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A Grounded Theory of ways in which flexible working arrangements are understood to foster

flourishing in the workplace: The experience of employees at the corporate offices of a

private South African hospital group

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that "*A Grounded Theory of ways in which flexible working arrangements are understood to foster flourishing in the workplace: The experience of employees at the corporate office of a private South African hospital group*" is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Ashleigh Joy Beelders   **Date:** December 2022

Signed: *Ashleigh Joy Beelders*

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ABSTRACT

This study envisioned providing a substantive theory to explain employees' flourishing in the workplace through the implementation and experience of flexible working arrangements. In so doing it aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge contributing to a movement of increased flourishing among employees in the Western Cape, South Africa, and perhaps around the world. Flexible working arrangements as a whole have been a topic of interest in recent times. There has been an increase in research on flexible working arrangements, specifically working hours. According to the literature, organisations are realising that when employees are treated well and have a sense of belonging, and even identify with their organisation, employees become more committed and engaged with their work. However, no study had explored the relationship between flexible working arrangements and flourishing in the workplace in the South African context. This study made use of the Grounded Theory approach to answer the question of "What are the processes and experiences by which flexible working experiences interact with flourishing in the corporate context of a private South African hospital group?" This study's findings suggests that in order to foster a workforce which is flourishing through the implementation of flexible working arrangements a work environment conducive for flourishing must be present. This environment is made up of the following elements: mutual trust and respect; value congruence/ person-organisational fit; inclusivity/ belongingness; attention to employee needs/ individualism; clear structure; autonomy; work-life balance; goal attainment and need fulfilment; positive cycle; discretionary effort; and team synergy. The study proposes that there are four elements that feed into a work environment conducive of flourishing, namely: organisational qualities, managerial qualities; employee qualities; and physical environment and affordances. It is required that these four elements have a harmonious relationship in order to obtain an environment conducive for flourishing. Through reciprocal trust and respect, and honest and clear communication, the study suggest that the

workforce are more likely to flourish, and as a potential by-product of this, the organisation may flourish too. This study may help improve the overall understanding of the benefits of flexible working arrangements and the importance of flourishing in the workplace. The grounded theory generated may also potentially be used in workplace interventions aimed at improving engagement, commitment, and ultimately flourishing in the workplace.

Key words: Private hospital group, flexible workplace arrangements, flourishing, employee engagement, employee commitment, grounded theory

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Orientation of the Study

1.1 Background of the study

This research focused on how flexible working arrangements may contribute to employee engagement, employee commitment and ultimately encourage flourishing in the workplace. In many industrialised countries worldwide, the institution of work is altering from a fixed forty-hour week and eight-hour day towards a flexible work arrangements (FWA) approach (Lyness et al., 2012). Lyness et al. (2012) describe flexible work arrangements as an approach that gives employees much more control and discretion over the scheduling of their work and the number of hours they work. FWA is not only about altering one's working hours but rather having that flexibility within various aspects of one's work life, such as dual place working arrangements, reduced hours, compressed work weeks, and flex time. The second primary concept of this study is employee engagement. According to (Shuck, 2011), employee engagement has various definitions. Employee engagement is defined by Kumar and Pansari (2014) as "a multidimensional construct which comprises of all the different facts of the attitudes and behaviours of employees towards the organisation" (p. 55). Kahn (1990) initially defined employee work engagement as a motivational variable promoting employees to put their all into their work roles, relationships and performance. Others have conceptualised employee engagement as the antithesis of burnout (e.g. Maslach et al., 2001). Deloitte (2016) states that engagement is how employees feel about how things are done at their organisation.

Work engagement is related to, but separate from, employee commitment. There are various definitions of employee commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment is a mental state which defines an employee's relationship with their organisation. The Three-component Model (TCM) of organisational commitment states that commitment can take various forms characterised by three different psychological states, namely affective

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commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2012). The last concept is flourishing. According to Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017), flourishing involves hedonic and eudaimonic components of well-being and happiness in the emotional, psychological and psychological spheres. Flourishing in the workplace entails subjective perceptions of well-being (e.g. feelings of job satisfaction and positive affect towards one's work and organisation) and positive functioning (e.g. work performance, engagement, and affirming workplace interactions and social tasks) (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2017).

With the advent of various online work productivity-focused communication platforms, such as ZOOM, Google MEET and several others, the traditional way of conducting meetings and business through face-to-face engagement may slowly become obsolete due to technological advancement. These changes to workplace arrangements are expected to influence the face of the workplace (Bresnahan & Yin, 2017). These online platforms have made it possible for organisations to allow their employees to work from home and increased the relevance of flexible work arrangements, given the different work backgrounds of employees. Due to technological advances, people can work from any place and at any time. An example would be the work hours stipulated by a company or organisation. A typical day's work is generally termed as "9-5" or "8-4". As the world of work evolves, fewer people have these hours as their typical workday (Bolino et al., 2021). Previously, people were described as living to work; now, people work to live (Buzza, 2017). In this modern age, one may say that people value their family and leisure time more (Forouzan et al., 2020) and may value flexible working arrangements as an essential aspect of the world of work. Organisations are using flexible working arrangements as a means to retain employees as well as to attract potential talent (Timms, 2015).

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Hughes (2012) has argued that organisations realise that they need to value their employees; by leveraging the development of employees balanced with the technology, they are at a competitive advantage. According to Brunetto (2012), organisations realise that when employees are treated well, have a sense of belonging, and even identify with their organisation, they become more committed and engaged with their work. This increase in organisational commitment and employee engagement positively affects the organisation (Brunetto, 2012). For this reason, it is essential to investigate how employees and managers experience flexible work arrangements in the workplace context of work engagement, commitment, and flourishing. A study by Kelliher and Anderson (2010) showed that employees who spent less time in their workplace produced higher overall job satisfaction and organisational commitment than those who did not have flexibility at work. The same study also showed that those who worked reduced hours encountered lower stress levels. Prevot and Mägi (2022) found that flexible work arrangements could either improve or impede work engagement, depending on how they are implemented.

Flexible working hours would result in more time spent with family and enhanced feelings of organisational commitment and employee engagement leading to increased productivity. The increased productivity would, in turn, have some positive implications for work-family enrichment and ultimately flourishing at the workplace (perhaps life as well). According to Muse et al. (2008), organisations have realised that one's work and family life undoubtedly intertwine and thus must be treated accordingly. They further state that Fortune magazine identifies the 100 top employers year after year, and these are the organisations that continuously develop their work-life benefit programs (Muse et al., 2008). These programs are developed to help employees better manage the various facets of their lives (i.e., professional development, personal well-being, and family responsibilities) (Muse et al., 2008). Bond et al. (2008) found that job autonomy enhanced employees' psychological well-being, more so for

employees with greater levels of psychological flexibility. Employee well-being is difficult to define as there is no definition for it. However, research accepts the validity of two distinct well-being paradigms (Zheng et al., 2015). The first is hedonism which defines well-being as a subjective experience of happiness. The second is eudaimonism, which regards well-being as a result of self-actualisation, personal achievement, or self-positioning (Zheng et al., 2015). One way job autonomy may contribute to well-being is by diminishing work exhaustion (Ahuja et al., 2007, cited in Park & Searcy, 2012). This has been achieved by providing employees freedom and flexibility in managing their workloads. The study also found that job autonomy had a negative impact on job stress and burnout (Parks & Searcy, 2012). In other words, job autonomy decreases employees' stress caused by their job, and lower burnout rates were detected.

Emotional well-being includes three employee judgments. According to Rothmann et al. (2019), these are job satisfaction and positive and negative emotions. Job satisfaction pertains to the amount of correspondence between employees' perceptions and standards. The positive aspect looks at the individual's ability to flourish. These are seen as pleasant reactions. Examples include joy, gratitude, and interest (Rothmann et al., 2019). Lastly, the negative effect involves unpleasant reactions, such as sadness, anxiety, and boredom (Rothmann et al., 2019). All three of these components affect flourishing in the workplace. Rothmann et al. (2019) stated that job satisfaction reveals an employee's perception of whether their wants have been met. Conversely, the positive and negative emotions concern whether or not the employee's needs are well met.

In previous years, people saw the human resources fraternity as a liability rather than an asset and therefore did not value it much. The COVID-19 pandemic has made managers more attuned to the importance of their workforce (Muthuku, 2020). Recently, the work environment

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has been more employee-focused and individualised (Milligan, 2017). Organisations are said to be more willing to try different approaches to harness their workers' potential and protect their well-being (Muthuku, 2020). Businesses have implemented different approaches, given the organisation's newfound appreciation for human resources. For example, they are providing flexible working schedules to accommodate employees, and their family lives, as well as funding entry-level employees' tuition in order for them to obtain better job positions (Milligan, 2017). Recently things are slowly changing as more and more people realise that happy employees produce a better quality of work. A study conducted in Western Germany demonstrated that companies were motivated to employ flexibility measures because they wanted to retain and attract competent employees and increase productivity, job satisfaction, and the speed of the reintegration of parents (Langner, 2018).

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Huckle (2019), there is a common misperception that flexible work hours result in diminished work performance and increase difficulty in employee management. This belief goes against research that found a positive correlation between work-life balance and employee engagement (Huckle, 2019). In a study conducted by Hewitt (2014), it was found that work-life balance is one of the main contributors to an improvement in employee engagement within Sub-Saharan Africa. Deficit-orientated and disease-driven paradigms historically dominated organisational and industrial psychological research. Rothmann et al. (2019) suggest that more research is needed to encourage strengths and optimal functioning and enhance positive employee behaviours (i.e. work engagement; employee commitment) and, as a direct result, lead to flourishing (Rothmann et al., 2019). This concern affects most people worldwide as most do not have flexible working arrangements. In most countries, their working hours are a variant of the '9 to 5'- Monday to Friday - making it an average 40-hour workweek (Doyle, 2021).

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If the above is not addressed timeously, it may lead to a decrease in employee productivity and an increase in disengaged employees, which ultimately would cause more harm to the employer. Recent research suggests that actively disengaged employees harm an organisation; their frustrations can increase burnout, absenteeism, and lousy ambassadorship for the organisation and lead to a significant increase in turnover (Nink & Sinyan, 2021). Unfortunately, it is challenging for most people to compartmentalise work-life and family life. Thus, this problem can affect one's relationship with their family- for both the employee and employer. Kim et al. (2019) state that negative work-family spillover transpires when one's work roles and job demands cause an incursion into one's family life. With that in mind, it can go against work-family enrichment, and flourishing in the workplace would most likely decrease.

1.3 Rational

Flexible working arrangements have been a topic of interest in recent times. According to Huckle (2019), there has been an increase in research on flexible working arrangements, mainly working hours. Whereas there is limited research on how flexible working arrangements affect work engagement (e.g. Prevot & Mägi, 2022), no study has examined the relationship between flexible working arrangements and flourishing in the workplace in the South African context. The findings of this study may help improve the overall understanding of the organisational and employee processes necessary to ensure the benefits of flexible working arrangements accrue to support flourishing in the workplace. This knowledge may also potentially help improve employee engagement, commitment, and, ultimately, flourishing in the workplace (Rothmann et al., 2019).

As mentioned, Rothmann et al. (2019) stated that disease-driven research far surpasses health promotion research. Given this, more research is needed focusing on positive employee

characteristics such as their strengths, optimal functioning, and flourishing (Rothmann et al., 2019). It is essential to look at these constructs from a strengths-based perspective. The hope is that this paper will provide a greater understanding of how flexible work arrangements and flourishing intersect in the workplace. Such knowledge can be used to design work contexts and policies that may increase employees' organisational commitment, engagement, and productivity. This may/will increase employees' organisational commitment and employee engagement, thus increasing work-family enrichment and leading to flourishing in the workplace. The present study aims to answer the following research question: How do flexible working arrangements affect flourishing in the workplace?

1.4 Research Question

What are the processes and experiences by which flexible working experiences interact with flourishing in the corporate context of a private South African hospital group?

1.5 Aims and Objectives

This study envisioned providing a substantive theory of employees' flourishing in the workplace through the implementation and experience of flexible working arrangements. It aims to build on previous research that identified factors determining whether flexible working arrangements impede or advance positive outcomes for the company and employees (Prevot & Mägi, 2022). It also aims to one day contribute to the body of knowledge to help spearhead a movement of the most significant number of employees flourishing in the Western Cape, South Africa, and perhaps worldwide. The following objectives have been developed to guide this study: To determine the obstacles that prevent flourishing and identify the factors that encourage flourishing in the context of flexible working arrangements.

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1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the field of positive psychology. It uses as a departure point the frameworks of well-being, PsyCap, and the PERMA model in order to understand and evaluate how flexible work arrangements may contribute to the experience of flourishing in the workplace.

1.6.1 Positive Psychology

One of the newer branches of psychology is Martin E. P. Seligman's (1998) positive psychology (Kun et al., 2016). This approach is based on moving psychology's focus from pathology-based or deficit centred to strengths-based and growth centred. Better said, psychology generally focuses on what is wrong with people and how to fix it, whereas positive psychology does not ask "what is wrong?" but rather "how can we make this even better?" Positive psychology topics include well-being, happiness, contentment, flow, hope, resilience, optimism, savouring, and human strength (Kum et al., 2016). Conversely, psychological topics from the more traditional approach centred around mental illness. Positive psychology highlights the notion of understanding the aspects that construct strengths, increase people's well-being and happiness, contribute to individuals' mental health and aid in flourishing (Kun et al., 2016).

According to Gruman and Saks (2019), positive organisational studies offer a different perspective and understanding of modern organisational phenomena. Positive organisational studies are made up of three constructs: (a) positive organisation behaviour; (b) positive organisation scholarship; and (c) positive organisational psychology. Positive organisational behaviour is defined as the positive orientation of an employee's strengths and capabilities (Luthans, 2002). The second construct, positive organisational scholarship, is described as placing focus on positive outcomes, attributes and processes of the organisation and its members (Cameron et al., 2003, as cited in Gruman & Saks, 2019). Lastly, positive

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organisational psychology is seen as building on to the general arena of positive psychology and emphasises positive subjective experiences, traits and institutions (i.e., the organisation) (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive organisational studies offer a viewpoint that emphasises the processes, mechanisms, and structure that support the notion of having thriving employees in flourishing organisations.

1.6.2 Well-being

The schools of psychology and sociology, along with other behavioural science disciplines, commonly have overlooked, or in some cases failed to contribute to understanding, the function one's strengths, flourishing, and optimum performance have on general well-being (Youssef-Morgan et al., 2015). However, research accepts the validity of two distinct well-being paradigms (Zheng et al., 2015). The first is hedonism which defines well-being as a subjective experience of happiness. Second is eudaimonism which regards well-being as a result of self-actualisation, personal achievement, or self-positioning (Zheng et al., 2015).

According to Youssef-Morgan et al. (2015), well-being and happiness generally are used interchangeably. They further stated that well-being had become commonly known as an umbrella-like concept. It covers three aspects: (a) emotional well-being; (b) psychological well-being; and (c) social well-being. The first, emotional well-being, looks at one's positive and negative affect, happiness, and life satisfaction (Youssef-Morgan et al., 2015). Next, psychological well-being focuses on an individual's self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, and environmental mastery. The last one is social well-being which centres around social acceptance, integration, contribution, actualisation, and coherence (Youssef-Morgan et al., 2015).

1.6.3 Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

According to Luthans et al. (2007), one's positive psychological state of development is illustrated by the acronym HERO, which is (H) Hope; (E) Self-efficacy; (R) Resilience; and

(O) Optimism. Self-efficacy looks at having the confidence to challenge and make an effort to triumph over challenging tasks (Luthans et al., 2007). Optimism deals with crafting a positive attribution towards triumphing now and in the future (Luthans et al., 2007). In contrast, Luthans et al. (2007) defined hope as persevering toward one's goals and altering the course of one's goals. Lastly, resilience has been described as the ability to sustain and "bounce back and even beyond" when faced with adversities (Luthans et al., 2007, p. 542). Luthans et al. (2007) stated that the harmonious phenomenon, PsyCap, has proven to produce a more significant correlation with performance outcomes than the components standing as individuals.

Avey et al. (2011) argue that people who obtain a significant level of PsyCap are prone to be invigorated and conjure efforts that result in an even greater degree of performance over lengthy durations of time. Luthans et al. (2007) stated that PsyCap positively correlates with employee performance and satisfaction. Avey et al. (2011) added that PsyCap positively correlates with organisational commitment and psychological well-being. PsyCap as a whole, as well as individuals' hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism, have been found to correlate positively with work engagement (Simons & Buitendach, 2013, as cited in du Plessis & Boshoff, 2018).
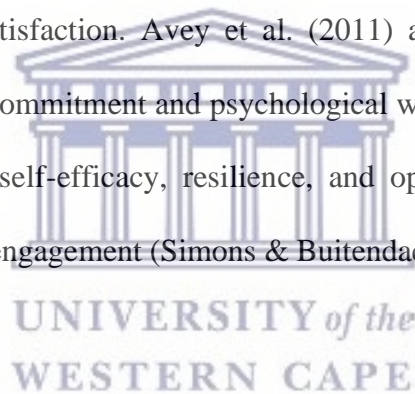
1.6.4 The PERMA Model

Seligman (2011) conceptualised the concept of flourishing in terms of the PERMA Model, composed of five dimensions: (P) positive emotions, (E) engagement, (R) relationships, (M) meaning, and (A) accomplishment. This model insinuates that well-being comprises both the feeling and functioning dimensions. Seligman's (2011) model suggests that well-being entails cultivating either one or more of its elements (Kun et al., 2016). The first element, positive emotions, is described as being motivated by feeling good to carry out various actions. Work performance, physical health, strong relationships and creating optimism and hope are enhanced by positive emotions (Kun et al., 2016). The second, engagement, is defined as the

concentration, attachment, involvement, and tendency towards numerous actions (i.e., work, recreation, and hobbies) (Higgins, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2006, as cited in Kun et al., 2016). One of the main aspects of engagement is the concept of flow, described as the moment when time seems to stand still; one loses one's sense of self and focuses intensely on the present (Kun et al., 2016). The authors state that in the context of positive psychology, flow is the state of being completely engrossed in pure bliss during the present moment. The third is relationships, which entails having a strong urge for love, connection, and an overall emotional and physical link/ connection with other individuals (Kun et al., 2016). Kun and colleagues further stated that by cultivating strong networks, people enrich their well-being. The fourth element is meaning. According to Kun et al. (2016), this entails utilising one's strengths for the benefit of others and aiding in fulfilling others' goals. The authors continued and stated that people are at their best when dedicating their time to something greater than themselves. The fifth and final element is accomplishment, this centres around the notion of living a life that is deemed productive and meaningful.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualising Flexible Working Arrangements

In many industrialised countries worldwide, the sequential institution of work is altering from a fixed forty-hour week and eight-hour day to a flexible work arrangements (FWA) approach (Lyness et al., 2012). Flexibility is an "omnibus term" that covers various forms of flexible working arrangements. Lyness et al. (2012) describe flexible work arrangements as an approach that gives employees much more control and discretion over the scheduling of their work and the number of hours they work. According to Lyness et al. (2012), the demand for flexibility arises from various sources. These sources include the increase in dual-earner households, single-parent households, employees having to care for their elders (i.e., their parents), older workers, and men being much more involved in caring for their families. They further state that the most significant contributor to the rise in the demand for flexibility is increased females' paid employment. Flexibility can aid females in combining work and family responsibilities (Lyness et al., 2012). Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard's (2014) research indicated that flexible working arrangements seem to suit females more than males, likely due to motherhood. Although, due to altering family dynamics, gender norms, and more females now employed, FWA is slowly but surely being utilised more by males (Huckle, 2019).

2.2 The Benefits of Flexible Working Arrangements

The employee/ employer relationship is transactional in that both parties benefit. With this in mind, by implementing flexible working arrangements, both employer and employee stand to reap benefits (Huckle, 2019). Kossek and Michel's (2011) study found two main benefits for the employer: change in employee behaviour and saving on costs. The alteration in employee behaviour looks at an upsurge in attracting and retaining talent, employee effort, quality of work, and overall productivity. These increases directly influence and result in an

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upsurge in employees' job satisfaction, engagement, extra role effort, organisational commitment, and a higher quality of the workforce through a greater talent pool and a decline in staff turnover (Huckle, 2019). The second benefit, saving on costs, refers to the capability of attracting and maintaining driven and motivated employees and diminishing the rate of dysfunctional and maladjusted employee conduct (i.e., absenteeism, workplace accidents, and turnover) (Kossek & Michel, 2011).

Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014) found that despite the evident benefits of flexible working arrangements for employees, such as having control over their work schedules, several employees - particularly males - believed that they would receive a pay cut and less employment security as a result of FWA. They also found that male employees view FWA as a means to cultivate their loyalty to the organisation (organisational commitment) instead of females who associate FWA with improving their work-life balance. A study conducted by Ashoush et al. (2015) supports this. It indicates that a balance between one's work-life and family life comes with great benefits; this includes a decrease in stress caused by one's job, an increase in positive morale, a higher quality of work-life, and a sense of total satisfaction. More employees are determined to find a balance between their work and family responsibilities (Chen & Powell, 2012). Flexibility is also said to be significantly related to family-work enrichment (Russo & Buonocore, 2012). According to Bennett et al. (2017), over the last few decades, the amount of single parents, dual-earner couples, and households with other alternate arrangements (like elderly parents living with their children) has increased. This has resulted in an increase in work responsibilities and difficult family circumstances.

2.3 The South African Context

As in many countries, South Africa has various definitions/ forms of flexible working arrangements. According to Dentlinger (2017), the City of Cape Town urged organisations operating within the city to implement flexible working arrangements as a means to lessen the

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traffic congestion around the city. The author stated that organisations that implement FWA would help benefit their employees as they do not need to spend hours in traffic and will benefit from more time with their loved ones. Given that organisations act on this request from the city, it is said that the organisation will be commended for their support concerning the city's initiative, and this will fortify the employer's employee value proposition and, through this, attract a greater talent pool to the organisation (Dentlinger, 2017).

In South Africa and worldwide, many organisations have been forced to implement flexible working arrangements due to the Corona Virus pandemic (COVID-19). van Schalkwyk (2021) stated that South African public universities were operating under the premise of "business as usual" during this time and that the only difference was that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, management and administration divisions were functioning on a work-from-home basis. Uber Sub-Saharan Africa shared this same sentiment. According to CDE (2020), Uber Sub-Saharan Africa's General Manager Alon Lits said that from March 6, 2020, they could move their corporate employees to a work-from-home set-up.

2.4 Conceptualising Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is "a multidimensional construct comprising all the different facets of the attitudes and behaviours of employees towards the organisation" (Kumar & Pansari, 2014, as cited in Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Deloitte (2016) states that engagement is how employees feel about how things are done at their organisation. In 2016, South African respondents ranked employee engagement as the third most crucial organisational construct, with 89% of respondents ranking it as essential. Deloitte (2016) also predicted that by 2020, millennials would make up 50% of the workforce. Therefore, millennials need to be considered when organisations look at their engagement strategies. Millennials value flexibility, creativity, and purpose at work. A study conducted by Camp et al. (2022) supports this; the authors

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established that millennials favour flexibility, constructing a positive work-life balance, and teamwork.

2.5 The Benefits of Employee Engagement

Employees are constantly expected to convey a positive attitude, thus making them a resource for competitive advantage to their organisation (Harris & De Chernatony, 2001). Engaged employees treat their organisation as their own and do not require extensive training and orientation on a repeated basis, thereby reducing training expenses for the firm. Engaged employees are also proactive; they work efficiently and effectively, thereby increasing productivity. These cost reductions and increased productivity can contribute to increasing a firm's performance measures. Organisations need to cultivate an employee-centric and flexible working environment to manage their workforces with multiple generations. Deloitte (2016) emphasises that this needs to be a clear focus for South African organisations going forward if they are to retain and engage millennial employees.

2.6 Conceptualising Employee Commitment

There are various definitions of employee commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment is a mental state which defines an employee's relationship with their organisation. The Three-Component Model (TCM) of organisational commitment states that commitment can take various forms, characterised by three different psychological states (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2012). These include (a) affective commitment (AC), which looks at the emotional attachment and desire the employee has to continue their employment with their organisation; (b) normative commitment (NC), which focuses on the employee's sense of obligation to remain a part of the organisation; and (c) continuance commitment (CC), which deals with the employee's awareness of the expenses which arise when departing the organisation (Meyer et al., 2012).

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2.7 The Benefits of Employee Commitment

In recent years, organisational commitment has gained much attention (Asiedu et al., 2014); this is due to the impact and influence of organisational commitment on employee performance and the organisation's profitability. In South Africa, Visagie and Steyn (2011) state that employees with a higher degree of affective commitment will willingly remain in an organisation. This type of commitment will be evident in employees when their work experiences are per their aspirations and basic needs.

Organisational commitment significantly affects the relationship between individuals and organisations (Babalola et al., 2015, as cited in Huckle, 2019). With an increase in economic growth and a competitive work environment, high company performance is primarily due to employee commitment. These employees will be more inclined to identify areas in the organisation where improvements can be made. Therefore, organisations should hold committed employees in high regard.

2.8 The Relationship Between Flexible Working Hours, Employee Engagement, and Employee Commitment

According to Fletcher (2015, as cited in Huckle, 2019), flexible work arrangements may result in desired employee engagement; this can only be possible if employees positively view the flexible working arrangements. Fletcher (2015) also proposes that it is essential for employers to consider constructing a secure employment situation for employees who use the benefit of flexible working hours often to increase employee engagement and performance. However, Bal and De Lange (2015) stated that flexible working hours do not link to employee engagement. They found that flexible working hours were linked to work performance by employees balancing their work life, but it was only sometimes accompanied by higher employee engagement. However, they found that flexible working hours are a significant predictor of employee engagement and performance.

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There is also a positive relationship between flexible working hours and organisational commitment. Stroup and Yoon (2016) suggest that FWA benefits organisations and their employees positively. Their research shows that during a study of five organisations that implemented flexible working hours, their commitment increased by 55% for employees who had utilised the company's flexible policies and that stress and burnout amongst employees had decreased by 57% (Stroup & Yoon, 2016, as cited in Huckle, 2019).

2.9 Conceptualising Flourishing

Research has shown that high levels of well-being/ flourishing are advantageous for individuals and society (Huppert & So, 2011). According to Janse van Rensburg et al. (2017), subjective well-being is described as flourishing. Subjective well-being centres around the way people assess their experiences within various settings. The concept of subjective well-being initially centred around hedonic/ emotional well-being, including happiness, and how this affects balance or life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). In later years two more aspects were added; Ryff (1989) focused on psychological well-being, and Keyes (1998) on social well-being, the sum of these two is eudaimonia well-being. In Keyes (2005), flourishing is theorised as a multidimensional viewpoint of emotional well-being (i.e., feeling well) and psychological and social well-being (i.e., functioning well). Diener et al. (2010) defined flourishing as self-perceived success in relationships, purpose, optimism, and self-esteem. In comparison, Seligman (2011) conceptualised the concept of flourishing in terms of the PERMA Model, composed of five dimensions: (P) positive emotions, (E) engagement, (R) relationships, (M) meaning, and (A) accomplishment. This model insinuates that well-being comprises both the feeling and functioning dimensions.

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2.10 Flourishing in a Work Context

Emotional well-being in the workplace consists of three employee judgments, including job satisfaction, positive emotions, and negative emotions (Rothmann et al., 2019). Weiss and Cropanzo (1996) classified job satisfaction as the correspondence between employees' perception of their job and the actual standard of their job. Positive affect/ emotions centre around one's ability to flourish; it looks at the pleasant reactions within one's work environment (i.e., joy, gratitude, and interest in the job) (Rothmann et al., 2019). Furthermore, negative emotions/ affect reflect unpleasant reactions, such as sadness, anxiety, and boredom. Rojas and Veenhoven (2013) summarise it well; they stated that job satisfaction is achieved when employees perceive that their wants have been met, whereas the effect looks at employees perceiving their needs have been met.

Psychological well-being within an organisational context consists of various dimensions, including autonomy, personal growth, mastery, meaning, purpose, and positive relations (Rothmann et al., 2019). Autonomy, or more specifically, autonomy satisfaction, is defined as experiencing independence and how the employee completes his/ her tasks. Literature, indicates that supervisor support, which includes autonomy, is a predictor of employee flourishing (Janse Van Rensburg et al., 2017). Mastery (competence satisfaction) looks at the sense of feeling effective within one's job, and positive relations (relatedness satisfaction) consist of feeling a sense of connectedness with regard to others within the employee's organisation (Rothmann et al., 2019). Whereas meaning is described as the perceived importance of an employee's work experiences, purpose centres around having a sense of one's preferred outcomes regarding one's work-related behaviour (Barrick et al., 2013).

Lastly, Social well-being consists of five dimensions: (a) social acceptance; (b) actualisation; (c) coherence; (d) contribution; and (e) intergradation (Rothmann et al., 2019). Social acceptance was defined as accepting diversity amongst employees within the

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organisation. Actualisation was described as having confidence within the organisation, one's team, and co-workers' potential. Coherence was considered as having the confidence or belief that one's organisation and social relations within it are understandable and meaningful. The contribution focuses on the belief that one's daily tasks enhance the value of the team, department, and organisation in which the employee operates. The last dimension, integration, was defined as employees believing their sense of collective togetherness is reciprocated and that they belong within the organisation (Rothmann et al., 2019).

2.11 Explaining Engagement

All organisations worldwide aim to attain the best possible organisational results (Alshaabani & Rudnàk, 2022). This includes improved organisational performance and productivity, which ultimately may inflate the organisation's return on investment (ROI) (Sundaray, 2011). Research shows that these organisational results may be obtained through engaged employees (Harter et al., 2020). Several organisational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, work creativity, job performance, intention to quit, and employee commitment, have been associated with employee engagement (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013; Saks, 2006). Given the above-mentioned, it is evident that employee engagement is rudimentary when it comes to attaining success for one's organisation; it should be considered vital for practitioners and scholars to obtain a greater understanding of the elements which contribute to the advancement of employee engagement (Alshaabani & Rudnàk, 2022). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), when employees are engaged with their work, they are much more connected with their work, display effectiveness and energy, and are better equipped to handle their job demands. The relative importance of employee resources and employee support for engagement is captured in a model termed the job demand-resources (JD-R) model of burnout. According to this model, social support drives employee engagement, and this social support is specially provided by management or one's supervisor (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The JD-

R model was developed by Demerouti et al. (2001). It is built on the assumption that two fundamental psychological processes contribute to safeguarding individuals' well-being: job demands and job resources. When job demands (physical, mental, and emotional) are unequal to the accessible job resources (feedback, support and autonomy), employees are likely to experience increased distress. When job demands are proportional to available resources, this results in a motivation-driven process in which employees experience work engagement. Adil & Baig (2018) stated the following in relation to the role autonomy plays within the JD-R model and how this relates to an increase in job satisfaction and a decrease in employee burnout:

> If employees are given sufficient opportunity to prioritise their tasks at the workplace they could satisfactorily allocate their available resources to these tasks. In other words, with adequate degree of autonomy, employees inherently feel job satisfaction enabling them to be more confident in managing their duties with available resources. This reflects an "adjustive reaction" against burnout while dealing with occupational stress. (p. 122)

Another model used in describing work engagement is social exchange theory (SET). Blau (1964) defines social exchange theory as "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others" (p. 91). This exchange or bartering creates a perception within those who did the boon (provided the benefit) and a feeling of indebtedness to the recipients (Settoon et al., 1996). From this viewpoint, employee engagement is explained as constituting a broad and deep connection between employees and their organisation, which enables a feeling of willingness to go the extra mile or to go beyond that which is expected from them (Gebauer & Lowman, 2009, as cited in Alshaabani & Rudnàk, 2022).

2.12 The Importance of Trust

Another critical component needed to advance the employee-organisation relationship is the development of trust (Alshaabani & Rudnàk, 2022). Trust is considered a primary tool for constructing a positive exchange relationship among employees, their colleagues, and the organisation (Guild-Williams, 2007). In a complex work environment, where numerous relationships are inevitable, trust is critical in potentially making the complexities more manageable and simultaneously increasing the parties' confidence. Trust is also known to facilitate cooperative behaviour amongst organisation members (Gambetta, 1988, as cited in Alshaabani & Rudnàk, 2022). Trust is considered critical to an employee's working behaviour because when the employee trusts the employer to live up to the psychological contract, the employee works to attain their organisational deliverables or outcomes (Noble-Nkrumak et al., 2022). For an effective employment exchange relationship, all parties must uphold their promises and commitments and ensure they deliver outcomes per everyone's expectations (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). Given the above mentioned, within organisational literature, the topic of trust has gained increased attention over the last two decades (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013; Colquitt et al., 2007; Ferrin, 2013; Schoorman et al., 2007).

Another significant outcome of trust is conflict management. Former studies have indicated that when there are low levels of trust, feelings of non-cooperation may transpire, resulting in conflict within the organisation (Solaja, 2018). It has been stated by Coleman et al. (2013) that a powerful and direct way of nurturing a favourable climate for governing conflict in organisations is through trust. A conflict management climate (CMC) refers to the perception of employees toward the practices and procedures of their organisation and how the interplay between subordinates and managers is perceived as conventional and fair (Einarsen et al., 2018). According to research, trust can positively affect CMC through the means of building a

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positive workplace climate where connections amongst the employee and organisation and employees and their managers are established on the cornerstone of characteristics such as transparency, clear understanding of issues, openness, risk-taking, confidence, being accommodating, as well as agreeableness (Solaja, 2018; Tjosvold et al., 2016). CMC has also positively influenced employee engagement (Einarsen et al., 2018; Jung & Yoon, 2018). According to Alshaabani and Rudnàk (2022), trust can also indirectly influence employees' engagement.

2.13 Communication within Organisations

In recent years it has been accepted and emphasised that internal communication plays a vital role in the success of organisations (e.g. Robbins & Judge, 2007; Tkala Verčič, 2019, as cited in Tkalac Verčič, 2021). Carlos Moreno (2010) argues that through ethical communication, leaders will find the means to advance their credibility and the confidence of their greatest immediate collaborators, the organisation which they lead, the society in which they operate, and of course, their teams that they facilitate. Internal communication satisfaction aids in better management and coordination of employer branding, perceived organisational support, and employee engagement. (Tkalac Verčič, 2021). Often, the primary motivation for programmes focused on employer branding is to attempt to promote employee engagement. Employer brand is said to assist potential employees in understanding the nature of the organisation or how it operates (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Ambler and Barrow (1996) define employer branding as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (p. 187). Promoting employee engagement is said to be closely linked to internal communication within organisations (Bakker et al., 2011). Forging a good brand is built through the internal and external communications of the organisation (Ruchika & Prasad, 2019). Given that employer branding is the organisation's effort to communicate that they are a desirable employer, it is

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evident that employer branding forms part of the organisation's corporate communications responsibility (Lloyd, 2002 as cited in Tkalac Verčič, 2021).

2.14 Summary

The literature synthesised in this chapter presents an understanding of workplace flourishing both influencing and being influenced by employee engagement and commitment. An organisation can attain employee engagement and commitment by implementing flexible working arrangements. According to the literature, trust between employees, management, and the organisation is essential to cultivating employee engagement and commitment. The research also suggests that communication amongst all parties is crucial for a positive relationship between the stakeholders mentioned above. There are some gaps within the literature, the biggest two being: (a) how FWA influences flourishing within the workplace, and (b) how this relates to a South African context. Related to these, there is a common myth that FWA would result in a pay cut and less employment security. According to the literature this misconception is mainly expressed by males, and more literature is needed that directly addresses such presuppositions. A final point which the researcher would like to address and challenge to a certain extent, and where literature seems to have a bit of a gap, is that FWA is not only for the sake of managing a busy schedule better, or aiding dual-career couples with their work-life commitments. Instead FWA is a tool that can improve overall wellbeing, and whether it is to have more time to take care of one's responsibilities or to just relax and prioritise oneself, whether it is going to the gym or reading a book during what would be a working hour, FWA can aid in this. To an extent, the present study has added some light on how this is possible while still achieving the goals and key performance indicators set in the workplace.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

3.1 Methodology

This study utilised a qualitative methodological framework to explore employees' experiences and understanding of flexible working arrangements and how this intersects with flourishing in the workplace. Burns and Grove (1999) stated that the intention of qualitative research is to discover and describe the depth, richness, and complexities of an issue or phenomenon. Qualitative research can explore visual and verbal narratives, specifically of the wants and needs of employees (Campbell, 1999). The qualitative methodology provides a researcher with a means to understand the complexity and contextualisation of experiences concerning the work environment and all its unique characteristics (e.g., Agrawal & Garimella, 1994; Coradi et al. 2015; Peterson & Beard, 2004). It can also assess the processes and procedures that link employees with their working environment and the nuanced meanings that result thereof (e.g., Fried et al., 2001; Jonge et al., 2001; Pati et al., 2014; Wistow & Schneider, 2003). This methodology has been utilised repeatedly in studies where there was no other primary data or where an understanding of how workers' attitudes and experiences change with an evolving workplace are important (Orel & Mayerhoffer, 2021).

3.2 Design

This study utilised an exploratory approach using Grounded Theory (GT) as the research design. Grounded Theory has been used to describe the methodological process followed to build theory from data and describe the resulting output of following such a methodology. As such, it has been described as the theoretical explanation of a phenomenon produced from data through implementing a GT methodological blueprint (Cullen & Brennan, 2021). According to Glaser (1992), Grounded Theory is "based on the systematic generating of theory from data, that itself is systematically obtained from social research" (p. 2). Strauss and Corbin (1994)

define GT as "a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed" (p. 273). GT evolves throughout the entire research process, which is done through a constant back-and-forth between the data collection and analysis process. According to Martin and Turner (1986), GT is an inductive theory-finding methodology that permits a researcher to generate a theoretical explanation of the overall traits of a specific subject matter while concurrently grounding the explanation in empirical evidence or data. In other words, it is reflected in the experience that serves as both the data on which the theory is built and evidence supporting the emerging theory. It has been stated that the main difference between other qualitative approaches and GT is that GT presents a distinct method of theory development because of this continuous interplay between the data collection and analysis (Urquhart et al., 2010). It emphasises three key characteristics, namely: (a) inductive, (b) contextual, and (c) procedural (Boland, 1979; 1985; Chua, 1986; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Inductive, in this case, refers to GT generating theory rather than testing theory. Contextual, in that GT, looks at a specific phenomenon within its environmental, social and organisational context. Finally, procedural speaks to how GT follows a core methodological guideline (Cullen & Brennan, 2021). These three characteristics are pertinent to the interpretive orientation of this study with a constructionist approach as opposed to a positivist one. The emphasis here is on cultivating a context-based, process-centric narrative and explanation of the phenomenon, and not an objective, static description which is firmly conveyed in terms of causality (Boland, 1979; 1985; Chua, 1986; Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991).

Bryant and Charmaz (2007) provided several research guidelines for it to be considered Grounded Theory. Their first point is that it should make sense. The reader needs to almost immediately recognise that this particular theory, derived from a specific social situation, is about actual people or objects with which the reader can relate. The second point is that it should be clear that the developed theory originates from the data as opposed to it being "forced

to fit" into any previously established theoretical framework. Bryant and Charmaz's (2007) third point is that the amalgamation of the final product should be done in such a way that each element of the research has a harmonious relationship with the other element/s. The authors' next point is that whoever makes use of GT needs to be able to utilise their developed theory within other social scientists' works and illustrate how it now surpasses that which was initially known. Furthermore, their last point is that published GT must be written in such a way that it is clearly understood by the audience, as the reader wants to know how the findings of the research will either affect their life, work, or their psyche (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

3.2.1 Design motivation

There are several reasons why GT was chosen as the approach for exploring the processes through which flexible working arrangements interact with flourishing in the workplace. These relate to its ability to (a) generate new theories with incremental validity/ utility where little research exists; (b) incorporate an understanding of the organisational context; (c) make sense and structure of experiences of change; (d) produce substantive theory helpful in guiding organisational change; (e) focus on processes rather than categories or variance in concepts or experience; (f) demonstrated efficacy in organisational and workplace research. Each of these points is elaborated on respectively, below:

(a) GT Generates New Theories With Incremental Validity/ Utility Where Little Research Exists. Strauss (1987) said it well, "the methodological thrust of grounded theory is toward the development of theory, without any particular commitment to specific kinds of data, lines of research, or theoretical interests" (p. 5). Simply put, the research presented is pure; it is not skewed to fit existing theory. GT is used in this study to provide a substantive theory of employee flourishing in the workplace through the implementation and experience of flexible working arrangements. The motive for this research design is aligned with Goulding (1998), in which GT was used to propose a new take on pre-existing knowledge or to generate a new and

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fresh theory where very little was known beforehand. As Parker and Roffey (1997) stated, GT aims to classify numerous ideas which have arisen through thorough data analysis of documents, field notes and/or interview notes, and then through iterative coding and to compare the data to arrive at a well-constructed theory. This generative methodology was especially beneficial to this study given that there is a paucity of research on the ways in which flexible working arrangements impact flourishing and employee commitment in a South African context.

(b) The Incorporation of an Understanding of the Organisational Context. The GT approach has been successfully utilised within organisational research (Ancona, 1990; Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Isabella, 1990; Kahn, 1990; Pettigrew, 1990; Sutton, 1987; Turner, 2014; de Lucas Ancillo et al., 2021; Rippon et al., 2020; Treebak & Thomsen, 2022). This proven ability to shed light on processes within the organisational context made it a viable choice of research design. According to Martin and Turner (1986) and Pettigrew (1990), a considerable proposition of GT is that for it to yield valuable and accurate results, the intricacies of an organisation's circumstances, or context, have to be integrated into the understanding of the phenomenon, as opposed to it being ignored or simplified. Numerous theoretical approaches emphasise the importance of the organisational context in implementing flexible working arrangements and flourishing within the workplace. This type of stance also informs this study, and applying the GT research design enables the presence and investigation of the organisational context as a critical element (Orlikowski, 1993).

(c) GT Makes Sense and Structure of Experiences of Change. Another reason why GT was chosen is that it is fixed on making logic out of data by giving it structure (Parker & Roffey, 1996). A significant point of reference for this study and a critical factor in the justification of this methodology comes from Orlikowski's (1993) seminal work, where she successfully utilised GT to analyse changes within an organisational context. Orlikowski's (1993)

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justification has also been utilised for the purpose of this research, given that it contains the complexities of an organisational environment within the understanding of the phenomena. Parallel to Orlikowski (1993), where she linked GT data with features of pre-existing formal theory, the author of this study also desires to highlight that she utilised the concepts of employee commitment and engagement alongside the PERMA Model as a theoretical framework with Grounded Theory while being reflexive of not inserting these theories into the data.

(d) GT Produces Substantive Theory Helpful in Guiding Organisational Change. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), GT is complementary to seizing interpretive experiences and developing a theory. This specific design permits the researcher to cultivate a theoretical explanation of an organisational phenomenon. Such theory is helpful for understanding and driving organisational change in not only the context in which the research was conducted but in other organisational contexts where transferability has been established.

(e) GT Focuses on Processes Rather Than Categories or Variance in Concepts or Experience. GT enables "the generation of theories of process, sequence, and change pertaining to organisations, positions, and social interaction" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 114). The transformation an organisation goes through when adopting and assimilating a new way of work, as in this case, flexible working arrangements, and the processes and procedures of appropriation and implementation of new systems or ways of work tend to be neglected in literature (Classen, 2011). Given this, a research approach explicitly containing the rudiments of process and transformation was precisely fitting for this research.

(f) GT has Demonstrated Efficacy in Organisational and Workplace Research. As Markus and Robey (1988) and Mohr (1982) stated, a GT study generates a process, not a variance theory. This type of theory defines and explains the procedure of adopting and implementing flexible working arrangements concerning the interaction of contextual circumstances, actions

and consequences, as opposed to only explaining the independent and dependent variables (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992). According to Pettigrew (1990), this positioning prioritises the realism of the context, and it also emphasises theoretical and conceptual expansion as research goals.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

The population of this study consisted of people who form part of South Africa's labour market. The sample consisted of employees from a private hospital group working at a corporate office in the Western Cape. Like many other organisations, this company has gone through a process of implementing flexible working arrangements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, they implemented a work-from-home arrangement. Although this was a reactive approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company took note of the advantages that had accrued and adopted a proactive stance in learning from these experiences and establishing a committee tasked to implement a hybrid model, namely dual-workplace arrangements. Through much research, countless hours, and numerous consultations, the committee generated and implemented a plan where all those who qualify – based on the nature of one's job – would have two set days to come into the office, leaving three days of working at home. This was done according to the department. For example, Monday and Tuesday Marketing would be in the office, and Tuesday and Thursday Human Resources would be in the office. This new approach was launched to align with the company's exact value of caring for its employees and wanting the best for their health and well-being. The company strives to advance a strong values culture in that most people, especially management, are encouraged to adopt and practice the core company values, and the company emphasises their values constantly. The organisation has five core values, client cantered; patient safety-focused; performance-driven; team-orientated; and mutual trust and respect. Each one of these values

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consists of the aspect of care. It is likely that the emphasis on care, both client and employee care, arises since they operate in the private healthcare sector- where the heart of the business is focused on caring for people.

The sample was selected using purposive sampling. This sampling method is a non-random technique of guaranteeing that those critical categories of cases/ people within the sampling domain that meet theoretically guided pre-identified criteria are constituted within the final sample (Robinson, 2014). Purposive sampling is one means of attaining a manageable data size (Ames et al., 2019). The rationale for utilising this sampling strategy is based on researchers' a-priori theoretical knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Mason, 2002; Trost, 1986, as cited in Robinson, 2014). The researchers assume that specific groups of people may have a distinctive, different or crucial viewpoint of the phenomenon at hand, and their presence in the sample ought to be ensured. The researcher looked for characteristics of people who had been in the company for a minimum of five years and those who have had enough opportunity to experience both flexible working arrangements and fixed. The researcher also sampled for variability, which means that she requested the HR liaison to identify individuals who distinguished themselves by flourishing in the workplace and those who seem to have struggled most with flexible work arrangements. In that way, the researcher could identify what processes, mechanisms, or characteristics explained the differences in experiences.

All participants were accessed through the Human Resources department of the organisation. With Grounded Theory, one's first round of discussions is exploratory. Once the researcher got a better understanding (started developing a substantive theory), she gained insight into what questions to ask in the next round of interviews and what kind of experiences and criteria to sample for. The answers that the researcher gained guided the researcher to more questions, and she kept cycling through iteratively until theoretical saturation was reached. A

total of three rounds of one-on-one interviews were held. Some participants only participated in one round, whereas others participated in two. A sum of twenty-three interviews was conducted, which consisted of eighteen participants. A combination of managers and non-managers were included as participants. There were ten managers and eight non-managers. The ten managers comprised of four strategic/ high-level managers, two tactical/ middle-level managers, and four operational/ low-level managers. All participants came from various departments within the company- Human Resources, Infrastructure, and Business Performance, to name a few. The sample also consisted of a mixture of preferences for dual-place/ flexible working arrangements and those against it. Participants varied in race and culture. The study included people who identify as White from both an Afrikaaner and English cultural/ linguistic background, as well as people who identify as Coloured. Unfortunately, the sample did not include people who form part or identify as part of the other racial groups as defined in the Employment Equity Act and other South African legislation (African, Indian, and Asian). This was not due to purposeful exclusion or bias in selection by rather availability, existing systemic underrepresentation of this segment of the South African population in the organisation and sector, the racial patterns in the geographic area in which the company is situated, and scheduling conflicts. By a large margin, the organisation predominately consists of employees who identify as White and Coloured, and more so those who form part of management. This is a historical artefact from the Apartheid era (both in terms of employment disparities and previous spatial planning legislation) that has still not been adequately addressed through exiting legislation and policies aimed to redress the injustices of the past. It is unfortunately common to find Black African individuals overrepresented in the lowest structures of organisations (e.g. custodial and cleaning services) and underrepresented in middle management positions. The majority of participants were managers, and thus the pool of potential participants from the Black, Indian and Asian demographic groups was

significantly smaller. Seeing as the sampling was focused on the theoretical selection criteria and not representation of the population, the sample is not representative of the South African population but was chosen by the HR liaison for diversity of experience with flexible working arrangements. Along with this, time was also a factor, and unfortunately the one person who agreed to take part in the study and who identifies as Black African could not participate due her availability. However, there were males and females, different age groups, people who had significant differences in terms of their experiences – life and career – and participants who had various tenures at the company – the shortest being five years and the longest over two decades.

3.4 Data Collection

As mentioned above, the sample consisted of employees within the corporate office of a private hospital group. The researcher kept going back iteratively and collected more information until saturation was reached. Face-to-face interviews were used as the data collection instrument in this study. The interviews were either in-person or via one of the various online meeting platforms, Microsoft Teams in particular. Interviews are guided, purposeful conversations between people (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). There are various types of interviews, but this study utilised one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The participants were asked to provide information, based on their understanding, experience and professional knowledge, on flexible working arrangements and flourishing, along with the various aspects of each. The interviews generally started with understanding participants' views and then moved on to eliciting detailed descriptions of their experiences. The interviews were semi-structured, with questions informed by the then-developing substantive theory that emerged from the answers provided in the previous interviews. An interview schedule was developed as a guide to facilitate each interview discussion (See appendix A), and the responses from the participants induced new ideas, which were explored in further discussions. In this sense, as

interview data were collected, they were transcribed and then analysed line-by-line, which fed

back into the next round of interviews.

3.5 Data Analysis
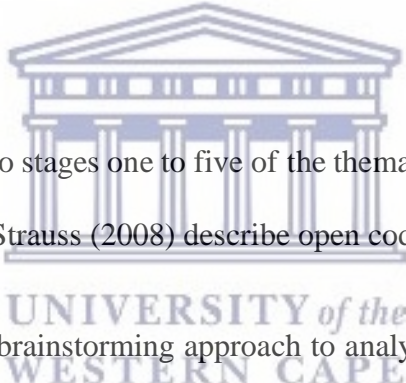
Grounded Theory analysis is iterative and entails having a secure movement between the

empirical data and the more abstract concept, along with it being comparative and, as a result

needing a continuous comparison across the various domains of evidence. This is done to

control the conceptual scope and level of the developing theory. This offers the researcher a

chance to inspect the process in context and, through this, extract the significance from each

level of the analysis and thus expose the numerous sources of causation and connectivity, which

are of utmost importance when pinpointing and explaining the various patterns in the change

process (Pettigrew, 1989, as cited in Orlikowski, 1993). The main focus during analysis in GT

is theory 33ould33ghg. The researcher needs to be skilled in theoretical sensitivity when

developing a theory. Glaser (1978) defined theoretical sensitivity as being immersed within the

area of investigation and its associated overall ideas. The purpose of this is for the researcher

to understand the entire context in which the theory was established. According to Urquhart et

al. (2010), there are two essential aspects of theorising: the degree of conceptualisation and

theory scope; these dimensions highlight the GT process of theory construction. This

conceptualisation surpasses description and instead considers the relationships between

categories and pitches the scope of the theory at a suitable level. Simply put, looking at the

degree of conceptualisation first focuses on the analysis, namely the degree to which it needs

to be carried out. In contrast, the theory scope is centred around the outcome of constructing a

theory that is grounded (Urquhart et al., 2010).

For this study, the researcher used Strauss, and Corbin's (1990) Grounded Theory analysis

process and Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis. Thematic analysis is a means of

identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data, organising and describing the data set in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This data analysis technique is considered appropriate for any phase that aims to uncover information through interpretations. The thematic analysis provides a systematic element to data analysis (Alhojailan, 2012). Thematic analysis includes the following 6 phases, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006): (a) familiarising yourself with your data; (b): generating initial codes; (c) searching for themes; (d) reviewing themes; I defining and naming themes; and (f) producing the report.

Numerous variations have emerged when applying Glaser and Strauss's (1990) Grounded Theory methodology (Cullen & Brennan, 2021). Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Grounded Theory analysis process entails three forms of coding, which are sequential but also feed back into the previous coding in an iterative cycle: (a) open coding; (b) axial coding; and (c) selective coding.

Open coding is very similar to stages one to five of the thematic coding described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe open coding as follows:

> Open coding requires a brainstorming approach to analysis because, in the beginning, analysts want to open up the data to all potentials and possibilities contained within them. Only after considering all possible meanings and examining the context carefully is the researcher ready to put interpretive conceptual labels on the data. Conceptualising data not only reduces the amount of data the researcher has to work with but also provides a language for talking about the data. (p. 159)

In this process of coming up with labels (codes) for the ideas captured in the text, moving line-by-line looking for meaning, preference was given to the discovered truth as opposed to what the participants said verbatim. To quote Bryant and Charmaz (2007), "to my way of

thinking, researchers need to focus on the accuracy of their discovered truth, rather than the less important what-did-they-say-exactly" (p. 199-120). Basic-level concepts are differentiated from categories, which are higher-level concepts and more abstract understandings of how various codes cluster into descriptive categories. During axial coding, these categories are re-evaluated to understand how they relate to one another in processes and influence. In its simplest form, axial coding, according to Corbin and Strauss (2008), is defined as correlating categories/ concepts to one another. As one would imagine, it closely relates to open coding. The difference between the two is "artificial". Purely for the explanatory purpose, they are there to show readers that although the data is broken apart and that concepts are identified to depict the data, It is pivotal to put it all back together again by relating those identified concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The codes are analysed to identify important concepts grouped into higher-order categories. In axial coding, those higher-order categories are related procedurally to one another on a more theoretical basis (theoretical integration). After that, selective coding is used to identify one or more significant categories that form the primary focus for explaining the inter-relationships between categories and suggest an emerging substantive theory explaining the experiences and understandings central to the data. Selective coding is described by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as the process in which we "give those ideas conceptual names that stand for and represent the ideas contained in the data" (p. 160). Selective coding involves identifying the main conceptual category/categories that can be used to form the theory that explains the interrelationships and processes that give rise to experiences and understandings captured in the data.

3.6 Significance of the Study

As Markus and Robey (1988) and Mohr (1982) stated, a GT study generates a process theory, not a variance theory. In this study, such a theory defines and explains the procedure of adopting and implementing flexible working arrangements concerning the interaction of

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contextual circumstances, actions and consequences, as opposed to only explaining the independent and dependent variables (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992). Positioning prioritises the realism of the context as well as the theoretical and conceptual expansion as research goals (Pettigrew, 1990).

This study provides a substantive theory of employees' flourishing in the workplace through the implementation and experience of flexible working arrangements. It aims to contribute to the body of knowledge that can be used in industry to ensure employees are flourishing in the Western Cape, South Africa, and perhaps around the world. Flourishing has been an essential topic of research triggering much interest. However, to date, there is minimal research on flexible working arrangements and their effects on flourishing. Understanding how to increase employees' flourishment becomes essential given the link of research in mental health, indicators of success, and the overall well-being of both employee and employer, as mentioned above. Hopefully, this research will contribute to greater awareness and practical implementation of interventions like flexible workplace arrangements.

3.7 Reflexivity and Trustworthiness

Qualitative and quantitative research are fundamentally different. Quantitative data quality is focused on internal and external validity and reliability, whereas qualitative studies focus on trustworthiness and reflexivity (Kisely & Kendall, 2011). Quantitative research endeavours to reveal or approximate fundamental truths, which, as far as possible, has not been tainted by researcher "bias" (Young & Ryan, 2020). Qualitative research acknowledges the role of subjectivity in knowledge creation and meaning-making (Rees et al., 2020). Researchers who decide on the qualitative route engage in reflexivity as a means to consider how subjectivity moulds one's inquiry (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). Reflexivity is linked to a researcher's capability to produce and communicate ethical and nuanced decisions amidst the compound work of gathering bona fide data, which mirrors the disarray of participants' social practices

and experiences (Finlay, 2002). Simply put, the researcher's subjective perspective (or "bias") is fundamentally interwoven but critically evaluated within the qualitative 'esearch processes.37ould37gh the researcher's perspective has numerous positive influences, fail'ng to address reflexivity may negatively influence the knowledge constructed through qualitative research and all those linked to it (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022).

Olmos-Vega et al. (2022) define reflexivity as "a set of continuous, collaborative, and multifaceted practices through which researchers self-consciously critique, appraise, and evaluate how their subjectivity and context influence the research processes" (p. 1). This definition underlines that reflexivity is a continuous process that expands throughout one's research venture. The authors emphasise the fact that reflexivity has a shared and cooperative nature in that it should be combined with the research team dynamic in order for it to be as effective as possible (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022). Reflexivity also has a multifaceted nature, as it entails focusing on interpersonal, personal, mythological, and contextual elements that affect the research being conducted.

Regarding personal reflexivity, I always had to "check" myself as I am pretty passionate about this topic. As a result, my bias may skew the data towards a favourable view of FWA. I have a strong and firm belief in positive psychology, and with this personal connection to the research, it can be easy to enforce my believes and views. For example, during interviews, I purposefully took note to watch the words that I used regarding the wording of the questions and throughout the conversations that took place. Also, during the interviews, I constantly repeated the respondents' answers to ensure that I not only got all which they said but also to ensure that I fully understood what was being said. It was of utmost importance to manage my assumptions and bias.

Concerning interpersonal reflexivity, this research was conducted at my place of work. All participants were colleagues, some of whom I know on a more personal level as I engage with

them almost daily. Given this, similar to what I did in order to address personal reflexivity, I was always mindful of the words that I used. I also made a concerted effort to remain professional, more so with those that I knew on a social level, as I did not want our personal relationship to taint the data.

Regarding methodological reflexivity, I decided to implement a positive psychology paradigm from the onset of this study. It was effortless for me to ensure that I stuck with this paradigm throughout the research process. As mentioned above, I have a personal and strong alignment with this school of psychology. However, to ensure that I did not "force-fit" my data, I neglected the literature, specifically on the PSYCAP and the PERMA Model, until after the data analysis was complete. Although aware that in GT the literature review is often delayed till after the analysis, this was done almost unintentionally. As I got immersed in the data and the rest of the study, I genuinely forgot about my framework. I believe that this, which could be seen as a potential slip-up or negligence, worked for the benefit of the research as I collected and analysed the data laying aside preconceived notions regarding the research framework, even though they were likely to be subconsciously present in my overall approach. Lastly, there is contextual reflexivity. This entailed that I had to understand the study's specific context. In this case, it was within the corporate office of a private hospital group.

Given that I was an employee at this very organisation and locality, I was uniquely familiar with the environment. This company has a robust culture, one which centres around its values. This may be due to the nature of the business– healthcare. However, this culture may also be particular to the company as they emphasise their values and, as a result, their culture.

When it comes to the validity of the actual value or transferability, as it is referred to in qualitative studies, it considers the honesty and application of the methods used and their accuracy in representing the data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Additionally, transferability can indicate the extent to which meanings, experiences, and processes can be inferred to apply to a

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similar context that shares important mechanisms or characteristics with the context in which a grounded theory was developed. In terms of transferability, I have attempted to provide a detailed description of the context in which the study was conducted, without endangering the confidentiality of the organisation or its employees, allowing the reader to evaluate the extent to which the findings are relevant to their context. The last one is credibility. This term refers to how truthful the responses are and how the researcher interprets and represents those responses (Noble & Smith, 2015).

For the purpose of establishing credibility and dependability, I provided the supervisor with all the transcripts, and he conducted his coding. The supervisor was then able to evaluate and engage in comparative discussions with me regarding the codes and categories developed. I also did some member checks toward the end of the data collection process, and what surfaced here was that people not only stated that they agreed with this "working theory", but the participants also mentioned that the theory resonated with their experiences, and it was considered helpful for understanding it. Many, if not all, stated that they could testify to the credibility of this theory as they have experienced it to be accurate; simply put, this theory resonated with them.
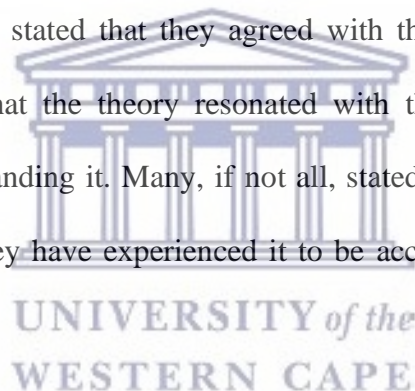
3.8 Procedure

The researcher approached the HR Operations General Manager of the organisation, enquired and requested permission to conduct this research. Once the General Operations Manager approved the researcher's request, the researcher then went through the formal process of the application. This included filling out a form and submitting specific documentation via email to the organisation's research coordinator. Once submitted and evaluated by the research coordinator, it was sent through to be evaluated by the organisation's research committee board members, who ultimately decided whether or not the research could be conducted in their organisation. The researcher was then assigned to individuals from the

organisation: the HR Operations General Manager, who ultimately is responsible for the researcher within the organisational context and the Organisational Effectiveness Manager, who, in essence, is the researcher's go-between as she is not allowed to recruit participants or approach them directly. Only after the board's approval did the Organisational Effectiveness manager recruited employees through her own and the organisation's network to participate in the study. This was done via email, thus ensuring written communication in the form of a request and proof that the participants chose to take part of their own free will. Only then, once employees expressed their interest and willingness to participate, was the researcher able to contact the interested individuals via email– this being the first time the participant identities were made known to the researcher. The intention of the research was explained, including the estimated time required to conduct the interview (See appendix B).

All participants were required to complete an informed consent form (Appendix C) and a demographics sheet (Appendix D) prior to the administration of the interview. Before any interview commenced, the researcher explained the participant's rights and the researcher's obligations and asked for permission to record the session once again. The interviews were conducted at a place of convenience for each participant or via one of the various video communications platforms, specifically Microsoft Teams. Participants were allowed to discuss their experiences and perspectives in an unrushed and private setting. As far as possible, the interviews were conducted in an appropriate venue to ensure a quiet place for conversing, recording, and comfort. All in-person interviews were conducted at the company's corporate office, either in the participant's office (if they had their own office) or in a boardroom. The researcher was available to answer any questions or address any concerns the participant may have had during the research process. The interviews took place at the most convenient time for the participant.

3.9 Ethics

All participants were made aware of the ethical principles of: (a) confidentiality; (b) consent; (c) voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the research; (d) non-maleficence; and I respect. Regarding confidentiality, the data was safely secured on a flash drive and in the Cloud as password-protected files; only the researcher and supervisor had access to this data. The flash drive was also secured in a safe. All data and information regarding the participants and the entire study were kept on the researcher's password-protected laptops. The data will be kept for a minimum of five years and then destroyed in line with the POPI regulations for research.

The participants' identities were protected in the data through utilising pseudonyms, and the researcher ensured that no identifying information could surface from the transcripts. This was done by redacting identifying information from the quotations from the transcripts in codes shared in this research report and any subsequent publications. On a separate file which was password protected and encrypted, the identities of each pseudonym were kept. As soon as the researcher no longer needed to identify who was who, she destroyed the file that linked the data to the participants' identities. In this way, the researcher protected the participants' identities, but the data was still available for the researcher to use again. The pseudonyms were necessary as the researcher collected information from the same person more than once. The researcher did not collect any personal information that was not needed for this study.

All participants were given an information letter (Appendix B), and each one was required to complete a consent form before administering the interview (Appendix C). The researcher again informed the participants that participation in this study was completely voluntary and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any point by choosing not to complete the interview and that participants' responses would remain strictly confidential and anonymous.

The researcher adhered to and uphel' the principle of non-maleficence, and participants were made aware of this promise. The researcher also informed the participants and ensured that they were aware of the fact that there were no known risks to participating in this study. However, if they found the interview questions upsetting, the research supervisor could be contacted for debriefing. Before each interview commenced, participants were reminded of their rights and the researcher's obligation towards them as participants. Participants were also made aware from the beginning that the researcher was likely to return to them more than once.

The researcher also assured all participants that the data collected will be dealt with respect, and thus the researcher would ensure that the data collected would be portrayed accurately. It should be noted that each participant was given an appropriate amount of time to consider the study and whether or not they wished to participate. Lastly, the researcher requested permission to record the interview. Only those comfortable and agreed to the above participated in the study.

This above procedure was repeated each time the researcher collected data. In order to reduce the load on participants, the researcher also recruited new participants as the theory developed. This also allowed the researcher to verify the theory on the new participants and use their new information to validate and refine it.
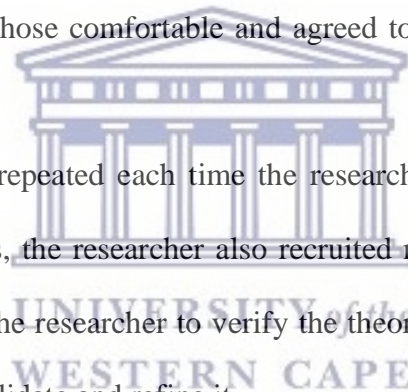
Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings and Discussion

4.1 Overview of Findings

Emerging from the data collection and analysis iterations, involving a total of twenty-three interviews that were conducted, a theoretical model emerged that aimed to elucidate the processes and factors that contribute to flourishing in the context of flexible working arrangements. The resultant grounded theory includes four components that impact on the grand theme of work environment. The first was the qualities or characteristics of the organisation that are important for flourishing to be possible. Some of these qualities include *organisational values* such as mutual trust and respect, and work-life balance. Others include *adaptability*, *resources*, *value employees*, *performance VS time orientation* (performance management), and *caring company*. Each of these are elaborated on in sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.6. Most of these organisational qualities are passed on to line managers and team leaders through training and the organisational culture. The second main component of the substantive theory developed through the GT approach was Managerial Qualities. Managerial qualities are important for flourishing to be able to take place, these included being a leader more than simply a manager (*leadership VS management*), being both *people orientated and goal orientated*, *appreciation and recognition*, *supportive relationships*, being *development/ empowerment focused*, having a *genuine interest in employees*, *openness*, and *managing accountability*. Each of these are discussed in more detail, and quotations are provided to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the analytical process, in sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.8. Management were described as enacting positive communication and maintaining positive relationships with their team members, these factors were found to impact directly on the employee and further facilitate flourishing. The third important component of the model was Employee Qualities. Some of these characteristics included *self-motivation and self-management*, *maturity/ personal insight*, *authenticity/ ability to be yourself*, *personal values*,

passion and interest, *ownership/ responsibility*, *work ethic*, and *environmental mastery*. These are described in more detail in sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.9. Although these employee qualities came out as important, it is also pertinent in the context of flexible work arrangements that employees are able to enact environmental control in order to create the necessary structure and boundaries in setting up their flexible work times and physical context, as per their needs, in order for flourishing to take place. It is through this process of environmental control that employees are able, together with the tools and resources provided by the organisation, to set up a physical environment and put in place those affordances necessary for flourishing to take place. This is the fourth main component of the model – physical environment and affordances. Important aspects of this component included being able to have a comfortable workspace that is tailored to one's preferences and needs (*comfort*), experiencing *connectedness (broader connection potential)*, this was done through *technology*, and the last code under this component was *home/ family dynamics*. These are all described in more detail in sections 4.5.1 to 4.5.4. When these four components are working in synergy, then it is possible for a psychological work environment conducive of flourishing to be experienced by the employee, and possibly have a workforce who is committed and engaged, thus benefiting the organisation. Such a work environment, based on the data collected in this study, is characterised by *mutual trust and respect* or reciprocity, a congruence between the values of the organisation and the personal values of the employee (*values congruence/ person-organisational fit*), *inclusivity/ belongingness*, *employee needs/ individualism*, *clear structure*, *autonomy/ independence*, *work-life balance*, *goal attainment and needs fulfilment*, *positive cycle*, *discretionary effort*, and *team synergy*. These are described in more detail in sections 4.6.1 to 4.6.11. A diagrammatic representation of this model is provided in Figure 4.1 on the following page:

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Figure 4.1

Diagrammatic representation of the AJB Flexible Work Arrangements Flourishing Model
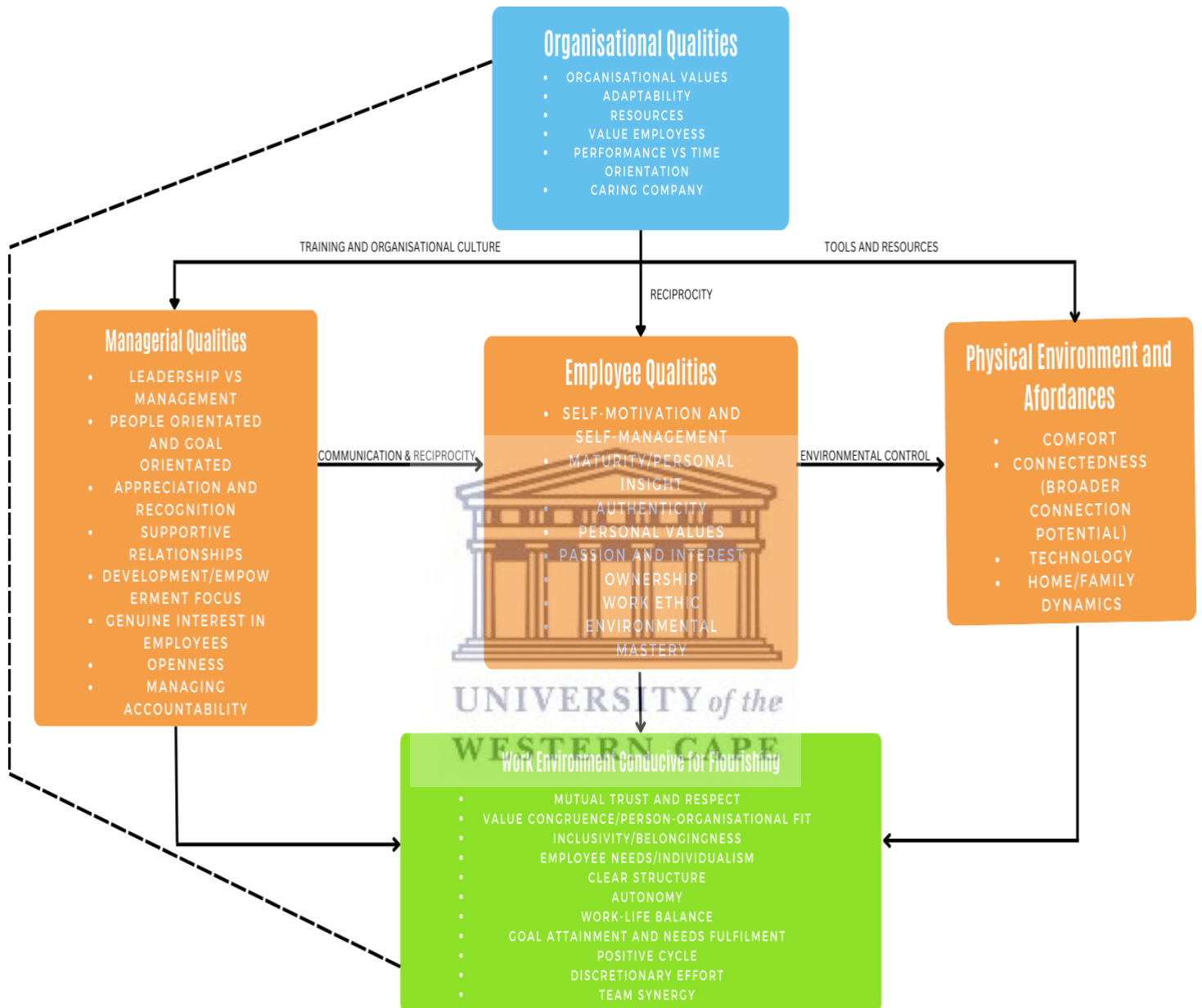
4.2. Organisational Qualities

This category looked at attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics of the organisation that were experienced by employees as contributing to feelings of engagement, commitment and flourishing. It is those things about the organisation that participants reported as making them feel that they are not just their employee number, or a cog in the machine, a needed liability – but rather that they are a person, an asset, and ultimately it was those aspects that made them feel good about working for the company. The codes that made up this category included *organisational values*, *adaptability*, *resources*, *value employee/s*, *performance VS time*, and *caring company*. These are all described in turn below and selected quotations are provided from the interviews which serve as examples to demonstrate the groundedness of the theory in the data.

4.2.1   Organisational values

This looked at those important company values which emerged from the data as encouraging engagement, commitment and flourishing. This is what the company practices – what they put out into the world. The company has a major values culture, it includes client centred, trusting and respectful, patient focused, performance driven and team orientated. Apart from those "core" values that are on the company's public domain, it also consists of those simple personal values, the values that pertains more to the embodied values of the employer as a personal individual and not just the values of a leading private hospital brand. It consists of those values which makes the company an employer of choice. This includes having mutual respect; exercising trust within the organisation- trusting employees; considering and valuing work-life balance; caring about the employees- their wellbeing; and being transparent. The following are some extracts from the data collection which serves as examples for this code:

> I'll give you an example of what happened last week about building a sense of commitment is. We had a very unfortunate circumstance of losing one of our very dear

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team members last week, who passed away. But I think the commitment of the people working for this organization and what they did is absolutely amazing. Many organizations would not go to those lengths. So I think for me personally, what gives me a sense of commitment to the organization is what the organization stands for and how they live their values. You know one of our values is obviously about team commitment. It's about caring. We are in the business of healthcare- to care and look after people, but to see an organization live the values and not just speak them, like that is what gives you that immense sense of commitment that you are working for an organization that cares. **[DM para36]**

I think the Flexible Working Arrangements needs to be managed correctly and through this it would improve wellness for employees in various aspects-emotional wellness, physical wellness. And it's a massive benefit for most people, not everyone uses it. Not everyone may see this as a benefit, but I think for the majority of employees that are eligible, it's a massive benefit and this definitely speaks to the company caring and trusting its people. **[HS2 para37]**

A lot of companies have sent employees back to work full time now, and the fact that our company is still going on says a lot, because I think what is important is that they are checking in with the employees on a constant basis, and they see that this arrangement is working and also you know showing care for your lifestyle, your routine, your daily routine. They're taking into consideration moms with kids or, you know, parents with kids- that they have extramural activities and whatever. So I think they are also showing care that aspect. But I don't think it will change. You know, the way to the company will still stand for what it stands for, even though we don't have the arrangement in **[AK para46]**.

4.2.2 Adaptability

This related to the company being willing to change as needed. Not being stuck in the old way of doing things just because that is the way things had always been done. In this ever-changing world it is crucial to be adaptable, more so when you want to remain at the top of industry. Adaptability was described as being willing to change for the betterment of the company, but also to aid your employees- because you care for them. Also, the inverse was

looked at here, not being adaptable. The following are some extracts from the interviews conducted:

when I joined the company, I really experienced them as old school. So when they were open to this during COVID, I was like, "Wow, this is hectic for the company to do, it's very left of field". So it really showed me the company is thinking broader and willing to trust employees and you know, be an employer of choice. So I think the way leadership dealt with this, for me was really positive. **[HS1 para31]**

So what we did actually, we had a committee. I was on the committee; it was called the Dual Workplace Arrangement Committee. And look, it was quite a process. OK, it was consultation, there were surveys, we had to understand and which departments come in which days. It was obviously the thing of equipping people. People have to be equipped to work from home. What are the policies, that was quite a process. However, I think it was a very good process. There was change management involved because, let's face it, there was some line managers who initially would be against it because they were used to the old style of managing. Like a school teacher- "I need to see my people". Those people today are the most pro advocates for remote duel workplace and how it changed. But it came with time. It came with change management. You understand that there are certain individuals that maybe don't have the workspace at home, So one of the things with our dual workplace that we implemented is that to be eligible to work from home, you need to have a dedicated space where you can actually work, where you can have uninterrupted meetings. But there was lots of engagement. It was a process and a lot of change management because people were used to working in the old way. But it was such an effective process. **[MD para42]**

I also found the implementation of it a privilege to compare to other big Fortune 500 companies that I read about in the media and if I see how there are struggling in America. I'm laughing at them, and also my husband works for a big media company and how they are struggling, it's like a fist fight because every department can make up their own rules. There is still uncertain about in which direction it's heading if they have to all this go back to the office soon one day. There's a lot of uncertainty and it's so stressful and it was such a privilege to know beforehand. **[CS para17]**

The other thing is the organizations ability to change the way they'v' been doing things for the past 40 odd years and just say, "You know what we understand, we realize", the leadership says we've got to change and then make the changes. I think that for me is

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something that's strengthens your commitment to the organization and the ability to accommodate people, the diversity and inclusivity of the organization. To be diverse and include all people from all walks of life and to accommodate them, is something that gives you a sense of commitment that you know you want to work for an organization that has those types of values. And as I mentioned, doesn't just have them on paper, but actually, you know, lives the values that is in my experience what builds that sense of commitment. **[DM para36]**

So you think that Flexible Working Arrangements, whatever it may be actually will enhance or support that of "We are a company who cares ", because it's more benefits and this actually prioritizes wellness and well-being.

Halley Styles: Yes, absolutely. And like I said, creating a culture of trust, and productivity. And also sharing that the company is moving forward with the times. So it was very much COVID driven, but it showed us that this works, or can work **[HS2 para39].**

4.2.3 Resources

This code looked at whether or not employees had the resources they needed to do their job. Does the infrastructure support them? It was experienced by participants, that when one does not have the proper, or needed, resources and supporting infrastructure needed to complete tasks or meet deadlines, it brings about a huge hinderance. Participants spoke of becoming frustrated and demotivated at times. It is essential for organisations to ensure that all employees have the needed tools to do their jobs as effectively and efficiently as possible. Resources include the basics such as having a working laptop/ computer, to having the proper technical and digital infrastructure in place to support complex systems – systems which are used every day by employees. In this instance resources also referred to ensuring that management is trained and equipped to support their staff, in this new way of working, specifically they need to be equipped as well in how to manage FWA. One of the resources organisations should provide is to give adequate training in FWA, this allow for managers to implement it with a view to employee needs, and this result in a work environment in which they experience

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flourishing, and the organisation receives better output from their staff. The following are extracts from the interview transcripts demonstrating examples of this theme:

So one of the things that really hinders me. I got managers reporting to me, so not so much, in our current work arrangement with people being at home three days of the week, and we all got laptops, 3G cards and whatever in terms of connectivity, and we have WIFI at home as well. But even with all these things, when the power goes off the connectivity of the cell phone towers goes off, then there's that delay in connected work, especially if you have to do work that is the dependant on input from a couple of parties. And with the delay, I become under pressure because I can't get these things off my table soon enough. At times the technology and the communications platforms doesn't support me.

Interviewer: So the external factors of technology not working, or the electricity in that case, but when that's not helping you to actually do what you're supposed to do, that brings a hindrance.

Allie Baldwin: Yes, definitely- that that constant break in communication. I have to be in constant communication with my managers as I require their input in order to put things together. And they need to be in communication with their teams. So when there's a break in communication, it upsets everything. **[AB para15-17]**

So what we did actually, we had a committee. I was on the committee; it was called the Dual Workplace Arrangement Committee. And look, it was quite a process. OK, it was consultation, there were surveys, we had to understand which departments come in which days. It was obviously the thing of equipping people. People have to be equipped to work from home. What are the policies, that was quite a process. However, I think it was a very good process. **[DM para42]**

It 50ouldd definitely align with that, yes, but I think it would definitely take the company to have the managers go for some training to better manage this. **[IW para76]**

For example, my SAP application has not been working for the past two weeks. And I.T can't help. They can't help sort it out so it's a major problem which has been escalated now to the network itself. This is an issue now for me because I can't be productive in certain areas of my work while I'm working from home. So just in terms of that I would say, maybe just improve on our on our resources in terms of working from home. **[AK para4]**

4.2.4 Value employees

This code included not only the things the organisation does to show how it values employees, but whether these actions are perceived by the employees as conveying care and being valued. This is important within any relationship, and to have a proper effective relationship, this is one of the key variables. The following are some extracts from the data collection which serves as examples for this code:

> I think it does align with it. I think it's it links to I guess a bit of a work life balance or an employer who cares about you and you as a person and your work life balance and you're allowing flexibility in your arrangements. And yeah, obviously if it's implemented correctly and managed correctly then it will enable people to flourish. **[HR2 para26]**
>
> So I think relating back to what I just said is that in communication. Communication leads to improved engagement and my commitment, which does the impact my reworking relationship and my experience. So if I'm not engaged and I'm not committed, I will just do the bare minimum. I won't be fully committed to doing my tasks like I'm doing now, working 12 hour days because I know that the company values me and because I know that I am engaged and my manager keeps me engaged and the company keeps me engaged. If I didn't have that feeling of engagement or that feeling that I am trusted and respected from my line manager and my company or my team, I wouldn't do what I do. I wouldn't go the extra mile to service my clients and to complete my work tasks. So it really for me, I always say that everything is linked and everything impacts on everything. You need to have a highly engaged employee which then links to trust and respect. Vice versa, from the organisation and your team members and your line manager. **[TK para17]**
>
> Also, what's demotivating, or hinders my flourishing is if I feel that I'm doing is not value adding. What I'm doing should be for a good reason, and not just to tick the boxes. As well as work that you do but it doesn't show the return or it doesn't get implemented. So you do the work or give your views, and its brushed over- its not recognized as value adding, or there's limitations. But again, you got to be realistic with it as well. **[HR1 para14]**

4.2.5 Performance vs Time Orientation

The data suggested that employees believe that outcome/ performance/ productivity should not be seen as time-based. In a nutshell, this code looks at the aspect of performance management. This is a crucial process for any job, this is the process which determines how productive the employee is, it asked the question of, "What have you been doing? Are you getting a salary for nothing?". But it also allows for an opportunity for the manager to truly engage with the employee to see if they are coping, where could one improve, and how could one be productive while maintaining wellbeing. Performance should be evaluated on the basis of output and not time, as time does not reflect impact and effectiveness in most working contexts. For example, someone could be at the office "working" for eight hours and have very little to show for it at the end of the day; whereas the next person could be working half the time (four hours) and have accomplished so much more. A lot of this comes down to the individual – who they are, and the mood one finds themselves in. In reality not everyone will work a full day every day and be productive the entire time, every now and then one tends to have those "lazy days". And on the other side of the spectrum, there are times when the individual finds themselves working more than their "allotted" eight hours, yet many do not get compensated for this. It is worth noting, that in terms of being compensated for overtime, this is very much job dependant. In the case of this study, most times (if not always), the participants indicated that they do not get compensated for working longer hours. Below are some extracts from the data collected that demonstrate how this theme emerged from the data:

> I think it's very important for them to take an active role in enabling it. Once again, it goes to that if the line manager sets a certain precedence that you are going to be monitored on your output and not on your icon being green, I think it would definitely create a more effective dual workplace that will be more efficient. The team I think will be more productive. **[IW para66]**
>
> I also think we need to move away from worrying about the time spent but rather look at the output of your work. If that's done, doesn't matter if you do it 9:00 o'clock in the

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evening or you know how you structure your work day, as long as you get the work done and if you're line manager sees that, I think automatically, you know they will be more lenient to having a flexible work arrangement. **[DN para15]**

Yes, absolutely, because we're not clock watchers, man. That's about quality output. It's about being productive and feeling proud of what product you've done for the day or what value you added, it can be tangible or intangible. **[CR1 para69]**

And you know the way that you measure output is people reaching deadlines, accomplishing their goals, their commitments, and the ability to do it according to their own ability and time. Giving them that flexibility and giving them, you know that freedom, which is really I think fantastic, and I think it's proven that it can work and it does work. **[DM para15]**

4.2.6 Caring company

This code was a common thread throughout the study, practically all participants said that "… the company looks after us". Many reported feeling valued by the organisation. Apart from the many benefits and opportunities that the company provides, they had a really strong company culture with a massive focus on values, one of them being "mutual trust and respect". Many at the company uphold this value and experienced it as well. They feel that the company cares for them. In other words, not only are trust and respect core values, as in the previous code, but they are demonstrations of the very nature of the organisation, a caring company. Given that the company is a leader in the healthcare sector, it is no surprise that care is experienced within the company – from the company to its staff, and this is what is shown to the "outside world", the clients. At the heart of it, this code focused on the company caring for their staff and the staff sensing/ feeling that they are cared for by their employer. The following are extracts from the interview transcripts that demonstrate the rootedness of this code in the data:

A lot of companies have sent employees back to work full time now, and the fact that our company is still going on says a lot, because I think what is important is that they are checking in with the employees on a constant basis, and they see that this arrangement is working and also you know showing care for your lifestyle, your

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routine, your daily routine. They're taking into consideration moms with kids or, you know, parents with kids- that they have extramural activities and whatever. So I think they are also showing care that aspect. But I don't think it will change. You know, the way to the company will still stand for what it stands for, even though we don't have the arrangement in **[AK para46]**.

I think it will contribute to flourishment if you are more free in a sense that you don't find that stress of the green icon. It's available all the time. If one can let go of that sort of sense of need to be online, then it could offer a lot on your well-being, but then also on what you want to put into your work because you would feel that sense of trust. You would feel that scenes of calmness. You can sort of do your work when you need to do it or when you want to do it but at the same time you would feel that your employer is caring for your wellbeing offering that type of work life balance. **[IW para36]**

The answer is yes. I think I loyalty which plays a big part, the company is good for us. The company looks after their employees. We got a lot of changes lately. Structural changes. But still in the bigger picture, the company is still good for us. And you must be able to change because a company goes through phases and you must be able to adjust with it. **[JA para34]**

What increases that commitment is what I get back from the company, in just the essence of community- family. My husband went through cancer in 2019. A lot of people say, "Oh, you must have had such great support from your family and everything", I'm like "No, my family is my company". I hate to say, but if I didn't work for the company, then it would have been a very, very different story we were telling. And my commitment increased, I have even more to give back to the company.

Also, with that whole thing of being in that world, if I hadn't had the flexibility- not that flexible work environment was a thing then but the mind frame was there- and because of my dedication to the company, I would not have been able to take care of my husband. Because I was able to work from every hospital, whenever he was in for treatment or whatever, I could just work wherever and I just carried on. **[MP1 para32-33]**

4.3 Managerial Qualities

This category focused at the attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics of management (line managers) that were experienced by employees as contributing to feelings of engagement,

commitment and flourishing. It is those things about management that they reported as making them feel that they are valued and supported. These are the aspects which participants reported as making them feel good about their leader and the company they work for. A strong focal point of this category is that of being a leader – which formed the basis of this category. Anyone can manage, but not everyone is a leader. The codes that made up this category included *leadership vs management*, *people orientated and goal orientated*, *appreciation and recognition*, *supportive relationships*, *development/ empowerment focus*, *genuine interest in employee*, *openness*, and *managing accountability*. These are all described in turn below and selected quotations are provided from the interviews which serves as examples to demonstrate the groundedness of the theory in the data.

4.3.1. Leadership vs Management

This looked at the type of leader the manager is. Anyone can be a manager – that's the position – anyone can dictate, but it takes a certain type of person to be worthy to be called a leader. They inspire, they attract, they bring togetherness, they respect, they are trusting, they guide and teach, they care; ultimately, they lead. Given this, it is important to have the right person appointed as a leader. How do you manage you team? The line manager is the employee's first point of call, and thus plays a huge roll in this study. This code looked at management styles. One could go as far as saying that the relationship between an employee and their line manager is so important that it for many that relationship can determine the employee's view and attitude toward the company. The following are extracts from the data collected:

> I think the process is which I think is important for this is performance management based on quality of your outputs and not managed by perception or time and input. But I think there's always room for improvement in terms of how managers are unable to do proper output based performance management. I think it's not necessarily easy, it puts more expectation on line management to ensure that you are keeping well in touch

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with what your employees are doing. I think you're to a degree, that's what we have going in our teams as well, where we sort of have regular one-on-one check-ins once a week. Your line manager is always informed of what you're busy with, and give guidance and so forth. So I think that helps to manage that process. **[HR2 para4-5]**

I mean, almost all line managers, it's not their only job is to line manage. So they've got their own jobs, but they are very much dependent on their teams outputs. And so if you actively managing your team and getting the most out of the flexible working arrangement, then you're going to have better outputs from your team which is going to make your work better and easier. **[HR2 para22]**

I think every element comes down to how you manage. So that is a process as well. It's an internal process of how do I manage? I tried touching base with my team constantly- It's exhausting. I personally can't do it. I can't handle when somebody tries to micromanage me, so my management style is I meet you on a Monday and I see you on a Thursday and you need to give me input and feedback as it is. So that's my process. Other people have other processes where they check in every single day at 8:30. I cannot have more on my plate. I don't need more than that.

So that's maybe one of my processes that enables my team. I have that mutual trust and respect for them, so I value their values and if I feel that they are losing them, then I'm able to check-in every now and then. And there I know whether they are available and those sort of things that I am able to say, "OK what can I do to help" or "Do you wanna come in for an extra day?", or that sort of thing. So I think that's the processes. I think it comes down to the managing type, in how you are because there's some managers who probably wouldn't even bother checking in with anybody, which I don't think is right because then why are you a manager**? [MP2 para10-11]**

Who's your line manager? That's it- an employee who cares. It depends on who your line manager is. That's is a simple thing of us. You can have somebody that cares and understands and appreciates and embraces, and you can get that person that is, "Forget it. Not interested".

It comes down to your line manager and also their line manager. So if their line manager is hard on them about being at work from 8:00 to 5:00 then that product projection is going to come on to you. And then how do you respond? That's your thing, you want to deal with it? "I'll be here. There's no problem". But I'm not going to project that onto my team**. [MP2 para37-38]**

4.3.2. People orientated and goal orientated

One of the qualities of a leader that was pronounced in the data was that of being people orientated and goal orientated, it is part of the fundamentals which makes a great leader, it is that perfect balance. This code emerged from participants' descriptions of that very aspect, having people skills but also being driven to achieve tasks, and make a success. When managers are only task orientated, they tend to meet deadlines and be productive – not necessary their team though. These managers also do not have a positive relationship with others, more so their team finds it difficult to work with them, yet alone lean from them, and it makes for an unpleasant working environment in which flourishing is hampered. On the other side of the coin, when managers are only people orientated, they tend to have wonderful relationships with their team and others within the organisation, but their productivity tends to be extremely low, and as a result deadlines and targets are not met. Both people and productivity (work) need to be prioritised. The following are statements from participants that serve as examples and motivation for this particular code:

> Let me give you some practical examples. So we in the office Mondays and Tuesdays and the other three days we work from home. So what I'm trying to do is use my Mondays and Tuesdays to really interact and engage because there is still a need for personal interaction. We can't ever, I think replace it. And what I do with the Mondays and Tuesdays is try and plan my week that those days are more engaging with my staff, my management team and being more interactive with other humans. **[DM para18]**
>
> It's not so much of breaking the routine, but try and like mimic a normal at office routine. For example, sometimes when I'm at the office I would go sit with one of the managers reporting to me and have a casual chat. Now I can't do that when I'm at home, so I'll go make a cup of coffee and just go sit outside in the garden and phone them and have that casual chat for 5 minutes. You know, so you have to be very cognizant of just introducing change in your home environment to give you that same type of flexibility and variation in your day. **[AB para12]**

4.3.3. Appreciation and Recognition

Appreciation entails that feeling of someone being grateful for that which you have done or contributed towards. It is that simple "thank you" that goes a long way. It became quite apparent within the data collection that a simple "thank you" carries a substantial weight and with this, impacts on employee's attitudes and behaviours. Participants also reflected on how acknowledging, publicly or not, that the person did a "good job" and is appreciated made them feel good. This is said to aid employees in terms of motivation, engagement, and commitment, and as a result increase productivity. If they do not receive acknowledgment, and are not aware that they are valued and seek that kind of validation, they are unlikely to develop motivation, engagement, and commitment. On the other hand, for employees to feel appreciated, the leaders / management need to provide that recognition. Possibly recognition is what managers need to do to develop appreciation in employees. This was what contributed to the employee-manager relationship being reciprocal. The sense of feeling appreciated also sets a positive morale within the team and overall company. People like being recognised for good deeds and a job well done, it does not only need to be publicly, but in various gestures – one being granted more flexibility perhaps. Recognition helps to build that relationship of trust and respect. Recognition and appreciation closely relate to one another, given this one could say that the two are synonymous with each other. The following excerpts from the transcripts provide examples of how participants talked about this code:

> But in the same breath, it's because the reason why I do it is because I've got a great manager that trusts me and pushes me and encourages me every day to do my best and always says thank you like yesterday a live example. Yesterday I was very sick. I had to do a consultation with the hospital or an employee at 8:00 o'clock in the morning. OK. So I literally dialled in for that meeting. The meeting was supposed to be half an hour. Ended up being an hour afterwards. I got a message because I was dealing with a high profile case. And then afterwards I got a message from the employee saying "thank

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you so much, you know, your help has been appreciated". I sent it to my boss and my boss responds to me "wow, good work!". **[TK para26]**

I wanted to treat everyone the same as well. But I had to learn the very hard way to manage each person in my team as an individual. And they don't all have the same responsibilities at home. Each one has different home cultures which forced me to really get to know my people and what makes them tick. What makes them feel appreciated. For example, I now know that one of my team members loves public recognition, that's what makes her feel appreciated, whereas the other does not like it at all, she feels appreciated or recognised if I give her an hour off if she needs to see to her kids for instance. Since I learned to trust them to do their work, they are more engaged. Our engagement score on Gallup is very good and the better it gets and the more trust I give them, the harder they work. **[CF para9]**

I think the company believes in the recognition but I think there are people who do and people who don't, unfortunately, so I do think it will enhance and support, but I think if you have a manager who wants to micromanage, then it's going to do the complete opposite and it's actually going to just make you more stressed if there's people that do not support the flexible working. So yes, the company as a whole should look at believing in celebrating, believing in recognising, believing in appreciating and then it would support it, yes. **[IW para42]**

I think this comes down to trust. Trust is a big one. That is more aligned to the Flexible Work Arrangement than the others. You can recognise a person, and the fact that you see their work effort, but if they're not physically in your face, you don't see how much effort they've put in or how much longer they've done. So how much more effort than detail and stuff that they've done with it? I'm huge on saying thank you and recognising my colleagues. **[MP2 para28]**

4.3.4. Supportive Relationships

This code looked at the supportive actions engaged in by managers that are perceived as nurturing, supportive and empowering. It looked at the line manager ensuring that that employees have the proper resources, and if that is out of their control, taking certain steps to ensure that something gets done about it. It also looked at whether or not the line manager stands up for their team when needed, no one wants to be in a position where your manager

will not stand up and represent or defend you, ultimately this boils down to support. It also looked at managers enabling their team, providing support in the form of helping and being willing to help when a subordinate needs assistance or guidance. It includes being engaging with one's employees and valuing bottom-up input. In terms of the personal side of things, supportive relationships considered the manager's willingness to be adaptable and "accommodative" for the employee's sake, for example if your employee has to be in office but their child is sick at home, allowing the employee to work from home that day. Below are excerpts from the transcripts:

> Structural and infrastructural limitations often have people disengaged. In other words, you feel that you are just not either empowered or equipped to do what is expected of you. A non-recognition of effort and or result normally limits engagement levels. Recognition makes all of us feel good and you want to strive for more. The moment that I start feeling stagnant or will get less engaged is when there is a lack of trust. I love speaking to people about discretionary effort and I'll always say we need to enable employees to provide us discretionary effort. Effort is not paid for. Voluntarily offering themselves to walk the extra mile is an indication of engagement, but it also creates engagement and if you can see that kind of behaviour, you know that you have triggered the right points to have them fully engaged. **[JN para18]**

> So I speak to my line manager when I'm in the office further more I don't. I know he's also very busy, like all of the company, but my point is if you're a manager its part of your responsibility is to manage your team. But a lot of people forget that that's the first that's the highest priority is to manage your team. You need to check and know if your team is coping and whether everything is alright. Again, those check-ins or huddles comes in. I think that we live in a culture where we only hear from our manager if something is wrong, and it's unfortunate. **[VC para32]**

> It also depends on the recipients of your opinion though, if they are willing to actually take it on, because what I've also seen in the company, unfortunately, a lot of the processes has been there for quite some time and they're reluctant to change because of this. You know almost that "Why do you want to come upset the apple cart" type of thing. But we try and say that, "We want expertise and you know we've got the expertise", but some don't listen or trust the experts. **[VC para35]**

So I think the first thing is line managers need to enable and upscale and support their teams on how to be effective at home. And also enable a type of culture where huddles, like I said earlier- the work packages at the beginning of the week, so to create an output productive environment. But they should also coach and upscale their employees, because it's not natural for everyone to know how to structure you're your day and prioritize necessarily.

And also, from a well-being perspective, not to say that I'm working from 6 till 6 every night- sometimes I mean it's necessary but it shouldn't become the norm. So yes, that would be my opinion on that.

Interviewer: So you say line managers should definitely support their teams in this, and with it comes great output driven culture. So get the work done but also prioritizing well-being.

Halley Styles: Yes. **[HS2 para27-29]**

4.3.5. Development/ Empowerment Focus

During the interviews it was evident that participants experienced that as a leader, one of the responsibilities that comes with "the job" is developing and empowering your team. This is one of the characteristics that makes a good leader. A leader is only as strong as their team, thus a leader's contribution can be measured by the extent to which they develop their team. This also helps strengthen the relationship between manager and subordinate. Also, when managers empower their subordinates, they are making them stronger in their competencies and thus better achieving their key performance indicators (KPIs). This code also looked at managers making and taking the time to develop their team, sending them for courses as well, or just having a simple chat which serves to help develop their employee/s. At the centre of it, this code looked at the manager's willingness to invest in their team. The following statements serves as examples to support this code:

I think you need to empower employees, whether it's with a short course. But I think the most important stakeholder that you need to upskill are the line managers. They need to be up skilled in managing our hybrid work environment properly. Then performance, well-being, because it all starts with a line manager. And then it should

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filter down to employees. For example, how do you structure your day? How to create an optimal work environment. And do you have great connectivity? It's quiet, you can focus, you have everything you need. So practically as well. I think you need to give line managers and employees practical tools. **[HS1 para42]**

It actually took me a very long time to get to that maturity level in leadership to understand that, "You know what, just make your team as strong as possible, give them all the recognition they need in the world because it's all going to come back to you in the department". You know, so I work very, very, very hard on this now. I have five strong managers, and the thing is that when you develop people, you always run the risk of losing them because they get ready for the next level of promotion, but currently I'm very, very fortunate in terms of the team that support me. It's the support, having competent people in my team who shares the same or similar values as me- this adds to my commitment. **[AB para25]**

I don't think management has really accommodated for that. Actually, I don't think that's been taken at all into account. I would like if they took a more active role. The fact that we don't see each other every day, we need to be in more conversation with each other now than before. **[VC para31]**

Interviewer: What are your thoughts about line managers taking a more active role in enabling teams to be more efficient or effective with flexible working arrangements? With specific reference to dual workplace arrangements.

Henry Redmayne: I'm a line manager myself, so I think it's an integral part of Team Dynamics and managing a team. Line managers play a crucial role in and I think it needs to be recognized by line managers and it needs to be understood and I think they can be equipped and be enabled to also do it better. I think guidelines and principles and enabling them can help. It may not necessarily require a lot of extra effort but it's just making them aware of it and then just assisting them to do that. So I think there's definitely room for improvement. **[HR2 para20-21]**

Where would autonomy fall for you, is it important for you in a working context?

Henry Redmayne: I think it is to a degree. I'm some who likes to be given a degree of guidance and a framework to work in, but then within that space to be able to do what I need to do and have the necessary mandate to do what I think is best or required. For instance, if I'm told to improve the business in a certain area, you give me the job, but I need to be empowered and enabled to do it with the resources (finance). So I like to work within the scope they give me, but its like "Let me do what I need to do- the way

I think it needs to be done". But in saying that I'm also a collaborative person, I like working in a team, I want to involve people, get their insights so we can build something together. **[HR1 para17-18]**

4.3.6. Genuine interest in employees

This code looked at being one who is present and one who wants to connect with others, or at least open to having connections with others. Participants stressed that with any relationship, you need to show interest and with that comes showing that you care. Whether it is about lending an ear – making time for a coffee without talking about work – or just a sincere "Hello, how are you?" This code was about making the effort to show interest in your employee as a person, and not seeing them solely as one's "worker" or a means to get the job done. When engaging with staff it should not only be regarding work, it was evident from the participants descriptions that they experienced it as important to take the time every now and then and connect on a personal level, whether it is finding out that the person is interested in sports or to find out they have two kids. These conversations convey authentic interest and care, which creates a strong relationship between employee and manager, and with this a better level of understanding is also formed. The following are extracts from the data collected that demonstrate the groundedness of the code:

> And I realised for my role, I need to know my client, maintaining engagement with line managers enables me to flourish. Having to be in their face, you need to be visible A couple of years ago part of the HR strategy was also visibility, because employees didn't see their managers- they just in their offices and the employees are on the ground. I try to make my rounds. I go say hello, how are you doing and how are you? So that's and that's when I flourish. And I am also selfish with my time, but I also feel it's important to engage with others because I need to check in with him. Are they OK? **[CR1 para4]**

> I must remind myself to focus on the individuals and ask them, really, how are you? Not only asking "How are you?" in the morning,? And "very well", thank you. But really be interested in the person's wellbeing. Mm. Because you mustn't be only be goal driven, and I am goal driven, and my boss never ask me how I am, but it, it doesn't have

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an impact on me. So I must remind myself sometimes to really be interested in the people's lives without being too personal. Except if they want to be. But I think they must still be a line. You must support your staff. **[JA para35]**

I don't think I need to. I just make sure that their work environment at home is comfortable. I make sure that you know that the load shedding doesn't affect them for too long. I mean, I don't mind if it's half an hour or something like that. It's fine. But they usually let me know. And they know that they can go to any hospital and plug in if it's an issue. Communication and just being understanding is what it comes down to. I check in and make sure that everything is working, that all are OK or if we need to sort something else out. So I think I don't need to do much more, but for those who doesn't do, or didn't do these things, I think they definitely should be more active in this regard. It's about being personal but not being totally personal, we need to keep that level of professionalism. But its so important to care, and show your team you care. **[MP2 para33]**

4.3.7. Openness

Another important code that emerged from the interviews was the need to be open and willing to hear and understand where the next person is coming from. It could be said that this responsibility would fall more so on the manager's shoulder. Openness looks at actually listening to what someone (one's subordinate) is saying and not just hearing them, and with this comes the willingness to see and understand their point or perspective. One should not have preconceived notions of the person or what they are going to say, and this is being open. This code also relates to the manager being willing and open to the input of employees. The following are excerpts from the data collected:

You can have the structure and that stuff in place, but then there's obviously some people in the upper world who don't quite see it and they don't quite understand actually what an impact it is.

If I look at my team, It has been a huge benefit to my team, I have one person who's mental state has improved 100%. The fact that he does not need to sit in his car for three to four hours a day. The fact that he doesn't need to spend money on petrol. He's actually cleared his debt completely. And some of my team does work flexi-time, the fact that

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he can actually work in his own hours helps him tremendously. But he knows he's on call for me from 8 till 5. But if he starts working at 10, I know that he gets the work finished and his work quality is of a high standard. I can't complain. It's fantastic. **[MP1 para12-13]**

Also you must be fair towards people. For instance, its very important to me that you don't come with preconceived notions on situations as well as on people. Especially with, you know, what we are working now in different, um, cultural groups, different languages, different circumstances at home, it all makes individual who he or she's. And as a manager, you must keep that into consideration. You wouldn't say this person is not friendly. Oh, this person might be, look where the person is coming from. Rather managers need to help them to develop.

So if that openness isn't there I think it would hinder my flourishing, and also if that willingness to see and understand where the next person is coming from is important. So we need to be open and respect one another. **[JA para26-27]**

Indeed, indeed it means you've got to trust. Even pre COVID, I've always believed in not micromanaging. I don't believe in micromanaging stuff. And I believe that staff who are micromanaged don't flourish. You have to give people freedom. You must give them the ability to be creative, come up with ideas. And when you get that trust going, then you find that people will put in the extra. You don't need to ask them. They will go the extra mile, but its also important to be understanding. So I've got the greatest of empathy, for example, for mothers and fathers that have got children, they've got family responsibility and this type of environment gives them that flexibility. **[DM para28]**

You also don't trust the things is going to change to a certain point because it's like everybody saying yes you're right and that. But tomorrow's just the same circus. **[DN para28]**

And it and it raises the question for me like, I know the company is all about- or claims all about 'your voice' and 'you matter'. But at the end of the day, why is our managers lacking in empathy sometimes. I took it upon myself to create that resurrection of trust between me and my colleagues to say 'I don't need to know what's going on. I just want you to know that I need more communication from you in order to help you'. Don't just disappear, you know, because even when I address the concern with my manager, it was just brushed off. I didn't want it in the sense of 'I want to know what this person is going through so that I can just know' I'm here so we can problem solve. I've got a solution. But again, it wasn't heard. **[DN para66]**

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4.3.8. Managing Accountability

This code looked at managers having certain things in place in order to manage/ ensure that there is accountability. To ensure that employees do that which they need to do, and that no one is taking advantage of the system or any person for that matter. This code also looked at ensuring that there are safeguards/ systems and procedures in place to ensure that productivity is taking place and there is no "foul play". This code also consisted of management taking action when and if things are not running as they should (employee not performing; taking advantage of the system/ company kindness). There need to be consequences for negative actions, but in saying this, the proper structures and procedures has to be in place. Below are some quotations which serve as examples and motivation for this particular code:

And also we've got processes behind it so that I can go and check, like on Fridays. They've gotta go onto our online system and they update all of their actions for the week. Have they completed it, where they are in percentage wise, and if they moved the date and that sort of stuff. So I give them the tools to actually inform me, but I'm not asking them all the time. So I've got that and I've got Teams so that we can check-in whenever we need to with each of our projects, but I'm not hogging up an hour of their time every single day demanding information from them. So yeah, its things like that. **[MP2 para13]**

I'm going to bring in fact that they are scared of the line manager because some of them, they will produce. They will produce because of the fear. Because of the fear of the consequences of not performing. And if they are on dual workplace arrangement, on those days they are being checked up on. And certain KPI's are implemented to ensure that if they don't have the capacity, that they can check on those metrics, what was done. I've got a department like it, yeah. I've got specific line managers who are like that. And then I had a discussion to say yes, I understand the consequences of not performing, but still you need to respect people. You need to trust people. But I think that's the fault is with that specific individual. **[CR2 para677]**

Interviewer: You mentioned it again, it comes back to that trust, but also keeping and earning that trust by being available. That's just what I need to do. So despite the fact

that I can work from home, that work needs to be done. Or despite that I can go fetch my kids at school. I need to be available and make it work.

Halley Styles: Exactly. And I mean if I'm busy having lunch and someone phones me, there's a crisis, I'll be on my laptop 1-2 minutes and I'll do something. You know what I'm saying? You have to really find that balance. You can still have your flexibility, but when there's a crisis, I mean, people need you need to be available. Because I mean, there's been incidents, only a couple, but for example, from hospitals, "Oh corporate office people don't accept meetings after 2:00 o'clock on a Friday.". It's a work day! People book out the calendars for gym from 10 to 12. And I'm not trying to be old school. But it's still a work day. You can flex and do your stuff, but you need to be productive and structured and available.

Interviewer: "With great power comes great responsibility."

Halley Styles: Exactly. So that's just my thoughts around how I've tried to manage it. **[HS1 para37-40]**

4.4. Employee Qualities

This category looked at attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics of the employee that were identified as contributing to feelings of engagement, commitment and flourishing. This component also looked at that which an employee needs to do. It cannot solely come from the company; employees need to bring their part as well. This factor was central to this category. These attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics were reported as making participants feel that they are valued by their manager, team and organisation. It has also been reported that these elements contributed to employees feeling that they are adding value, fulfilling a purpose, and being part of something greater than themselves. A major point of this aspect comes from knowing who you are, driving oneself to perform/ deliver, and ultimately having that ability and discipline to manage oneself. The codes that made up this category included *self-motivation/ self-management*, *maturity/ personal insight*, *authenticity/ ability to be yourself*, *personal values*, *passion and interest*, *ownership/ responsibility*, *work ethic*, and *environmental mastery*. These are key attributes and features which needs to be present in order to ensure a successful FWA. These are all described in turn below and selected quotations are provided

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from the interviews which serves as examples to demonstrate the groundedness of the theory in the data.

4.4.1. Self-motivation & Self-management

This code looked at the employee's ability to manage themselves. There are two aspects to this, the physical work aspect, and the emotional one, but both stem from the employee needing to have the ability to manage their thoughts and behaviours. It looked at whether or not the employee portrays the ability to regulate these thoughts, behaviours and emotions in a productive way. The purpose of this is to ensure that employees fulfil their tasks- proving that they do not need to be micromanaged to ensure that things are done. Being able to manage DWA/ FWA takes ownership/ responsibility from the employee in order to ensure that they are effective and efficient and ultimately that the arrangement is beneficial for both company and employee. It also includes planning, planning your day, your schedule, your week. You taking control and doing what you must do in order to work effectively and efficiently. Having intrinsic motivation comes into play here, it is that ability to drive oneself. Also, each person should manage their own wellness, it is the manager and organisation's responsibility to support employee wellness. In a nutshell, this category comes down to managing oneself. It comes down to being disciplined. The following are some extracts which supports this notion of personal values:

> People must just leave me alone. I'm actually working personally. Nobody needs to check on me. For example, I don't even have man monthly meetings with my manager. As soon as I got a question, I arrange for a meeting and I ask for a short discussion or something, or a phone call or whatever. But nobody checks on me so I can work totally independently. And I like it like that. I'm not somebody who needs external motivation, wanting to reach my goals is enough for me. I don't need to be micromanaged. **[JA para19]**

> I think having a flexible working arrangement and a hybrid working arrangement, it's really a privilege. It's not something that companies have to do. So for me, how I see it,

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my role is to keep that trust, deliver on what I need to deliver, deliver even more. And there's a lot of line managers that says they want people back at the office because they don't know what they're doing at home. If you don't wanna work, you're gonna sit in the office and not work- go and NEWS24, plan your next holiday, or shop online. If you don't wanna work, you're not gonna work at the office or at home. Or do your best. **[HS1 para21]**

Before working here, I started as an outside contractor for the company, and I told my now boss that I will someday work for this company. That was about 2009. I pulled all my experiences, as much as possible, from the contractors, from the suppliers, from everybody that actually made me want to be where I am now. and took that experience and build it to where I am now. I endured the bad because I knew what I wanted. So all of this builds into my commitment and that dedication to a company like this. Like it's just where I want to work. I had I had a goal. **[MP1 para31]**

I think what helps we get into flow is my intrinsic motivation of wanting to achieve. I drive results... I think it comes back to motivation, my own personal drive to want to achieve, for myself and no one else. I think as you get older you start realising that there's no need to compare yourself to others, but rather just yourself. I started to evaluating myself, looking at the factors that contributed to me doing better, and when I don't do that great I look at what I need to change- what I need to develop in my work life and personal life. **[CR1 para3]**

So I think flourishing in a hybrid work environment, it needs a particular skill. And not everyone has that skill. If I had to put a label on that skill I would say it's managing hybrid working. And being productive. Managing your own wellness. And it a very fine balance, because for example, lets say I go fetch my daughter at school, whenever I leave my laptop, I always have my phone on me and I will always answer my phone. I mean you have to be so careful in terms of the underside perceptions, but I mean there are people who book out their calendars for two hours in the afternoon to fetch their kids. I mean, it's work. But you have to be so careful in terms of how you manage your time and perceptions and your availability. I mean, that's something for me, that's a value, people need to always be able to find me, even if I'm at the school gate or at the swimming at 4:00. O'clock. Whatever. They need to be able to find me if there's a crisis because that's how you keep trust. It's important for the business. **[HS1 para36]**

4.4.2. Maturity/ Personal insight

This looks at knowing who you are and also knowing what you have to do, and then doing it. It Looks at being responsible, knowing what's expected of you and performing. It also looks at being mature enough to "put in the time" when you need to, even though it may be outside one's traditional working hours. For example, because of circumstances- the employee fetched their children from school and had to go to the doctor (during working hours), with maturity the employee will do their work outside of their normal hours- make that "sacrifice" so to speak, without being told to or ask to do so in order to "catch-up". It also relates to knowing one's limitations and strengths, and being able to establish boundaries and structure one's day aligned to those individual characteristics. This includes an insight into one affective states and establishing emotional boundaries as well. So it came down to knowing what you suppose to do and just doing it. It also related to having the emotional maturity necessary to implement this. For example, one cannot be a "doomsdayer", if the employee is negative he/ she cannot expect the organisation to make things positive for them, it is on the employee to make the change, the organisation could support them in this. Each individual is primarily responsible for their own happiness and wellbeing, and in saying that the reality is that the onus falls on the individual to not let other's "moods" affect them. Below are extracts from some of the participants' interviews from which this code was developed:

> I think for me the flexible workplace arrangements has definitely been positive. I think we know it's certainly been a positive change. It allowed me more flexibility in my personal and work life.
>
> There's sometimes still challenges because of the time of work I do, so its sometimes a challenge to keep the motivation- but this is whether I'm at home or at the office, its irrelevant. I could be sitting at the office and still not get much done, and of course when you at home there are other distractions- such as kids. However, its mostly managed. So if I feel I need to catch up on things then I'll work into the evening, I at least have the flexibility to do that. And the flexibility to do other things, like pick the

kids up from school. I think for my well-being and state of mind and family, work life balance. I think it's been good in that sense. **[HR1 para23-24]**

But I do think what is important here is, if you want to make it work you need very clear boundaries and structure for yourself. Otherwise, you can get into bad habits. I mean, that's why my kids know they don't come in here if there's not a crisis. I start working at the same time every day. I take my lunch the same time. I try to not eat at my laptop. I try and have lunch at the dining table, so I try not to work till 6:00 every night just because I'm at home. So you need to structure it very carefully for yourself and find what works for you. So it's up to you to put those boundaries in place. Those structures in place in order for it to work. And for it to be a healthy and conducive space. **[HS1 para35]**

My new manager, yeah. I don't think he realises the concept of working from home, and I don't blame him. You know why, because he comes from hospital. So that's a complete different culture in terms of 'if you're not at the office, you aren't working', whereby my previous manager knew what was going on. But it was never this judgment or unbiased comments that were made. And we have huddles every Monday, so he knows what I'm doing. I think maybe because I'm so old I actually don't care because I myself know I know what I'm doing and the output that I am leaving at the end of every day. So I know that there are people who fear this, but I think I'm over the fear. **[CR1 para53]**

4.4.3. *Authenticity/ Ability to be yourself*

As the name of the code suggests, authenticity looked at one's ability to be themselves. It is about feeling comfortable to be your true self. It also looked at knowing who you are. In order to be one's best self, it requires a person to be comfortable in their environment to be almost vulnerable enough to be authentically him or herself. Authenticity allows for others (manager and colleagues) to get to know one another better, and through this strengthen relationships amongst each other. The following excerpts are examples of this code:

Yes, so having those huddles and those conversations that's being had, you discover how the next person thinks basically, you and getting to know that person, and you build respect in those conversations. And understanding is built in too. When you having those constant conversations and in understanding one another, I would think

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you trust one another because you should be able to share honestly, with each other in order to build something or grow as a team. You become comfortable with one another in order to share honestly. **[DN para12]**

I feel that by providing an effective and consistent communication channel, automatically that will help build a culture of trust and mutual respect. It's from our own experience, we have two weekly meetings, the one is a more formal one on Tuesdays and then on Fridays we have a more informal one. But because we are now so used to having these regular sessions, it does evoke that feeling of trust and respect. We know each other so well and even better than before so it's just very important. It allows you to feel comfortable in the environment and setup. **[MN para4]**

4.4.4. Personal Values

This code focused on what are your values as an individual, what does the individual stand for, their morals. It included empathy, loyalty, consideration, respect, teamwork, work ethic, and dedication. It also entails those things which are valued, but not necessarily moralistic. For example, some people value growth and improvement, others love the challenge, whereas for some it might be innovation, work ethic and ethics as a whole for that matter. These factors are what makes each employee, manger, person uniquely themselves. The following are some extracts which supports this notion of personal values:

Micromanagement. I think you must trust somebody, but if you're a micromanaged, you don't necessarily trust somebody. So there's a lot of things that could go indirectly with that. So I think it's the best to function in a situation of trust, loyalty, professionalism, you don't need to be checked. And also if there is no trust, you can't work without trust. **[JA para25]**

I actually went to my boss, and I said to him, "I got a lot of work. I can't get through my day, but I'm now at a place where I actually don't know how I can better the system, is there something else I can do?". And then, he gave support services to me. So from then on they report to me. So I am committed to my work. I think that is also because I actually want to take on more things if I can. I didn't ask for increase in salary, I just thought maybe he can give me something else to do as well. **[JA para56]**

A big factor for me is work ethics you know, really loving that value of work ethics. That's one of the things that frustrates me the most if is people undermine work ethics.

Jobs are so scarce in this country and then you get people that got a job, they've got a good income and then they don't look after it. It just boggles the mind. Ethics is extremely important for me. **[AB para25]**

4.4.5. Passion and Interest

When one is interested in something they tend to pay more attention to it, they invest more in it, and this a contributes to engagement as well as commitment. This passion and interest also serves as a driving factor. This code relates to work ethic, when an employee is interested in what they are doing and has a passion for their career, they tend to have a stronger work ethic as opposed to an individual who does not care for what they are doing (there is no passion or interest). Though passion and interest relate with work ethic, the two are different in that passion and interest is not the only factor which makes an employee engaged within their work, it contributes to it. Also, what emerged in the data is the importance of roles and responsibilities given by management needing to align with an employee's passion. Below are a few quotes which serves as motivation for this quote:

I'm always absorbed. Every single day. I just don't have, have too much work. I'm in the zone at the office and when I'm working from home. I think my volumes, to get through things. That drive to get through it, and also to do it the best you can and to do it in the quick time that you can.

I'm one who doesn't struggle to focus, and I can also work in compartments. I think it's because my mind is a bit scattered, so I can do a lot of things spontaneously. I don't need to finish one thing to go to the next. It's the same at home, so I never. In a sense of, I will, It will not get me watch TV without my reading a book as well. But it's just because I get bored. But if something interests you, like a challenge, it's obviously more, it's easier to be engaged, it's nicer to work with it with a challenge. **[JA para29-30]**

Flourishing is when you're Excelling and doing well. It's a place where you feel fulfilled and engaged. Fulfilling your purpose and passions, and you're doing well at it. **[HR1 para2]**

In my opinion, externally bestowed limitations often take people's enjoyment out of the equation and that will impact on their flourishing. If you were a doctor and they have suddenly changed your scope of work and they say, well now you can only do this

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and I'm expecting you to increase your admin component by 30% then the reality is for a period you might struggle to flourish because you feel impeded upon. So therefore, often there are external elements which are bestowed on you, which you cannot necessarily control, that take away some of that ability to flourish. Personally, if something is asked of me from a superior and they give me instructions without explaining to me why that is the requirement or without engagement, I will struggle with following through with the instruction. We must operate within a very structured, holistic environment but to enable me to flourish, I need to understand why expectations are made and then I can contribute within those limitations. **[JN para14]**

I will be engaged if you give me something in which there's a sense of purpose, intellectual stimulation, a challenge, and an understanding of the purpose of the result. If I am provided something within my ambit of interest or ambit of responsibility it will also increase engagement. **[JN para16]**

4.4.6. Ownership/ Responsibility

This code entailed the employee not expecting the company to make everything great for them – expecting handouts. But the employee also doing their part – adding to a positive working environment, doing what they are supposed to in order to fulfil one's responsibilities which is to reach KPIs. Employees were described as needing to be upfront and address concerns or ask their manager questions if they are not clear or unhappy about something. The employee takes ownership/ responsibility and ensures they do their tasks – proving that they do not need to be micromanaged to ensure that things are done. Being able to manage DWA/ FWA takes ownership/ responsibility from the employee in order to ensure that they are effective and efficient and ultimately that the arrangement is beneficial for both company and employee, this is how participants described it. It is also the employee's responsibility to place themselves into a position where they are likely to flourish. It is also the employee's responsibility to ensure that they know what is expected of them and that they are able (have the necessary skills and competencies) to fulfil their job requirements. The employee should also take ownership of their own learning and development, the manager and organisation

should offer and support the employee in this venture, but the onus falls on the employee. Below are extracts from the participants' interviews providing examples of how this code emerged from the data:

> I think having a flexible working arrangement and a hybrid working arrangement, it's really a privilege. It's not something that companies have to do. So for me, how I see it, my role is to keep that trust, deliver on what I need to deliver, deliver even more. And there's a lot of line managers that says they want people back at the office because they don't know what they're doing at home. If you don't wanna work, you're gonna sit in the office and not work- go and NEWS24, plan your next holiday, or shop online. If you don't wanna work, you're not gonna work at the office or at home. Or do your best. **[HS1 para21]**

> If flourishment means that you can do the best that you can do and that you are happy about your contribution, then I would say the first thing is you need to make sure that you are positioned in an environment where you believe you can do those two things. So personally, there's a responsibility to position yourself in an environment where you can flourish. in many cases you might enter an environment where that is not the case and then the responsibility will be on you to enable yourself to flourish again. So, in some cases, you are under stress, and you might not feel you are flourishing initially, but with adequate application and a learning aptitude, you often can convert that into a flourishing environment again. To flourish it is important also to understand expectations, because when you are in an environment of severe uncertainty, it is very difficult for people to flourish. You can focus on your own development. You can focus on putting yourself in the right position or environment that you prefer and then you can make sure that you've got a clear understanding of expectations, because those boundaries normally give you the ability to flourish. **[JN para12]**

> Yes, because I think your wellness and your productivity is dependent on you and if your job is that important to you, you will flourish within the arrangement, you will make sure that you reach all your outcomes, no matter where you working from. So yeah, I think it does have a positive effect on your on your Wellness. For example, it's nice to work from home because it's quiet here. It's sometimes difficult to be 100% productive when you are in the office environment, especially in an open space environment like we are. Sometimes it's difficult to get everything done in one day whereas when you are at home and you have no distractions. So you just need to make

sure that you use your time effectively and that you manage yourself properly in order to meet your outcomes when you are working from home. **[AK para16]**

And it raises the question for me like, I know the company is all about- or claims all about 'your voice' and 'you matter'. But at the end of the day, why is our managers lacking in empathy sometimes. I took it upon myself to create that resurrection of trust between me and my colleagues to say 'I don't need to know what's going on. I just want you to know that I need more communication from you in order to help you'. Don't just disappear, you know, because even when I address the concern with my manager, it was just brushed off. I didn't want it in the sense of 'I want to know what this person is going through so that I can just know' I'm here so we can problem solve. I've got a solution. But again, it wasn't heard. **[DN para66]**

4.4.8 Work Ethic

This spoke to when the participants put in a high work ethic and valued performance. It looks at the employee doing that which is required of them – to perform. It looks at the individual knowing that he/ she needs to work, and they do it. This code also considers the opposite, where one shows no work ethic – not doing what they need to do. Thisthis breaks down other important aspects that were raised, such as trust and ultimately autonomy. It also aligns to the company's core value of being performance driven. Being able to focus and perform. As an employee one's "job" is to perform. Below are extracts from the participants' interviews that spoke to this theme:

> Yes, it might, but also just to a point, I think it depends on your work ethic.
> If you're somebody that has a dedicated work ethic, you'll work hard anyways, but I think you might not always walk that extra mile for your line manager because you don't respect them. But if you are not someone with a good work ethic, I think too much trust and respect might make you take it for granted. It doesn't matter how much trust and respect you get, you should still be held accountable for your responsibilities. I think a lot of the time line managers give free reign to people but if something doesn't get done, they don't always keep the person responsible**. [CF para19-20]**
> A big factor for me is work ethics you know, really loving that value of work ethics. That's one of the things that frustrates me the most if is people undermine work ethics.

Jobs are so scarce in this country and then you get people that got a job, they've got a good income and then they don't look after it. It just boggles the mind. Ethics is extremely important for me. **[AB para25]**

I'm just one of those people, and I mean the people who have worked with me before, my managers, that's what they like about me, its that I do my thing- they don't have to micromanage me. If I say I'm going to do something, I will do it. I believe I can trust me. And I want to be able to approach things the way I think it's best, obviously with other people's input. I want to feel empowered. **[HS1 para19]**

4.4.9 Environmental Mastery

This code looked at one's ability to choose and change one's environmental context through the means of physical or mental actions. It also entails being able to control the events within our lives, but in this specific case, participants focused on their working lives. It looks at being capable and empowered to make the needed changes/ actions for oneself. But with this, it is important to note that with this ability, quality output should always be there. The following excerpts are examples of this code:

how do you experience flourishing through flexible arrangements? You said yes, it has helped you to flourish, especially because of that flexibility, but because also, you know, what are your responsibilities and changing environment of the different place and having that of being able to be creative in your own space, not having the disturbances. **[JA para37]**

I think for me the flexible workplace arrangements has definitely been positive. I think we know it's certainly been a positive change. It allowed me more flexibility in my personal and work life.

There's sometimes still challenges because of the time of work I do, so its sometimes a challenge to keep the motivation- but this is whether I'm at home or at the office, its irrelevant. I could be sitting at the office and still not get much done, and of course when you at home there are other distractions- such as kids. However, its mostly managed. So if I feel I need to catch up on things then I'll work into the evening, I at least have the flexibility to do that. And the flexibility to do other things, like pick the kids up from school. I think for my well-being and state of mind and family, work life balance. I think it's been good in that sense. **[HR1 para23-24]**

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So I think the essence is yes to flexible working arrangements. You can have the structure and that stuff in place, but then there's obviously some people in the upper world who don't quite see it and they don't quite understand actually what an impact it is.

If I look at my team, It has been a huge benefit to my team, I have one person who's mental state has improved 100%. The fact that he does not need to sit in his car for three to four hours a day. The fact that he doesn't need to spend money on petrol. He's actually cleared his debt completely. And some of my team does work flexi-time, the fact that he can actually work in his own hours helps him tremendously. But he knows he's on call for me from 8 till 5. But if he starts working at 10. I know that he gets the work finished and his work quality is of a high standard. I can't complain. It's fantastic. I find the flexibility very good and I actually have realized I like the routine of coming into the office. But I can still have the flexibility to have a work from home day if I want. **[MP1 para12-13]**

I think it would, in my personal opinion. I think it will contribute to flourishment if you are more free in a sense that you don't find that stress of the green icon. It's available all the time. If one can let go of that sort of sense of need to be online, then it could offer a lot on your well-being, but then also on what you want to put into your work because you would feel that sense of trust. You would feel that scenes of calmness. You can sort of do your work when you need to do it or when you want to do it but at the same time you would feel that your employer is caring for your wellbeing offering that type of work life balance. **[IW para36]**

On the topic of flexibility, what would you deem as the fundamentals to make that process happen?

Henry Redmayne: Trust between employee and employer and manager and subordinate- the organisation and employee. It links to, the aspect of performance management that are managed by outputs and performance, and not by perception time and ticking the boxes. We know you've clocked in your 8 hours type of thing, but that's challenging in some environments, more than others because many roles aren't that well defined, "ABC- you need to do this", in that its not easy to measure their output, or the job entails you being there physically for all your hours- i.e. nurses, doctors. But also who you are as a person. The output should always be there, and the quality should be high. I think proper structures need to be in place in order to ensure that the output

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and quality are there. So I'm all for the flexibility, but the proper structures need to be in place. So its challenging, but possible. **[HR1 para7-8]**

4.5. Physical Environment and Affordances

This category concentrated in on the elements which are important to consider in terms of an employee's physical environment. The physical environment which employees found themselves in had a huge impact on the way they perceived their work, organisation, and overall work environment. The psychical environment should be of such a nature that it enables staff in that which they do, anything less than this would not acceptable. This is where affordances come into play. The mere definition of affordances speaks to the way in which the environment is perceived to afford an individual to meet their need/s. In its simplest form, one can think of affordances in terms of enabling people to meet their needs, in this case to fulfil their role within the company. This category entailed the aspect of *comfort*, *connectedness (broader connection potential)*, *technology*, and *home/ family dynamics*. These are all described in turn below and selected quotations are provided from the interviews which serves to provide examples to demonstrate the groundedness of the theory in the data.

4.5.1. Comfort

This code looked at being in an environment which was comfortable for the participant, more specifically in a physical sense of environment. It was expressed by participants that when one is physically comfortable in an environment, they tended to stand a better chance of being more relaxed (mentally comfortable), and as a result it increased the chances of one being productive. Below are extracts from the participants' interviews providing examples of how this code was described:

> So the change of scenery helps you in that aspect and therefore working from home is something positive for you and it has helped to increase your sense of flourishing. And I because you like working independently, it gives you the autonomy to do so.

Julie Andrews: Yes, for example, I once visited one of our hospitals out of the city, and we got holiday home there. So then I actually said I'm going to work the week from there. And I worked there for a week independently. It was very nice to work from there, and then I'm really working, from seven o'clock I was behind my laptop, then I would maybe stop a bit earlier, but it won't be before five o'clock. But then it feels to me that I'm working half day. **[JA para44-45]**

I think the nature of well-being is that your environment needs to be in a comfortable place, to be happy in a place. So you've got to be happy in a place because then you're comfortable. In the right environment to be your best person. I think that's the simplicity of it.

Interviewer: So being in the right environment for you to be the best to you.

Miranda Priestly: Correct yes, for me to flourish. **[MP1 para6-8]**

If I look at the productivity, if they need to at 10:00 o'clock quickly zip out to the bank or do this or the other, it's fine because they they're not on the clock, they are purely measured on outcomes and then you'll find them working till six 7:00 o'clock tonight. Working on weekends because they're happy to do it, and again I think that comes back to being an environment that you in control of and an environment where you feel comfortable and that is what I've seen in my own department and in my own experience that my team and I have flourished and that we've become more productive. They've definitely way more productive and more responsive than previously. **[DM para29]**

4.5.2. Connectedness (Broader connection potential)

This looked at breaking down geographical boundaries. Being able to work no matter where participants were located. This included being able to employ people from outside the city (locally or internationally), and this brought a means for talent attraction and talent retention. Another factor was being able to work when one is away/ out of town – maybe taking care of a family member for instance. It also allows for less traveling, and thus saves on time for both the employee and business. Below are example extracts from the participants' interviews supporting this theme:

I used to travel extensively pre COVID. I've not travelled since January 2020. And that, to me, was a stressful thing, I don't like traveling. I don't like living out of a suitcase. I don't like being at the airports. I don't enjoy traveling, and COVID taught us we don't

have to travel all over the country. We've got technology we can use and that to me has also been a fantastic thing because that was a stressful thing, a lot of wasted time and a lot of pressure and stress, traveling and living out of our suitcases in our hotel, I don't enjoy it. So that has been fantastic for me as well, flourishing because of not travelling. **[DM para24]**

I had a great support system away to continue my work when my dad passed. I don't think I would have been able to continue with any of my meetings and responsibilities if we didn't have a flexible arrangement. **[CS para17]**

I'm at our hospital in Upington. I'm sitting in every meeting (online) with a bunch of tissues. Perhaps this is how the team rallied around me like never before that it was that feeling of this team in solidarity for me. **[CS para7]**

4.5.3. Technology

Information Technology, or IT infrastructure is there to enable and support productivity. This code looked at how technology was there to enable employees and aid in productivity. The sad reality is, it is almost inevitable that systems crash/ have problems or that technology fails us to a certain extent, this code looked at those failures too. The following excerpts are examples of this code:

It also can ensure that we have the proper resources that when you're working from home, that we are all 100% productive. For example, my SAP application has not been working for the past two weeks. And I.T can't help. They can't help sort it out so it's a major problem which has been escalated now to the network itself. This is an issue now for me because I can't be productive in certain areas of my work while I'm working from home. So just in terms of that I would say, maybe just improve on our on our resources in terms of working from home. **[AK para4]**

And also we've got processes behind it so that I can go and check, like on Fridays. They've gotta go onto our online system and they update all of their actions for the week. Have they completed it, where they are in percentage wise, and if they moved the date and that sort of stuff. So I give them the tools to actually inform me, but I'm not asking them all the time. So I've got that and I've got teams so that we can check-in whenever we need to with each of our projects, but I'm not hogging up an hour of their time every single day demanding information from them. **[MP2 para13]**

and there's something else, with the onset of stuff like Teams and Zoom, but teams in particular you've now got instant messaging. You've now got the tools. So the tools that evolved, now people are quick and responsive because they're online all the time, it does bring in obviously other problems in that there's an expectation that you must be available all the time. However, I find the responsiveness is way better than working in the office because people are generally attentive on their devices, they're not walking around in the canteen having chats. **[DM para24]**

4.5.4. Home / Family Dynamics

Many participants spoke of having their work and home/ family life, and many a time these two dimensions overlapped, and some described struggling to reduce conflict between their work and family roles. Both are demanding, and the busier life gets the more difficult it is to manage one's work life and personal life, yet alone finding that balance becomes ever more challenging. This code looked at how flexibility, or more specifically flexible work arrangements, aided participants in their quest to not only manage their dual life, but how to find some balance in it that allowed them to be the best versions of themselves at home and at the office. Whether it's a matter of parents being able to fetch their children from school, being able to run quickly to the doctor without having to take time off or alleviate certain pressures of life and as a result decrease stress level. Each individual and situation is unique, but the common thread is that flexibility enabled people to better manage their lives. Below are some excerpts which demonstrate some of the participant's descriptions that helped generate this theme:

> I was/ am flourishing with it. I'm the happiest person ever about it. I mean, I was on my way to resign before COVID. That was January/ February 2020. And my husband said to me, "Just wait until June, so you can get your bonus at least." And then COVID came and we were all working from home in any case. So for me, it's been a deal maker. I mean, I can work at other companies, a retailer phoned me a few weeks ago, they offered me much more money. And I asked them, "Do you have a hybrid option?", and they said "No". So I said, "For me, it's not about the money, it's about the flexibility.". I know everyone's personal financial circumstance are different, but for me, my

husband I've had discussions, one of us needs to be flexible. so I just said, "I'd rather earn less money and be more flexible". **[HS1 para33]**

currently with dual-workplace I'm able to manage and balance my home life, and I can actually focus on my work. I mean I'm not sitting at the office and checking my phone to see if the kids are OK, I can hear the kids are OK. It doesn't actually bother me. I know they're fine, so I don't have to worry and I can focus on what I need to do. So it keeps me actually mentally healthy. I remember before the dual workplace, as my daughter was small, I was like a stress-ball by the time I got home. If the nanny didn't answer I would be stressed-out, meanwhile they were just playing outside. And it actually had such a bad impact on my mental health to certain extent. So to give an example. **[HS1 para17]**

if I hadn't had the flexibility- not that flexible work environment was a thing then but the mind frame was there- and because of my dedication to the company, I would not have been able to take care of ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇. Because I was able to work from every hospital, whenever he was in for treatment or whatever, I could just work wherever and I just carried on. **[MP1 para33]**

Flexibility also helps, I feel, especially with regards to your personal requirements. For example, maybe I need to go and see the doctor tomorrow, I'm only coming in at 10:00 o'clock. I don't want to put in leave for the whole day because it's unnecessary. So you want that flexibility that also suits your personal needs. **[PL1 para14]**

My dad also passed away last year but because of flexible work arrangement, I took some family responsibility leave and then I just I worked from my mom's place in the Northern Cape for a month and then loadshedding happened and [locality] gave me their office space to use. I then met all our colleagues at [locality]. I could still dial in and continue with my work and at the same time I could support my mum and support my family from [region]. **[CS para6]**

4.6. Work Environment Conducive of Flourishing

This category concentrated on the characteristics of a work environment considered conducive for flourishing. These characteristics had been expressed and explained as factors which advanced the participants' sense of flourishing. This aspect of work environment is an abstract and perceptual reality, it was regarded as the ultimate category linked to flourishing, one could consider this category as the utopia – it was described as where participants desired

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to be. In terms of GT, this is the study's grand theme. In order for a psychological work environment conducive for flourishing to be possible, it is believed by the researcher that the above four components (Organisational Qualities; Managerial Qualities; Employee Qualities; and Physical Environment and Affordances) are required to work in synergy. It is considered a prerequisite for these components to have a harmonious relationship for there to be flourishing within the working context. The codes which constituted this category were themes and results which contributed to a conducive work environment. The codes that formed this category included *mutual trust and respect/ reciprocity*, *values congruence/ person-organisational fit*, *inclusivity/ belonging*, *employee needs/ individualism*, *clear structure*, *autonomy/ independence*, *work-life balance*, *goal attainment*, *positive cycle*, *discretionary effort*, and *team synergy*. These are key attributes and features which were described by participants as elements of flourishing. These are all described in turn below and selected quotations are provided from the interviews which serves as examples to demonstrate the groundedness of the theory in the data.

4.6.1 Mutual Trust and Respect

Mutual trust and respect was described as a core value within the organisation, it is something that all employees are required to uphold – from the most junior employee, all the way to the most senior (CEO). This aspect is not only a value within the organisation, but it is expected to be lived out by every employee and human being ultimately. No matter if the person is a member of this particular organisation or not, everyone wants and needs to be treated with respect and with that comes trust in a reciprocal relationship. This code looked at the importance of trust and respect, and how it should be reciprocated by all (employee, manager and organisation). "Mutual" is a key word in this context, as trust and respect are earned and perceived. For example, if the employee does not do their job, the manager will likely not trust them, and the reason the employee does not do all that they are supposed to is

perhaps due to feeling that the manager does not respect them, or trust them as they are constantly being micro-managed. There are various scenarios as to how it can go and be perceived, because it might not always be the reality, but the manner in which things are done tells a different story. It is worth noting that it was made very clear by all participants that they want and require trust and respect. Below are example excerpts from the participants interview responses:

> Definitely both, but line managers for me are critical. If a team does not trust and respect their line manager, I can guarantee you that they don't stay very long at the company. Which means the company might lose very valuable people if the wrong people are in line management positions. **[CF para16]**

> In my opinion, both are extremely important. From the organisation view everyone wants to work for an ethical company. I've never wanted to leave the company. I've had a look at other companies but I just never got so far because it's such a nice culture at the company. Yeah, one really does feel that sense of pride in working for this company. So from an organisation point of view, the trust and respect is very important. But as well from your line manager, because that is the person that you look up to for guidance and everything on a daily basis. In both aspects, it's extremely important from both sides, yeah. **[MN para11]**

> I think it will contribute to flourishment if you are more free in a sense that you don't find that stress of the green icon. It's available all the time. If one can let go of that sort of sense of need to be online, then it could offer a lot on your well-being, but then also on what you want to put into your work because you would feel that sense of trust. You would feel that scenes of calmness. **[IW para36]**

> I don't ever check on those things though. I know how busy my people are. It's one of those things, trust, mutual trust and respect. I have a lot for my team. For example, one of my staff is a smoker, I know that when he's status is on "away" that means he's gone for a smoke or if he has to pop out to go and fetch his daughter at an ad hoc time, he lets me know everything. So I mean, I don't stress about that. I think some other managers put the fear of God into people. But no, not me. I don't even check.

> I'm not a control person, I don't like being micro-managed so I don't micro-manage. Because I know what your output must be. If your output's not there, then what's wrong? Talk to me now. **[MP2 para30-31]**

> Yes, so having those huddles and those conversations that's being had, you discover how the next person thinks basically, you and getting to know that person, and you build respect in those conversations. And understanding is built in too. When you having those constant conversations and in understanding one another, I would think you trust one another because you should be able to share honestly, with each other in order to build something or grow as a team. You become comfortable with one another in order to share honestly. **[DN para12]**

4.6.2 Values Congruence / Person-Organisational Fit

This code looked at the concept of whether or not the employee's values aligned to that of the company's values. This was perceived as an important concept, from the recruitment stage right up to the employee who has had a 20-year tenure for instance. When employees identify with their organisation's values it creates a sense of pride, it increases their commitment to the organisation, it enhances their engagement and as a result the employee becomes more engaged, this is what has been expressed by the participants. Apart from the "bottom-line" aspect, this aspect is crucial for the company as well because when their employees do not align to their values problems may likely occur, employees may not hold up company values as the values do not speak to theirs, not only does this have the potential to produce disgruntled employees, but it has an indirect impact on the company's brand as well. An important aspect of the concept of aligning to company values was also having that job-person fit as well. This is a key component when it comes to job satisfaction, as well as engagement. On a practical level for the company, if the individual does not align to their job, they may have poor performance – they struggle to do what is required of them, this has a negative impact on both the organisation and the individual, this has also been conveyed by the participants. These "elements" speak to wellness within a working context specifically. The following extracts from the interviews provide examples of data from which this code emerged:

> I don't know how well you know the company, but the values of the company are very strong. We had many sessions about do you agree with the values and that's the values

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of the company suit you or is in line with your values and I think those things are key in having this belonged to feeling with a company to say that I support the values and their values are in line with my values. And you get to know the company to understand the values. **[PL1 para36]**

What can decrease it for me is not have any growth, not have any personal growth in your work. Not to have the autonomy. Having a very autocratic manager, that can definitely decrease it. It's your immediate environment. It could be the lack of values within an organisation, this can also decrease or hinder you. Because if don't have a purpose driving you, you don't know where you going. The misalignment of values between yours and the company's values- the lack of synergy can also decrease or hinder you. Also, your immediate team for that matter. Because you need to find something that you can hang on to for you to be able to flourish, I tell my son this all the time as well. If there's nothing, move on, because then that's not your place. You need to find that person-job fit. Aligning with the organisation and the job is important. I mean we look for these things when we recruiting- does this person align to us, do they fit/ align to the team? **[CR1 para20]**

the wellbeing of our department and the whole company, is the people working for that company happy people? It's not only the individual. But is it, are you actually fine to come to work or is it that you don't want to come, because that's also not a healthy state of wellness person. So do I want to be here? Am I in alignment with the company, company, am I feeling good where I am and what is the company doing for me to feel? **[JA para9]**

4.6.3 Inclusivity / Belongingness

Everyone wants to feel included, part of the "in crowd", everyone wants and perhaps needs a certain sense of belonging. This is exactly what this code looked at. It was established through the data collection process that is vital for a company to emphasise this togetherness, and for a manager to practise this. It was considered important for an employee to feel as though they are a part of the organisation, it is also a factor which drives one's sense of commitment. This sense of belonging happens from one's first step into the organisation, and this too sets the tone with regards to one's experience and opinion regarding the organisation. It is an element that always must be present. This factor of inclusivity is also a focal point in terms of the company's

culture, this added to its magnitude. Below are excerpts from the interview transcripts, these serves as examples of this particular code:

> The other thing is the organizations ability to change the way they've been doing things for the past 40 odd years and just say, "You know what we understand, we realize", the leadership says we've got to change and then make the changes. I think that for me is something that's strengthens your commitment to the organization and the ability to accommodate people, the diversity and inclusivity of the organization. To be diverse and include all people from all walks of life and to accommodate them, is something that gives you a sense of commitment that you know you want to work for an organization that has those types of values. And as I mentioned, doesn't just have them on paper, but actually, you know, lives the values that is in my experience what builds that sense of commitment. **[DM para36]**
>
> So now, Design Studio is moved to corporate office, and for all the years we've been the last cousins in Bellville, so now we actually with the family now that we all in the building with everyone. That move in itself increased the engagement and the commitment because we feel part of everything. We feel part of marketing now. Like everybody was up in arms about having to travel now to Stellenbosch. It's been a couple of weeks now and you can see like the spirit of the team has changed completely in the sense of there being more engagement. There's a bigger sense of commitment now to the company. **[DN para34]**
>
> I feel that by providing an effective and consistent communication channel, automatically that will help build a culture of trust and mutual respect. It's from our own experience, we have two weekly meetings, the one is a more formal one on Tuesdays and then on Fridays we have a more informal one. But because we are now so used to having these regular sessions, it does evoke that feeling of trust and respect. We know each other so well and even better than before so it's just very important. It allows you to feel comfortable in the environment and setup. **[MN para4]**
>
> I haven't been treated poorly in the organization. I haven't been in a situation where I feel that I need to resign tonight. It's just not our culture at the company. But if I think about undermining the department sense of commitment, there's a lot of things that I can think about that, there's a lot that we need to address. **[AB para26]**

4.6.4. Employee Needs/ Individualism

Participants emphasised that each person is different, we have different needs and different motivational factors. Managers need to look at and consider each one, as far as reasonably possible, as an individual and grant employees that which they need in order to succeed. For example, participants mentioned that some employees need public acknowledgement for jobs well done, it makes them feel appreciated, others do not like public acknowledgement but appreciate being able to leave an hour early to tend to something important when and if it occurs. Some people need a pep-talk and to be checked on in terms of motivation, whereas others do not, they may have a strong intrinsic motivation. This notion of employee needs and individualism also considers people's circumstances, again, each being different, and thus it was emphasised that it is important to be accommodating as far as reasonably possible. As long as the effort is there to consider each one's needs, it goes a long way in terms of how the staff experiences their organisation. Respecting individuals as individuals is the key in terms of this code. Below are extracts from the participants' interviews:

> So that brings me back to the point of every employee or individual has different needs, like family situations. It's not always just people with kids, there's people who have to look after their parents or grandparents. Everyone's got a unique situation, and even if you don't have any commitments, your time is still your own and how you want to spend it. I know a company you can't cater for everyone, but I think if you've got various options of flexibility you will meet the needs of your employees easier than just, for example, saying "Ohh you can have flexible hours, or you can buy back your hours, or you can buy more leave". And if you output driven, for example, say we have workplace arrangement and it is output driven, you're creating new flexibility where people are not expected to be available from nine to five.
>
> So yes, I think you will meet the needs of more employees and then address all of those elements that you mentioned. **[HS2 para14-15]**
>
> I micromanaged them in the beginning because I wanted to know everything because I was so scared that my line manager will ask me a question and I can't answer them. I always asked my team questions about their work but it wasn't to check up on them, it

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was to ensure that I am always updated. I wanted to treat everyone the same as well. But I had to learn the very hard way to manage each person in my team as an individual. And they don't all have the same responsibilities at home. Each one has different home cultures which forced me to really get to know my people and what makes them tick. What makes them feel appreciated. For example, I now know that one of my team members loves public recognition, that's what makes her feel appreciated, whereas the other does not like it at all, she feels appreciated or recognised if I give her an hour off if she needs to see to her kids for instance. Since I learned to trust them to do their work, they are more engaged. Our engagement score on Gallup is very good and the better it gets and the more trust I give them, the harder they work. **[CF para9]**

And I think acknowledging you as an individual is key. It makes you feel included. And you need to foster a sense of belongingness with your fellow colleagues, so they can feel a part of it and also flourish. Because would they not want to kind of mimic your behavioural traits if they see you flourishing… But this of course comes down if they in fact desire it. **[CR1 para17]**

4.6.5. Clear Structure

This code looked at the importance of the employee knowing they have a stable job, and knowing what is expected of them within that job. Having a set standard to follow came into play here. There is a need for consistency in what is and what is not allowed, or expected from the employee/s. It has always been important to have a set of rules, policies and structure in place in a traditional sense of work, but with FWA it is more so important as the old "checks and balances" do not suffice in this context. For example, traditionally people were monitored on time, how often one is in the office, having the "boss" physically see the employee working. Participants stressed that many of these older methods have become obsolete to a certain extent, thus new structures has to be in place to not only monitor but enforce this new way of work (FWA). It is not enough for the structure to be there, but employees need to understand the structure in order to know and follow the structure, this has been explicitly expressed by participants. When a clear structure is not in place it precipitates an unstable setting. This structure is not only with regards to the organisation implementing policies, but those soft

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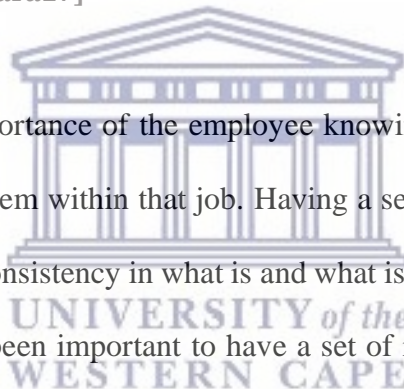
aspects which comes from the manager and how they manage their team. It looked at things being managed in general – not only from the line manager, but how the organisation runs. A huge factor of this was also making sure that everything is fair, especially with a FWA implementation, it is important that all are catered to. The following examples are excerpts from some participants' interviews that speak to this theme:

> I think its important to know and feel that you work for a stable company, and to know what is expected of me- what's my role in the company. And with this comes having consistency. For example it can't be that the one day it's okay to do this, and then the next day it's not okay to do it. I was also think it's important that you must feel that you understand your work. You must have confidence in doing your work. **[JA para10]**
>
> I think it starts within the team, and between the line manager and the employee, because you're talking about quality output. So I think what's important is, is that a line manager must agree to a work package per week with the employee, where you agree that you will deliver according to the business needs and/ or what's on the table. For example, "These four or five outputs need to be done", And that's what is expected of me. There should be a work package and should be output driven, but it should be agreed up-front in the beginning of the week. **[HS2 para5]**
>
> there's different roles and its tough to consider them all. Especially in terms of big companies, like this company, where fairness is a massive thing, we can't let some people work like that and others not. I do think it could work practically and the outputs still being delivered. I think the real challenge comes in where it links to our operations directly. But if the right structures and systems are in place I think it can work well. For instance, perhaps splitting those in operational roles in groups and have them on rotation- that way any day of the week our operational staff are there. **[HR1 para28]**
>
> It can be detrimental if it's not managed correctly. And again we're on the sort of fairness principle and people have incorrect perceptions of how it's managed or other teams are managed differently or so forth so. **[HR2 para13]**

4.6.6. Autonomy/ Independence

This aspect, or code, looked at an employee having the autonomy or independence to make their own decisions as to how to fulfil their job. It came down to participants having freedom within the manner as to how one does their job. Trust is crucial when it comes to autonomy. It

is important to note that in this instance autonomy referred to having freedom to do one's work, and being independent, but also being able to receive input and guidance from one's manager and colleagues. Participants explicitly stated that they enjoy and want that sense of working in a team and being able to consult with others, and managers input and guidance being pivotal in this regard. This is crucial, as participants described themselves as open, and in fact requested guidance and input, but they needed to feel that they are in control and able to do that which they know is needed in order to obtain the desired product outcome. It is the complete opposite to how an autocratic leader leads their team. The objective remains, the job must be done and done well, but employees should be entrusted to complete the task in the means that they feel fit, certainly within reason that is. Especially those employees who has proven that they can do the task, should be entrusted with autonomy, it is different if and when the person does not know what to do, again this has been stated by participants. Autonomy also comes with responsibility – the employee needs to work and be able to work while having independence. Like that age old saying, "With great power comes great responsibility", in this case, with great autonomy comes great responsibility, the participants noted this key factor. What seems to be quite apparent is that not only did employees want and need autonomy, but management also wanted to give it to them. Although it is worth mentioning that it was indicated that some managers like giving their employees autonomy, and others micromanage. In terms of this study in particular, the term autonomy had a strong focus on the time that the task gets completed (within reason) and the overall technique the employee chose to utilise, again within reason. For example, allow the person employed as an expert to put processors/ systems in place which have been proven to be effective and efficient. It is worth noting that this code also included participants' expressions as to when they feel they do not have autonomy within their job roles. The following are example excerpts from the transcripts from which this theme was derived:

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People must just leave me alone. I'm actually working personally. Nobody needs to check on me. For example, I don't even have man monthly meetings with my manager. As soon as I got a question, I arrange for a meeting and I ask for a short discussion or something, or a phone call or whatever. But nobody checks on me so I can work totally independently. And I like it like that. I'm not somebody who needs external motivation, wanting to reach my goals is enough for me. I don't need to be micromanaged.

What helps me flourish is to have independence, but within a structure, or at least I will make my own structure. And this is also how I lead my team. I always give them some independence but within a specific scope **[JA para19-20]**.

Where would autonomy fall for you, is it important for you in a working context?

Henry Redmayne: I think it is to a degree. I'm someone who likes to be given a degree of guidance and a framework to work in, but then within that space to be able to do what I need to do and have the necessary mandate to do what I think is best or required. For instance, if I'm told to improve the business in a certain area, you give me the job, but I need to be empowered and enabled to do it with the resources (finance). So I like to work within the scope they give me, but its like "Let me do what I need to do- the way I think it needs to be done". But in saying that I'm also a collaborative person, I like working in a team, I want to involve people, get their insights so we can build something together. **[HR1 para17-18]**

I love my job. I got this department eight years ago as a new department. I've got a fantastic boss and he said, "This is your department. You do with it, what you want". And it was up to me to put strategies and everything together. And as it has grown over the years, I'm able to look back and see how that strategy evolved and grew…

If you want to really get me engaged and absorbed let me put strategies in place for quality improvement- because that's ultimately what strategies are about. I like that if you give me a big project to do and tell me, "You've got five years to do it", and then after that, five years I will deliver on something great. I want to see that big, big picture. And then I say, "How do we break it down and how do we keep it feasible"- I love it. **[AB para19-20]**

I think just that mutual trust and respect should be looked at. I mean that is one of the company's values. One of our 'proud of' statements and I'm saying it like that because it's not always there. I mean if what you put in is what you get out, the same goes for management. What they put into the relationship, the working relationship, they will

get out. So if you're going to micromanage, you're not probably going to get quality **[IW para14].**

4.6.7. Work-life Balance

This code looked at that very well sought-after commodity – balance between one's private/ family life and work life. Unfortunately, this is something that many participants struggled to find, specifically in terms of work demands being high that take away from one's time with their family, enjoying leisure time, anything really which is outside the work and career realm of life. To find that perfect balance is probably like finding a unicorn for most, it does not exist, but flexibility helps the working force to obtain the best realistic sense of work-life balance. Below are some quotes from the transcripts, these serve as examples and motivation for this code:

> 100% because with also being, uh, a mommy and it's so important and I think with the company doing a flexible workforce arrangement is that they understand the employees, they understanding that employees need to balance work life. And if we can't balance work life, you're not going to have an engaged workforce, which then obviously impacts on your productivity and that impacts on your bottom line at the end of the day. But it's also how we handle that flexible arrangement at the end of the day, so.
>
> I love the fact that the company has a flexible working arrangement, because if I need to leave at 3:00, o'clock to go and fetch my child to take them to school or pick them up from school to take them to the doctor, that's great because I know I can still uphold my responsibilities and the works responsibilities at the same time are also linked to that that the company trusts me. But that trust needs to be communicated, otherwise you in a flexible working arrangement are not going to feel trusted to do what you need to do. **[TK para34-36]**
>
> currently with duel-workplace I'm able to manage and balance my home life, and I can actually focus on my work. I mean I'm not sitting at the office and checking my phone to see if the kids are OK, I can hear the kids are OK. It doesn't actually bother me. I know they're fine, so I don't have to worry and I can focus on what I need to do. So it keeps me actually mentally healthy. I remember before the duel workplace, as my

daughter was small, I was like a stress-ball by the time I got home. If the nanny didn't answer I would be stressed-out, meanwhile they were just playing outside. And it actually had such a bad impact on my mental health to certain extent. So to give an example. **[HS1 para17]**

I also find that in many ways people are more committed, way more committed in this. Because I appreciate this balance now between work and personal life, and it gives you that flexibility to balance, give you that balance. And I've seen in my own environment and with work, its contrary to what people initially thought. Actually, productivity has improved significantly, and people generally tend to put in more time. You're more focused. You're more dedicated. **[DM para12]**

4.6.8. Goal Attainment and Needs Fulfilment

This code looked at feeling satisfied in one's work, or task which the participant had completed. It is that good feeling participants got when they felt great about reaching and meeting their goal/s. In this sense the goal ranged from smaller tasks such as correlating data for a project, to the grander goals such as completing a project/ initiative. It entailed a personal and deep connection. It came down to employees reaching that feeling of being fulfilled and that they are meeting their sense of purpose. These are strong and powerful motivators. This code also relates to having meaning in one's work, aiding one's sense of purpose and feeling fulfilled. The following excerpts are examples of this code:

I find that I'm most absorbed within my work when I work with lots of data, you need to keep your head in it and I get lost in it for hours. And it's quite fulfilling obviously when the things then workout and you can see the things are getting to a point. So I enjoy that side of it, then that's in terms of an absorbed aspect. **[HR1 para20]**

And also what keeps you engaged is that the final product. So when one goes and you've built the building, so if I take [locality], that's my baby. When I walk in there and I see how the stuff function, and the patients, and the well-being of people that's is what gets me up every morning. Its that it's just that contentment, or rather fulfilment. **[MP1 para29]**

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> A great experience in my career is working on something interesting and knowing what I do is making a difference, or it's part of something bigger. This and making a contribution brought about that that sense and feeling of flourishing for me. **[CS para2]**

4.6.9. Positive Cycle

In a nutshell this code was described as a 'positive knock-on effect'. It was seen as a practical chain reaction when the "basics" were in play. There were no particular limitations as to what the elements were within this cycle, but rather the golden thread was that they are all considered positive, or favourable factors and outcomes. For example, how something such as team alignment can lead to an increase in productivity, or how recognition can lead to better engagement. This code focused on the by-products which result from certain elements being present. The following are excerpts from the interviews with the participants:

> it works in a cycle you know because when you have that whole team alignment and committed, then you deliver. When you deliver on all those goals as a team, everyone gets the sense of accomplishing something and then you all get the sense of let's tackle something new, and then it grows and grows on top of each other as you go through that cycle, and it repeats. **[AB para28]**

> I think if you're talking about an overall loyalty to the company, if I can call it that, then it's definitely the recognition that you're getting when you achieving something. So if somebody gives you something to do and you can do it successfully and you get the recognition, then that obviously also motivates you to do more, and be more engaged in the work. **[PL1 para31]**

> Definitely because your manager will see it in your work output and appreciate your increased productivity and so forth. It motivates you to increase your commitment when you see your outputs are appreciated and so forth. **[MN para8]**

> I think it would, in my personal opinion. I think it will contribute to flourishment if you are more free in a sense that you don't find that stress of the green icon. It's available all the time. If one can let go of that sort of sense of need to be online, then it could offer a lot on your well-being, but then also on what you want to put into your work because you would feel that sense of trust. You would feel that scenes of calmness. You can sort of do your work when you need to do it or when you want to do it but at the

same time you would feel that your employer is caring for your wellbeing offering that type of work life balance. **[IW para36]**

4.6.10. Discretionary Effort

This code looked at employees (and employers) going the extra mile – going beyond the point of necessity, simply doing more than just the bare minimum. It shows dedication, commitment, engagement, and appreciation. It entailed doing something without being asked to do it. Whether it is being of service directly to the organisation or a colleague. A factor of this was being able and willing to take initiative. These things are not required, but it comes from genuinely wanting to be helpful, wanting to make things better, and ultimately it stems from caring, the care factor motivates the individual to do it. In terms of the employee, it results in producing really great quality work/ service, and in terms of the employer there are different outcomes from this. All of this has been described by the participants. This included offering wonderful benefits, providing more than the Basic Conditions of Employee Act requires ultimately. The following excerpts provide examples of this code:

> I love speaking to people about discretionary effort and I'll always say we need to enable employees to provide us discretionary effort. Effort is not paid for. Voluntarily offering themselves to walk the extra mile is an indication of engagement, but it also creates engagement and if you can see that kind of behaviour, you know that you have triggered the right points to have them fully engaged. **[JN para18]**

> My personal view about flourishing is about doing more for others. I suppose people have different views about what they see as flourishing? In my personal view, its about being able to do your best, but also being able to do more, not just the minimum but do more and do more for others and giving more to others and being able to contribute a lot more. **[DM para3]**

4.6.11. Team Synergy

This code focused on how the team engages with one another. Are they on the same page, do they share the same values, do they trust and respect one another, are they open and transparent, do they support one another, what is the team morale? It was these questions or

factors which came into play when considering one's attitude and experience within the organisation. Line managers generally set the tone for this synergy, one could say it was their relationship with the team that formed the building blocks for the team. Many participants, stated that team synergy plays a vital role in how they experience their work environment. It is important to note that when referring to "team", it referred to manager and subordinates, and team member with team member. Below are extracts from the participants' interviews:

> If I think in terms of an engaged aspect, I think of the people side of things, like working in a team- engaging with great people keeps me engaged. For instance, working in a team where we have a common goal, we on the same page, we respect each other, great morale. An example of this was the dual workplace project, we were very much aligned and engaged. **[HR1 para21]**

> I would say that it's so beneficial, it's so vital because it really brings our team together in the sense of unison. We are united now and we are on the same page constantly with regards to process, with regards to adapting to new processes, coming to terms with what is weaknesses in our link. Well, weak links in in our chain and finding a solution to certain problems and stuff like that. So right now, after all the teething processes have been ironed out. You know we really at a point where those sessions are such an asset to our team. **[DN para4]**

> I remember when COVID hit and we were first told that we were going to be working from home, I was so nervous. I was like, "How am I going to do my work without turning back to my colleagues and checking in on them, bouncing things off of them just to reassure myself that what I'm doing is correct". So it was a huge change for me, and then I'm like "But how am I going to do this? How am I going to call my colleagues? What am I going to do?" So we as an HR team, we do weekly huddles every week and before we start because I'm quite pedantic, I already have like a list that I ask the manager or ask our team and then each one gets given a turn what they list on their concerns or what they want to discuss or what they want to raise. So we all together as a team knowing where we all at and we're all on the same page and how we can progress forward. **[TK para2]**

4.7 Discussion

The central aim of this study was to build on previous research that identified some of the factors that determine whether flexible working arrangement impede or advance positive outcomes for the company and employee (Prevot & Mägi, 2022). The summary of the findings provided in the following section, in the form of a grounded theory, has the potential to serve as a suggested blueprint, or guidelines for organisations with similar dynamics to the study context (in particular the private hospital sector) during the development of a FWA strategy to increase employee engagement, commitment, and overall flourishing.

4.7.1. Organisational Qualities

Employees appreciate being entrusted, valued and respected, they tend to give more when they feel appreciated, they even go the extra mile, or as a participant described it produce "discretionary effort". This appreciation can be in terms of FWA and promotions, but also the simple "thank you". And vice versa in terms of the company appreciating their staff. Participants found that hard work was rewarded with flexibility for instance, or more benefits and opportunities, because the organisation trusted them and appreciated their contribution. One hand washes the other, in that they both need each other, and ideally both the employees and the company would want to flourish, through this reciprocal relationship it seems to be a likely possibility. This principle aligns with social exchange theory. Blau (1964) defines social exchange theory as "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others" (p. 91). This exchange, or bartering creates a perception within those who did the boon, or provided the benefit, and a feeling of indebtedness to the recipients (Settoon et al., 1996).

The notion of organisations implementing FWA to help aid and advance flourishing is supported by the data collected as well as literature. The relative importance of employee resources and employee support for engagement is captured in the job demand-resources (JD-

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R) model of burnout (Shaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to this model social support drives employee engagement, and this social support is especially provided by management or one's supervisor. But in saying that, this needs to be implemented by the organisation in order for managers to practice FWA along with their team. When looking at participants' responses, all noted that FWA can aid them in one way or another.

What also came through very strongly in the data is the importance of communication, communication between the employee and organisation, communication between team members/ co-workers, and of course communication between line manager and employee. Having open and honest conversations allows one to build respect and trust- between employee and organisation and probably more so with manager and employee. Carlos Moreno (2010) argues that through ethical communication leaders will find the means to advance their credibility and the confidence of their greatest immediate collaborators, the organisation which they lead, the society in which they operate, and of course their teams that they facilitate.

4.7.2. Managerial Qualities

This category of managerial qualities is centred on the responsibilities of the manager, but at the crux of this is whether the manager is a leader or not. What came through the data is that one's manager is a major contributor with regards to how an employee experiences their organisation and the work that the employee does. This seems to be supported by the PERMA model. The data and literature suggest that the manager has influence and thus affects all five dimensions of the PERMA model, and as a result managers having an effect on employee wellbeing. Seligman's (2011) model proposes that well-being entails cultivating either one or more of its elements (Kun et al., 2016).

Starting with positive emotions, this is described as being motivated by feeling good to carry out various actions. Work performance, physical health, strong relationships and creating optimism and hope are enhanced by positive emotions (Kun et al., 2016). What came through

the data is that when employees have a good working relationship with their manager, they are motivated to do that which is required of them. This aspect is also related to the relationship dimension of PERMA. The data proposes that when those two dimensions (positive emotions and relationships) are present, the dimensions of engagement, meaning and accomplishment could possibly be a by-product of it. What starts this "knock-on effect" of the PERMA model is the relationship- this is the first step. It is worth noting that the elements of accomplishment may be less likely to result when compared to the others, as this is a much more personal state given that this element is defined as the notion of living a life that is deemed productive and meaningful (Kun et al., 2016). Having meaning in one's life requires more than just that of having a wonderful working relationship with one's manager or organisation. In fact, an individual loving their job does not necessarily mean that they have meaning in their life, for some their family is what brings meaning perhaps.

When one of the participants spoke about strategy and being entrusted to start a new department, having the mandate to develop it as she sees fit, it suggests her passion for strategy- in fact she states this passion is a great motivator and enabler. One could say that part of this passion stems from being respected and entrusted to fulfil this role/ job. The data indicates that this is another factor contributing to her drive and commitment. Perhaps the aspects of meaning and achievement, from the PERMA model relates to this point. According to Kun et al. (2016), meaning entails utilising one's strengths for the benefit of others; it regards aiding to fulfil other's goals. The authors continued and stated that people are at their best when dedicating their time to something greater than themselves, whereas accomplishment centres around the notion of living a life that is deemed productive and meaningful. Unfortunately, this was not experienced by all, according to the data gathered. Given that not all participants shared this notion of being trusted by the organisation, this variability suggests that it might be person/ relationship specific. One of the contributing factors to a positive relationship, conducive of

trust and respect, was consistent and open communication, as trust and respect is built through communication.

The researcher noticed from the transcripts that if a manager has an affirming relationship with their manager – it is open, trusting, respectful – they tend to be more inclined to practice this and have the same wonderful relationship with their subordinates. The data suggests that this may increase the likelihood of managers having a better relationship with their subordinates, managers developing their staff, and ultimately producing a better chance for both the employee and employer to do better. For example, if one's manager invests/ develops them and grants them autonomy, the individual may be likely to do the same for their team – like conditioning. It is that funnel-down approach. This is reinforced by the JD-R model, specifically to the point where providing the resources, in this instance support, allows for a positive motivation-driven process which results in work engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). With regards to the PERMA model, this also relates to the dimensions of relationships and of course engagement. According to Kun et al. (2016), the concept of relationships entails having a strong urge for love, connection, and an overall emotional and physical link/ connection with other individuals, and engagement is defined as the concentration, attachment, involvement, and the amount of tendency towards numerous actions (Higgins, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2006 cited in Kun et al., 2016).

The data suggests that even though there are great qualities regarding the business, there are concerning issues that needs to be addressed. Perhaps a FWA which is implemented properly- with the right structure and care given (as suggested above), could address these concerns. Yes, there are always going to be a couple of concerns, it comes with running a business and more so a huge global organisation, but when organisations do what they can do- along with the support and cooperation of management and employees, all can stand a better chance of reaching that utopia- that state of flourishing.

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4.7.3. Employee Qualities

Ownership is a suitable word to capture the variation of this component of the model. It is vital for employees to do that which is required from them. For any relationship to be successful, all parties involved need to deliver on their expectations and commitments, as the famous colloquial saying goes, "it's a two-way street", it is a reciprocal. Once again, trust is at the heart of this relationship, the one party needs to trust that the other will deliver, and vice versa. But, in order to gain and maintain this trust and relationship, employees need to take ownership- the same as management and the organisation. As an employee, one has various responsibilities, this includes not taking advantage of that which the company offers; ensuring that one is abreast in order to perform at the best level possible, but ultimately it comes down to the employee knowing what is expected from him/ her and doing the job as best as possible.

Each participant mentioned the importance of employees performing. Simply put, none of the participants expects "handouts", each one indicated that they know what is required of them and they want to fulfil it. In fact, all participants mentioned and stressed the importance of having proper performance management techniques and tools in place, thus guaranteeing that each employee does all that of which is required of them.

More so it is important to properly manage performance when FWA are implemented, as is within this particular organisation. It seems that employees knew that FWA are beneficial. The organisation does not have to offer it to their employees, thus the employees wanted to prove to their managers and the organisation that they are "worthy" of their trust, in that of allowing for FWA. This is done through employees taking ownership. From the viewpoint of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employee engagement is explained as constituting a broad and deep connection between employees and their organisation, which enables a feeling of willingness to "go the extra mile" as well (Gebauer & Lowman, 2009 cited in Alshaabani & Rudnàk, 2022). This willingness is also known as discretionary effort.

4.7.4. Physical Environment & Affordances

The physical environment which employees find themselves in has a huge impact on the way they perceive their work and organisation, it affects how employees experience it all. The psychical environment should be of such a nature that it enables staff to fulfil their job roles in the best possible way. This is where affordances come into play. The mere definition of affordances speaks to the way in which the environment is perceived to afford an individual to meet their need/s. Given this, affordances are is a crucial aspect to consider, according to the data, for some the factors of the working environment was the deciding factor with regards to talent attraction and retention.

In today's era the working class, and organisations as a whole, are reliant on the affordance of technology, now more than ever with options such as remote working. It is through technology that productivity can take place. Be it for having a meeting with someone in a different locality, or simply being able to access information on the company's systems. Due to technological advancements, employees are able to work from any place and at any time, and this seems to appeal to many- managers and non-managers. A company providing greater affordances is likely to increase talent attraction and retention is what the data suggests.

According to Timms (2015), organisations are using flexible working arrangements as a means to retain employees as well as to attract potential talent. Kossek and Michel's (2011) study stated that the change in employee behaviour brought about an upsurge in attracting and retaining talent. This type of increase directly influences and results in an increase in employees' job satisfaction, engagement, extra role effort, organisational commitment, and a higher quality of the work force through a greater talent pool and a decline in staff turnover (Huckle, 2019). It seems to be that the reason as to why the participants opted for FWA, and why FWA is becoming a more popular talent attraction and retention tool is due to people now setting an even greater precedence for family and/ or personal time. In previous years, people

used to live to work, now they work to live. When participants were asked to convey their experiences and opinions with regards to FWA practically all said the same thing – how it helps them to be more present with their family (better their family life), how they had more balance within their personal lives, and how it allowed them to find better overall balance in their lives.

According to literature, more employees are determined to find a balance between their work and family responsibilities (Chen & Powell, 2012). Flexibility is also said to be significantly related to the concept of family-work enrichment (Russo and Buonocore, 2012). According to Bennett et al., (2017), over the last few decades the number of single parents, dual-earner couples, and households with other alternate arrangements (like elderly parents living with their children) has increased substantially. There has been an increase in work responsibilities and difficult family circumstances. Thus, FWA could help aid in this very real battle.

4.7.5. Working Environment Conducive for Flourishing

The term of a 'working environment conducive for flourishing' conceptualises having a good overall environment – the space you find yourself in. An environment that encourages positivity, productivity, happiness, calmness, and overall enables one to be in one's best state, allowing the individual to be productive and essentially to flourish. It is different for each person, but according to the study, there are many overarching commonalities, in that despite being person specific all employees have similar basic needs. This includes physical aspects such as having a quiet, peaceful, comfortable space, but also experiencing a positive working environment in terms of the atmosphere. And that sense of inclusivity and belongingness has a strong correlation to this conducive comfortable working environment. Specifically with regards to the emotional working environment, this relates to your relationships and culture within the organisation. Trust and respect is at the heart of it, this is what the data seems to indicate. All participants indicated that it boils down to a simple question, "Do I feel that sense

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of trust and respect within my work environment?" This seems to be the 'golden thread' which pulls together the commonalities of what makes a conducive working environment. According to Noble-Nkrumah et al. (2022), trust is considered critical to employee's working behaviour for the reason that when the employee trusts the employer to live up to their psychological contract, the employee works to attain their organisational deliverables or outcomes. In order for there to be an effective employment exchange relationship, all parties involved are required to uphold their promises and commitments, and ensure they deliver outcomes as per everyone's expectations (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000). Again, this is supported by Social Exchange Theory (Settoon et al., 1996).

It became evident quite early during the data collection process that autonomy within the workplace is a key element for many, if not all the participants. According to the data, not only do employees want and need autonomy, but management seems to want to give it to them as well. This need for autonomy is also reinforced by literature, namely the JD-R model is apparent here once again. In a study conducted by Adil & Baig (2018), the authors stated, "with adequate degree of autonomy, employees inherently feel job satisfaction enabling them to be more confident in managing their duties with available resources. This reflects an "adjustive reaction" against burnout while dealing with occupational stress." (p. 122).

What also came through the data is that some managers like to give their employees autonomy, whereas others micromanage, ironically, all participants (management included) indicated that they do not want to be micromanaged. With this, participants have also indicated that autocratic leadership is that which hinders their ability to flourish. In fact, some went as far as saying that one cannot work in an environment where there is no trust. Given the above, one can easily conclude that an autocratic leadership style is the opposite to allowing autonomy, and thus this leadership style having a negative impact on one's ability to flourish and autonomy advancing one's ability to flourish- according to the data gathered these two factors

correlate. Literature indicates that supervisor support, which includes autonomy, is a predictor of employee flourishing (Janse Van Rensburg et al., 2017). In order to have a working relationship between manager and employee and employee and organisation, which allows for and encourages autonomy, there has to be trust and respect amongst all parties.

What also came out strongly through the data is that FWA was able to create an environment where participants (15/ 17 of them) reported experiencing less of the negative dynamics in the workplace, but with that, they have been experiencing an increase in the positive dynamics at the office and within their personal lives. This is supported once again by JD-R model, as FWA would be associated as a resource, the model which the researcher proposes seems to be supported by the JD-R model. According to Demerouti et al. (2001), job resources- which constitutes features such as feedback (communication, support, and autonomy) contributes to employee engagement and ultimately a positive motivation-driven process.

It became fairly eminent that people, or rather participants, seems to share the same thoughts as the researcher in terms of FWA increasing employee's ability to flourish. This is supported by the literature too. Fletcher (2015) proposes that it is essential for employers to consider making a secure employment situation for employees who use the benefit of flexible working hours often to increase employee engagement and performance. However, Bal and De Lange (2015) stated that flexible working hours are not linked to employee engagement. They found that flexible working hours were linked to work performance by employees balancing their work life, but it was not necessarily accompanied by higher employee engagement. However, they found that flexible working hours were a significant predictor of employee engagement and performance.

As a closing thought to this section, when a member check was done, the author asked the last few participants if they agreed with her then working substantive theory, which was that flexible working arrangements would have a positive effect on flourishing within the

workplace, and it is based on trust and respect? All responded to say that they agree with this theory.

4.8 Contribution of the study

Through this study a model which depicts how FWA impacts employees' ability to flourish has been developed. This model, the AJB Flexible Work Arrangements Flourishing illustrates how the various factors affect one another, and ultimately how FWA has the potential to result in employees flourishing.

This study seems to be the first of its kind, in that currently no other study which the researcher and her supervisor found seems to capture all of the elements of this study, the main being the effect of FWA and employees' ability to flourish. This study did not solve the problem of having a workforce where all are not flourishing, but it did contribute in terms of establishing a possible blueprint for increasing the possibility for as many employees as possible within the workforce to flourish.

This research contributed to filling the gap found within this area of discussion, namely FWA influence on flourishing withing the workplace, currently this is the first and only one of its kind within a South African context. This study's findings can help improve the overall understanding of the organisational and employee processes that are necessary to ensure the benefits of FWA accrue to support flourishing within the workplace. This knowledge also holds the potential to aid in the advancement of employee engagement, commitment, and flourishing within the workplace (Rothmann et al., 2019).

This research relates to existing theory, specifically it has supported Social Exchange Theory, and the JD-R model. It also aligns and thus supports the positive psychology paradigm and PERMA model in particular.

4.8 Limitations

Unfortunately, the sample of this study did not include people who form part or identify as part of the Black African, Indian and Asian racial groups as defined in the Employment Equity Act and other South African legislation. The reason for this was ultimately due to availability and continuing systemic inequalities (both in terms of representivity in this work sector and in the geographical area where the study took place). By a large margin, the organisation predominately consists of employees who identify as White or Coloured, and more so those who formed part of management. These racial groups are overrepresented in middle management and in the geographical area where the study took place. The pool of potential Black, Indian and Asian managers was very small, making the likelihood of employees from these racial groups being included in the sample very small – particularly seeing as sampling was not aimed at proportional representation but theoretical criteria for inclusion. Along with this, time was also a factor, and unfortunately the one person who agreed to take part in the study and who identifies as Black African could not participate due her availability. Further research should be done to examine whether the processes and components of the model are experienced by South Africans from other racial groups, other minority groups (such as those with disabilities), and different work sectors, in the same way as the participants in this study.

Another limitation was that most participants had the notion of FWA being FWH and flexi-hours. It was challenging to get participants to open their minds and see past this. This notion may, and mostly will affect how employees and management would utilise the polices and implement FWA. Given that the organisation of this study has a strong, robust values focus culture, this too may influence participants thoughts and views on the topic. Also, because of the company being a leader within the private hospital sector, a very particular market one could say, this too seems to be a factor to consider when reflecting on the limitations as this too affects the transferability of the findings to other contexts. Also, with the company operating

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in within private healthcare, it was challenging to get participants to think solely within their environment- i.e. corporate. The participants almost always circled back to how things were/ are done at a hospital level. This seemed to be constantly on the participants' minds and the researcher could see their responses may have been affected by this. Although it brings about certain limitations, the researcher does believe it is a positive as it ensured a wholistic approach was taken.

4.9 Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should map the different conceptualisations that exist of FWA, making it easier to gain consensus when discussing the topic. It was clear that all participants wanted, perhaps even needed FWA, but not all wanted the work from home option (2/ 15 indicated). FWA takes on different forms (thus arrangements). Almost all the participants had ideas of what this could be and suggested many variables of this way of working. One mentioned the company giving employees off on their birthday or a day in the week of their birthday and this should not be taken off from their annual leave. Another proposed having the ability "save" one's leave over a few years- allowing it to accumulate significantly, two people suggested having the ability to be contracted according to hours per week and thus allowing employees to work in their hours at times which best suits them, and a few suggested a four-day work week. Many, if not all noted if all that is supposed to be done is done (and the quality is there), employees should be able to stop working for the day. For example, if everything is done in six hours as opposed to eight, employees should be able to clock out/ log off for the rest of the day. But each participant also indicated that they know that in order for any FWA to be effective, it has to be implemented properly which means it is vital for the appropriate supporting structures to be in place.

The author recommends that future studies should focus on which forms of FWA would be most appropriate for various industries, for example the private healthcare environment could

be a good starting point. The researcher also recommends future research to embark upon the importance of leadership or leader and management effectiveness with regards to the implementation of FWA, and another point to delve into would be the importance of leadership or leader and management effectiveness and how it affects employee flourishing. Throughout the study, it became quite apparent that managers play a pivotal role in employees' ability to flourish.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Employees appreciate being entrusted, valued and respected, they tend to give more when they feel appreciated, they even go the extra mile, or as some referred to it "discretionary effort". This appreciation can be in terms of FWA or a simple "thank you". Participants found that hard work was rewarded with flexibility for instance, or more benefits and opportunities, because the organisation trusts them and appreciates their contribution. One hand washes the other. With regards to employee qualities, it is vital for employees to do that which is required from them. For any relationship to be successful, all parties involved need to deliver on their expectations and commitments, as the famous colloquial saying goes, "it's a two-way street". Once again, trust is at the heart of this relationship, the one party needs to trust that the other will deliver, and vice versa. But, in order to gain and maintain this trust and relationship, employees need to take ownership- the same goes for management and the organisation. As an employee, one has various responsibilities, this includes not taking advantage of that which the company offers; ensuring that one is abreast in order to perform at the best level possible, but ultimately it comes down to the employee knowing what is expected from him/ her and doing the job as best as possible. According to research this falls within the Social Exchange Theory. This exchange, or bartering creates a perception within those who did the boon, or provided the benefit, and a feeling of indebtedness from the recipients (Settoon et al., 1996).

The notion of organisations implementing FWA to help aid and advance flourishing is supported by the data collected as well as literature. The relative importance of employee resources and employee support is captured in the job demand-resources (JD-R) model of burnout. According to this model social support drives employee engagement, and this social support is especially provided by management or one's supervisor (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). But in saying that, this needs to be implemented by the organisation in order for managers to practice FWA along with their team. When looking at participants' responses, all noted that

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FWA can aid them in one way or another. it is important to properly manage performance when FWA are implemented. It seems that employees knows that FWA is a benefit – the organisation does not need to offer it their employees, thus the employees want to prove to their managers and the organisation that they are "worthy" of their trust, in that of allowing for FWA. This too is supported by SET (Gebauer & Lowman, 2009 cited in Alshaabani & Rudnàk, 2022).

What also came through very strongly in the data is the importance of communication, communication between the employee and organisation, communication between team members/ co-workers, and of course communication between line manager and employee. Having open and honest conversations allows one to build respect and trust – between employee and organisation and probably more so with manager and employee. This too was supported by literature (Moreno, 2010). Communication is the vehicle which drives trust and respect throughout the organisation.

It was clear from this study that one's manager is one of the biggest contributors with regards to how an employee experiences their organisation and the work that the employee does. When it comes to the PERMA model, the manager has influence and thus effects all five dimensions of the PERMA model, and thus managers having an effect on employee wellbeing. Seligman's (2011) model suggests that well-being entails cultivating either one or more of its elements (Kun et al., 2016).

The physical environment which employees find themselves in also has a huge impact on the way they perceive their work and organisation, it affects how employees experience it all. This is where affordances come into play. This is a crucial aspect to consider, and according to the data for some participants the factor of the working environment is the deciding factor with regards to talent attraction and retention. One reason as to why FWA is becoming an increasingly popular talent attraction and retention tool is due to many potential employees

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setting a high precedence for provision of family and/ or personal time. FWA can help aid in the battle for having better work-life balance.

An environment that encourages positivity, productivity, happiness, calmness, and overall enables one to be in one's best state, allowing the individual to be productive and essentially to flourish, this is termed as a conducive working environment. It is different for each person, but according to the research, there are many overarching commonalities, in that despite being person specific most employees benefit from similar fundamental environmental qualities. These include physical aspects such as having a quiet, peaceful, comfortable space, but also experiencing a positive working environment in terms of the psychological and social atmosphere. Trust and respect is at the heart of it, this is what the data seems to indicate. All participants indicated that it boils down to a simple question, "Do I feel that sense of trust and respect within my work environment?" This seems to be the 'golden thread' which pulls together the commonalities of what makes a conducive working environment. This is supported by literature as well (Noble-Nkrumah et al., 2022; Settoon et al., 1996).

It was evident that autonomy within the workplace is a key element for many, if not all the participants. According to the data, not only do employees want and need autonomy, but management seems to want to give it to them as well. With this, participants have also indicated that autocratic leadership is that which hinders their ability to flourish. Given this, one can easily conclude that an autocratic leadership style is the opposite to allowing autonomy, and thus this leadership style will have a negative impact on one's ability to flourish. The JD-R model supports this (Demerouti et al., 2001). Participants stated that FWA was able to create an environment where employees experience less of the negative dynamics in the workplace and an increase in the positive dynamics at the office and within their personal lives. This too is supported by JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001).

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In conclusion, this study indicates that FWA can enhance employee commitment and engagement and ultimately their ability to flourish. Trust and respect throughout the organisation are at the heart of this, it is a crucial aspect for flourishing. Communication is the vehicle which enables a strong and working relationship within the organisation (employee, manager and organisation).

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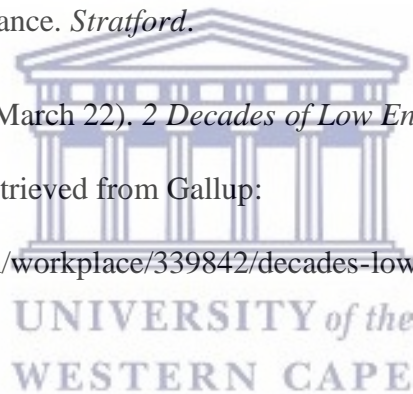
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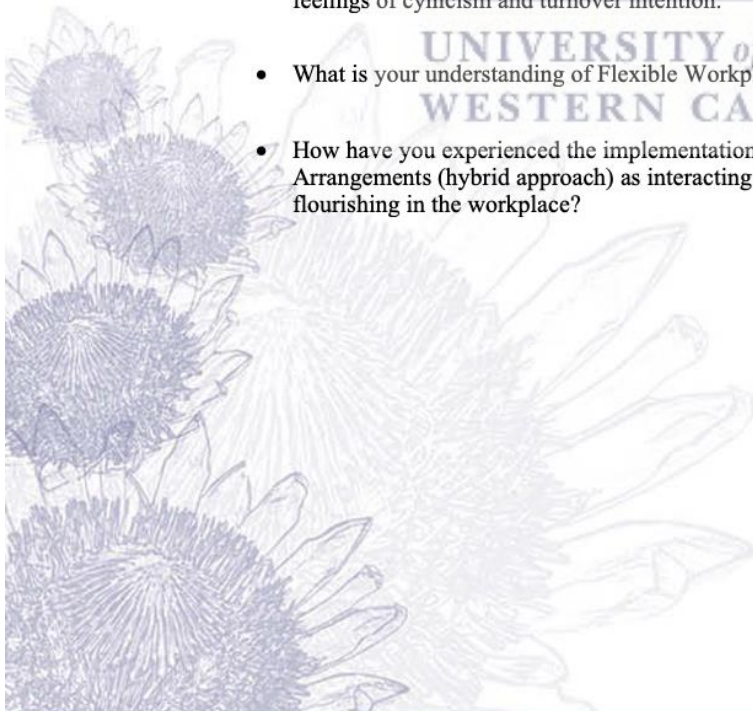
Appendix A: Flexible Interview Schedule (Round 1)

Interview Guide

The interview will consist of the following core questions:

- What is your perception/ understanding of the term flourishing?

- What is your perception/ understanding of the nature of well-being?

- What are some of the things you do, or you think you can do, to increase your flourishment within a working context?

- What are some of the things that you believe would decrease/ hinder your flourishing at work?

- What are some of the things that you believe would decrease/ hinder your flourishing at work?

- Can you describe a situation in which you were engaged/ absorbed in your work?

- Would you consider yourself committed to your work? Please elaborate on what you experienced as building or undermining your sense of commitment to the organization and nurturing or reducing feelings of cynicism and turnover intention.

- What is your understanding of Flexible Workplace Arrangements?

- How have you experienced the implementation of Flexible Workplace Arrangements (hybrid approach) as interacting with your sense of flourishing in the workplace?

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

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Appendix A: Flexible Interview Schedule (Round 2)

Interview Guide

The interview will consist of the following core questions:

1. What Flexible Working Arrangements would you like your organization to implement?

2. Could you please recommend a process which could enable Flexible Working Arrangements to allow guaranteed quality output, specifically to your personal working environment?

3. With regards to talent retention and/or talent attraction, is Flexible Working Arrangements a deciding factor for you?

4. Please provide your opinion on the following statement:
   Flexible Working Arrangements helps to improve your overall wellness and ability to flourish at the risk of productivity remaining the same.

5. In your opinion, how would the offering of various forms of Flexible Working Arrangements contribute to flourishment? With specific reference to improving employee engagement, working environment, productivity, and commitment.

6. The company believes in a recognition system, it's all about celebrating successors and appreciating our colleagues. Given this, do you think Flexible Working Arrangements would support and enhance this culture?

7. Are you familiar with, or have you personally experienced the common fear of "My manager thinks I'm not busy if I'm not at the office working?

8. What are your thoughts about line managers taking a more active role in enabling their team to be more efficient/ effective with Flexible Working Arrangements? With specific reference to Dual Workplace Arrangements (WFH).

9. Do you think if more people had the notion of productivity = quality output, and not productivity = time, things would be better with regards to trust and overall happiness within the organization?

10. The company considers themselves as "an employer who cares". Do you think Flexible Working Arrangements aligns with this, especially if it enables people to flourish?

Appendix A: Flexible Interview Schedule (Round 3)

Interview Guide

The interview will consist of the following core questions:

1. What are your thoughts regarding having regular contact sessions (huddles/ check-ins) with your line manager and/ or team?

2. Do you feel that huddles will help establish better trust and respect between line managers and their team?

3. With increased trust and respect, would one's engagement and commitment improve?

4. Do you think improved engagement and commitment will help you "earn" more trust and respect from the organization and your manager?

5. Who should set a greater precedence for a greater sense of trust and respect within the organization, is it top management, your line manager, or both?

6. Would experiencing a greater sense of trust and respect at work contribute to you flourishing within a working context?

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Appendix B: Information Sheet

University of the Western Cape
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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

Thesis Title: Ways in which flexible working arrangements are understood to foster flourishing in the workplace: The experience of employees at the corporate office of a Private South African Hospital group

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ashleigh Beelders in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Industrial Psychology, at the University of the Western Cape.

The purpose of this study is to discover whether flexible working arrangements results in flourishing in the workplace. The focus of this study will be on the various types of flexible working arrangements and its benefits, and how they may impact employee engagement, employee commitment and overall flourishing within the workplace, all within a South African context.

As a participant you will be required to participate in more than one face-to-face interview for the purpose of this study. The interview/s will be conducted in person or via one of the various online meeting platforms (i.e. Zoom; Google Meets; MS Teams), based on your preference and availability. Completion of each interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes. The interview will also be recorded if agreed upon by the participant, this is solely for transcribing purposes.

All participants will be required to complete a consent form before the administration of the interview. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any point by choosing not to complete the interview. Participants' responses will remain strictly confidential and anonymous.

There are no known risks to participating in this study. However, if you find the questions in the interview upsetting at all, the research supervisor (who is a registered psychologists) can be contacted for debriefing. Alternatively, you may call 0861 322 322 for counselling.

Whilst there is no direct financial or other benefit for respondents, your participation will enable the researcher to better understand whether flexible working arrangements results in flourishing in the workplace.

This study received ethical clearance from the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape (E-mail: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za) as well as from [ ] Research Committee (E-mail: [ ]. If you have any questions or would like additional information about the study, please feel free to contact the following individuals:

Researcher: Ashleigh Beelders
E-mail: [ ]
Contact number: [ ]

Supervisor: Prof. Conrad Zygmont
E-mail: [ ]
Contact number: [ ]

Head of Department (Industrial Psychology): Prof Bright Mahembe
E-mail: [ ]
Contact number: [ ]

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Appendix C: Consent Form

University of the Western Cape
Department of Industrial Psychology
Tel: 021 850 7541
E-mail: zygmontc@hche.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

Thesis Title: Ways in which flexible working arrangements are understood to foster flourishing in the workplace: The experience of employees at the corporate office of a Private South African Hospital group

The study has been explained to me in a language that I can comprehend. I am aware of what my participation will involve and I agree to participate freely and voluntarily. I also understand that my information will remain strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to any third party. Furthermore, I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequence or loss of benefits.

Please indicate the following by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box:
☐ I agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.
☐ I do not agree to be audio recorded during my participation in this study.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in this research study.

Name of respondent (optional):_____

Signature of respondent:_____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or would like additional information about the study, please feel free to contact the following individuals:

Researcher: Ashleigh Beelders
E-mail: 3696564@myuwc.ac.za
Contact number: 083 308 75 74

Supervisors: Prof. Conrad Zygmont
E-mail: zygmontc@hche.ac.za
Contact number: 021 959 3184

Head of Department (Industrial Psychology): Prof Bright Mahembe
E-mail: bmahembe@uwc.ac.za
Contact number: 021 850 7541

Human and Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape
Care of: Research and Development, UWC
Tel: 021 959 2988 research-ethics.uwc.ac.za

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Appendix D: Demographics Sheet

Demographics

Please indicate the following by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box:

1. Indicate your gender:

1) Male	
2) Female	

2. Indicate your age:

1) 18-23	
2) 24-35	
3) 36-45	
4) 46-55	
5) 56-60	
6) 60+	

Length of service at Mediclinic Southern Africa:

1) 0-3 years	
2) 4-10 years	
3) 11-15 years	
4) 16-20 years	
5) more than 20 years	

4. Work Department

1) Finance	
2) Marketing & Communication	
3) Legal	
4) Business Performance	
5) Infrastructure	
6) Clinical	
7) Human Resources	
8) Strategy	
9) ICT	
10) Operations	
11) Transformation	

Appendix E: University Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

6O YEARS *of hope, action & knowledge*

30 August 2022

Miss A Beelders
Industrial Psychology
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

HSSREC Reference Number:	HS22/5/39
Project Title:	A grounded theory of the ways in which flexible working arrangements are understood to foster flourishing in the workplace: The experience of employees at the corporate offices of a Private Southern African Hospital group.
Approval Period:	**29 August 2022 – 29 August 2025**

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology, and amendments to the ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.

For permission to conduct research using student and/or staff data or to distribute research surveys/questionnaires please apply via: https://sites.google.com/uwc.ac.za/permissionresearch/home

The permission letter must then be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

Director: Research Development
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X 17
Bellville 7535
Republic of South Africa
Tel: +27 21 959 4111
Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

NHREC Registration Number: HSSREC-130416-049

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

Appendix F: Company Approval Letter

Our ref: [ ]
Date: 23 September 2022
Ms Ashleigh Beelders
E-mail: 3696564@myuwc.ac.za
Copies to: [ ]

Dear Ms Ashleigh Beelders,

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [ ] **CORPORATE OFFICE**

Your research proposal entitled "**A Grounded Theory of ways in which flexible working arrangements are understood to foster flourishing in the workplace: The experience of employees at the corporate offices of** a Private South African Hospital group" refers.

1. Degree level: Masters

2. Study Aim: To determine the obstacles that prevent flourishing and identify the factors that encourage flourishing

3. Study design and methodology: Qualitative research and multiple rounds of semi structured interviews (Grounded theory approach).

4. [ ] **contact person:** [ ] Organization Effectiveness Manager

5. Access conditions:
- [ ] will assist in identifying suitable prospective participants.
- Please share research invite with [ ] who will send out the research invite to the identified prospective participants.
- Interested participants will contact you directly to participate in the study.

Kindly submit a written summary/closing report to [ ] within 30 days of the study end date stipulated in the protocol. Should your research period surpass the initial period indicated in the protocol ending, you will be required to apply for an extension

Yours sincerely,

[signature]

[ ]
Non-clinical Research Committee Representative

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