i>					<i>Step 3</i>				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.02, $F(2, 537) = 6.56, p = .002$ .					.20, $F(2, 535) = 69.92, p < .001$ .					.00, $F(1, 534) = 0.00, ns$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.17	.08	.09*	.01		.15	.07	.08*	.01		.15	.07	.08*	.01
Parent status (no/yes)		.25	.08	.13**	.02		.18	.07	-.09*	.01		-.18	.07	-.09*	.01
Block 2 Controls, independent variable and interaction variable															
Dev. CWA RR							-.07	.05	-.05			-.07	.05	-.05	
Dev. culture							.54	.05	.43***	.17		.54	.05	.43***	.14
Block 3 Controls, IV and moderation variables interaction terms combinations															
Dev. CWA RR $\times$ Dev. culture												-.00	.07	-.00	

*Note.* Total  $R^2 = .226$ , Adj  $R^2 = .219$ , Final model,  $F(5, 534) = 31.21, p < .001$ . RR = request responses.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### **4.4.5 Robustness checks**

All moderation analyses were replicated using control variables, to eliminate any additional influence that gender and parent status may have had on results. Appendix I summarises the series of moderations tested, with and without control variables, for ease of comparison.

Overall, the vast majority of moderation analysis results were unchanged when they were replicated using control variables. However, results varied for two analyses. In the first case, without controls, organisational and managerial support of work–life flexibility culture moderated the relationship between flexibility responses to requests and work engagement. However, with the introduction of control variables, work–life flexibility culture failed to moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and work engagement (see Hypothesis 9). In the second case, developmental culture moderated the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and NWHI significantly at the  $p < .01$  level, but with the introduction of controls, significance was reduced to  $p < .05$  level (see Hypothesis 12).

### **4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

Brief overviews are set out for each subsection of the results chapter, highlighting key features or outcomes for each.

#### **4.5.1 Preliminary analysis**

A targeted convenience sample returned a 63% response rate of e-surveys totalling 797. The sample comprised finance industry employees from one large organisation, across four divisions. Sample demographics indicated: 38% men (13% did not indicate gender), 21% with leadership responsibilities, 42.7% parents, 76.8% working permanent full time, 7.9% working permanent part time, 0.1% casual, 1.8% contractor and 0.9% other.

#### **4.5.2 Descriptive statistics**

Over 98% of employees indicated they had requested CWAs in the previous year in five thematic areas (hours of work, time off, work tasks, offsite work, and development opportunities), totalling 5,865, or over seven requests per employee. Of all requests, most were fully granted ( $n = 4,244$ ; 74%), with 1,020 requests being partly granted, and 493 requests being declined. Demographics (gender, parent status, household type, leadership responsibilities, job status, business division) and five thematic areas were examined for proportions of responses to requests for CWAs.

#### **4.5.3 Reliability and validity**

All scales used in the analyses showed good reliability, as indicated by Cronbach's alphas. The work-life (flexibility) culture scale was further subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the construct validity of dimensions underlying the structure and their applicability to the sample used in the thesis.

#### **4.5.4 Treatment of missing data**

Missing data were examined for missing patterns, and found not to be problematic. However, due to the extent and nature of missing data, the dataset was subjected to multiple imputation using expectation maximisation (EM) for use in further multivariate analyses. A sensitivity analysis compared pre- and post-imputed datasets using regression analyses. Differences between regression coefficients and significant predictors were found to be minimal.

#### **4.5.5 Differences in mean scores across groups and moderated relationships**

In conclusion, all hypothesised differences between responses to requests for CWAs and outcome variables PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement were fully supported.

All differences between participants' scores on PWHI, NWHI, and engagement based on responses to requests for flexibility CWAs were significant, and consistently showed that employees whose requests were fully granted had higher levels of PWHI and work engagement, and lower levels of NWHI, than those whose flexibility requests were declined. Most effect sizes were small (Cohen, 1988, pp.79–81), suggesting weak relationships, except for responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI, which had a medium effect size, suggesting a moderate relationship.

All differences between participants' scores on PWHI, NWHI, and engagement based on responses to development CWAs were significant, and consistently showed that employees whose requests were fully granted had higher levels of PWHI and work engagement, and lower levels of NWHI, than those whose development requests were declined. All effect sizes were small (Cohen, 1988, pp.79–81), suggesting weak relationships, except for responses to requests for development CWAs and NWHI, which had a low-to-medium effect size, suggesting a weak-to-moderate relationship.

The hypothesised moderating variable, work–life flexibility culture (organisation and manager support), significantly influenced the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI, and remained so when gender and parent status were controlled for.

The hypothesised moderator developmental culture significantly influenced responses to requests for developmental CWAs and NWHI, and remained so when gender and parent status were controlled for.

Robustness checks of moderation analyses included use of control variables, gender and parent status, to isolate the influence of moderators in analyses.

# Chapter 5: Discussion

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## 5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter is structured into three main sections that follow the three research questions, as in the Methodology (Chapter 3) and Results (Chapter 4) chapters. The discussion focuses on key themes emerging from the findings, in the context of theory and practice. The discussion in the first section (section 5.2) centres on CWA types, requests, and approvals in the context of demographic characteristics and job roles. Gendered and parental choices for CWAs are also addressed. Next, the role of social exchange theory is discussed in terms of explaining responses to requests for CWAs. The second section (section 5.3) discusses themes emerging from how responses to requests, and thus subsequent employee use of CWAs, have an impact on work–home interaction and engagement at work. The discussion here centres on manager–employee exchanges, in terms of process and outcomes. In section 5.3, flexibility and developmental CWAs are discussed, in terms of outcomes, PWHI, NWHI, and work engagement. It is contended that social exchange and one of its approaches, the norm of reciprocity (Ekeh, 1974), can help explain why fully and partially approved CWAs have similar outcomes. The third section of the discussion (section 5.4) addresses the influence of the cultural environments on relationships between responses to requests, employees’ work–home interaction, and engagement at work. It discusses, in the context of social exchange and perceived organisational support theories, the importance of organisational and manager support in terms of organisational contextual issues and communicating the cultural environment to employees. It contends that organisational and manager support and communication have key roles in helping employees optimise work–life balance. In

sections 5.4.5 and 5.4.6 the theoretical perspectives of the research are further discussed. Section 5.5 concludes the chapter.

## **5.2 FLEXIBLE WORK: WHAT THEY ASK FOR, WHO ASKS, AND WHICH REQUESTS ARE APPROVED**

The first research question asked, *'What types of customised work arrangements do employees request and how do supervisors respond to those requests?'* The following three subsections discuss: (a) what types of CWAs are requested, (b) who makes those requests, and (c) which CWAs requests are approved. Theoretical implications for social exchange and norms of reciprocity are discussed as well as practical implications of the extent to which CWAs are requested and approved, and by whom. While requests for CWAs were prolific in the past year at FinanceCo, some requests were initiated more often than others and are discussed here in terms of types of CWAs, gender, and parent status. Additionally, the majority of responses to requests that were either fully or partially approved are discussed in terms of the type of CWA requested and who made the requests.

### **5.2.1 What do they ask for? Time off and developmental opportunities**

Almost all employee respondents sought multiple adjustments to a broad range of work arrangements in the previous year. The high frequency of requests made across FinanceCo employees suggests a high level of awareness of a broad range of worker flexibilities that are both available and accessible to all employees. This is in stark contrast to literature showing low awareness and utility of family-friendly practices is common in organisations (Skinner & Pocock, 2011; Yeandle, Crompton, Wigfield, & Dennett, 2002:). However, this extant research focuses on flexible work, which is enshrined in policy and which also tends to be for longer term arrangements. By surveying employees using an expanded form of flexible work, that is CWAs, a wider

scope of requests is captured and accounts for the contrast. Further, the Australian Government (e.g., source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2016) also reports on worker flexibility, but reports of flexibility used is based on information supplied to it by representatives of the organisation, who outline longer term forms of flexibility and fewer ad hoc and occasional modifications to work. It is suggested by this study that many of the informal changes to work arrangements have been previously overlooked by other studies on work–life practices. Therefore, it is conceivable that many CWAs are omitted during the reporting process, and result in the government (e.g., source: Australian Workplace Relations Survey, 2015) perhaps understating flexible work practices in terms of narrower types and frequencies of use.

The findings here also differ substantially from previous research that suggests a reluctance among workers, especially men, to use the flexibility arrangements offered (e.g., Coltrane et al., 2013; Donnelly et al., 2012; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Feldt, 2011; Morrison & Milliken, 2003;). However, the results here show that some forms of CWAs were requested more often than others, consistent with the findings of Pleck (1993) and Berry and Rao (1997). However, another explanation for contrasts with previous research may be that the scope and definition of CWAs used in this study is more inclusive of the range of modifications to work that workers use to manage work and life. This explanation is supported by the findings here. Many CWA requests which are understood as standard or longer term forms of flexibility, for example requests for part-time work, were requested much less often than CWAs that could be understood as occasional or ad hoc, such as amount of flexibility in work hours. What is interesting for this study, is that the definition and scope of CWAs have illuminated the extent to which employees are invested in requesting a broad range of work arrangements to manage work and life. To remind the reader, a key point of difference for CWAs is that they are tailored to



individuals, in all forms of flexible work. CWA is a more comprehensive term which encompasses forms of flexible work enshrined in national legislative frameworks and organisational policy as well as those informal, occasional and ad hoc arrangements that are negotiated with supervisors and tailored to individual needs.

The findings here, that numerous CWA requests were made multiple times by almost all respondents, may be explained as demonstrating that CWAs are available to all, via good-quality social exchange relationships between employees and their managers. It could also be anticipated that employees would reciprocate the manager support demonstrated in social exchanges with positive work-related behaviours (see section 5.3.3 for discussion on social exchange theory and norm of reciprocity).

The next paragraphs and subsections separately discuss types and frequency of CWA requests. Here, the reader is reminded that four types of CWAs (adjustments to work hours, time off, offsite work, adjustments to work tasks) are collapsed into one category, flexibility CWAs (see Results chapter, section 4.2.3, which details descriptive statistics), because they all reflect employees' attempts to balance work and life, from accommodative perspectives – in contrast, developmental opportunities CWAs reflects employees' attempts to develop at work, from career advancement perspectives.

Employees requested some CWA types more often than others. Requests for adjustments for time off were most frequent, followed by requests for developmental opportunities. Flexibility and developmental opportunities are conceptually distinct in terms of considering why and how employees make requests. While employees use flexibility requests to manage their nonwork responsibilities and needs, developmental opportunities are requested as a means to focus more on work activities and career development. Consequently, in order to balance work and life, employees request a combination of both types of CWAs. The findings suggest that employees were supported

by their managers in making both types of requests. The frequent requests for both types of CWAs could be explained by manager support and the social exchange process. Supporting this possible explanation is research which finds manager support of accommodative and developmental flexibility is a key to employees being able to balance work and nonwork responsibilities without work–life conflict, which can result in work intensification (Geurts et al., 2006). Additionally, the types of CWAs that were requested may also reflect employees’ career orientations and thus they sought CWAs that were not associated with career penalties or flexibility stigma (e.g., Vandello et al., 2013).

Flexibility requests for time off were most frequent, while other flexibility CWAs, such as changes to work hours, were requested less often. Requests for accommodations that were related to offsite work and changes to work tasks were requested least often. The findings that time off was by far the most requested category illustrates how important this type of CWA is to facilitating work–life balance. Evidence from previous studies suggests that types of flexible work arrangements used reflect national- and organisational-level policies (e.g., AHRI, 2012; Chapman et al., 2014). The majority of requests for time off were for sick leave, which is supported by the National Employment Standards (NES) (*Fair Work Act 2009*) entitlements, and may explain the large number of requests. Volunteer leave and carer’s leave were also frequently requested. Volunteer leave is also supported by the *Fair Work Act 2009* and by organisational policies and may be unpaid, depending on whether the leave is for emergency service (Community Service Leave, *Fair Work Act 2009*) or for corporate social-responsibility-related activities. Carer’s leave is supported by provisions under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, and may be paid or unpaid. Flexible leave days were as popular as sick leave. Flexible leave days may have been used instead of sick leave on some occasions, and customised to accommodate the many unplanned and ad hoc requirements that characterise how many employees

attempt to balance work and life, within organisational constraints (Sweet, Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2014).

The most popular requests for time off were for sick leave, flexible leave days, and volunteer leave, respectively. Employees are entitled to sick leave under the NES and sick leave can be requested ad hoc (source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2016). In terms of self-censoring, (formal, unplanned, or ad hoc) sick leave may have been requested often because of anticipated positive responses. However, even though sick leave may be seen by employers as reduced commitment, many of the customised provisions for time off might be less likely to have connotations of reduced commitment to work than other forms of CWAs where the stigma is clearer (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). This is an important point, because in the context of financial services organisations that are internally competitive, perceptions of reduced commitment can damage career prospects (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Furtmueller, et al., 2011a).

For the FinanceCo sample, this suggests that requests for time off may have been higher because there may be fewer assumptions of reduced career commitment, which could attract negative career penalties (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep, 2009; Martinez & Gómez, 2013). For example, although carer's leave is included in the NES, requesting this type of leave could attract more negative penalties than requesting sick leave. Research shows employees request particular work arrangements that are readily accepted by managers and coworkers through modelling and support (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Bradley et al., 2010). This may help explain the higher frequency of requests for time off over other types of flexibility, as well as the higher frequency of requests for particular subtypes of time off.

The current findings show infrequent requests for changes to work hours, offsite work, and work tasks, consistent with Beauregard and Henry (2009), who highlight the

career penalties associated with flexibility work that prioritises nonwork activities. This suggests some employees may avoid flexibility options that prioritise nonwork activities, because of perceived career penalties (Furtmueller, Dick, & Wilderom, 2011b). The infrequent requests for offsite work can also be explained as in Beauregard and Henry (2009), by the fact that the low visibility of employees working offsite may result in coworkers and managers perceiving them as less committed.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) provides another possible explanation as to why few CWAs are requested for offsite work and changes to work tasks. The fewer requests for both types of CWAs immediately make those employees stand out and potentially receive more attention, or they may require different forms of monitoring. Further, the different forms of monitoring may not be welcomed by employees unless they have a high-quality socioemotional relationship with their employer. This suggests that employees may self-censor their requests if there is not a strong socioemotional relationship with their managers.

Developmental opportunities were the second most frequent requests (after time off), and comprised three in 10 requests overall in the previous year. Developmental opportunities offer a means to advance careers and increase income (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008; Creed et al., 2015; Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2013). The findings here are consistent with research on large financial services firms (Furtmueller, et al., 2011b) showing that employees are career oriented and work in internally and externally competitive environments. This also suggests developmental opportunities are perceived by management as a way to retain their talent (e.g., Strack et al., 2014; Wu, 2016).

### **5.2.2 Who asks? Gendered and parental requests**

Prior to the discussion on gendered and parental requests, the reader is reminded of a limitation in terms of the data collection method used. The FinanceCo sample dataset

contains missing data for both gender and parent status. Table 4.1 details sample statistics including frequencies and missing data for gender and parent status categories. In the first stage of descriptive analysis (see section 3.7.1) missing data were not substituted. As previously observed in the Results chapter, there is a highly similar pattern of missing data for the gender and parent status categories (see section 4.2.1). That is, the vast majority of those who did not indicate gender also omitted their parent status.

Despite the broad range of CWAs available and requested, men and women at FinanceCo continue to follow gendered stereotypes of ideal worker norms in their organisation (e.g., Carreiras, 2006; Harris, 2009). Extending the argument by McDonald and Jeanes (2012), men's and nonparents' requests for flexibility avoid those which attract career penalties, and women's and parents' choices prioritise caregiving activities. Other possible explanations for the different requests made by different employee groups include reasons of lifestyle and to relieve work–life interference (Skinner, Hutchinson & Pocock, 2012). In line with previous studies, the results here show few differences between men and nonparents, on one hand, and women and parents on the other (e.g., Skinner & Pocock, 2011). The following discussion examines in more detail gendered requests and requests that differed based on parent status.

***Men were more career oriented and women changed work hours more often***

While the requests made by men and nonparents were in similar proportions for the same types of CWAs, they will be discussed here separately in terms of first making gender comparisons, and then discussing findings for parents and nonparents.

Though men made about three quarters as many requests as women overall, this study showed that over 98% of all respondents had requested a CWA on some occasion in the last year. This finding challenges some prior empirical work (e.g., Brandth & Kvande, 2002) showing low use of work–life provisions among staff with career

aspirations and working fathers. Furthermore, the frequency of men's requests for time off, compared with other types of CWAs for nonwork responsibilities, is consistent with other studies (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009) showing that men suffer from 'flexibility stigma' and may be perceived as less committed when they utilise flexible work practices that would appear to prioritise their nonwork life.

For most types of CWAs, the proportions of requests were similar for men and women. However, men requested more developmental opportunities than women, who requested changes to work hours more often than men did. This finding suggests men reserved a disproportionate number of developmental requests in order to manage their work and life needs. Specifically, requests for career development and training or skills development subtypes were most frequent. These findings align with other studies showing that men use flexible work arrangements for study-related activities (Skinner et al., 2012). This finding is also interesting in light of the types of CWAs that are shown to be readily acceptable in the financial services industry, such as developmental opportunities (e.g., Noback, Broersma, & van Dijk, 2013; Williams, 2010).

Women requested changes to their work hours disproportionately more often than men, in order to manage their work and life needs. Specifically, requests for changes to start and finish times and amount of flexibility in work hours were by far the most frequent. This finding suggests women prioritise modifications to work hours more highly than opportunities to pursue professional development and other types of CWAs. This suggests that women's choices may continue to mirror their nonwork responsibilities as primary caregivers (Chapman, Skinner & Pocock, 2014), even though they average 39-hour work weeks (compared with men's 41.5 hours) (see Table 4.2) at FinanceCo. Another possible explanation is that women's requests appear to reflect those used to accommodate nonwork responsibilities or lifestyle activities within the constraints of and

in addition to working full-time hours (e.g., Jones, 2012; Skinner et al., 2012). Conceivably, these explanations allude to women's efforts to offset work-life interference without reducing their commitment to work (Skinner et al., 2012). This is a particularly interesting finding in light of the long-hours work environment and the competitive nature of employees, characteristic of the financial services industry (e.g., Coltrane et al., 2013; Furtmueller et al., 2011b).

Taken together, the findings suggest a gender balance for having requested a CWA on some occasion in the past year, though women made these requests more frequently. There is a gendered difference in the way men and women request CWAs in order to manage their work and lives. While men take more advantage of CWAs to advance their careers than women do, women request CWAs in ways that allow full-time work hours to fit around their nonwork lives, more so than men do.

*Parents prioritised caregiving and lifestyle and nonparents were more career-focused*

This subsection is somewhat limited by the data collection method used for this study. A limitation in discussing parents' requests for CWAs is that over 10% of respondents did not indicate their parent status (13.7%) (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 for details).

The types of CWA requests made by parents may reflect those used to accommodate caregiving or lifestyle activities (e.g., Jones, 2012; Skinner et al., 2012). Parents' requests may be explained by being primarily aligned to accommodating caregiving activities, with coupled parents initiating more requests on average in the previous year than sole parents did. Another explanation may be that parents requested CWAs that would allow them to manage work commitments within the constraints of

their other nonwork responsibilities. Adding weight to this explanation is that there is little difference in average work hours between parents and nonparents (see Table 4.2).

There was almost no difference in the overall number of requests between parents and nonparents. This challenges the view that parents use more flexible work arrangements than nonparents do (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009). However, while there was little difference in the quantity of requests, there were some interesting differences in the types of requests that were asked for. Parents requested offsite work and adjustments to work hours slightly more often than nonparents did. Specifically, requests to work from home were by far the most requested, followed by changes to start and/or finish times and flexibility in work hours. Besides being able to access and perform work tasks through e-technologies that enable work-from-home arrangements, working from home saves parents time and money in terms of commuting and childcare. Therefore, by working from home, parents can relieve some aspects of work–life interference. On the other hand, nonparents requested developmental opportunities more often than parents did. Specifically, requests for career development and training or skills development were most often requested. This suggests that nonparents made requests to develop their careers, a finding which aligns with research showing these are acceptable types of flexibility in the financial services industry (e.g., Noback et al., 2013).

Parents made significantly fewer requests for developmental opportunities, but requested work hours and offsite work more often than nonparents. Also, parents requested changes to work tasks marginally less often than nonparents did. This finding is consistent with literature (e.g., Brown & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2013; Skinner & Pocock, 2011) showing parent’s choices for flexibility at work are framed around their primary caregiving roles. Consequently, parenting responsibilities and full-time work hours (see Table 4.2) create challenges for parents’ requests for work tasks and developmental



opportunities. Aligned with findings here, a study of Australian employed parents with young children found that parents have lower job quality in jobs with very long hours (Charlesworth, Strazdins, O'Brien & Sims, 2011).

Looking more closely at household type, parents in couples relationships made more requests on average (than other household types), and made the most requests for work hours and offsite work CWAs. Regarding household type, CWA requests were most frequent for, in descending order, couples with children, couples without children, single nonparents and sole parents.

Surprisingly sole parents, who might be expected to need a high number of accommodations to their working hours in order to meet their caring needs (Nomaguchi, 2012), actually made about a third fewer requests for CWAs per employee (5 requests versus 7.49) than the average number of requests overall, and the least of any household demographic group. The majority of sole parents at FinanceCo were women (see Table 4.1). This finding is particularly interesting because it may be explained by Greenberg and Landry's (2011) argument that women's requests for flexible work follow their perceptions of relative power in the manager–employee relationship, as they weigh up the risk of violating the ideal worker norms of their organisation (Williams, 2010). Recent Australian research has also shown that mothers feel either a sense of entitlement or resignation regarding flexible work arrangements that challenge the ideal worker norm, depending on the supportiveness of family-friendly provisions (Walters & Whitehouse, 2015). Findings for the 2015 study show that where barriers to provisions were perceived, workers tended to interpret these as personal problems (Walters & Whitehouse, 2015). Following, a perceived lack of manager support for family-friendly practices may be communicated in manager-employee interactions and may discourage these workers from making requests. This perceived lack of support may also be reinforced by fewer

interactions to build the social exchange relationship, because of time constraints or work intensification.

### **5.2.3 Which requests are approved?**

While most requests were approved, rates of approval and managerial support seemed to depend on the type of request, its alignment with organisational needs, and associations with worker entitlements. However, approvals also depended on who requested the CWAs and whether those CWAs supported employees' work-life balance or career development.

The majority of requests for CWAs were either fully or partially approved. This finding challenges much of the previous research (e.g., Donnelly et al., 2012; Skinner & Pocock, 2011), which suggests flexible work is not as available as it should be, in terms of the legislation (right-to-request provisions, *Fair Work Act 2009*). However, many requests included short-term arrangements, which may have been approved because they did not disrupt the workplace very much or for very long. On the other hand, employees may be choosing to request only those CWAs they anticipate will be approved. This may account for the high proportions of approvals. Skinner and Pocock (2011) and Cathcart, McDonald, Graham and Townsend (2013) showed that nonrequesters could be supported by stronger legislation via rights and requests processes. However, the survey did not measure requests that were desired but not asked for.

Approval rates may also have been affected by requests that would have incurred 'increased costs' or represented 'cost savings' to FinanceCo. The findings show promotion to a more senior position, paid overtime, and altered duties were more likely to be denied than sick leave and flexible leave days, as all three require additional time and resources of additional trainers along with interim replacements. On the other hand, reduction in work hours (e.g., full time to part time, amount of flexibility in work hours,

time off) were more likely to be approved. Reduced work hours represents a saving and is important to company reporting. The continued reduction of the workforce indicates the focus on cost-saving in FinanceCo, and can explain the firm's reluctance to want cost-incurring requests (source: [www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au)).

Generally, the approval rates for the five types of CWAs were commensurate with the level of popularity of requests. Time off was, by far, the type of CWA most often fully or partially approved and this suggests high levels of managerial support in social exchanges. However, many of these requests and approvals are also supported by worker entitlements under the NES, the *Fair Work Act 2009*, and organisational policies, though the timing of leave does need to be negotiated with managers.

Developmental opportunities were the second most often requested and approved, suggesting very high levels of managerial support in social exchanges, despite these types of CWAs not being supported by statutory provisions – unlike many of the requests and approvals for time off. Research shows developmental opportunities that are not tailored to individuals can cause work–life conflicts through work intensification (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008) (see Section 5.3.1). However, the finding here suggests that managerial support in social exchanges helps employees customise their developmental opportunities. Even though, overall, men made requests less frequently than women, men requested and were approved developmental opportunities more often than women were. This suggests men had more managerial support to assist with their career development than women did.

Offsite work was the third most approved type of CWA. These requests were fully or partially approved at the rate of about nine in every 10 requests. However, less than two thirds of requests for offsite work were fully approved. The high number of partial approvals for most offsite work requests reflects managers' needs to satisfy their own

conditions for approvals. This finding is consistent with previous literature (Hemp, 2004; Lautsch & Kossek, 2011; Rousseau, 2001a; Seppälä et al., 2011), revealing that challenges of telecommuting include the need to trust employees to work autonomously and not engage in presenteeism and opportunism, given the lower monitoring capabilities (Blau, 1964; Molm, 2010; Paulsen, 2015).

Approvals for adjustments to work hours were lower than for time off, developmental opportunities and offsite work. These requests were approved (fully and partially approved) at the rate of around four in five requests. Requests for ‘start-finish times’ and ‘amount of flexibility’ in work hours comprised the bulk of requests and were approved more than nine times out of 10. Women’s requests for changes to work hours were approved more often than men’s. Parents were also approved changes to work hours more often than nonparents. This finding mirrors much research (e.g., Skinner & Pocock, 2011) showing that women still have primary caregiving roles in families, and results here suggest this may also be the case at FinanceCo. This is particularly interesting because the most requested changes to hours (which were approved most of the time) did not involve reduction of work hours, with Table 4.2 showing parents and nonparents worked very similar weekly hours. This suggests parents work almost the same number of hours as nonparents, but parents work at different times to help them contend with additional childcare responsibilities.

Findings here show the frequency of approvals to requests is different for gender and parent status. Overall, men seeking developmental opportunities were approved more often than women, suggesting greater managerial support for men’s requests for career development. Men’s CWA requests prioritise developmental opportunities (e.g., CWA approvals for training or skills development, career development) and time off (e.g., flexible leave days, sick leave), rather than requests for changes to work hours and offsite

work. This is consistent with prior studies (e.g., Brandth & Kvande, 2002; Cunningham, 2001) showing men prefer career-enhancing flexibility, and are supported in this regard, more so than women.

Even though men and women requested the same proportions of offsite work, men's requests were approved significantly more often than women's were. On the other hand, men requested significantly fewer work-hours CWAs than women. Men's requests for work-hours CWAs were fully approved significantly less often and declined significantly more often than women's were. The findings show greater managerial support for men working off site, but less support for men wanting to change their work hours, compared with women. Findings of the current research challenge empirical work by Martinez and Gómez (2013) showing that employees trade-off telecommuting flexibility for training opportunities. In terms of offsite work, the current finding suggests men have more of their managers' trust in socioemotional relationships (Blau, 1964) than women do.

Parents' requests were approved more often than nonparents. Looking more closely, this was true for all types of CWA requests, though the differences were not large (see Table 4.3). This finding shows managers were more supportive of parents' requests than of nonparents'. The current findings challenge some research (e.g., Corell, 2007; Laurijssen & Glorieux, 2013) asserting that parents who use flexible work arrangements may be shut out of developmental opportunities. Among parents, and in terms of household type, those in couple relationships had higher approval rates than sole parents. Couple parents averaged a higher annual number of requests (more than seven each) – compared with sole parents (five) – and were also approved more often. The results in this study show that sole parents have fewer approvals from fewer requests (than for couple parents), indicating there is a lower level of managerial support for sole parents

than for couple parents. In terms of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), fewer interactions leave fewer opportunities to establish trust in manager–employee socioemotional relationships. Yet, sole parents are pressured for time, and constraints on interactions may impact on managers’ responses to requests (McDonald & Cathcart, 2015). Section 5.4 details the discussion examining managerial support and decisions in terms of responses to requests.

#### **5.2.4 Analysis of types of requests, types of requesters and approvals for CWAs**

Five interesting discussion points arose from this first stage of analysis. First, CWAs, as defined and examined in this thesis, were very often requested at FinanceCo by almost all employees. This finding suggests modifications to work include many shorter term and ad hoc arrangements which are not included in much of the work–life research because flexible work arrangements have a narrower scope of longer term and formal modifications to work.

Second, though (almost) all men and women made a request on some occasion in the past year, women requested CWAs about one third more frequently than men did. Overall, most requests were for time off and developmental opportunities CWAs. As expected from the literature, men requested developmental opportunities more frequently than women; however, women requested more changes to work hours than men did. The frequent requests for time off were supported by employee entitlements under the NES, the *Fair Work Act 2009* and organisational policies.

Third, the vast majority of these requests were either fully or partially approved, signalling strong managerial support for a broad range of CWAs within organisational constraints and protected by worker entitlements and provisions. However, approval levels differed for gender and parent status. The acceptability of CWA practices at FinanceCo mirrors findings in other studies (e.g., Sweet, Besen et al., 2015).

Interestingly, men requested and were approved more often (than women) for developmental opportunities. The literature shows employees are perceived as committed and ambitious by using modifications to work that signal career orientation and by avoiding low-visibility and accommodative work arrangements that prioritise nonwork responsibilities, associated with career penalties (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009). It is also possible that men may have requested extra offsite work as a way to signal their availability and commitment to work, instead of replacing onsite work hours with offsite hours.

Fourth, managers showed women less support for blending their career development and primary caregiving or nonwork responsibilities, a finding that alludes to women's experiences of career penalties and work intensification found in other studies (Kinnunen et al., 2004). On the other hand, women's requests for changes to work hours were approved more often than men's and were focused on altering rather than reducing hours in order to balance work and life. This was evidenced by women still working almost the same full-time hours as men did, but implies that women modify their work arrangements to balance competing demands of work and life.

Fifth, while parents requested more offsite work, changes to work hours, and time off than nonparents, their requests were also approved more often than nonparents'. However, the demonstrated managerial support for parental caregiving was also supported by the NES, right-to-request provisions, and other *Fair Work Act 2009* entitlements.

It is acknowledged that there is a limitation of the coding scheme for responses to CWA requests. The research design meant that respondents may have been referring to more than one request when indicating whether it was approved, partially approved or declined. A limitation of the research design was that it does not allow respondents to cite

multiple different examples in the same category of CWA. Although it is assumed that the three ‘responses to requests for CWAs’ categories were linear or hierarchical (from completely to not at all), the differences between the three categories (approved, partially approved, declined) may not be precisely the same. This is a limitation of all Likert or Likert type scales (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015; Pearse, 2011). However, where the study has found numerous instances of responses to requests which were partially approved, it is indicative of work being customised to suit needs of both managers and employees, whatever the degree of compromise that was made.

### **5.3 REALISING BENEFITS OF CWA USE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES**

The second research question asked, *‘What are the impacts of the different “responses to requests” (approved, partially approved, denied) for customised work arrangements on employees’ individual and business-related outcomes?’* This section has three subsections: (a) the impacts of responses to employees’ requests on their work–home interaction; (b) and engagement at work; and (c) links with theory discussing the roles and implications of social exchange manager–employee interactions at the micro-level and norm of reciprocity. It argues how, through approved responses to requests, employees are able to optimise their work–life balance, which also benefits their organisation. Special attention is given to discussing the similarities in outcomes for full and partial approvals of CWAs, and the similar findings for both flexibility and developmental CWAs.

#### **5.3.1 Facilitating benefits for individuals – work–home interaction**

This subsection discusses, separately, differences between responses to CWA requests with positive work–home interaction (PWHI) and negative work–home interaction (NWHI). PWHI and NWHI are constructs of the same SWING scale (Geurts



et al., 2005). However, they measure distinct dimensions: *mood spillover* and *skills acquisition* for PWHI and *work-based strain* and *time-based strain* for NWHI (Geurts et al., 2005) (detailed in Chapter 2), affecting individuals and their families.

While PWHI measures employees' *positive mood* and *skills learned at work*, which spill over from work to home, NWHI measures negative *job pressure* and *fatigue*, which also spill over from work to home. PWHI measures job resources, whereas NWHI measures job demands, which are theorised in terms of effort-recovery theory (E-R theory) and from Karasek's (1979) demand-control (D-C) model and demand-control-support (D-C-S) model (Johnson & Hall, 1988). Job resources spill over to employees' home lives to energise them, via control (and support) provided at work. On the other hand, effort required from job demands spills over to employees' home lives where they can recover (Geurts et al., 2005) (see Section 5.4.6 for discussion on JD-R model).

#### ***Positive work-home interaction***

According to E-R theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), PWHI is the degree to which employees 'accrue sufficient psycho-physiological reserves at work' to spill over into their home lives. PWHI uses two dimensions, *mood spillover* and *skill transfer from work*, to measure how work facilitated functioning at home through *job control* and *job support* (Geurts et al., 2005).

Supporting Hypotheses 1 and 3, both fully and partially approved responses to requests had the same positive impact on PWHI. This was the case for both flexibility and developmental CWAs, which conflicts with some prior studies (Ng, 2015; Rousseau et al., 2009). Rousseau and colleagues (2009) assert that flexibility and developmental work arrangements are conceived of differently in terms of social exchange (Blau, 1964), and are regarded differently by employees. Rousseau and colleagues situate work-hours flexibility as economic exchanges and developmental I-deals as social exchanges between

managers and employees. According to previous research (Rousseau et al., 2009), different outcomes for flexibility and developmental CWAs would be expected.

Findings here suggest partial and full approvals provided the same spillover of positive mood and skills learned at work to employees' home lives. According to Geurts and colleagues (2005), high levels of PWHI evidence job resources for employees, through job support and job control. The finding here is generally consistent with prior research (e.g., Geurts et al., 2005; Mauno & Rantanene, 2013) showing that approvals for work–life facilitation benefit employees' nonwork lives.

Fully and partially approved requests provide job resources which help employees balance work and life. This finding is consistent with literature showing work–life facilitation benefits individuals and their families (e.g., Geurts et al., 2005). In terms of PWHI, and impacts at the workplace, Geurts and colleagues (2005) showed that job control and feeling supported (forms of job resources) are associated with commitment and are accompanied by feelings of loyalty to the organisation. Findings here also support other research on FWAs showing that benefits of work–life facilitation include improved health and wellbeing for employees (e.g., McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2009; Wayne et al., 2013). In terms of employees' home lives, studies show PWHI energises employees so their excess energy reserves from work spill over to their home lives (Geurts et al., 2005).

In terms of manager support, partial approvals show employees that managers have invested effort into trying to approve their requests. Research shows that employees respond with high PWHI because they have high job support and job controls, and this would be the case where employees CWA requests are fully approved (Geurts et al., 2005). However, employees whose requests were partially approved also responded with

the same high levels of PWHI, which implies that employees also received job support and job control from partially approved requests.

Partial approvals for CWAs imply that managers also negotiated for options within the constraints of management capabilities, business strategy, and discretionary powers in granting occasional, short-term, or ad hoc CWAs (Australian Human Resources Institute, 2012; Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2009; Strack et al., 2014). Previous research (Sweet, Besen et al., 2014) shows employees understand that managers' efforts to grant requests are not always successful based on the business case. The study by Sweet, Besen and colleagues (2014) shows employees reduce their expectations of managers in these circumstances. In terms of the findings for the current research, employees whose requests were partially approved responded with the same levels of PWHI as those whose requests were fully approved, in acknowledging managers' efforts to at least partially approve requests.

The findings here suggest employees felt supported and in control of their jobs with a wide availability of CWAs in place (see section 5.2.5 for the discussion of social exchange theory and managerial support as social support for employees). CWAs included flexibility for timing, content, location, and skills development, and included short-term and ad hoc arrangements (as well as more standard and formal forms of flexibility). Temporary arrangements were also able to be revisited multiple times. This suggests that employees may not have perceived partially approved responses to requests as permanent arrangements, but tailored work arrangements for that particular time or situation, and could be recustomised at a later date. In keeping with E-R model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), where positive load reactions, accumulated at work, spilled over to home, employees experiencing temporary partial approvals may have been able to 'hold out' (their mood and skills development) until their request could be revisited (i.e., wait

about 1.6 months to renegotiate CWA). Thus being enabled to revisit CWAs provides job resources that contribute to PWHI (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2004; Hornung, Rousseau et al., 2010).

Understandably, employees whose requests were declined experienced significantly less PWHI than those whose requests were approved. The marginally significant difference between fully or partially approved responses to requests and declined requests may be partly accounted for by the agility and capability of CWAs. Low PWHI from declined requests (low mood, low skills acquired) may also be ameliorated by using short-term and ad hoc arrangements, modified from previous agreements, as is evidenced by numerous requests by almost all respondents, in the previous year (Dorenbosch et al., 2013).

Declined requests have negative impacts on employees' health and wellbeing and that affects their families. Low levels of work–family enrichment were found for those who experienced declined requests, and are found to be attributable to low contextual support and low control (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013). Low PWHI is associated with physiological responses such as insomnia, overeating, and poor nutrition, and may lead to fatigue from work–life imbalance (Stoner, Robins, & Russell-Chapin, 2005). Work–life conflict may lead to depression, physical health complaints, and burnout for employees (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997; Oosthuizen & Mostert, 2010). Low job support and low job control are associated with low mood and low skills acquisition (Geurts et al., 2005).

PWHI is found to precede job resources such as learning opportunities, performance feedback, autonomy and professional development opportunities, which then promote engagement at work (Rothbard, 2001; Voydanoff, 2004). This suggests declined requests, shown to significantly decrease mood and skills acquisition for this sample, may also have negative impacts on employees' engagement levels.

In summary, fully and partially approved responses to requests for both flexibility and developmental CWAs contributed to lower levels of overload and higher possibility for advancement through PWHI. The findings revealed that both fully and partially approved requests had the same PWHI impacts on employees. The job resources provided by fully and partially approved requests enabled positive spillover from employees' work to home. It is suggested that employees perceived manager support by receiving full or partial approvals for requests, which they reciprocated by responding to partial approvals with the same level of PWHI as for fully approved requests. Employees whose requests were declined had significantly less PWHI with which to balance work and life.

#### ***Negative work–home interaction***

In opposition to PWHI, NWHI measures how work hampers employees' functioning at home from low job control, low job support, job pressure, and fatigue (Geurts et al., 2005). This study utilised two dimensions of NWHI to measure work-based and time-based strains, which are distinct from those used for PWHI.

Hypotheses 2 and 4 were fully supported. The findings revealed that there were statistically significant differences between levels of responses to requests on NWHI scores. While fully approved employees had the lowest NWHI scores, scores escalated significantly for partially approved and again for declined responses to requests. The statistically significant scores had a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988) and the largest variance of all variables tested, which indicates that declined responses to requests had the biggest impact on employees' NWHI. The findings revealed that there were no differences in NWHI outcomes for employees whose flexibility or developmental requests were either approved or denied. This finding suggests that perceived manager support was highest for fully approved requests, but the perceived manager support received from partial approvals was still better than for declined requests, regardless of

whether it was for flexibility or developmental CWAs. This finding is consistent with research showing developmental opportunities that are not matched to employee needs may increase employees' work–life conflict (e.g., Geurts et al., 2005; McNall et al., 2010; Taris, Geurts, Marais, & Mostert, 2009; Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007;). However, this finding also contrasts some research which suggests that manager support in social exchanges is more important to employees for developmental opportunities than it is for flexibility modifications to work (e.g., Rousseau et al., 2009).

If employees' requests are all fully approved, they experience less of the negative work-based and time-based strain, which research suggests can hamper their functioning at home (Geurts et al., 2005). Thus, employees whose requests are fully approved have less NWHI– compared with partial approvals and declined requests. Fully approved requests that result in significantly less job pressure (work strain) and time pressure (fatigue), through less NWHI, offer organisations the benefit of employees who can better manage job pressure from job support (Geurts et al., 2005).

At FinanceCo, findings revealed that manager support alone (see section 5.4 for discussion of influences on the workplace cultural environment), shown by partial approvals to requests, did not fully resolve NWHI, when compared with fully approved responses to requests for CWAs. This finding is interesting given that employees made numerous requests for CWAs in the previous year, and only needed to be 'partially approved' on one occasion to be classified as partially approved. Another possible explanation for partially approved employees having significantly higher NWHI scores than fully approved employees may be that the responsibility of managing work and life is shifted onto them, who have less power to change it (Fursman & Zodgekar, 2009b). Yet, at FinanceCo, employees had requested CWAs at the micro-level with managers more than seven times each in the previous year. This suggests the trade-off between

‘meeting organisational goals’ and ‘providing employees with their preferred work arrangements’, by ‘granting partial approvals’ rather than full approvals, leads to significantly more negative impacts on employees.

As expected, declined requests for CWAs had the greatest impact of NWHI on employees who, on average, experienced relatively high levels of excessive job pressure and time strain. This suggests that those whose requests were declined were not able to recharge sufficiently at home to start the next work day refreshed (Meijman & Kompier, 1998). However, over an extended period of insufficiently recovering from negative load reactions, employees are expected to suffer health and wellbeing problems from depleted reserves arising from work–life conflict (Geurts et al., 2005; Rothbard, 2001). This suggests that the extent to which the impact of insufficient recovery time affects their health and wellbeing may depend on how soon declined employees can renegotiate suitable CWAs. Employees who are fatigued and/or disengaged, due to low job resources, are not likely to function optimally, and result in organisational inefficiencies.

In summary, a possible explanation as to why fully approved employees experienced the least NWHI was because they could draw on CWAs as a job resource, which helped insulate them from negative spillover to their home lives. A possible explanation as to why partially approved employees experienced significantly higher NWHI (than employees whose requests were fully approved) is that employees value CWAs as important job resources for managing job pressure and fatigue spillover to their home life (see section 5.4.6 for explanation of job demands-resources model). Accordingly, declined employees may be explained as having the worst NWHI because they are deprived of resources to manage work and life.

### *Differences in PWHI and NWHI outcomes*

The findings revealed that while the positive and negative work–home interactions measures affect employees differently, responses to CWA requests had a greater impact on NWHI scores. Employees scored the same PWHI levels whether their requests were fully or partially approved, even though those whose requests were partially approved had significantly higher NWHI scores than those whose requests were fully approved. Furthermore, statistically significant differences between levels of responses to requests are more powerful for the NWHI measure.

The findings here suggest that FinanceCo employees regard CWAs as the same important job resource, whether they are fully or partially approved. In terms of effort-recovery (E-R) theory (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), fully and partially approved responses to CWA requests provide full or partial control (for partial approvals), and manager support during manager–employee interactions (see sections 5.3.3 and 5.4.6 for discussions on social exchange theory and job demands-resources model). At the same time, however, findings here also suggest employees who experience partial approvals to CWA requests perceive significantly higher job demands in terms of job pressure and fatigue, which significantly escalate again for those whose requests are declined. In terms of the demand-control-support (D-C-S) model (Johnson & Hall, 1988), job demands have a detrimental impact on employees’ recovery efforts (E-R theory) (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) when they have less control over work arrangements. Furthermore, managerial support during manager–employee interactions (where requests take place) is not sufficient to compensate for lack of control. (See section 5.4.6 for discussion on job demands-resources model.)

Both full and partial approvals allow employees to transfer positive mood and skills to their home lives (PWHI), from which their families can benefit. Benefits may



include a reduction in work–life conflict and more energy and better health to be supportive in family life (e.g., Geurts et al., 2005; Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007). However, for partial approvals and declined responses to requests, employees experienced escalating job pressure and fatigue spillover to their home lives and families, associated with health and wellbeing problems (Geurts et al., 2005; Rothbard, 2001). The differences in work–home interactions found at FinanceCo suggest that job demands may overshadow the positive impacts of job resources in terms of responses to CWA requests.

### **5.3.2 Facilitating business-related benefits – Work engagement**

Employees' wellbeing and productivity at work facilitates employees' optimal workplace functioning through emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort that employees apply to their work (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004; Frank et al., 2004). This defines work engagement and is measured using the dimensions: vigour, dedication, and absorption. The average work engagement score was relatively high, compared to a similar sample used to validate the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale used for this study (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004).

As in previous studies, positive responses to requests led to higher levels of work engagement. Yet there was no significant difference between approved and partially approved responses to requests for either flexibility or developmental CWAs.

Employees whose requests were partially approved were as engaged as those whose requests were fully approved. This finding is partly inconsistent with research (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Geurts et al., 2006; Peeters et al., 2009) showing employees who are unable to integrate work and life are less able to engage at work. However, the findings here are consistent with empirical studies (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, Glaser et al., 2010; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Swanberg et al., 2011) showing mutually

beneficial FWAs or developmental work arrangements lead to enhanced employee engagement. FinanceCo employees whose requests were either fully or partially approved underwent a process of work customisation to suit both the manager and employee. Similarly, the findings are partly consistent with Bal and Dorenbosch's (2015) study linking individualised HR practices with organisational performance. Even though employees' requests were not fully approved, they were customised.

Employees whose requests were declined were significantly less engaged than their counterparts whose requests were approved and partially approved. Engagement levels were also low compared with representative studies for white-collar workers (for profit) used in validation studies for the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, used for this thesis (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2004). According to previous research, less engaged, declined employees are more likely to leave the organisation or engage in negative workplace behaviours, than engaged employees (Körner et al., 2012; Paulsen, 2015; Wollard, 2011). Some CWA types, such as adjustments to work tasks, were declined quite often – up to 20 percent of the time. An awareness of which CWAs are more problematic in terms of approvals offers organisations an opportunity to develop targeted strategies that may ultimately improve employee engagement.

In summary, full and partial approval of requests for both flexibility and developmental CWAs contributed to higher employee engagement than declined requests. Employees whose requests were fully and partially approved were able to better engage at work, and a large body of literature suggests these employees are also likely to have higher levels of wellbeing, commitment and loyalty, and to engage in more OCB, than those whose requests were declined. Employees whose requests were declined were significantly less engaged at work and research suggests this group is more likely than others to engage in presenteeism or other negative work behaviours.

### **5.3.3 Links with theory – Social exchange and norm of reciprocity**

This thesis uses the lens of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and rule of reciprocity (Molm, 2010) to understand how managers' responses to requests lead to employees' outcomes. This second subsection discusses the role of managers in social exchange that has important implications for responses to CWA requests and their outcomes. The following three subsections discuss: (a) the role of manager–employee exchanges, (b) the manager–employee outcomes process, and (c) limitations of social exchange and reciprocity in this context.

#### ***Role of manager–employee exchanges***

Socioemotional exchanges provide managers with opportunities to procure, maintain, and/or build HR benefits for the organisation. Helping employees manage their work–life balance through granting CWAs is an important part of the interaction. For employees, manager–employee exchanges provide a platform for requesting best-fit CWAs, and are important to maintaining their engagement. The results of requests for CWAs show manager support is the key to more-engaged employees. This suggests that the social exchange process leads to positive outcomes despite many requests not being fully approved.

During requests for adjustments to work arrangements, managers also seek to ensure that CWAs are aligned with the organisational will (Liao et al., 2014; Sweet, Besen et al., 2014). Sweet, Besen, and others (2014) suggests that employees aligned with the organisation reduce their expectations because they understand organisational goals and managers' constraints and are therefore satisfied with less. This suggests employees whose requests are partially approved or declined, and who are engaged in social exchange relationships, realign their expectations of being granted CWAs within the constraints of the 'organisational strategy'.

When employees have a sense of reciprocity and loyalty to their managers, it can mitigate the disappointment of having a request declined, or only partially approved. Findings here suggest this was the case for employees at FinanceCo and align with research by Sweet, Besen et al. (2014), which found that organisationally aligned employees reciprocate because of their loyalty to the organisation. Also, by revisiting requests multiple times in further exchanges, employees may be afforded a degree of ongoing control of their work arrangements.

This study found fully and partially approved responses to requests led to the same positive outcomes of work engagement, when compared with declined responses to requests. An explanation may be that with the option of revisiting terms of CWAs during exchanges, employees are satisfied with responses that both appeased their requests, but also helped them reciprocate ‘indebtedness’ generated from prior approvals and alignment with organisation strategy.

Findings here show the vast majority of responses to CWA requests were either fully or partially approved. Studies incorporating manager–employee exchanges have highlighted managers’ roles during interactions, include assessing employee wellbeing, in order to support decision-making processes surrounding modifications to work (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013; Moen, Kelly, & Huang, 2008; Sweet, Besen et al., 2014). This suggests managers could follow a similar avenue to optimise micro-level exchanges by monitoring workers’ wellbeing, where job pressure and time strain may interfere with their functioning, especially where fully approving CWA requests is not practical. For this study, a possible explanation for some CWA requests being partially approved or declined on occasion, may be that managers have taken employees’ other responsibilities and/or wellbeing into account when making such decisions.

### *Manager–employee outcomes process*

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) proposes that through repeated interactions economic exchanges evolve to socioeconomic exchanges, where resources are exchanged and employees participate in a reciprocal relationship with the organisation (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005). The approval of the vast majority of a broad range of requests can be explained in terms of the evolving cycle of reciprocal social exchanges (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Molm, 2010).

The process of manager–employee exchanges generally led to positive outcomes at FinanceCo. Manager–employee interactions provided opportunities for managers to build supportive social exchange relationships with employees (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002; Molm et al., 2006). Over time and multiple exchanges, managers have opportunities to assess employees' performance and provide greater responsibility. Social exchange relationships also allow employees to show loyalty and commitment by reciprocating with positive work-related attitudes and behaviours, such as high engagement with organisational goals. High engagement also leads to extra-role behaviours, such as organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB), which are markers for an organisation's competitive advantage (Mitchell & Cropanzano, 2005; Molm, 2010).

According to social exchange theory, the overall frequency of requests for short-term and ad hoc CWAs showed employees engaging with their managers in social exchange relationships. This suggests employees felt empowered and entitled to initiate numerous requests during these exchanges (Greenberg & Landry, 2011). The majority of requests and approvals suggests they are used as supportive resources by managers and the organisation (Molm, 2010; Uehara, 1990).

### *Limits of social exchange rule of reciprocity*

The limit of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and norm of reciprocity (Molm, 2010) as applied to this thesis is that there were no differences found between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs responses, for work engagement outcomes. The literature provides two arguments, which reason that utilising either flexibility (or accommodative) work arrangements or developmental opportunities work arrangements should lead to different outcomes for employees. A third point discusses norm of reciprocity and negotiated exchange lenses used in social exchanges.

First, this finding contrasts with some studies that show developmental opportunities build social exchange relationships, while flexibility arrangements and those that reduce workload, diminish them (Lai et al., 2009; Walumbwa, Cropanzano, & Goldman, 2011). However, this research examined requests for customising all types of work arrangements, which all required social exchanges with managers, and thus all interactions built relationships. CWAs include all forms of flexible work which encompasses forms of flexible work enshrined in national legislative frameworks and organisational policy as well as those informal, occasional and ad hoc arrangements that are negotiated with supervisors and tailored to individual needs. Also in terms of manager-employee social exchanges, even though it could be argued that two in five requests were for time off and many of those were protected by worker entitlements, the timing of leave still needs to be negotiated with managers and, interestingly, those requests were almost always fully approved. It is also well known that men for example, sometimes take annual leave for child rearing rather than carer's leave due to stigma. The finding implies that employees had the same social exchange relationships with their managers, regardless of whether it was because of requests or responses to requests for either flexibility or developmental CWAs.

Second, the findings here imply that employees regarded flexibility and developmental CWAs equivalently, whereas previous research asserts that both managers and employees agree on the superior social value of professional development opportunities over flexibility-based modifications to work (Rousseau et al., 2006). The findings here may imply that developmental CWAs were not more highly valued than flexibility CWAs, to the extent that developmental CWAs did not generate superior reciprocity of work engagement, and contrasts research by Rousseau and colleagues (2006). Their study uses social exchange theory to show that employees and their managers value opportunities for professional development more than flexible work arrangements. Further, in the study where Rousseau and colleagues draw their claim, developmental opportunities were only negotiated with certain valued employees. The current findings here showed developmental opportunities were requested most often after requests for time off, and comprised around a third of all requests. This suggests that employees in this study also valued developmental opportunities more than other types of CWAs. In the context of FinanceCo, a possible explanation is that the higher value (high frequency of requests) of developmental CWAs (over flexibility CWAs) may have been offset by all CWAs being individually tailored through social exchanges, and also available to all.

In contrast to prior studies on I-deals (e.g., Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2009; Rousseau et al., 2009), which principally use the lens of negotiated exchange, reciprocal exchange used in the current research generates more commitment, trust, and affective regard as relations between partners rather than adversaries (Molm, Collett, & Schaefer, 2006; Molm, Peterson, & Takahashi, 1999). Reciprocal exchange and negotiated exchange are two types of exchange within social exchange theory (Molm, 2010; Molm, et al., 2006; Molm et al., 1999). These differences between reciprocal exchange and

negotiated exchange (Molm, 2010) explain why, in the current research, positive results may have been magnified by reciprocal exchange, when examining ‘requests’ and ‘responses to requests’ compared with negotiated exchanges in I-deals literature.

In summary, social exchange theory and the rule (or norm) of reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Molm, 2010) may offer a possible explanation as to why fully and partially approved requests result in the same levels of work engagement, notwithstanding their limits. It is proposed that by using a range of widely available CWAs and by empowering employees to revisit arrangements frequently, the quality of manager–employee social exchange relationships can be enhanced because frequency of requests generate more cycles of reciprocity. In this way, CWAs represent a ‘continuum of arrangements’, rather than a series of separate arrangements. Accordingly, during repeated interactions employees are frequently reminded of the organisation’s goodwill in granting requests and is reinforced by modelling of CWAs by coworkers and managers.

## **5.4 WORK–LIFE (FLEXIBILITY) AND DEVELOPMENTAL CULTURES**

### **BUFFER NEGATIVE WORK–HOME INTERACTION**

The third research question asked, *‘What are the moderating influences of flexibility culture and developmental culture on the relationships between “responses to requests” for customised work and individual and business-related outcomes?’*

The following four subsections discuss the roles of organisation and manager support in terms of context and communicating the cultural environment with employees. The organisation and manager support of the cultural environment further contends that these roles and the quality of support and communication are key mechanisms in helping employees optimise work–life balance. The first subsection (section 5.4.1) discusses the context of FinanceCo and the financial services sector in terms of characteristic features that shape overall outcomes for employees and the organisation. The second subsection



(section 5.4.2) discusses the differential impacts of the work–life (flexibility) and developmental cultures. The third subsection (section 5.4.3) discusses work–life (flexibility) culture support for individual outcomes. The fourth subsection (section 5.4.4) discusses how the developmental culture supports employees’ work–life balance. The fifth subsection (section 5.4.5) links social exchange theory and perceived organisational support (POS) theory with work–life (flexibility) and developmental cultures. The sixth subsection (section 5.4.6) links social exchange theory and the job demands-resources model with work–life (flexibility) and developmental cultures. The seventh subsection (section 5.4.7) discusses how social exchange theory, POS theory, and the job demands-resources model are interlinked with the work–life (flexibility) and developmental cultures, and how organisation and manager support affected employees’ perceptions of NWHI.

#### **5.4.1 The organisation and industry**

In the financial services sector, talented employees are the main source of competitive advantage (Strack et al., 2014). Employees typically work in competitive environments and engage in high levels of emotional labour. Employees require managerial support to help them manage the demands of work and life. Hence, it is key to FinanceCo’s competitive advantage that they support their employees.

The finance sector has the largest and continued gender wage inequities for any sector (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2013, 2016). The corporate culture of the finance industry is biased towards a segment of employees, which may shape how FinanceCo approaches CWAs, in terms of equal support for men’s and women’s utilisation (McDonald & Jeanes, 2012). Findings showed gendered uptake between flexibility and developmental CWAs, where men requested and were approved more developmental opportunities than women.

To manage worker flexibility, large organisations such as FinanceCo need formalised human resource (HR) policies (source: FinanceCo web page) that are compliant with business goals. At the micro-level, managers interpret formalised HR policies in terms of how to best meet employees' needs and flexibility approvals are guided by managers' support in manager–employee relationships with subordinates. However, many short-term and ad hoc CWAs may not be formally reported at the organisational level. For example, such cases may include unplanned time off, such as calling in sick from home on the day of work, or working from home because a child is sick, in lieu of using parental leave. Although HR-initiative work policies contain a range of different flexibility types, a fuller understanding of how flexibility is operating in the organisation requires attention to a greater range of flexibility that is approved at the local level and is not necessarily formally recorded.

#### ***Organisation-level support***

Obstacles to manager support for CWA requests and approvals may be explained by business strategies, organisation-level HR policies and limits to e-capabilities (Blau, 1964; Magni & Pennarola, 2008; Molm, 2010; Strack et al., 2014). Managers facilitate the organisational will through gatekeeping and granting CWAs (McDonald & Cathcart, 2015). The continued reduction of the workforce at FinanceCo indicates the focus on cost-saving in FinanceCo, and may explain the firm's reluctance to foster support for requests that incur costs, such as promotion to a more senior position, paid overtime, and altered duties (source: [www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au)).

#### ***Manager support***

Managers help communicate the wider organisational culture during social exchanges where employees request their CWAs. Part of the manager's role involves supporting employees in terms of organisational constraints and policies. Gatekeeping

activities (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Hochwarter, Ferris, Zinko, James, & Platt, 2007) include managing worker flexibility, deciding whether employees are granted flexibility or developmental CWAs, and disseminating information to employees on flexible work policies and provisions (e.g., *Fair Work Act 2009*; Gregory & Milner, 2012; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Some or all of these aspects of gatekeeping, mentioned above, may be affected by fewer interactions with managers, leading to fewer approvals.

The strength of an organisation's culture is judged according to how well it aligns all of its tangible and intangible elements so that a consistent message is communicated to all employees and customers. Part of the manager's role includes record-keeping and upward reporting of the types of flexibility worked. Through these channels, flexible work can inform organisational strategies and policies that contribute to the fabric of the organisational culture. However, short-term or ad hoc requests may not be formally recorded, as the term suggests (Eaton, 2003). Research here captured all CWA requests – whether formal or informal – and CWAs could be either, but were not separated. By omitting formal record-keeping (of short-term, occasional, and ad hoc CWAs), organisational intelligence linking CWAs with performance is lost or misleading, in terms of how to specifically achieve best performance outcomes.

Granting requests is meant to optimise work–life balance for employees and to incentivise performance; however, such approved requests may not be accurately linked to performance because only formal records are used. For managers to support employees within the organisational culture's goals and objectives, all types of formal and ad hoc CWAs need to be linked in ways that reflect how employees seek to optimise work–life balance, so they can be correctly linked with performance. This suggests that FinanceCo's 'strategy' of granting or denying requests may be evidence of a potential problem for employees seeking to optimise work and life, even though the organisation's culture

promotes flexibility and work–life balance. This potential mismatch between actual and recorded CWA requests is reflected in recent research highlighting how such disconnects may play out in practice. The study showed a disconnect between Australian employees’ work and nonwork needs, where they were not supported by institutional systems, policies, management, and work cultures that continued to base assumptions on an unencumbered ‘ideal worker’ (Skinner, Elton, Auer, & Pocock, 2014; Williams, 2010).

#### **5.4.2 Work–life (flexibility) and developmental cultures: Differential impacts for employees**

Conceptually, flexibility culture (which supports work–life practices) and developmental culture (which supports career development) support separate areas of work. It is important to consider them separately because employees pursue flexibility work to accommodate nonwork responsibilities, while developmental opportunities are sought to advance careers (Bal et al., 2012; Bradley et al., 2010). Yet, developmental opportunities are also associated with work–life conflict and additional time demands on employees’ other work and nonwork responsibilities (e.g., Kelliher & Anderson, 2010).

The findings here show that, on average, developmental cultural support for employees was higher than flexibility cultural support. This suggests the developmental culture supported developmental CWAs more than the flexibility culture supported flexibility CWAs. This finding is consistent with literature (Furtmueller, Dick, & Wilderom, 2011a; Noback et al., 2013; Strack et al., 2014) showing financial services organisations foster a culture that supports career-focused employees.

Previous research shows that where flexibility culture is low and developmental culture is high, employees who use substantive flexibility work arrangements might feel pressured to use developmental opportunities while continuing to work long hours (Thompson et al., 1999). According to prior research (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010), this

work intensification leads to work–life conflict and negative health outcomes for employees. The findings here show almost all employees requested flexibility CWAs, compared to around four in five employees requesting developmental opportunities CWAs. This finding suggests that even though the culture slightly favoured developmental requests, flexibility CWAs were requested more often.

### **5.4.3 Work–life (flexibility) culture: Organisational and managerial support**

#### **buffers negative work–home interaction**

Work–life flexibility culture was measured using four dimensions: (a) organisational and managerial support, (b) coworker support, (c) career consequences, and (d) time demands. This thesis tested how four dimensions of work–life (flexibility) culture influenced the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWA and NWHI (Hypothesis 8). Only organisation and manager support influenced this relationship. Those who were supported had less NWHI when their requests were declined. This finding is consistent with prior studies (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Bradley et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 1999) showing organisation and manager support of the flexibility culture are key to facilitating use of flexible work arrangements, with less work–life conflict. The finding may also be attributed to organisational supportiveness of CWAs, communicated to employees during manager–employee interactions (Sweet, Besen et al., 2014). This suggests that manager–employee exchanges (Blau, 1964) and organisational support reduce NWHI from declined requests. This finding is consistent with research (e.g., Thompson et al., 1999) showing organisation and manager support are key to helping employees managing work–life conflict. The findings here show organisation and manager support of the flexibility culture enabled FinanceCo to reduce employees’ work–life conflict for those whose requests were partially approved or declined (see also previous section 5.3).

#### **5.4.4 Developmental culture: Organisation and manager support buffers negative work–home interaction**

Developmental culture refers to the extent to which the organisation or supervisors support employees' professional development (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008). The current research tested how developmental culture influenced the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and NWHI (Hypothesis 11). Employees who were supported at unit and supervisor levels had lower NWHI when their requests were declined. This finding challenges research (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008) which showed that being denied developmental opportunities is associated with career consequences, which result in NWHI. Their study suggests organisational support of developmental CWAs is communicated to employees in manager–employee interactions and the wider organisational context (Sweet, Besen et al., 2014). However, findings here suggest that believing in an organisational strategy and receiving manager support through the developmental culture that supports professional development is also key to lower job pressure and fatigue.

Typically, trust and strategy are communicated through managers. The findings here show that organisations and managers can significantly reduce employees' NWHI and longer term negative effects for their health and wellbeing (e.g., Peeters et al., 2009; Timms et al., 2015). Using the lens of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), manager–employee interactions that are also part of manager support represent an independent source of job resources (see sections 5.3.3 and 5.4.5 for theoretical links with social exchange and perceived organisation support), specifically job support and job control (Geurts et al., 2005), which employees draw on to reduce NWHI.

#### **5.4.5 Theoretical perspectives – Perceived organisational support**

One of the surprising findings of this thesis is that for partially approved and declined requests for CWAs, the NWHIs were lower than might have been expected. There are several interlinking theoretical perspectives that can explain this. Perceived organisational support (POS) theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) builds on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), explained earlier in section 5.3.3. During exchanges, managers communicate organisational support to employees, detailing support from the wider context (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Social exchange theory and POS theory work together to explain how work–life (flexibility) culture and developmental cultures influence the impact of responses to requests for (respective flexibility and developmental) CWAs on NWHI.

POS theory captures how responsive or supportive an organisation is perceived to be toward employees' needs or welfare, and the extent to which it cares for the wellbeing of its personnel (Mauno, Kinnunen & Feldt, 2011). Perceived organisational support at FinanceCo underlies work–life flexibility and support for developmental culture. The similar influences of both work–life flexibility and developmental cultures on the effects of responses to requests on NWHI (flexibility and developmental CWAs), show key roles for perceived organisation support and manager support as experienced in social exchange relationships.

POS theory suggests that symbolic support of the work–life flexibility culture may have led employees to interpret it as an organisational resource that reduced the NWHI experienced from declined requests. The findings here suggest FinanceCo employees used organisation and manager support of work–life flexibility culture as a resource to reduce NWHI when they were denied requests. These findings are consistent with previous research (C. D. Allen, 2003), which finds a supportive job development climate

is interpreted by employees as symbolic of an organisation's commitment to them (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008). In micro-level social exchanges, managers communicate organisational support – as well as their own – which may result in approvals to requests. But even when requests are partially approved or declined, the organisation and managers can elicit supportive work–life flexibility and developmental cultures which allow employees to experience much less NWHI.

#### **5.4.6 Theoretical perspectives – Job demands-resources (JD-R) model**

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker, Demerouti, De Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) uses the two constructs to explain how work characteristics can be organised in order to understand how the processes work together to impact employees' experiences with their jobs.

Job demands refer to physical, psychosocial, or organisational aspects of a job that require sustained physical or mental effort (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). Examples are role conflicts, high work pressure, or emotional or physical demands at work (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). Job resources, on the other hand, refer to aspects of a job that are functional in meeting task requirements, and thus reduce the physical and psychological costs, but simultaneously stimulate personal development (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). Bakker and Geurts (2004) provide examples of resources as: task-related resources (performance feedback, skill variety, autonomy [Hackman & Oldham, 1976]), organisational resources (career opportunities, job security), and social resources (supervisor and coworker support).

##### ***Theoretical links with work–life (flexibility) culture and developmental culture***

Employees draw on the support of the organisation's family-friendly practices as a social supports job resource, which helps them cope with demands of work according to the theory of the JD-R model (Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner et al.,



2001). Findings here showed direct impacts of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs on NWHI. For responses that were partially approved or declined, employees' experiences of NWHI increased significantly. NWHI measures dimensions of job pressure (work strain) and time pressure (fatigue), in the JD-R model (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Geurts et al., 2005). However, the current findings also reveal that support of the work–life flexibility culture has a buffering (moderating) effect on relationships between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI. The organisation and manager support dimension of work–life flexibility culture buffered (moderated) the effects of NWHI, for employees whose requests were partially approved or declined. According to the JD-R model, organisation and manager support are social resources. The findings support the buffering hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985) that social supports buffer negative demands of work (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005). These findings are consistent with Mauno and colleagues (2005) who showed that job resources, job control, and a family-supportive climate effectively buffer (moderate) the adverse effects of work–life conflict on wellbeing and job attitudes.

The influence of workplace culture (work–life [flexibility] and developmental cultures) on relationships between responses to CWA requests and work–home interaction and work engagement can be explained by three theories: social exchange, POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986), and the JD-R model (Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner et al., 2001). The resources that employees draw from social relatedness in exchanges helps energise employees to engage with their work. Additionally, employees draw on social exchanges as social resources to help counter the negative demands of work in terms of strain and stressors (NWHI). Hindrances such as NWHI add to employees' stress – according to the JD-R model. Where employees are not able to draw on resources to counter their work demands, they experience increased levels

of strain and stress, which is associated with burnout (Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner et al., 2001).

According to the JD-R model, during social exchanges employees draw on social support of managers as social resources while they make CWA requests. During manager–employee exchanges, employees request CWAs and responses to those requests determine additional job resources. Task-related resources include task variety and autonomy. Organisational resources include career opportunities (Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner et al., 2001; Geurts et al., 2005).

The current findings show that where employees requests were partially approved, the CWA suited to managers and themselves, provided those employees with enough job resources, sufficient to counter negative impacts of partial approvals (where full approvals were not granted), for PWHI and work engagement. These job resources provided by social supports during social exchanges, however, were not sufficient to compensate for the escalated impacts of partial approvals on NWHI (compared to fully approved requests). That said, POS (Eisenberger et al., 1986) did provide sufficient resources (JD-R model) (Karasek, 1979) to buffer the negative impacts on NWHI even when requests were partially approved or declined.

## **5.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

This chapter has explored four important themes emerging from the data summarised in Chapter 4. The first new and important theme is that there was extensive utilisation of CWAs. Overall, managers at FinanceCo showed high levels of support for their employees' CWA requests, mirrored by the high frequencies of requests in the previous year by almost all employees. Employees appeared to capitalise on short-term and ad hoc modifications to work to meet both their own and the organisation's needs – though these types of flexibility have been neglected in most of the work–life balance

literature. For example, ad hoc and occasional CWA requests are important to manage demands of work and life, though FWAs are often interpreted as longer term and standard forms of modifications to work. Employees requested time off and developmental opportunities most often. Their requests were gendered and depended on whether they were parents. Men made around a third fewer requests than women, but requested developmental opportunities more often than women. However, women requested changes to work hours more often than men did, though these changes did not reduce their hours.

A second interesting theme is that managers showed strong support for employees in social exchanges by approving the vast majority of requests, but approvals varied for the type of request and who made those requests. Although the most often requested and approved types of CWAs were enshrined in worker entitlements and the *Fair Work Act 2009* provisions, requests for the timing of leave and changes to work hours do need to be negotiated, and were well supported by managers. For example, almost all requests for time off were fully approved and parents' requests were approved more often than nonparents. Managers' responses to requests also appeared to consider organisational-level needs from a cost-savings perspective. For example, requests for paid overtime and requests to increase work hours from part time to full time were declined around twice as often as other types of adjustments to work hours.

Management responses appeared to consider employees' work-life balance, career development, and gender. Interestingly, managers supported men in their career development more than women, while women received more managerial support for changes to their work hours. Yet, while women's requests to change work hours may have been additionally supported by right-to-request provisions, approvals for developmental opportunities relied on manager support in social exchange relationships.

The third theme is that fully and partially approved responses to requests had positive impacts on work–home interactions and work engagement. Employees whose requests were partially approved perceived higher levels of work–home interactions and work engagement than those whose requests were declined. This suggests manager–employee social exchanges have helped employees customise their CWAs to suit their own and the organisation’s needs. In terms of PWHI, fully and partially approved responses to requests provided employees with the same perceptions of social supports. At the same time, employees’ perceptions of NWHI were significantly lower when their requests were partially approved, compared to when their requests were declined, which suggests being able to customise work did help prevent higher NWHI, by allowing employees to recover from job pressure. Perceptions of NWHI were lowest for those whose requests were fully approved, which underlines that CWAs are key to enabling employees to manage work and life via social exchanges.

Employees whose requests for CWAs were fully or partially approved reciprocated in kind to their managers and FinanceCo with the same levels of work engagement, which was assisted by manager–employee social exchanges where requests took place. The employees whose requests were either fully or partially approved were also significantly more engaged than those whose requests were declined. This suggests that approving or partially approving CWAs in social exchanges is an important way for managers to maintain employees’ engagement.

Management’s positive responses to requests for CWAs led to higher levels of engagement at work, even when employees had to make compromises on some occasions. The results specifically demonstrated that the employees who made some compromises with their managers regarding a CWA request remained as engaged with work in terms of vigour, absorption and dedication, as their fully approved counterparts.

Results also demonstrated that when they declined employees' requests for CWAs, managers were essentially operating to disengage employees. The findings demonstrate that managers' and supervisors' actions have a direct impact on employees' level of work engagement in terms of employees' level of emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation or the amount of discretionary effort that they apply to their work.

The fourth theme emerged from discussion of the influence of the workplace environment on employee experiences of NWHI, depending on responses to requests. Organisational features of a large Australian financial services entity such as FinanceCo also shape employee attitudes towards flexible work. Organisation and manager support are key influences in the work–life flexibility and developmental cultures. Organisation and manager support buffer relationships between responses to CWA requests and NWHI. Perceived organisational support of the work–life flexibility and developmental cultures provided employees with sufficient job resources to offset their NWHI from partial approvals and declined responses to requests. Finally, findings highlight the central roles of organisation and manager support and belief in work–life flexibility and developmental cultures, in reducing NWHI for all employees.

# Chapter 6: Conclusions

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## 6.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research focused on exploring customised work arrangements (CWAs) requested at FinanceCo and how responses to requests affect employees' efforts to optimise work–life balance and are influenced by the work environment. Although the work–life balance literature is very large, it has neglected the many ad hoc and occasional work arrangements which have an important role in balancing employees' work and life, and which are requested in the context of manager–employee social exchanges.

The initial research question asked the extent to which CWAs were used, the types of CWAs requested, and what the responses to requests were. First, this research took the approach of asking employees about all the types of modifications to work they used so they could optimise their work and life balance. The modifications included a wide range of CWAs that could also provide short-term and ad hoc solutions to their needs. Second, CWAs were requested extensively ( $N = 5,865$ ) by almost all employee ( $n = 783$ , 98.2%) respondents. Across five request types, employees requested 36 subtypes in the following proportions in the previous year: time off (40% of the total number of requests), adjustments to work hours (15%), offsite work (10%), adjustments to work tasks (7%), and developmental opportunities (28%). Men requested developmental opportunities more often than women, who requested changes to work hours more often than men did. The vast majority of requests were either fully approved ( $n = 4,244$ , 72.4%), or partially approved ( $n = 1,020$ , 17.4%), with the remainder of requests, ( $n = 493$ , 8.4%), being declined.

Third, the disconnects between flexible work policy and flexible work utilisation in the literature, referred to as policy–practice gaps, are explained by the much more

extensive range of practices uncovered by this research, which include both those detailed in policy and others. An achievement of this research is that it has detailed a fuller picture of the range of adjustments that happen in everyday workplaces and is evidence that flexibility – especially short-term and ad hoc forms – is requested and approved often.

The second research question asked how responses to CWA requests affected positive and negative work–home interaction and work engagement. As expected, fully and partially approved responses to requests contributed to better outcomes. Important conclusions are that employees whose requests were partially approved perceived higher levels of manager support than those whose requests were declined. Through manager–employee interactions, employees also drew on this social support, which helped counter the demands of work. In return, employees also reciprocated with higher levels of engagement at work.

The third question concerned the influence of the workplace cultural environmental on relationships between responses to CWA requests, work–home interaction, and work engagement. Perceived organisation and manager support, representative of supportive ‘work–life flexibility’ and ‘developmental’ cultures, buffered the negative impacts of declined requests on NWHI. Two important conclusions can be drawn here: (a) employees who perceive support from the work–life flexibility and developmental cultures do not experience NWHI, and (b) developing a supportive culture is important to managing CWA requests.

## **6.2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

This thesis began by seeking to address the research problem that although manager support is considered critical for the uptake of flexible work (e.g. Skinner & Pocock, 2011), flexible work has been narrowly defined and operationalised, and the nature of the social exchange process which occurs during employee requests and

manager responses, is not well understood. In arriving at the main conclusions, this thesis also makes several contributions to research and practice. The academic literature and government statistics point to flexible work arrangements being underutilised to resolve employees' work–life conflicts, despite their availability. The literature has provided possible reasons: discontented nonrequesters (e.g., Skinner & Pocock, 2011), lack of voice (e.g., Morrison & Milliken, 2003), inadequate policies and provisions to support employees (AHRI, 2012; Skinner & Pocock, 2011), potential career penalties for using FWAs that accommodate nonwork responsibilities (e.g., Williams et al., 2013), and lack of manager support (e.g., Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

The study, for the first time, distinguished between requests for a wide range of CWAs. Five types of CWAs were examined and included requests for time off, adjustments to work hours, offsite work, adjustments to work tasks, and developmental opportunities. Each type of CWA request included a number of subtypes. The study examined the three levels of responses to requests for CWAs as: fully granted, partially granted, and declined, for the types of CWAs and their subtypes. The study classified the three levels of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and developmental opportunities CWAs, which were separately examined. The study examined the impacts of responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and developmental CWAs on work–home interactions and work engagement. Next, the study tested the influence of the workplace cultural context on the effects of responses to CWA requests on work–home interactions and work engagement.

This thesis offers an explanation for the gaps between the flexible work policies and employees' practice of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) to optimise their work and lives. It examined the extent to which CWAs were requested, and how responses to requests affected work–home interactions and work engagement and were influenced by



the work environment. First, the number of CWA requests was much more extensive than is reflected in work–life balance research. Second, the vast majority of requests were either fully or partially approved and had a direct positive impact on perceptions of PWHI and work engagement, compared with declined requests. Third, perceived organisational support for family-friendly and professional development practices buffered employee experiences of NWHI.

The first contribution provides new knowledge to the work–life balance literature, which had not quantified how frequently employees make requests, so this is a new benchmark against which future research might be compared. The current research examined a wide range of modifications to work, including occasional, short-term, and ad hoc types of requests (e.g., sick leave, remote location work), as well as standard forms of flexibility (Dick, 2009; McDonald & Townsend, 2012; Rousseau, 2001a). This thesis concludes that more forms of CWAs are requested than are reported in statistics and the literature, for two key reasons. First, whereas this thesis asked employees what CWAs they requested, statistical data (e.g., AHRI, 2012; source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2016) has drawn primarily from formal records kept within organisations. Second, whereas the CWAs reported by employees here included a broad range of modifications to work, the literature focuses on more narrow and standard forms of FWAs, such as part-time work.

One implication is for government-level policymakers. This thesis suggests that the current understanding of FWAs be broadened to include CWAs, to reflect all the types and forms of flexible work that many employees request. In cases where CWAs are ad hoc and short term, they may not be formally recorded. As a consequence of fewer flexible work arrangements being recorded at organisation level, fewer flexible work arrangements are reported to government agencies. Flexible work practices may be

incorrectly recorded at government level, which has impacts for policymakers and relevant policies, such as the *Fair Work Act 2009* and NES. It is possible that the common understanding of FWAs as formal, standard, and longer term forms overlooks the wide range of CWAs that are requested.

Another implication from this contribution is for organisational practice. Organisations need to recognise the importance of taking a broader definition of FWAs to include the many shorter term, occasional, and ad hoc arrangements of CWAs that employees often request. Although the longer term and standard forms of flexibility are included in organisational policies and practice, employees utilise an extensive range of many forms of CWAs to help them optimise work and life. By including the full range of CWAs that are requested by employees, this information can better assist organisations to improve their understanding of how CWAs are requested and/or utilised to optimise employees' work and lives. Additionally, an improved understanding of the CWAs that are utilised by employees could be linked with other measures and consequent business strategies. Here, systems that support record-keeping would assist organisations with many aspects of CWA management. Organisations can thereby learn (via the managers or supervisors to who receive CWA requests) how to make best use of CWAs that benefit their business. Furthermore, managers may be able to help the organisation thrive by capitalising on employees' numerous occasions of CWA requests, to engage with and build relationships and loyalty with their employees. For employees, CWAs mean they can better manage their work and nonwork lives and achieve this with less NWHI and more PWHI and engagement at work. Customising work arrangements to suit managers and employees helps better meet the needs of both parties, and lifts the value and interdependence of each with the other.

A second contribution to research is that responses to requests for CWAs provide a nuanced measure which allows researchers to gain deeper insight into the effects that fully approved, partially approved, and declined requests have on employee and organisational outcomes. Manager support during social exchanges provides employees with more PWHI and less NWHI, while employees whose requests were fully or partially approved reciprocated by being more engaged at work. Although partial approvals and declined responses to requests led to increased levels of NWHI, the effects were diminished by perceived organisation support (POS) of the work–life flexibility and developmental cultures. In terms of POS theory, this thesis concludes that organisational and managerial support of family-friendly and professional development practices reduced perceptions of NWHI, even when CWA requests were declined or partially approved. This thesis shows that perceptions of organisation support influence how partially granted or declined employees perceive responses to CWA requests, in terms of their impacts on time strain and job pressure, which are associated with NWHI. This suggests that firms that have positive work–life cultures and developmental cultures may be expected to have less work–life conflict among their employees. If a firm has a positive culture it is suggested that, as this study shows, employees experience less NWHI.

A third contribution to research applies to effort-recovery (E-R) theory (grounded in demand-control support model) and POS theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) (grounded in social exchange). When employees experienced less job control (from partial approvals and declined requests), their job demands significantly increased and led to NWHI. However, these job demands were reduced for those who perceived organisational support, which was fostered by the work–life flexibility and developmental cultures. This

study showed that when requests were partially approved or declined, POS and manager support buffered the job demands that contributed to NWHI.

An implication for practice is that POS alleviates job demands by developing a supportive culture and is important to managing requests. With supportive work–life flexibility and developmental cultures, organisations can offset NWHI experienced by employees. However, the caveat is that employees need to believe in organisational and manager support in order for this to be realised. Employees who were supported by the organisation and by their managers’ support of the work–life flexibility and developmental cultures were able to use this organisational resource to buffer NWHI when their requests were denied or only partially approved. The less employees experience NWHI (when their requests are partially approved or declined), the more they are insulated from the short- and long-term negative impacts on their health and wellbeing. This is both an important personal outcome for the individual and has an organisational benefit through employees’ improved ability to engage at work. In terms of organisation-level policy, managers and supervisors would benefit from training in terms of how to manage requests for CWAs. Further organisation-wide enculturation training would also build awareness of how the organisation supports work-life balance and professional development. In terms of practice, managers or supervisors would be advised to approve or at least partially approve CWA requests regardless of the type, and impress upon employees how they and the organisation supports them, especially when requests are declined.

### **6.3 LIMITATIONS**

There are some limitations in the research design of this study: (a) common method variance of cross-sectional data; (b) self-report bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), and an inability to show direction or causality. Self-reporting is key to examining employees’

requests, managers' responses to those requests, and how they affected the employees' work and nonwork lives. However, the additional perspectives of managers and coworkers are more reliable, in terms of measuring manager support and coworker support. For example, (c) the work-home interactions and work engagement outcomes for responses to requests for flexibility CWAs were not isolated from responses to requests for developmental CWAs.

There is often considerable overlap between CWAs that are entitlements, protected by the FWA and discretionary CWAs such as occasional or ad hoc forms of flexibility. For example, annual leave provision is specified in employment contracts, but the timing of that leave is often discretionary and dependent on social exchange processes. In this thesis there is a deliberate decision to adopt an inclusive approach to examining CWA in order to capture flexibility in all its myriad forms and explore how social exchange processes impact on employees. A limitation of this study therefore, is that the analysis does not separate CWAs covered by the legal and regulatory framework from those entirely at a manager's discretion. A future direction for research may be to create sub-categories of FWAs to facilitate a finer grained analysis of the relationship between employee entitlements and social exchange.

The study used a sample of one Australian organisation across four business divisions. In the Australian legal context, CWA approvals may depend on manager support via social exchange processes, though some CWAs function as legal entitlements, and derive less benefit from social exchange relationships. Social exchange may be more central or more critical to some types of requests more than others; less so, for example, with statutory entitlements, but nonetheless still a factor, as some of the examples attest. The study is therefore shaped by both the national context, which includes the regulatory framework, and the institutional one.

The findings here might not be attributable to workplaces that are very different from FinanceCo. The large, white-collar organisation in the financial services sector employs knowledge workers whose main work is customer service and skilled professional administrative roles assisted by technology. The knowledge workers are committed to career development but also require modifications to work arrangements to help them maintain long work hours and attend to their nonwork responsibilities. FinanceCo offers a broad range of flexible work arrangements which help attract and retain the talent who provide the intellectual capital and the firm's key competitive advantage (Chia, 2013; Joshi et al., 2013). Whereas knowledge workers have specialised skill sets and are not easily replaced, less-skilled workers are often more easily replaced and may have less need for career development. Further, the types of work some employees perform may make some types flexibility less practical.

#### **6.4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Future research employing different designs, such as mixed and repeated cross-sectional design, could help show causal relationships and from multiple perspectives, for example, of managers and coworkers as well as employees. Future research could apply longitudinal approaches which show causal and directional relationships between responses to requests for flexibility and developmental CWAs, PWHI, NWHI and work engagement. Such approaches would reveal how relationships shown here could be accounted for by a relationship with one or more other variables. The literature would benefit from replicated studies across different national, organisational, and industry sector contexts.

Suggestions for future research that addresses limitations of scope include examining the roles of employee voice and silence in requesting CWAs. Research tells us that workplace culture may inhibit employees, especially women (Harris, 2009), from

voicing concerns about their work–life conflicts in the face of personal and career consequences (Charles & Breena, 2009; Dundon & Gollan, 2007; Dundon et al., 2004). As voice is found to be an antecedent to work engagement (Freeman & Rogers, 1999), it is an important limitation of the research findings that the notion of employee voice and silence could not be examined here, and this is an important avenue for future research.

Using varying design methods to derive categories for responses to requests (approved, partially approved, denied) may provide a more nuanced understanding of how responses to CWA requests affect employees' efforts to optimise their work–life balance. By isolating items for flexibility CWAs or developmental CWA types, the survey design could better evaluate outcomes that relate specifically to each CWA type. For example, question items could start with, *'Thinking about your requests for developmental CWAs ...'*. Finally, it is recommended that future studies adopt the broader term customised work arrangements (CWAs) in preference to flexible work arrangements (FWAs) in seeking to capture all the forms of flexible work available to employees.

## **6.5 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

This thesis has helped to resolve the research problem, that although manager support is considered critical for the uptake of flexible work, flexible work has been narrowly defined and operationalised, and the nature of the social exchange process which occurs during employee requests and manager responses, is not well understood. This thesis clearly shows that there are extensive CWA requests made by employees in order to optimise their work–life balance. Almost all employees of FinanceCo requested a wide range of CWAs, and often requested the same form of CWA multiple times in a given period. However, these CWAs were often not captured by the existing reporting mechanisms, especially when they were short term, occasional, and of an ad hoc nature.

This research also analysed the extensive number of responses to requests. The

majority of requests were either fully approved or partially approved and reflected how the social exchange process was used by managers and employees to help employees meet their work arrangement needs in line with the needs of the organisation. Employees who were fully or partially approved their requests for CWAs enjoyed the same PWHI and engagement with work as a result of the manager support in social exchange relationships. Employees who were partially approved their requests for CWAs also had less NWHI than those whose requests were declined, and showed how customising work through social exchanges helps meet the needs of both employees and the organisation.

When CWA requests were not fully approved, they led to significant increases in NWHI for employees whose requests were partially approved or declined. However, if employees perceived organisational support for family-friendly and professional development practices, they did not experience significant increases in NWHI when their requests were partially approved or declined. Fully approving requests for all CWAs is not always practicable for an organisation. However, organisations can protect employees from NWHI by ensuring they have the support of a family-friendly and professional development culture.

In conclusion, CWAs reflect the broad range of flexibility that employees request to help balance work and life. For this reason, there needs to be a broader conceptualisation of FWAs to include CWAs, in order to encompass all forms of flexibility, and to reflect the needs of employees. Moreover, a supportive culture is key to buffering negative responses and helps prevent health problems in employees whose requests for CWAs are not fully approved.

This chapter set out the main theoretical and practical contributions of this thesis. This research examined CWAs, and examined how management responses to CWA requests affected employees' efforts to optimise their work–life balance. The chapter



focused on three contributions that emerged from discussion between thesis results and the contextual environment of FinanceCo, in the context of current literature. Overall conclusions articulated contributions to the work–life balance literature and perceived organisational support theory. Furthermore, implications for national-level policies and organisation-level practice were presented. Thesis conclusions were contextualised by specifying limitations and opportunities for future research, and closed with key conclusions.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A Customised work survey

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Customised Work Survey

<b>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT</b>
<b>CUSTOMISED WORK ARRANGEMENTS</b> QUT Ethics Approval Number 0800000251
<b>RESEARCH TEAM</b> <b>Student Researcher:</b> Sylvia Roux 0403 901 895 <a href="mailto:sylvia.roux@student.qut.edu.au">sylvia.roux@student.qut.edu.au</a> <b>Supervisor:</b> Prof. Paula McDonald 07 3138 5318 <a href="mailto:p.mcdonald@qut.edu.au">p.mcdonald@qut.edu.au</a> <b>Associate Supervisor:</b> Dr Abby Cathcart 07 3138 1251 <a href="mailto:abby.cathcart@qut.edu.au">abby.cathcart@qut.edu.au</a>
<b>DESCRIPTION</b> This study is being conducted as a project through the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). The purpose of the project is to explore employees' experiences of customising the terms and conditions associated with their work. By 'customising work', we mean situations where you have had to informally or formally discuss an issue, in relation to your work hours, or other job conditions, with your manager, first line leader or employer.
<b>PARTICIPATION</b> Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate and there will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate. You may withdraw before submission of the completed questionnaire, but as it is anonymous, you may not withdraw once submitted. Your participation involves completing a questionnaire which will take up to 20 minutes. You may decline to participate in the whole questionnaire or to choose not to answer any individual question. We would like to ask you questions about how you customise the terms and conditions of your work, such as start and finish times, when you take annual leave, working less hours or working from home.
<b>EXPECTED BENEFITS</b> It is expected that this project will contribute to an understanding of why workers discuss the terms and conditions of their employment with their employers / managers and the outcomes. The research will also contribute to the effective development and implementation of flexible work policies and practices. A summary of the results of the research can be provided upon request.
<b>RISKS</b> There are no out of the ordinary risks associated with participating in the questionnaires, although if you have had any negative interactions with your manager or employer, this may lead to some psychological discomfort. If you experience discomfort and need support please contact Lifeline Helpline which operates 24-7 Tel: 13 11 44.
<b>PRIVACY &amp; CONFIDENTIALITY</b> All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. Only the research team will have access to the data. Responses from the questionnaires will be reported in aggregate form and no individual will be identified. At no time will your responses influence your employment or your relationships with participating organisations.
<b>RETURNING THE SURVEY</b> By completing the survey and returning it, consent is implied.
<b>QUESTIONS / FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT</b> Please contact the research team members to have any questions answered or if you require further information.
<b>CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT</b> QUT is committed to researcher integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Unit on 07 3138 5123 or email <a href="mailto:ethicscontact@qut.edu.au">ethicscontact@qut.edu.au</a> . The Research Ethics Unit is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner. <i>Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><input type="button" value="Next &gt;"/> <input type="button" value="Next &gt;"/> <input type="button" value="Next &gt;"/></p> <p>Completed: <input type="text"/></p>

### Customised Work Survey

The following questions ask whether, in the past year, you have needed to discuss or request adjustments to your work arrangements with your manager or first line leader. This could be formally or informally or on a short-term or long-term basis. Please indicate yes or no against each option. If you tick 'yes', please indicate whether the request was fully granted, partly granted or declined.

**1. Have you discussed or requested a change from full-time to part-time hours?**

- Yes
- No

**[SKIP LOGIC: If indicate 'Yes', further options are displayed. If indicate 'No' progress to next question. Applies to questions 1 – 28.]**

- Fully granted
- Partly granted
- Declined

**2. Have you discussed or requested a change from part-time to full-time hours?**

- Yes
- No

**3. Have you discussed or requested changes to start and/ or finish times?**

- Yes
- No

**4. Have you discussed or requested a compressed work week?**

- Yes
- No

**5. Have you discussed or requested working term time (i.e. not working during school holidays)?**

- Yes
- No

6. Have you discussed or requested changes to the amount of flexibility in working times (E.g. asking to work different hours temporarily)?

- Yes
- No

7. Have you discussed or requested an increase or decrease in work hours?

- Yes
- No

8. Have you discussed or requested working paid overtime?

- Yes
- No

9. Have you discussed or requested how you are notified of your work hours?

- Yes
- No

10. Have you discussed or requested other changes to working times?

- Yes
- No
- If 'Yes' please state |

[If indicate 'Yes' and/ or 'If Yes please state' further options are displayed.  
If indicate 'If 'Yes' please state', and then don't type text in that box, they will be prompted to do so when they click on 'next' (to move to the next view of the survey.)]

- Fully granted
- Partly granted
- Declined

11. Have you discussed or requested a change to the timing of annual leave or holidays?

- Yes
- No

**12. Have you discussed or requested sick leave?**

Yes

No

**13. Have you discussed or requested carer's leave (for sick children or family)?**

Yes

No

**14. Have you discussed or requested a change to the timing of parental (maternity or paternity) leave?**

Yes

No

**15. Have you discussed or requested flexible leave days?**

Yes

No

**16. Have you discussed or requested volunteer leave?**

Yes

No

**17. Have you discussed or requested other leave (E.g. study leave, compassionate leave)?**

Yes

No

If 'Yes' please state

**18. Have you discussed or requested a promotion to a more senior position?**

Yes

No

**19. Have you discussed or requested career development opportunities?**

Yes

No

**20. Have you discussed or requested training or skills development?**

Yes

No

**21. Have you discussed or requested taking on more challenging work?**

Yes

No

**22. Have you discussed or requested other development opportunities?**

Yes

No

If 'Yes' please state

**23. Have you discussed or requested a reduction or increase in workload?**

Yes

No

**24. Have you discussed or requested altered duties (e.g. a change in roles, tasks or responsibilities)?**

Yes

No

**25. Have you discussed or requested another issue?**

Yes

No

If 'Yes' please state



**26. Have you discussed or requested working from home?**

Yes

No

**27. Have you discussed or requested taking work home after hours?**

Yes

No

**28. Have you discussed or requested another offsite arrangement?**

Yes

No

If 'Yes' please state

**29A. Thinking about the customised work arrangements listed previously, were there any that you wanted to discuss or request but didn't?**

Yes

No

If yes, please identify which arrangement was relevant and why you decided not to pursue this.

**29B. Thinking about the customised work arrangements listed previously, are there any that you are discouraged from requesting?**

Yes

No

If yes, please briefly explain how.

**30A. Please indicate how valid you think the following reasons are for requesting customised work arrangements.**

	Very valid	Valid	Neutral	Not very valid	Not at all valid
1. To care for dependent children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. To care for adults (such as the elderly, neighbours, people with disability etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. To shorten commute times such as through work from home arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. To study.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. To attend a scheduled medical appointment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. To recuperate from illness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. To engage in sporting or leisure activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. To attend to general life activities (e.g. car repairs, pets, children's school event)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. To do volunteer work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. To help concentration or avoid distractions in the office.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**30B. Please state any other reason for requesting customised work arrangements.**

Completed:

### Customised Work Survey

**31A. The following questions ask about your experiences of workplace culture in relation to work and non-work activities. Please rate the following.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1. In general, managers in this workplace are quite accommodating of non-work needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Higher management in this workplace encourage first line leaders to be sensitive to employees' personal concerns.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Middle and senior managers in this workplace are sympathetic toward employees' childcare responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. In the event of a conflict, managers are understanding when employees have to put their non-work responsibilities first.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Middle and senior managers in this workplace are sympathetic toward employees' elder care responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. In this workplace employees are encouraged to strike a balance between their work and personal lives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. This workplace is supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for family reasons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. In this work environment it is generally okay to talk about one's non-work activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. In this work environment, employees can easily balance their work and non-work lives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. This workplace encourages employees to set limits on where work stops and home life begins.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**31B. The following are a few more questions asking about your experiences of workplace culture in relation to work and non-work activities. Please rate the following.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Neutral	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
11. To get ahead in this workplace, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week, whether at work or at home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their non-work/ personal responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. To be viewed favourably by senior management, employees in this workplace must constantly put their jobs ahead of their personal lives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Being seen at work after hours is an important way of getting ahead in your career in this workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. In this workplace employees who do not participate in available work-life arrangements (e.g. job sharing, part-time work) are more serious about their careers than those who do participate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. To turn down a promotion or transfer for personal reasons will hurt one's career progress in this workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. In this workplace employees who do not use work-life arrangements are more likely to advance in their careers than those who do use work-life arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Developmental opportunities are less likely to be offered to employees who use work-life balance arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. In this workplace, employees who use work-life policies are perceived negatively by their co-workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. In this workplace, co-workers are supportive of their colleagues' use of work-life balance arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. If an employee is away from work due to a work-life balance arrangement, co-workers resent having to help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Co-workers in this workplace feel positively about employees using work-life balance arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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### Customised Work Survey

**32. The following questions ask about how your workplace encourages your professional development. Please rate the following.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. In this department, workers are developed and encouraged to learn new things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. In this department, the existing experience, knowledge and capacities of workers are used.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. In this department, workers are encouraged to maintain and polish their skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My first line leader encourages workers to develop and learn new things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. My first line leader uses the existing experience, knowledge and capacities of workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. My first line leader encourages workers to maintain and polish their skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Completed:

### Customised Work Survey

**33. The following questions ask about work-home interaction and how it affects you. Please rate the following.**

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. You find it difficult to fulfil your domestic obligations because you are constantly thinking about your work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Your work schedule makes it difficult for you to fulfil your domestic obligations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. You do not have the energy to engage in leisure activities with your spouse/ family/ friends because of your job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. You have to work so hard that you do not have time for any of your hobbies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Your work obligations make it difficult for you to feel relaxed at home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Your work takes up time that you would have liked to spend with your spouse/ family/ friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. After a pleasant working day/ working week, you feel more in the mood to engage in activities with spouse/ family/ friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. You fulfil your domestic obligations better because of the things you have learned on your job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. You are better able to keep appointments at home because your job requires this as well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. You manage your time at home more efficiently as a result of the way you do your job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Completed:

**Customised Work Survey**

**34. The following questions ask about your well-being and engagement at work. Please rate the following.**

	Never	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I am enthusiastic about my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My job inspires me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I feel happy when I am working intensely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I am proud of the work that I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I am immersed in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I get carried away when I am working.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Completed:

### Customised Work Survey

35. In the following questions, we would like to learn about you. Please respond with answers that most apply to you.

36. Please select your gender

- Male
- Female

37. What is your occupation/ job title in this organisation?

- Team member
- First line leader
- Business leader
- Strategic leader

38. Do you have people leadership responsibilities? If yes, how many staff do you lead/manage?

Yes

No

If Yes, number of persons

39. How long have you been employed in this organisation?

Number of years:

Number of months:

40. Which of the following best describes your current employment?

- Permanent full-time
- Permanent part-time
- Casual full-time
- Casual part-time
- Consultant/Contractor
- Other (Please Specify)



**41. How many hours do you usually work each week?**

In your main job?

In all jobs (if you have more than one job)?

**42. Are you a member of a union?**

Yes

No

If so, which union are you a member of?

**43. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background?**

Yes

No

**44. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?**

**45. What is your year of birth?**

Year of birth:

**46. What kind of household do you live in?**

Single, no children

Single, with children

Couple, no children

Couple, with children

Other (Please Specify)

**47. How many dependent children are you responsible for?**

**48. What is the age of your youngest child?**

in years

**49. How many other people do you provide some care for?**

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Completed:

### Customised Work Survey

You have come to the end of the questionnaire, and we wish to thank you very very much for participating. We understand your time is valuable and your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Please click submit to end this survey.

Completed:

## Appendix B Scores for internal consistency of work–life outcomes scales

Table B.1.  
*Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for Internal Consistency of Work–Life Outcomes Measures*

Scale Subscale	Original comparison scale	Current study
	$\alpha$	$\alpha$
Positive work–home interaction	.75	.75
Negative work–home interaction	.84	.90
Work engagement – total	.91	.93
Vigour	.76	.90
Dedication	.87	.88
Absorption	.79	.78
Work–family culture – total	-	-
Organisational support	.85	.88
Managerial support	.92	.90
Organisational and managerial support	-	.93
Time demands	.88	.89
Career consequences	.74	.86
Coworker support	.72	.72
Developmental culture – total	.72	.93
Unit-level support	-	-
Supervisor-level support	-	-

**Appendix C Missing values analysis tables – Identified missing patterns for relevant variable combinations**

Table C.1 displays missing values (MV) patterns for variable combinations used in the thesis's central analysis, indicated by asterisks\*. Table C.2 displays MV patterns summaries taken from Table C.1. with the five specified patterns.

Table C.1.

*Missing Values Patterns of Variables Combinations Measures Used in Analyses*

<i>Scale Subscales</i>	Flexibility customised work				Development customised work
	<i>Work hours</i>	<i>Time off</i>	<i>Work tasks</i>	<i>Offsite work</i>	<i>Development opps.</i>
Positive work-home interaction	.145	.145	.132	.145	.145
Negative work-home interaction	.962	.962	.974	.962	.962
Work engagement	.178	.178	.315	.178	.178
Work-life (flexibility) culture					
Managerial support	.029*	.029*	.027*	.029*	.029*
Organisation support	.270	.270	.441	.270	.270
Mgr & org. support	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
Time expectations	.415	.415	.576	.415	.415
Coworker support	.430	.430	.408	.430	.430
Career consequences	.026*	.026*	.025*	.026*	.026*
PWHI & WLFC					
PWHI & managerial support	.083	.083	.233	.083	.083
PWHI & org. support	.038*	.038*	.038*	.038*	.038*
PWHI & mgr & org. support	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
PWHI & time expectations	.055	.055	.120	.055	.055
PWHI & coworker support	.336	.336	.261	.336	.336
PWHI & career conseq's	.032*	.032*	.031*	.032*	.032*
NWHI & WLFC					
NWHI & managerial support	.497	.497	.701	.497	.497
NWHI & org. support	.844	.844	.875	.844	.844
NWHI & mgr & org. support	.009*	.009*	.009*	.009*	.009*
NWHI & time expectations	.913	.913	.980	.913	.913
NWHI & coworker support	.268	.268	.335	.268	.268
NWHI & career conseq's	.081	.081	.227	.081	.081
Work engagement & WLFC					
WE & managerial support	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
WE & org. support	.004*	.004*	.004*	.004*	.004*
WE & mgr & org. support	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
WE & time expectations	.252	.252	.551	.252	.252
WE & coworker support	.171	.171	.321	.171	.171
WE & career conseq's	.022*	.022*	.023*	.022*	.022*
Dev. culture & WLFC					
DC & managerial support	.001*	.001*	.001*	.001*	.001*
DC & org. support	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
DC & mgr & org. support	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
DC & time expectations	.253	.253	.602	.253	.253
DC & coworker support	.011*	.011*	.012*	.011*	.011*
DC & career conseq's	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
Developmental culture	.117	.117	.242	.117	.117
PWHI & DC	.012*	.012*	.012*	.012*	.012*
NWHI & DC	.005*	.005*	.005*	.005*	.005*
Work engagement & DC	.106	.106	.257	.106	.106

Note. PWHI = positive work-home interaction, NWHI = negative work-home interaction, WLFC = work-life [flexibility] culture, DC = developmental culture, WE = work engagement. Missing values patterns are indicated by asterisk (\*) using Little's MCAR test (Little, 1988).

\* denotes significance level,  $p < .05$ .

Table C.2  
*Missing Value Patterns Summaries for CWA Variables Combinations Measures Used in Analyses*

<i>Missing values patterns summary</i>													
Scales & subscales	CWA	n	1		2		3		4		5		Excl. patterns
			n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n
<b>Work-life (flexibility) culture</b>													
Managerial support	.029*	4	65 (8.3)	SD exCDC	23 (2.9)	D exCDC	25 (3.1)	ParentwCh	44 (5.5)	Age	n/a		555
Mgr & org. support	<.001*	4	"	SD exCDC	22 (2.8)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	43 (5.4)	Age	n/a		545
Career consequences	.026*	4	67 (8.4)	SD exCDC	23 (2.9)	D exCDC	25 (3.1)	ParentwCh	45 (5.6)	Age	n/a		554
<b>PWHI &amp; WLFC</b>													
PWHI & org. support	.038*	4	66 (8.3)	SD exCDC	15(2)	D exCDC	23 (2.9)	ParentwCh	42 (5.3)	Age	n/a		537
PWHI & mgr & org support	<.001*	4	65 (8.2)	SD exCDC	15 (2)	D exCDC	23 (2.9)	ParentwCh	42 (5.3)	Age	n/a		535
PWHI & career conseq's	.032*	4	67 (8.4)	SD exCDC	15 (2)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	44 (5.5)	Age	n/a		544
<b>NWHI &amp; WLFC</b>													
NWHI & mgr & org. support	.009*	4	65 (8.2)	SD exCDC	16 (2)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	43 (5.4)	Age	n/a		541
<b>Work engagement &amp; WLFC</b>													
WE & managerial support	<.001*	5	65 (8.2)	SD exCDC	14 (1.8)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	43 (5.4)	Age	9 (1.1)	WD exCDC	543
WE & org. support	.004*	5	66 (8.3)	SD exCDC	13 (1.8)	D exCDC	23 (2.9)	ParentwCh	42 (5.3)	Age	10(1.3)	WD exCDC	535
WE & mgr & org. support	<.001*	5	65 (8.2)	SD exCDC	13 (1.8)	D exCDC	23 (2.9)	ParentwCh	42 (5.3)	Age	9 (1.1)	WD exCDC	533
WE & career conseq's	.022*	5	67 (8.4)	SD exCDC	14 (1.8)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	44 (5.5)	Age	9 (1.1)	WD exCDC	542
<b>Dev. culture &amp; WLFC</b>													
DC & managerial support	.001*	4	65 (8.2)	SD exCDC	21 (2.6)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	44 (5.5)	Age			544
DC & org. support	<.001*	4	66 (8.3)	SD exCDC	20 (2.6)	D exCDC	23 (2.9)	ParentwCh	44 (5.5)	Age	n/a		536
DC & mgr & org. support	<.001*	4	65 (8.2)	SD exCDC	20 (2.6)	D exCDC	23 (2.9)	ParentwCh	43 (5.4)	Age	n/a		534
DC & coworker support	.011*	4	67 (8.4)	SD exCDC	21 (2.6)	D exCDC	24 (4.1)	ParentwCh	44 (5.5)	Age	n/a		540
DC & career conseq's	<.001*	4	67 (8.4)	SD exCDC	21 (2.6)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	45 (5.6)	Age	n/a		543

<i>Missing values patterns summary</i>													
Scales & subscales	CWA	n	1		2		3		4		5		Excl. patterns
			n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n (%)	Omissions	n
PWHI & DC	.012*	4	69 (8.7)	SD exCDC	15 (1.9)	D exCDC	23 (4.1)	ParentwCh	44 (5.5)	Age	n/a		539
NWHI & DC	.005*	4	69 (8.7)	SD exCDC	16 (2)	D exCDC	24 (3)	ParentwCh	46 (5.8)	Age	n/a		546

*Note.* PWHI = positive work-home interaction, NWHI = negative work-home interaction, WLFC = work-life (flexibility) culture, DC = developmental culture, WE = work engagement, Exc.= excluding, demogs = demographics. SD exCDC = All scales and demographics excluding carer status, division, and CWA. D exCDC = All demographics excluding carer status, division, and CWA. ParentwCh = Parent with dependent child status. WD exCDC = All work engagement items and demographics excluding carer status, division, and CWA.

\* denotes Little's MCAR significance level,  $p < .05$ .

**Appendix D Missing values analysis tables – Summarised detail of five missing values patterns for relevant scale and demographic variables**

Tables D.1 to D.8 display summarised missing values of interest for survey items (taken from the 5 missing values patterns) arising from missing values analysis – grouped by demographic categories.

Table D.1.  
*Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses for Survey Items – Job Title Category*

Variable		Job title								
		<i>n</i>	<i>% N</i>	Mean score	Total	Team member	First line leader	Business leader	Strategic leader	Missing
PWHIQ9SkilTrf	<i>Present</i>	717	90	1.01	717	515	140	30	4	28
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10	1.2	0	0	0	72.5
PWHIQ10SkilTrf	<i>Present</i>	713	89.5	1.08	713	512	139	30	4	28
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.5	1.7	0.7	0	0	72.5
WEQ4D	<i>Present</i>	715	89.7	3.67	715	515	140	30	4	26
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.3	1.2	0	0	0	74.5

*Note.* Job title category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2, and 5.



Table D.2.

*Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses for Survey Items – Household Status Category*

Variable		Household status									
		<i>n</i>	% <i>N</i>	Mean score	Total	Single no children	Single, children	Couple no children	Couple, children	Other	Missing
PWHIQ8SkilTrf	<i>Present</i>	718	90.1	0.80	718	135	38	209	296	5	35
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				9.9	0	0	0.5	1	0	68.8
PWHIQ9SkilTrf	<i>Present</i>	717	90	1.01	717	134	38	209	296	5	34
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10	0.7	0	0.5	0	0	68.8
WEQ1V	<i>Present</i>	717	90	3.29	717	134	38	209	297	5	33
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10	0.7	0	0.5	0.7	0	69.7
WEQ2V	<i>Present</i>	715	89.7	3.32	715	134	38	208	296	5	33
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.3	0.7	0	1	1	0	69.7
WEQ4D	<i>Present</i>	715	89.7	3.64	715	133	38	209	296	5	34
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.3	1.5	0	0.5	1	0	69.7
WEQ7D	<i>Present</i>	716	89.8	4.51	716	133	38	209	297	5	33
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.2	1.5	0	0.5	0.7	0	69.7
DEVCQ1US	<i>Present</i>	725	91	3.98	725	135	37	210	297	5	40
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				9	0	2.6	0	0.7	0	63.3

*Note.* Household status category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2, and 5.

Table D.3.  
 Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses for Survey Items – Parent Status Category

Variable		Parent status						
		<i>n</i>	% <i>N</i>	Mean score	Total	Yes	No	Missing
PWHIQ8SkilTrf	<i>Present</i>	718	90.1	0.80	718	330	354	34
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				9.9	0.9	0.3	68.8
PWHIQ9SkilTrf	<i>Present</i>	717	90	1.01	717	330	353	34
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10	0.9	0.6	68.8
WEQ1V	<i>Present</i>	717	90	3.29	717	331	353	33
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10	0.6	0.6	69.7
WEQ2V	<i>Present</i>	715	89.7	3.32	715	330	352	33
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.3	0.9	0.8	69.7
WEQ4D	<i>Present</i>	715	89.7	3.64	715	330	352	33
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.3	0.9	0.8	69.7
WEQ7D	<i>Present</i>	716	89.8	4.51	716	331	352	33
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10.2	0.6	0.8	69.7
DEVQ1US	<i>Present</i>	725	91	3.98	725	330	355	40
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				9	0.9	0	63.3
WLBCQ16CC	<i>Present</i>	726	91.1	3.88	726	330	354	42
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				8.9	0.9	0.3	61.5

*Note.* Parent status category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2, and 5.

Table D.4.

*Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses for Survey Items – Years of Employment Category*

Variable		Years of employment				
		Mean item score	Mean item score (when Totalemploy is present)	Mean years employed (when other Var. present)	$r^2$ *	$r^2$ #
WLBCQ4MS (mgr support)	<i>Present</i>	5.20	5.06	8.21	-.022	-.022
NWHIQ1Strain	<i>Present</i>	0.98	0.96	8.20	.068	.068
WEQ1V	<i>Present</i>	3.29	3.32	8.22	-.049	-.049
Totalemploy			8.21		1	1

*Note.* Years of employment category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2 and 5.

\* denotes pairwise correlations, # denotes listwise correlations.

$r^2 < 0.25$  trivial (Hair et al., 2013).

Table D.5.

*Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses – Education*

Variable			Education												
			Total	Jnr high	Snr high	Vocational	Assoc. dip.	U/grad	Bach.	P/grad	H/deg.	Other	Missing		
WEQ1V	<i>Present</i>	717	90	3.29	717	26	157	24	157	47	166	61	49	30	26
	<i>Missing (%)</i>				10	.0	.0	.0	.6	.0	1.8	.0	.0	71.7	.0

*Note.* Education category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2, and 5.

U/grad = undergraduate degree, Bach. = bachelor degree, P/grad = postgraduate degree, H/deg = higher degree (masters, PhD).

Table D.6.

*Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses for Survey Items – Leadership Status Category*

Variable					Parent status			
					Total	Yes	No	Missing
WLBCCW22_REV (coworker support)	<i>Present</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>% N</i>	Mean score				
	<i>Missing (%)</i>							
		723	90.7	1.80	723	166	525	32
					9.3	.6	1.1	67.7

*Note.* Parent status category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2, and 5.

Table D.7.

*Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses for Survey Items – Parent With Dependent Children Status Category*

Variable					Parent with dependent children status		
					Total	Yes	No
WLBCQ8OS (org. support)*	<i>Present</i>	Mean score					
	<i>Missing (%)</i>						
		5.42	725 (91%)	279 (99.6%)	375 (99.2%)	71 (51.1%)	
			9%	0.4 %	0.8%	48.9%	
DEVQ1US (unit support)#	<i>Present</i>	3.98	725 (91%)	278 (99.3%)	377 (99.7%)	70	
	<i>Missing (%)</i>		9%	0.7%	0.3%	50.4%	

*Note.* Parent with dependent children status category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2, 3 exclusively, and 5.

\* denotes question item 'In this work environment it is generally okay to talk about one's nonwork activities'. # denotes question item, 'In this department, workers are developed and encouraged to learn new things'.

Table D.8.  
*Missing Values of Interest Arising From Missing Values Analyses for Survey Items – Age Category*

Variable		Age				
		Mean item score	Mean item score (when Age is present)	Mean age (when other Var. present)	$r^2$ *	$r^2$ #
WLBCQ6OS (org. support)	<i>Present</i>	5.20	5.24	39.93	-.066	-.070
WLBCQ8OS (org. support)	<i>Present</i>	5.42	5.48	39.94	-.093	-.090
WLBCQ10OS (org. support)	<i>Present</i>	4.59	4.64	39.93	-.063	-.067
WLBCQ18CC (career cons.)	<i>Present</i>	3.61	3.53	39.94	-.003	-.001
WLBCQ19CWSR (coworker)	<i>Present</i>	3.37	3.32	39.97	-.021	.032
WLBCQ21CWSR (coworker)	<i>Present</i>	3.53	3.46	39.96	-.002	-.007
PWHIQ9SkilTrf	<i>Present</i>	1.01	2.04	39.93	.008	.004
NWHIQ1Strain	<i>Present</i>	0.98	1.95	39.94	-.003	-.005
WEQ1V	<i>Present</i>	3.29	4.32	39.97	.046	.058
WEQ2V	<i>Present</i>	3.32	4.36	39.97	.046	.054
Age			39.96		1	1

*Note.* Age category pertains to missing data patterns 1, 2, 3, 4 exclusively, and 5.

\* denotes pairwise correlations, # denotes listwise correlations.

$r^2 < 0.25$  trivial (Hair et al., 2013).

## Appendix E Sensitivity analysis – Nonimputed and multiply imputed datasets

Tables E.1 and E.2 display hierarchical regression results for flexibility CWA and development CWA respectively, on nonimputed data.

Tables E.3 and E.4 display hierarchical regression results for flexibility CWA and development CWA respectively, on multiply imputed data.

Table E.1.

*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Flexibility CWA – Sensitivity Analysis Comparisons – Nonimputed Dataset*

Dependent variable	Negative work-home interaction			Positive work-home interaction			Work engagement		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)
(Constant) (Model 2)		5.551***			3.658***			4.345***	
<i>Independent variables</i>									
Work hours (WH)	.179	2.146*	.147	.046	.443	.038	-.119	-1.154	-.098
Time off (TO)	.048	.573	.039	-.187	-1.829	-.155	.080	.777	.066
Work tasks (WT)	.231	2.666**	.183	-.098	-.916	-.078	-.012	-.110	-.009
Offsite work (OW)	-.068	-.824	-.057	.134	1.308	.111	.030	.297	.025
<i>Moderation variable</i>									
Org/man. support (OMS) <sup>+</sup>	-.382	-.3998***	-.275	.247	2.084*	.177	.344	2.917**	.247
<i>Change of R<sup>2</sup> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)</i>	.075***			.031*			.061**		
<i>F change</i> (1,122); (1,121); (1, 119)	15.983***			4.343			8.510**		
<i>R<sup>2</sup></i> (Model 1)	.348			.095*			.083*		
(Constant) (Model 2)		4.200***			8.887***			9.660***	
<i>Independent variables</i>									
Work hours (WH)	.220	2.499*	.182	-.009	-.088	-.008	-.158	-1.545	-.131
Time off (TO)	.136	1.565	.114	-.244	-2.405*	-.206	-.024	-.231	-.020
Work tasks (WT)	.335	3.945***	.288	-.193	-1.938	-.166	-.123	-1.242	-.105
Offsite work (OW)	-.001	-.012	-.001	.113	1.099	.094	.001	.010	.001
<i>Moderation variable</i>									
Coworker support (CWS) <sup>+</sup>	-.124	-1.633	-.119	.027	.303	.026	.203	2.287*	.194
<i>Change of R<sup>2</sup> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)</i>	.014			.001			.038*		
<i>F change</i> (1,123); (1,123); (1,121)	2.666			.092			5.229		

Dependent variable	Negative work-home interaction			Positive work-home interaction			Work engagement		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)
$R^2$ (Model 1)	.331***			.101			.094*		
(Constant) (Model 2)		2.872**			15.105***				
Independent variables									
Work hours (WH)	.194	2.247*	.160	.006	.063	.005	-.134	-1.322	-.110
Time off (TO)	.137	1.621	.115	-.246	-2.436*	-.207	-.026	-.255	-.021
Work tasks (WT)	.326	3.953***	.281	-.185	-1.880	-.160	-.122	-1.256	-.105
Offsite work (OW)	-.033	-.378	-.027	.127	1.229	.105	.040	.395	.033
Moderation variable									
Career consequences (CC) <sup>+</sup>	.232	3.027**	.215	-.095	-1.041	-.089	-.280	-3.113**	-.259
<i>Change of <math>R^2</math> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)</i>	.046			.008			.067**		
<i>F change</i> (1,123); (1,123); (1,121)	9.163**			1.085			9.690**		
$R^2$ (Model 1)	.331***			.101*			.094*		
(Constant) (Model 2)		3.563**			16.730			21.164***	
Independent variables									
Work hours (WH)	.159	1.903	.130	.025	.237	.020	-.140	-1.335	-.113
Time off (TO)	.073	.898	.061	-.225	-2.220*	-.188	.013	.131	.011
Work tasks (WT)	.273	3.386**	.231	-.166	-1.656	-.140	-.107	-1.062	-.090
Offsite work (OW)	-.005	-.061	-.004	.115	1.123	.095	-.004	-.040	-.003
Moderation variable									
Time expectations (TE) <sup>+</sup>	.352	4.465***	.305	-.139	-1.413	-.120	-.205	-2.078*	-.177
<i>Change of <math>R^2</math> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)</i>	.093***			.014			.031*		
<i>F change</i> (1,124); (1,123); (1,121)	19.941			1.997			4.316*		
$R^2$ (Model 1)	.330***			.101*			.094		

Note.  $N = 797$ . Separate regressions performed for each IV and DV combination controlling for CWAs. Groupings are in line with theoretical relationships being tested in the research model. Regressions used listwise deletion. <sup>+</sup>work-life flexibility subscales.  

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table E.2

*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Development CWA – Sensitivity Analysis Comparisons – Nonimputed Dataset*

Dependent variable	Negative work–home interaction			Positive work–home interaction			Work engagement		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	$R^2$ (part)
(Constant) (Model 2)		14.023***			10.176***			11.864***	
Independent variable									
Development opportunities (DO)	.182	4.404***	.172	-.135	-3.226**	-.128	-.081	-2.072*	-.077
Moderation variable									
Developmental culture (DC)	-.220	-5.334***	-.209	.210	5.007***	.199	.417	10.640***	.395
<i>Change of <math>R^2</math> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)</i>	.043***			.040***			.156***		
<i>F change</i> (1,584); (1,582); (1, 579)	28.451***			25.072***			113.202***		
<i>R<sup>2</sup> (Model 1)</i>	.064***			.041***			.047***		

Note.  $N = 797$ . Separate regressions performed for each IV and DV combination controlling for CWAs. Groupings are in line with theoretical relationships being tested in the research model. Regressions used listwise deletion.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



Table E.3

Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Flexibility CWA – Sensitivity Analysis Comparisons – Using Imputed (EM) Data

Dependent variable	Negative work–home interaction			Positive work–home interaction			Work engagement		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>
(Constant) (Model 2)		6.969***			4.335***			5.224***	
Independent variables									
Work hours (WH)	.142	1.749	.117	.049	.490	.040	-.145	-1.481	-.120
Time off (TO)	.044	.537	.036	-.205	-2.051*	-.168	.069	.705	.057
Work tasks (WT)	.184	2.208*	.147	-.107	-1.043	-.086	-.026	-.254	-.021
Offsite work (OW)	-.058	-.705	-.047	.137	1.367	.112	.012	.119	.010
Moderation variable									
Org/man. support (OMS) <sup>+</sup>	-.449	-5.071***	-.338	.230	2.113*	.173	.322	3.013**	.243
Change of $R^2$ after inclusion of mod. IV at Step 2 (unique contribution)	.115***			.030*			.059**		
<i>F</i> change (1,130); (1,130); (1, 130)	25.719***			4.466*			9.078**		
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Model 1)	.307***			.096*			.094*		
(Constant) (Model 2)		4.648***			9.100***			10.011***	
Independent variables									
Work hours (WH)	.202	2.323*	.168	.011	.108	.009	-.170	-1.722	-.141
Time off (TO)	.146	1.705	.123	-.255	-2.582*	-.215	-.009	-.095	-.008
Work tasks (WT)	.315	3.723***	.268	-.180	-1.833	-.153	-.106	-1.103**	-.090
Offsite work (OW)	-.004	-.045	-.003	.108	1.067	.089	-.022	-.222	-.018
Moderation variable									
Coworker support (CWS) <sup>+</sup>	-.137	-1.826	-.132	.031	.354	.029	.201	2.357*	.193
Change of $R^2$ after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)	.017			.001			.037*		
<i>F</i> change (1,130); (1,130); (1,130)	3.333			.125			5.554*		
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> (Model 1)	.307***			.096*			.094*		
(Constant) (Model 2)		3.134**			15.489***			21.010***	
Independent variables									
Work hours (WH)	.178	2.093*	.147	.025	.245	.020	-.152	-1.564	-.126
Time off (TO)	.145	1.742	.122	-.256	-2.602*	-.216	-.006	-.061	-.005
Work tasks (WT)	.308	3.739***	.263	-.173	-1.781	-.148	-.104	-1.107	-.089

Dependent variable	Negative work-home interaction			Positive work-home interaction			Work engagement		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>
Offsite work (OW)	-.036	-.420	-.029	.122	1.198	.099	-.011	-.112	-.009
Moderation variable									
Career consequences (CC) <sup>+</sup>	.243	3.235**	.227	-.096	-1.081	-.090	-.268	-3.111**	-.250
<i>Change of R<sup>2</sup> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)</i>	.052**			.008			.063**		
<i>F change</i> (1,130); (1,130); (1,130)	10.468**			1.169			9.675**		
<i>R<sup>2</sup> (Model 1)</i>	.307***			.096*			.094*		
(Constant) (Model 2)		3.850***			17.316***			21.974***	
Independent variables									
Work hours (WH)	.138	1.681	.113	.041	.409	.034	-.157	-1.567	-.128
Time off (TO)	.080	.998	.067	-.230	-2.323*	-.192	.033	.341	.028
Work tasks (WT)	.257	3.208**	.216	-.152	-1.551	-.128	-.090	-.927	-.076
Offsite work (OW)	-.006	-.071	-.005	.110	1.097	.091	-.027	-.270	-.022
Moderation variable									
Time expectations (TE) <sup>+</sup>	.371	4.822***	.324	-.150	-1.588	-.131	-.207	-2.213*	-.181
<i>Change of R<sup>2</sup> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)</i>	.105***			.017			.033*		
<i>F change</i> (1,130); (1,130); (1,130)	23.251***			2.523			4.897*		
<i>R<sup>2</sup> (Model 1)</i>	.307***			.096*			.094*		

Note. *N* = 797. Separate regressions performed for each IV and DV combination controlling for CWAs. Groupings are in line with theoretical relationships being tested in the research model. Regressions used listwise deletion. <sup>+</sup> denotes work-life (flexibility) culture subscales.

\**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001.

Table E.4.

*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Development CWA – Sensitivity Analysis Comparisons – Using Imputed (EM) Data*

Dependent variable	Negative work–home interaction			Positive work–home interaction			Work engagement		
	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> value	<i>sr</i>
(Constant) (Model 2)		15.511***			10.668***			12.286***	
Independent variable									
Development opportunities (DO)	.168	4.298***	.161	-.120	-3.017**	-.114	-.073	-1.991*	-.070
Moderation variable									
Developmental culture (DC)	-.230	-5.874***	-.219	.215	5.393***	.205	.429	11.631***	.409
Change of R <sup>2</sup> after inclusion of interaction term (unique contribution)	.048***			.042***			.167***		
<i>F</i> change (1, 642); (1, 642); (1, 642)	34.504***			29.080***			135.272***		
R <sup>2</sup> (Model 1)	.057***			.034***			.041***		

*Note.* *N* = 797. Separate regressions performed for each IV and DV combination controlling for CWAs. Groupings are in line with theoretical relationships being tested in the research model. Regressions used listwise deletion. EM = Expectation maximization.

\**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001.

## Appendix F Sensitivity analysis – Summary

Table F.1.

*Sensitivity Analysis Summary – Nonimputed and Imputed Datasets Comparisons – Highlighting Similarities and Differences Within Separate Regression Analyses Between Variable Combinations Examined in Thesis*

Independent variables (IV) and moderator variables	Dependent variables (DV)	Direct relationships		Moderated relationships		Results comparisons between nonimputed and imputed data
		Nonimputed	Imputed	Nonimputed	Imputed	
Development CWA (IV) and developmental culture (moderator)	NWHI	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	both replicated
	PWHI	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	both replicated
	WE	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	both replicated
Flexibility CWA (IV) and organisational and managerial support (moderator)	NWHI	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	both replicated
	PWHI	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	both replicated
	WE	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	both replicated
Flexibility CWA (IV) and coworker support (moderator)	NWHI	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	both replicated
	PWHI	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	both replicated
	WE	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	both replicated
Flexibility CWA (IV) and career consequences (moderator)	NWHI	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	<i>ns</i>	$p < .01$	direct r'ship replicated – imputed data increased sig. for moderated r'ship
	PWHI	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	both replicated
	WE	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .01$	$p < .01$	moderated r'ship replicated -
Flexibility CWAs (IV) and time expectations (moderator)	NWHI	$p < .01$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	moderated r'ship replicated – imputed data increased sig. for direct r'ship
	PWHI	<i>ns</i>	$p < .001$	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	moderated r'ship replicated – imputed data increased to sig. for direct r'ship
	WE	$p < .001$	$p < .001$	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	both replicated

*Note.* Flexibility CWA relationships –Nonimputed data  $N = 125$ , Imputed data  $N = 131$ . Development CWA relationships –Nonimputed data  $N = 585$ , Imputed data  $N = 643$ . NWHI = negative work–home interaction, PWHI = positive work–home interaction, WE = work engagement. Significance levels of direct relationships taken from  $\beta$  statistic. Significance levels of moderated relationships taken from  $R^2$  change statistic. Moderating variables (as used for main thesis analysis) were not centred for multiple imputation sensitivity analyses as described here.

## Appendix G Exploratory factor analysis – Work–life (flexibility) culture scale

Tables G.1. to G.3. display key information pertaining to exploratory factor analysis on subscale dimensions for total sample.

Table G.1.  
*Descriptive Statistics for Work–Life (Flexibility) Culture Scale*

Item number	Mean	Median	SD	$\alpha$
1–22	4.43*	4.20	0.46	.66
1	5.55	6	1.175	
2	5.27	6	1.262	
3	5.27	6	1.191	
4	5.07	5	1.247	
5	4.95	5	1.188	
6	5.19	5	1.343	
7	4.73	5	1.275	
8	5.43	6	1.131	
9	4.94	5	1.389	
10	4.60	5	1.415	
11	3.44	3	1.532	
12	3.39	3	1.414	
13	3.59	4	1.523	
14	3.34	3	1.463	
15	3.35	3	1.381	
16	3.88	4	1.410	
17	3.78	4	1.416	
18	3.63	4	1.406	
19 (reverse coded)	4.66	5	1.330	
20	4.49	4	1.339	
21 (reverse coded)	4.45	4	1.417	
22	4.47	4	1.284	

Note.  $N = 785$ . Scores measured on Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = disagree somewhat, 4 = neutral, 5 = agree somewhat, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree (Bradley, L. M., McDonald, P. K., & Brown, K. A. 2010. An extended measure of work–life balance culture: Development and confirmation of the measure. Paper presented at the Proceedings of Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Montréal). Measure allows for 1x missing item per scale.

\* denotes mean response is ‘neutral’.  $\alpha$  - Cronbach’s alpha based on standardised items.

Table G.2.  
*Comparison of Eigenvalues From PCA and Criterion Values From Parallel Analysis*

Component number	Actual eigenvalue from PCA	Criterion value from parallel analysis	Decision
1	6.072	1.3064	Accept
2	4.151	1.2572	Accept
3	2.699	1.2183	Accept
4	1.822	1.1855	Accept

Note.  $N = 792$ . Verification of correct number of components extracted for analysis. Parallel analysis indicates corresponding criterion values generated for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (Horn, 1965).

Table G.3.

*Factor Loadings, Communalities ( $h^2$ ), and Percents of Variance and Covariance for Principal Components Extraction With Varimax Rotation for Work–Life Flexibility Culture*

Item	F <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>2</sub>	F <sub>3</sub>	F <sub>4</sub>	$h^2$
<i>Managerial and organisational support F1</i>					
1. In general, managers in this workplace are quite accommodating of nonwork needs.	<b>.780</b>	.00	.00	.00	.648
2. Higher management in this workplace encourage first line leaders to be sensitive to employees' personal concerns.	<b>.780</b>	.00	.00	.00	.660
3. Middle and senior managers in this workplace are sympathetic toward employees' childcare responsibilities.	<b>.783</b>	.00	.00	.00	.675
4. In the event of a conflict, managers are understanding when employees have to put their nonwork responsibilities first.	<b>.812</b>	.00	.00	.00	.698
5. Middle and senior managers in this workplace are sympathetic toward employees' elder care responsibilities.	<b>.789</b>	.00	.00	.00	.676
6. In this workplace employees are encouraged to strike a balance between their work and personal lives.	<b>.765</b>	.00	.00	.00	.709
7. This workplace is supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for family reasons.	<b>.715</b>	.00	.00	.00	.581
8. In this work environment it is generally okay to talk about one's nonwork activities.	<b>.642</b>	.00	.00	.00	.488
9. In this work environment, employees can easily balance their work and nonwork lives.	<b>.723</b>	.00	-.355	.00	.674
10. This workplace encourages employees to set limits on where work stops and home life begins.	<b>.631</b>	.00	-.346	.00	.545
<i>Time expectations F3</i>					
11. To get ahead in this workplace, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week, whether at work or at home.	.00	.00	<b>.788</b>	.00	.722
12. Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their nonwork/personal responsibilities.	-.303	.326	<b>.769</b>	.00	.789
13. To be viewed favourably by senior management, employees in this workplace must constantly put their jobs ahead of their personal lives.	-.301	.444	<b>.708</b>	.00	.789
14. Being seen at work after hours is an important way of getting ahead in your career in this workplace.	.00	.536	<b>.568</b>	.00	.643
<i>Career consequences F2</i>					
15. In this workplace employees who do not participate in available work–life arrangements (e.g., job sharing, part-time work) are more serious about their careers than those who do participate.	.00	<b>.682</b>	.00	.00	.558
16. To turn down a promotion or transfer for personal reasons will hurt one's career progress in this workplace.	.00	<b>.747</b>	.00	.00	.642
17. In this workplace employees who do not use work–life arrangements are more likely to advance in their careers than those who do use work–life arrangements.	.00	<b>.821</b>	.00	.00	.762
18. Developmental opportunities are less likely to be offered to employees who use work–life balance arrangements.	.00	<b>.799</b>	.00	.00	.747
<i>Coworker support F4</i>					
<b>19. In this workplace, employees who use work–life policies are perceived negatively by their coworkers.</b>	.00	<b>.700</b>	.00	-.310	.656
20. In this workplace, coworkers are supportive of their colleagues' use of work–life balance arrangements.	.00	.00	.00	<b>.887</b>	.789
<b>21. If an employee is away from work due to a work–life balance arrangement, coworkers resent having to help.</b>	.00	<b>.548</b>	.00	-.366	.530

Item	F <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>2</sub>	F <sub>3</sub>	F <sub>4</sub>	<i>h</i> <sup>2</sup>
22. Coworkers in this workplace feel positively about employees using work–life balance arrangements.	.00	.00	.00	<b>.843</b>	.764
Percent of variance	27.59	18.78	12.31	8.29	
Percent of covariance	41.20	28.04	18.38	12.38	
Cronbach's $\alpha$	.93	.88	.88	.76	

*Note.* Factor labels: F1 – Organisational and managerial support; F2 – Career consequences and coworker support; F3 – Time expectations; F4 – Coworker support. Bolded items are reverse scored (Bradley et al., 2010). Bolded numbers are maximal loadings for variable items. Oblique rotation used initially revealing low intercorrelations (<.3) on factor correlation matrix, hence varimax rotation was then used to enable easier interpretation of loadings.

Zeros indicate omitted due to low factor loading (<.300).

## Appendix H Confirmatory factor analysis – Work–life (flexibility) culture scale

Tables H.1. and H.2. display key information pertaining to confirmatory factor analysis on subscale dimensions for total sample.

Table H.1.  
*Correlations Between Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimensions*

Dimension	1	2	3	4
1. Manager and organisation support				
2. Time expectations	-.527**			
3. Career consequences	-.455**	.659**		
4. Coworker support	.420**	-.348**	-.473**	

*Note.*  $N = 770$ . Work–life (flexibility) culture scale (Bradley et al., 2010). Managerial support and organisational support are recommended to be measured as a single combined measure (Bradley et al., 2010).

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

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



Table H.2.

*Factor Matrix loadings, Communalities (h<sup>2</sup>), Percents of Variance and Alphas for Confirmatory Factor Analysis Using Principal Axis Factoring Extraction With Varimax Rotation for Work–Life (Flexibility) Culture Dimensions (D)*

<i>Dimensions</i> Variables items	<i>Dimensions factor</i> <i>matrix loadings</i>				<i>Extracted</i> <i>h<sup>2</sup></i>
	D <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	D <sub>3</sub>	D <sub>4</sub>	
<i>D1 Manager and organisation support</i>					
1. In general, managers in this workplace are quite accommodating of nonwork needs.	.774	-	-	-	.598
2. Higher management in this workplace encourage first line leaders to be sensitive to employees' personal concerns.	.781	-	-	-	.609
3. Middle and senior managers in this workplace are sympathetic toward employees' childcare responsibilities.	.775	-	-	-	.601
4. In the event of a conflict, managers are understanding when employees have to put their nonwork responsibilities first.	.799	-	-	-	.639
5. Middle and senior managers in this workplace are sympathetic toward employees' elder care responsibilities.	.750	-	-	-	.563
6. In this workplace employees are encouraged to strike a balance between their work and personal lives.	.821	-	-	-	.674
7. This workplace is supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for family reasons.	.734	-	-	-	.538
8. In this work environment it is generally okay to talk about one's nonwork activities.	.655	-	-	-	.429
9. In this work environment, employees can easily balance their work and nonwork lives.	.772	-	-	-	.596
10. This workplace encourages employees to set limits on where work stops and home life begins.	.697	-	-	-	.486
Percent of variance	57.334				
Cronbach's $\alpha$	.93				
<i>D2 Time expectations</i>					
11. To get ahead in this workplace, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week, whether at work or at home.	-	.748	-	-	.560
12. Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their nonwork/personal responsibilities.	-	.864	-	-	.747
13. To be viewed favourably by senior management, employees in this workplace must constantly put their jobs ahead of their personal lives.	-	.898	-	-	.806
14. Being seen at work after hours is an important way of getting ahead in your career in this workplace.	-	.749	-	-	.561
Percent of variance		66.85			
Cronbach's $\alpha$		.88			
<i>D3 Career consequences</i>					
15. In this workplace employees who do not participate in available work–life arrangements (e.g., job sharing, part-time work) are more serious about their careers than...	-	-	.663	-	.439
16. To turn down a promotion or transfer for personal reasons will hurt one's career progress in this workplace.	-	-	.722	-	.522

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Dimensions factor matrix loadings</i>				<i>Extracted</i>
	D <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	D <sub>3</sub>	D <sub>4</sub>	<i>h</i> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Variables items</b>					
17. In this workplace employees who do not use work–life arrangements are more likely to advance in their careers than those who do use work–life arrangements.	-	-	.896	-	.803
18. Developmental opportunities are less likely to be offered to employees who use work–life balance arrangements.	-	-	.857	-	.735
Percent of variance			62.50		
Cronbach's $\alpha$			.88		
<i>D4 Coworker support</i>					
<b>19. In this workplace, employees who use work–life policies are perceived negatively by their coworkers.</b>	-	-	-	-.604	.364
20. In this workplace, coworkers are supportive of their colleagues' use of work–life balance arrangements.	-	-	-	.566	.320
<b>21. If an employee is away from work due to a work–life balance arrangement, coworkers resent having to help.</b>	-	-	-	-.626	.392
22. Coworkers in this workplace feel positively about employees using work–life balance arrangements.	-	-	-	.700	.490
Percent of variance				39.15	
Cronbach's $\alpha$				.76	

*Note.* Dimension labels: D1 – Organisational and managerial support; D2 – Time expectations; D3 – Career consequences and coworker support; D4 – Coworker support. Bolded items are reverse scored. (Bradley et al., 2010).

Zeros indicate omitted due to low factor loading (< .300).

## Appendix I Summaries of moderation analyses performed with and without controls

Table I.1.

*Moderation Analyses Comparisons Summary, With and Without Control Variables – Co-influences of Gender and Parent Status on Work–Life Flexibility Culture and Developmental Culture Moderators, Affecting Personal and Business Outcomes, Dependent on Responses to Requests for Customised Work Arrangements*

Moderation analyses		Compared results show <i>Total R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, Δ R<sup>2</sup>, F test for Δ R<sup>2</sup></i> (moderation), and significance	
Independent variable (IV) Moderator (mod)	Dependent variable (DV)	Control variables <b>not included</b>	Control variables <b>included</b>
Flexibility CWA (IV)			
Organisation and manager support (mod)	NWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .257, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .254, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .013, F(1, 769) = 13.881***</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .275, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .269, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .016, F(1, 637) = 14.417***</i>
	PWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .092, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .089, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 769) = 0.442, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .114, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .107, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .002, F(1, 637) = 1.744, ns</i>
	Work engagement †	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .210, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .207, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .006, F(1, 765) = 5.422*</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .223, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .217, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 632) = .013, ns</i>
Time expectations (mod)	NWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .219, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .216, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .003, F(1, 769) = 3.213, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .243, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .238, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .004, F(1, 637) = 3.167, ns</i>
	PWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .056, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .052, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 769) = 0.820, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .061, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .054, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 637) = .424, ns</i>
	Work engagement	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .091, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .088, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 769) = 1.119, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .122, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .115, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 637) = .430, ns</i>
Career consequences (mod)	NWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .169, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .165, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 766) = 0.164, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .192, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .185, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 637) = .001, ns</i>
	PWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .066, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .062, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .002, F(1, 769) = 1.819, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .070, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .062, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .003, F(1, 637) = 1.787, ns</i>
	Work engagement	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .149, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .142, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 769) = .004, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .149, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .142, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 637) = .003, ns</i>
Coworker support (mod)	NWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .139, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .135, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 765) = 0.189, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .162, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .156, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 637) = .675, ns</i>
	PWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .058, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .055, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 769) = 0.011, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .075, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .068, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .004, F(1, 637) = 2.952, ns</i>
	Work engagement	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .096, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .092, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 749) = .263, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .116, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .109, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .000, F(1, 637) = .030, ns</i>
Coworker support – revised (mod)	NWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .079, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .076, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 753) = 0.563, ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .118, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .111, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 637) = .800, ns</i>
	PWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .047, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .043, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .001, F(1, 753)</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup> = .061, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .054, Δ R<sup>2</sup> = .002, F(1, 637)</i>

Moderation analyses		Compared results show <i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> , <i>adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i> , $\Delta R^2$ , <i>F test for <math>\Delta R^2</math></i> (moderation), and significance	
Independent variable (IV) Moderator (mod)	Dependent variable (DV)	Control variables <b>not included</b>	Control variables <b>included</b>
		= 1.149, <i>ns</i>	= 1.385, <i>ns</i>
	Work engagement	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .064, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .060, $\Delta R^2$ = .000, <i>F</i> (1, 764) = 0.377, <i>ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .083, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .075, $\Delta R^2$ = .000, <i>F</i> (1, 637) = .001, <i>ns</i>
Development CWA (IV)			
Developmental culture (mod)	NWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .116, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .112, $\Delta R^2$ = .013, <i>F</i> (1, 639) = 9.240**	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .117, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .109, $\Delta R^2$ = .007, <i>F</i> (1, 534) = 4.275*
	PWHI	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .072, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .068, $\Delta R^2$ = .003, <i>F</i> (1, 632) = 2.513, <i>ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .083, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .074, $\Delta R^2$ = .004, <i>F</i> (1, 534) = 2.307, <i>ns</i>
	Work engagement	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .203, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .119, $\Delta R^2$ = .000, <i>F</i> (1, 632) = .040, <i>ns</i>	<i>Total R<sup>2</sup></i> = .226, <i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i> = .219, $\Delta R^2$ = .000, <i>F</i> (1, 534) = .001, <i>ns</i>

*Note.* Control variables include gender and parent status. Flexibility CWA = responses to requests for flexibility customised work arrangements. Developmental CWA = responses to requests for developmental customised work arrangements. NWHI = negative work-home interaction (personal outcome), PWHI = positive work-home interaction (personal outcome), Work engagement = business outcome. Coworker support – revised comprises items 20 and 22.  $\Delta R^2$  = *R square change*. Significance levels of moderated relationships taken from  $\Delta R^2$  (*R<sup>2</sup> change*) statistic. † Significantly altered relationship with DV due to inclusion/influence of control variables.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Appendix J Robustness tests for significant results – Hypotheses 8 and 11

*Hypothesis 8: A positive flexibility culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and negative work-home interaction (NWHI), such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive flexibility cultures.*

The robustness test was performed in light of criticism directed towards ordinal variables being treated as ‘continuous’ variables (Royston & Sauerbrei, 2008). The robustness test used ‘categorical’ variables in place of ‘continuous’ variable treatment of the independent ordinal variable, flexibility CWA responses to requests (with three levels: fully granted, partly granted, declined). Hypothesis 11 used moderated regressions to test the moderating effect of work–life flexibility culture on the relationship between responses to requests for flexibility CWAs and NWHI. Whereas Hypothesis 8 used moderated regressions and continuous IVs, the robustness test here uses multiple regressions with dummy coded (categorical) treatment of the IV flexibility CWA responses to requests (with three levels: fully granted, partly granted, declined) (Aiken & West, 1991). The following paragraphs detail the steps taken to conduct the robustness tests for Hypothesis 8.

1) Two dummy variables were created ( $k - 1$ ) so that the three-level categorical IV from the moderated regression (moderator) could be included in the regression as predictor variables: Dummy Variable 1: fully granted vs partly granted and Dummy Variable 2: fully granted vs declined.

The regression which used categorical variables centred the independent variables and interaction terms, but employed dummy coding for the three categories (Aiken & West, 1991). The independent variable, flexibility CWA responses to requests, had three levels, which were dummy coded into two new variables. The fully granted category was the reference group coded ‘0’ for both new variables. The first new variable compared fully

granted and partly granted responses to requests, which were coded '0' and '1' respectively, and the declined requests category was also coded '0'. The second new variable compared fully granted and declined responses to requests, which were coded '0' and '1' respectively, and the partly granted responses to requests category was also coded '0'.

2) Two interaction terms were created by multiplying the two dummy variables by the mean-centred perception score for the work–life (flexibility) culture moderator IV.

3) A hierarchical regression was run for the work–life (flexibility) culture moderator IV. For the regression, this included control variables in Step 1, dummy variables and flexibility culture variable in Step 2, and the two interaction terms in Step 3.

4) Next, the analysis tested whether  $R^2$  change was significant at Step 3, following the entry of the interaction terms. A significant  $R^2$  change at Step 3 would indicate that the increase in NWHI across the three conditions depended on perceptions of culture support (i.e., the moderator interaction hypotheses).

For work–life (flexibility) culture, my results were also consistent with the hierarchical regression with continuous IV of responses to CWA requests; at Step 3 of the hierarchical regression, the inclusion of the two interaction terms resulted in a significant  $R^2$  change ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .14$ ,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 661) = 118.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that, consistent with my original analyses, the increase in NWHI across the three responses to CWA requests conditions depends on work–life flexibility culture.

Results of hierarchical regression analysis is presented in Table J.1, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared semipartial correlations,  $sr^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step. Table A also reports the F test for each step, the change in variance ( $R^2_{\text{change}}$ , i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with that step, and the final variance. A detailed write-up of the robustness check analysis follows.

The  $\Delta R^2$  for each step in the model is located at the top of the table. The  $R^2$  for the model was large and significant,  $R^2 = .233$   $F(6, 660) = 33.44$ ,  $p < .001$ . The adjusted  $R^2$  was .226, and indicates that about a quarter of the variability in employees' NWHI was accounted for by the variables. Specifically, control variables in Model 1 explained 1% of the variance (small nonsignificant effect). The second set of predictors in Model 2 at Step 2 (dummy coded responses to requests for flexibility CWAs: fully granted and partly granted; fully granted and declined) together added 11%, which was a significant (medium effect). In Model 3 the interaction variable (flexibility culture, organisation and manager support dimension) was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(2, 660) = 55.86$ ,  $p < .001$ , accounting for an additional 13% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .13$ ), which was a significant (medium effect) increase of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2.

Thus, by treating the IV flexibility CWA responses to requests as a categorical variable (with three levels) and creating two dummy variables for use in a regression model, the moderator work–life flexibility culture dimension, organisation and manager support, remained influential to the relationship between flexibility CWA responses to requests and NWHI, when controlling for gender and parent status.

Table J.1. – Using Independent Variable ‘Flexibility CWA Responses to Requests’ as Dummy Coded Categorical Variables

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regressions With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Flexibility Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Negative Work–Home Interaction Moderated by Work–Life Flexibility Culture Dimension – Organisational and Managerial Support*

Variables added in each block	Negative work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 664) = 2.61$ , <i>ns.</i>					.10, $F(2, 662) = 35.25$ , $p < .001$ .					.13, $F(2, 660) = 55.86$ , $p < .001$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.04	.05	.04			.02	.05	.02			0	.04	0	
Parent status (no/yes)		-.10	.05	-.08*	.01		-.10	.04	-.08*	.01		-.11	.04	-.09**	.01
Block 2 Controls, independent variable (IVs)															
Flex. CWA RR fully vs. partly granted							.15	.05	.11**	.01		.15	.05	.11**	.01
Flex. CWA RR fully vs. declined							.48	.06	.33***	.10		.22	.06	.15***	.02
Block 3 Controls, IVs and interaction variables combinations															
Flex. CWA RR fully vs. partly granted $\times$ cOMS												-.23	.04	-.18***	.03
Flex. CWA RR fully vs. declined $\times$ cOMS												-.37	.04	-.36***	.10

*Note.* Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .233$ , Adj  $R^2 = .226$ , Final model,  $F(6, 660) = 33.44$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses. cOMS = centred organisation and manager support. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



*Hypothesis 11: A positive developmental culture will moderate the relationship between responses to requests for developmental CWAs and negative work-home interaction (NWHI), such that the positive relationship between these variables will be weaker in positive developmental cultures.*

For reasons given in the previous subsection (robustness test for Hypothesis 8), another robustness check was performed for Hypothesis 11. The result was significant, using a moderation design with the three-level IV (responses to requests for developmental CWA) treated as ‘continuous’ variables, as opposed to ‘categorical’. The robustness test used categorical variables in place of continuous variable treatment of the independent ordinal variable, developmental opportunities CWA responses to requests (with three levels: fully granted, partly granted, declined). Hypothesis 11 used moderated regressions to test the moderating effect of developmental culture on the relationship between developmental opportunities CWA responses to requests and NWHI. Whereas Hypothesis 11 used moderated regressions and continuous IVs, the robustness test used multiple regressions with dummy coded (categorical) treatment of the IV developmental opportunities CWA responses to requests (with three levels: fully granted, partly granted, declined) (Aiken & West, 1991). The following paragraphs detail the steps taken to conduct the robustness tests for Hypothesis 11.

1) Two dummy variables were created ( $k - 1$ ) so that the three-level categorical IV from the moderated regression (moderator) could be included in the regression as predictor variables: Dummy Variable 1: fully granted vs partly granted and Dummy Variable 2: fully granted vs declined.

The regression which used categorical variables centred the independent variables and interaction terms, but employed dummy coding for the three categories (Aiken & West, 1991). The independent variable, developmental CWA responses to requests, had three

levels, which were dummy coded into two new variables. Fully granted category was the reference group coded '0' for both new variables. The first new variable, compared fully granted and partly granted responses to requests and were coded '0' and '1' respectively, and the declined requests category was also coded '0'. The second new variable, compared fully granted and declined responses to requests and were coded '0' and '1' respectively, and the partly granted responses to requests category was also coded '0'.

2) Two interaction terms were created by multiplying the two dummy variables by the mean-centred perception score for the developmental culture moderator IV.

3) A hierarchical regression was run for the developmental culture moderator IV. For the regression, this included control variables in Step 1, dummy variables and developmental culture variable in Step 2, and the two interaction terms in Step 3.

4) Next, the analysis tested whether  $R^2$  change is significant at Step 3, following the entry of the interaction terms. A significant  $R^2$  change at Step 3 would indicate that the increase in NWHI across the three conditions depended on perceptions of culture support (i.e., the moderator interaction hypotheses).

For developmental culture, my results were also consistent with the hierarchical regression with continuous IV of responses to CWA requests; at Step 3 of the hierarchical regression, the inclusion of the two interaction terms resulted in a significant  $R^2$  change ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .05$ ,  $F_{\text{change}}(1, 553) = 29.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that, consistent with my original analysis, the increase in NWHI across the three responses to CWA requests conditions depends on developmental culture.

Results of hierarchical regression analyses are presented in Table J.2, showing beta weights ( $\beta$ ) and their significance at each step, with the unique variance (i.e., the squared semipartial correlations,  $sr^2$ ) of the significant predictor variables at each step. Table J.2 also reports the F test for each step, the change in variance ( $R^2_{\text{change}}$ , i.e.,  $\Delta R^2$ ) associated with

that step, and the final variance. A detailed write-up of the robustness check analysis follows. The results show (see Table J.2) the same results for moderation analysis using dummy coding for the ordinal independent variable, developmental CWA responses to requests, as for when the ordinal variable was used as a continuous variable in the main analyses.

The  $\Delta R^2$  for each step in the model is located at the top of the table. The  $R^2$  for the model was medium and significant,  $R^2 = .133$   $F(6, 552) = 14.06, p < .001$ . The adjusted  $R^2$  was .123, and indicates that about a tenth of the variability in employees' NWHI was accounted for by the variables. Specifically, control variables in Model 1 explained 1% of the variance (small effect). The second set of predictors in Model 2 at Step 2 (dummy coded responses to requests for developmental CWAs: fully granted and partly granted; fully granted and declined) together added 8%, which was significant, and a small to medium effect. In Model 3 the interaction variable (developmental culture) was added to the regression analysis in Step 3,  $F_{\text{change}}(2, 552) = 19.34, p < .001$ , accounting for an additional 6% ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .06$ ), which was a significant (small effect) (Cohen, 1992, 1988) increase of the variability over and above what was accounted for in Model 2.

Thus, by treating the IV developmental opportunities CWA responses to requests as a categorical variable (with three levels) and creating two dummy variables for use in a regression model, the moderator developmental culture remained influential to the relationship between developmental opportunities CWA responses to requests and NWHI, when controlling for gender and parent status.

Table J.2. – Using Independent Variable ‘Developmental CWA Responses to Requests’ as Dummy Coded Categorical Variables

*Results for Hierarchical Multiple Regression With Interactions – Predicting Relationships Between Developmental Customised Work Arrangements (CWAs) and Negative Work–Home Interaction Moderated by Developmental Culture*

Variables added in each block	Negative work–home interaction														
	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	$\Delta R^2$	B	(SE of B)	$\beta$	$sr^2$
$\Delta R^2$ , F test for $\Delta R^2$	.01, $F(2, 556) = 2.19$ , <i>ns.</i>					.064, $F(2, 554) = 19.09$ , $p < .001$ .					.06, $F(2, 552) = 19.34$ , $p < .001$ .				
Block 1 Control variables															
Gender (men/women)		.04	.05	.04		.06	.05	.05			.06	.05	.05		
Parent status (no/yes)		-.10	.05	-.08		-.13	.05	-.11**	.01		-.13	.05	-.11**	.01	
Block 2 Controls, Independent variables (IVs)															
Dev. CWA RR fully vs. partly granted						.19	.05	.15**	.02		.17	.05	.14**	.02	
Dev. CWA RR fully vs. declined						.43	.07	.26***	.06		-.33	.07	.20***	.03	
Block 3 Controls, IVs and interaction variables combinations															
Dev. CWA RR fully vs. partly granted $\times$ cDevC											-.21	.05	-.16***	.02	
Dev. CWA RR fully vs. declined $\times$ cDevC											-.34	.07	-.20***	.04	

*Note.* Blocks 1 to 3 use control variables, with Steps 1 through to 3 Total  $R^2 = .118$ , Adj  $R^2 = .111$ , Final model,  $F(6, 552) = 14.06$ ,  $p < .001$ . RR = request responses. cDevC = centred developmental culture. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .