

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**FLEXITIME AS A TOOL TO REDUCE EMPLOYEE STRESS:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

By

Alice Karyabwite

207525020

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree
of**

Master of Commerce

(Human Resources Management)

School of Management

Faculty of Management Studies

Supervisor: Dr.P Govender

Date submitted: June, 2011



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Supervisors permission to submit for examination

Date: 09 June 2011

Student Name: Alice Karyabwite

Student no.:207525020

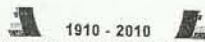
Dissertation Title: Flexitime as a Tool to Reduce Employee Stress: An Exploratory Study.

As the candidate's supervisor I agree to the submission of this dissertation for examination.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. P Govender

Signature: *P. Govender*

i



100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

DECLARATION

I Alice Karyabwite declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- (ii) This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a) their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - b) where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- (v) This dissertation/thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation/thesis and in the References sections.

Signature:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the following individuals, without whose assistance, this study would not have been possible:

- My profound gratitude is extended to the almighty God for guiding me through my project to a successful end.
- I am most grateful to my supervisor, Dr P. Govender for assisting me in choosing an appropriate topic, her comments, critical review and useful suggestions.
- The organisation for granting me permission to conduct my study and all respondents for their participation in this research.
- I would like also to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Dr Kabera for his statistical analysis.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

- My lovely husband Fabien Ntaganda, for his support, unconditional love and advice, and for what he sacrificed for my studies. God bless you in abundance.
- My daughters Allegra Urujeni and Farley Isaro for their patience, love, prayers and encouragement during my studies.
- My father Pierre Karyabwite and my mother Goreth. Kabagwira for their inspiration and support.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate flexitime as a potential moderator to reduce the administrative employee stress, and to reduce the negative aspects associated with stress through the use of flexitime programmes. This exploratory study was conducted in a tertiary environment.

The literature review explores the core areas of the main and sub-variables. A literature review was conducted relating to the key variables of the study, that is, flexitime and stress. In terms of flexitime, emphasis was placed on the benefits of flexitime, flexible work practice and the drawbacks of flexitime. In terms of stress, emphasis was placed on stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment.

This study was conducted with a sample of 97 subjects from a tertiary environment. The data was collected using questionnaires, and reliability was also determined. Various statistical techniques were used to test the hypotheses. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics and the results were presented using tabular and graphical representations.

Furthermore, comparisons were made with studies of other researchers who have embarked on this area of the study or studies close to this research topic. The study shows correlations and significant associations with employee stress and flexitime. The findings also indicate that stress can be reduced through the moderator, that is, flexitime.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIS:	American Institute of Stress
CEB:	Corporate Executive Board
EAPs:	Employees Assistance Programs
FWP:	Flexible Work Practices
GEAR:	Growth, Employment and Reconstruction
HRC:	Human Resource Consultants
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
NIOSH:	National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SHRM:	Strategic Human Resource Management

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION	PAGES
Title page	1
Supervisor's permission to submit for examination	2
Declaration	3
Acknowledgments	4
Dedication	5
Abstract	6
List of abbreviations	7
Table of contents	8
List of Figures	13
List of Tables	14
List of Appendices	113
Chapter 1 Introduction and to the study	
1.1 Introduction	15
1.2 Problem Statement	16
1.3 Motivation of the study	16
1.4 Objectives of the study	16
1.5 Hypotheses	17
1.6 Limitations of the Study	18
1.7 Structure of the Study	18
1.8 Conclusion	19
Chapter 2 Flexitime	
2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 Definition of flexitime	20
2.3 Flexitime	21
2.3.1 History and background of flexitime	21

2.3.2	Flexitime schedule	22
2.4	Benefits of flexitime	23
2.4.1	Advantages of flexitime	24
2.5	Flexible work practices	26
2.5.1	Examples of flexible work practices	26
2.5.2	The emergence of flexible work practices	28
2.5.3	Workplace flexibility	30
2.5.3.1	Further examples of flexibility in the workplace	30
2.5.4	Potential barriers and challenges for flexible work practices	31
2.5.4.1	Training	32
2.5.4.2	Management	33
2.5.4.3	Communication	34
2.5.4.4	Career	35
2.6	Drawbacks of flexitime	35
2.7	Instructions for the success of flexitime implementation	38
2.7.1	Steps in flexitime implementation	39
2.8	Conclusion	41

Chapter 3 Stress in the Workplace

3.1	Introduction	42
3.2	Definition of Stress	42
3.2.1	Common causes of stress	43
3.2.2	Factors which cause stress	43
3.2.3	Other factors that cause stress at work	44
3.2.4	Insecurity at the workplace	47
3.2.5	Harassment at work and workplace aggression	48
3.3	Stress Reduction	50
3.3.1	Preventive Stress Management	50
3.3.2	Reducing stress by taking care of employees	51
3.3.3	Reducing stress in the workplace with emotional attitude	51
3.3.4	Programs to overcome stress	52

3.3.5	Input of managers and employers in reducing stress at work	52
3.4	Stress and work/life balance	54
3.4.1	Work/life balance	54
3.4.2	Conflict in work/life balance	54
3.4.3	Identification of strategies and actions that will assist employees	55
3.4.4	Challenges to work/life balance	56
3.4.5	The preservation of work/life balance: policy and practice	56
3.4.6	Work/life balance benefits	58
3.5	Employee Commitment	59
3.5.1	What is employee commitment?	59
3.5.2	General model of workplace commitment	60
3.5.3	Well-being and employee commitment	61
3.5.4	Physical environment and employee commitment	62
3.5.5	Management implications in employee commitment	63
3.6	Improving employee morale	64
3.6.1	Advice to enhance employee morale	64
3.6.1.1	To be grateful to the employee	65
3.6.1.2	To show some respect to the employee	65
3.6.1.3	Open the channel of communication	65
3.6.2	Additional tips for improving employee morale	65
3.7	Conclusion	66

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

4.1	Introduction	67
4.2	Objectives	67
4.3	Hypotheses	67
4.4	Sampling technique and descriptive of the sample	68
4.4.1	Sampling technique	68
4.4.2	Description of the sample	69
4.5	Data Collection Method	75
4.5.1	Description of Questionnaire	76

4.5.1.1	Construction of the Questionnaire	76
4.5.1.2	Psychometric Properties of the Questionnaire	77
4.5.2	Reliability	77
4.5.3	Administration of the questionnaire	77
4.6	Analysis of Data	78
4.6.1	Descriptive statistics	78
4.6.1.1	Frequency	78
4.6.1.2	Measures of Central Tendency	78
4.6.1.3	Measures of Dispersion	79
4.6.2	Inferential Statistics	80
4.6.2.1	Correlation	80
4.6.2.2	t-test	81
4.6.2.3	Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)	81
4.6.2.4	Multiple Regression	81
4.7	Conclusion	82

Chapter 5 Presentation of results

5.1	Introduction	83
5.2	Descriptive statistics	83
5.3	Inferential Statistics	86
5.4	Reliability	95
5.5	Conclusion	96

Chapter 6 Discussion of Results

6.1	Introduction	97
6.2	Dimensions of flexitime	97
6.2.1	Benefits of flexitime	97
6.2.2	Flexible work practice	98
6.2.3	Drawbacks of flexitime	98
6.3	Dimensions of employee stress	99
6.3.1	Stress reduction	99

6.3.2	Work/life balance	100
6.3.3	Employee commitment	100
6.4.	The relationship between flexitime and employee stress	101
6.5	Biographical correlates and flexitime	102
6.6	Biographical correlates and stress	104
6.7	Conclusion	104

Chapter 7 Recommendations and Conclusion

7.1	Introduction	105
7.2	Major findings of the study	105
7.3	Recommendations for future research	105
7.4	Recommendations based on results of the study	105
7.4.1	Relationships between the sub-dimensions of flexitime and employee stress	107
7.5	Conclusion	108

References		109
-------------------	--	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Illustration of flexitime	22
Figure 3.1:	Illustration of Workplace Commitment	61
Figure 4.1:	Sample composition by Age	70
Figure 4.2:	Sample composition by Gender	71
Figure 4.3:	Sample composition by Marital Status	72
Figure 4.4:	Sample composition by academic qualification	73
Figure 4.5:	Sample composition by job category	74
Figure 4.6:	Sample composition by length of service	75
Figure 5.1:	Descriptive statistics key: dimensions of flexitime	85
Figure 5.2:	Descriptive statistics key: dimensions of employee stress	85
Figure 5.3:	Impact of benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime	93
Figure 5.4:	Impact of stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment on employee stress	95

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	Illustration of source of stress	46
Table 3.2	Illustration of four phases of stress	49
Table 4.1:	Frequency and Percentages of Age Groups	69
Table 4.2:	Frequency and Percentages of the Gender Group	70
Table 4.3:	Frequency and Percentages of the Marital Status	71
Table 4.4:	Frequency and Percentages of academic qualification	72
Table 4.5:	Frequency and Percentages of job category	73
Table 4.6:	Frequency and Percentages of length of service	74
Table 5.1:	Descriptive statistics of flexitime and stress	84
Table 5.2:	Intercorrelation amongst the sub-dimensions of flexitime and employee stress	86
Table 5.3	Analysis of variance: Difference in flexitime based on biographical profiles	87
Table 5.4:	Post Hoc Scheffe's Test: Job Category	88
Table 5.5:	Post Hoc Scheffe's Test: Academic Qualifications	89
Table 5.6:	T-test: Benefits, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime based on gender	89
Table 5.7:	Analysis of variance: Differences in stress based on biographical profile	90
Table 5.8:	T-test: Stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment based on gender	91
Table 5.9:	Multiple regression for flexitime	92
Table 5.10:	Multiple regression for employee stress	94
Table 5.11:	Reliability: Flexitime	95
Table 5.12:	Reliability: Employee Stress	96

Chapter 1

Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

The emerging changes in technology, the competitive work environment, work overload and fear of job losses are factors that contribute to stressful work environments. Furthermore, globalisation is changing the way organisations are operating. In today's competitive business environment, employees need to work optimally in order to increase productivity and growth. Companies need to achieve better economic efficiency, and to adapt to changing market conditions. The changing demographics of the work force emphasise the importance of workplace flexibility. However, at a macro-economic stage flexibility in the workforce has been mentioned in the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction (GEAR) policy as one of the aspects that can contribute in the improvement of the present labour-market situation in South Africa (Appia-Mfodwo, 199 8). Hence, organisations are looking for ways to be more flexible in order to respond efficiently regarding products and services.

Flexibility in organisations may contribute to survival as both people and organisations are in rising strain to do more with less and need to respond rapidly to external stress and ongoing changes (Odendaal & Roodt, 2002). In all sectors, the work environment and high work demands result in work-related stress levels and reduced interest in the workforce. The International Labour Organization, ILO (2005) states that work-related stress affects all nations, all professions and all categories of employees. Of importance, several studies confirm the detrimental effects of stress on our health. The American Institute of Stress (AIS,2001), for example, found that about 90% of all health problems are related to stress. Changes in the nature of employment towards flexibility are an effort to address the changing organisational and environmental needs. In this regard, the need of flexible work practices, such as flexitime, job sharing, compressed workweek, telecommuting/telework, and work sharing is to make organisations less rigid, and to have policies in place to allow managers and employees to be more productive (Odendaal & Roodt, 2002). This improves employee morale, commitment and motivation. A study of this nature must take cognizance of co-worker support. Flexitime is evaluated as a work-life balance practice based on employee stress.

This study considers the view of many authors and explores every facet of the benefits of flexitime. Emphasis is placed on flexitime as a moderating factor for stress in a work situation. Furthermore, when a balance is not

achieved, employees in an organisation may stress with, for example, work and family conflict. The aim is to ameliorate stress. Stress can be a positive factor in a work situation.

With modifications in the South African workplace, there is no doubt that stress is a reality among many employees in tertiary institutions. This is an exploratory study on staff perceptions to introduce flexitime in a tertiary environment. The relationship between flexitime and employee stress is examined. The target population will be the administrative employees in this organisation.

1.2 Problem Statement

What is the nature of the relationship, if any, between flexitime and employee stress in an organisation. Also, the band within which all hours must be worked is one of the major reasons that contribute to employee stress.

1.3. Motivation for the study

The topic of this research project was motivated because incomplete experiential proof is available in South Africa concerning the introduction of flexitime in tertiary institutions. Studies have been conducted in America, Europe and Asia (OECD, 1999). There is no evidence of a study of this nature in South Africa. Information deduced from employee perceptions will provide greater clarity to the human resource personnel and the organisation as a whole regarding the possibility of introducing flexitime to reduce employee stress in a tertiary institution.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To determine whether flexitime as a tool can reduce the stress of administrative employees in a tertiary institution.
- To determine the influence of biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, job category and number of years in company) on flexitime.
- To determine the influence of biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, job category and number of years in company) on stress.

- To determine the extent to which the sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, work flexible practices and drawback of flexitime) and the sub-dimensions of employees stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employees commitment) influence the key dimensions.

1.5 Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1

There exists significant intercorrelations amongst the sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime) and the sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment), respectively.

- Hypothesis 2

There is a significant difference in the level of employee perceptions on flexitime varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, job category, academic qualification and year in company), respectively.

- Hypothesis 3

There is a significant difference in the level of employee perceptions on employee stress varying in biographical profile (age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job category and years in the company), respectively.

- Hypothesis 4

The sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks) significantly account for the variance in determining the perceptions of flexitime.

- Hypothesis 5

The sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment) significantly account for the variance in determining perceptions of employee stress.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted only at two campuses because of accessibility to other campuses. A sample size of 97 was used. Some employees in this organisation did not complete the questionnaire, as they were too busy to participate. There were time restraints for this study. This study was limited to one organisation. Different results could have emerged when a comparison is made to another tertiary institution.

1.7 Structure of the Study

Chapter 1

This chapter outlines the overview of the study, the motivation for the study, the objectives, the hypotheses and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter outlines the literature review on flexitime. The chapter focuses on definitions and history of flexitime, the benefits of flexitime, flexible work practice and drawbacks of flexitime.

Chapter 3

This chapter entails a literature review on stress at the workplace. It focuses mainly on the definition of stress, stress reduction, work/life balance and employees commitment.

Chapter 4

This chapter entails the research methodology used in this study. The researcher specifies the methodology followed when conducting the empirical study to investigate the nature of the relationship, if any, between flexitime and employee stress. It outlines the sampling technique, data collection methods and research instruments and data analysis techniques.

Chapter 5

In this chapter, the presentations of results are displayed through descriptive and inferential statistics.

Chapter 6

This chapter presents a discussion based on the data deduced from descriptive and inferential statistics. These results are compared and contrasted to results of previous research.

Chapter 7

This chapter provides the recommendations and conclusions of the study.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the areas of the study, including the motivation, hypotheses and limitations of the study. An outline of the chapters is provided. The focus of the next chapter is flexitime.

Chapter 2

Flexitime

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the literature of various authors will provide information concerning flexitime. This describes the benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices, as well as barriers and challenges that employees and managers encounter in the implementation of flexible work practices in terms of training, communication, management and career consequences. As it is an exploratory study, it is important to discuss the implementation of flexitime and measures taken to ensure its success. One of the most important aims of introducing flexible working is to hand over control to employees. They need to determine when and how they will achieve their work objectives. This trust is enormously empowering and, when handled correctly, allows employees to balance their work and personal lives. The successful implementation of flexitime will permit staff to be more confident and productive with their work. Their success will positively affect the organisation in terms of its stability and value.

2.2 Definition of flexitime

According to Mondy and Noe (2005) flexitime is the practice whereby employees are permitted to select their own working hours, provided that they work within specific limitations determined by their employers. For many old economy managers who are of the opinion that they must see their employees every minute of the working day in order to ensure that they are working, this may be a difficult practice to adopt. However, 55 percent of the firms responding to the 2003 Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) benefits survey indicated that they made use of flexitime (Mondy & Noe, 2005). According to the recent Harvard study in which employees were asked to list the most important component of their jobs, the most important listed was having a work schedule that permitted them to spend more time with their families.

Flexitime is a changeable work plan, and is different from customary work agreements. With flexitime, there is normally a specific time that employees are expected or should be at work, for example between 11am and 3pm. The other period of the workday is flexible time, within which employees may decide when they can start and finish their work (Internet 1).

Thus, flexitime is a human resource department strategy which allows employees to determine the time that they will work. This will help employees to deal with their stress and be more focused and conscious of their work; this will result in more productivity and creativity within the organisation. Furthermore, with flexitime, employees and organisations will both be able to attain their goals.

2.3 Flexitime

2.3.1 History and background of flexitime

Flexitime has rapidly become identified as a valuable strategic instrument in human resource management. It reduces employee stress within organisations and increases productivity levels, whilst at the same time keeping employees committed to the organisation.

Flexitime has its origins in Germany within the Aerospace Company, Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blom, and is one of the first typical implementations of employee led flexibility (Ridgley, Scott, Hunt & Harp, 2005). This system was perceived as applicable in 1967, by 3000 White Collar workers in administration, as well as those in charge of Research and Development at the company's headquarters near Munich. The aim was to alleviate long queues for clocking on and off, and to decrease the resultant traffic caused by everyone being required to start and finish work at the same time.

In 1973, the idea of flexitime was adopted by the labour force in Germany, and companies across Europe (Ridgley et al., 2005). In Germany, where there was a shortage of labour, women were allowed to re-enter the workforce and take care of their families.

According to Ridgley et al. (2005) a pilot study conducted at a French company indicated that employees of a particular department demonstrated increased pride in their department because of flexitime practices; they became more relaxed and co-operative, and their absenteeism was significantly reduced. Employees in other departments protested at the lack of flexitime in their departments and proposed that the same system be introduced for them.

Today, flexitime is still utilised to assist employees to reduce stress across Europe, Asia and America (Ridgley et al., 2005). It is unfortunately not widely used in Africa particularly in higher education (universities).

Flexible working hours can have a positive impact on improving the general progress within the work environment for tasks performed. It can improve human relations and enhance staff enjoyment of work. Flexitime has been identified as durable, with clear advantages when well managed. A survey conducted, in

which employees were asked to appraise the option of varying their working hours on a daily basis, revealed that most employees indicated that they would be in favour of working flexitime. In companies where flexitime had already been introduced, most staff indicated that it is a practice that they would be most reluctant to lose.

2.3.2 Flexitime schedule

In a flexible work plan, employees perform the same amount of work for the same number of hours that they would, if working according to a normal schedule. For example, a normal schedule could comprise of a workday from 8am to 4pm, but an employee could work from 6am until 2pm instead (Mondy & Noe, 2005). Core time is that part of the day when all employees are required to be present at the workplace. Flexible time is the period around the core time period, in which employees may vary their schedules. Typically, an employee can vary his or her start time between 6am and 9am and will then finish work at the time corresponding to the number of hours that they are required to work per day. Figure 2.1 illustrates flexitime in a work environment.

Figure 2.1 illustration of flexitime

Flexible time	Core time	Flexible time (lunch)	Core time	Flexible time
6am	9am	Noon	3pm	6pm

Source: Mondy & Noe (2005), Human Resource Management. 9th edition, USA: Prentice Hall, p. 341.

Mondy & Noe (2005) explain that in today's society, time is highly valued; a flexible work schedule provides employers with a framework in which to recruit new employees and retain highly skilled and qualified employees. The authors indicate that a study conducted by HR consultants Watson Wyatt Worldwide; flexible work arrangements actually increase productivity. The reason for this includes the following:

- Short term absences are decreased as employees have better control over their schedules.
- Tardiness is reduced because the workday starts when the employees get to work.
- Staggered hours result in reduced numbers of morning coffee breaks.
- Employees are more productive during their most active hours at sunrise and sunset.
- Employees focus more on the job at hand, instead of merely passing time at the office.
- Businesses can provide customers with a more comprehensive service, by having employees available to assist them for an extended period of time during the day.

- Supervisors tend to communicate more effectively and concisely with employees as they only have direct access to their employees for a limited period during the day.

2.4 Benefits of flexitime

According to Ridgley et al. (2005), flexible work schedules have been increasingly accepted globally and provide potential benefits for both employers and employees. These are cited below:

Potential benefits for employers:

- The use of flexitime is extremely important and it is easy to reach agreement on it.
- The core hours of flexitime provide a time period in which all employees will be in the office.
- The ability or opportunity to set their own start and end times for their working day improves employees' morale and productivity, as employees are able to attain a greater fit between their workplace and personal commitments.
- Absenteeism is reduced as employees can arrange their working hours to accommodate their personal commitments such as travel times, childcare facilities, doctor's appointments and can utilise flexible leave when required.
- The issue of poor punctuality is mitigated because there is a core time, which forms part of the flexitime schedule, when an employee must be at work.
- The increased employees morale and productivity frequently results in an improved service to the customer, as well as an improvement in the atmosphere at work which is of much importance for employers.
- There are cost benefits, as the extra cost of checking and managing staff time is usually found to be minimal.
- It is advantageous when there are team members who prefer to start work earlier in the day and team members who prefer to start and finish later in the day, as this allows them to extend the office coverage.
- Communication and teamwork may improve as employees discuss their work and any associated problems more frequently and in a more focused manner during periods of increased office coverage.
- The flexible time periods before and after the core hours of business are calmer, as some companies have found that telephone calls are more concentrated during the core hours. This enables staff to be more productive during the flexible times.
- Employees may be more inclined to work overtime over busier time periods, with the knowledge that they will be able to take the time off once the busy period has passed. This would save on costs for employers as

it would alleviate the need to employ casual staff over these busier time periods. This could also support better work planning and the attainment of targets, as employers could make better use of the quieter time periods and reduce periods of staff inactivity.

- Employees are more likely to remain as full-time staff, rather than requesting to work only part-time.
- The introduction of flexible work time indicates to staff that the organisation recognises and supports their employees' need to balance their private and work lives and in turn helps employees to feel valued.
- The practice of flexitime can assist with both the recruitment and retention of staff because this is a popular system with staff, and therefore gives the company a competitive advantage.

Potential Benefits for Employees:

- Flexitime is trusted by employees because it has given them some control over their working conditions.
- Working hours can be altered to suit their personal needs, as they are able to start earlier or later in the day.
- Working hours can be set around commuting times. This will address problems associated with commuting during peak travel times, allow for the use of public transport, and alleviate late-coming.
- Employees can work overtime, knowing that they will be able to claim the time worked as flexi leave.
- By utilising flexi leave, employees are able to accumulate a limited overtime, which can be used for appointments during working hours, without the loss of normal leave or working hours. Working times can be arranged around personal responsibilities and a partner's working hours.
- With flexitime, employees can schedule their medical consultations and other appointments more easily if they can be arranged around work.
- Employees are less stressed when dealing with emergencies because they are able to work back any time taken off to deal with these situations.
- Flexitime allows employees to work a full day, rather than working as part-time employees because the working hours are reasonable for them.
- Employees' stress levels are usually reduced, and their morale is usually increased as they enjoy their work more, and feel more valued. They are therefore likely to be more supportive of their organisations.

2.4.1 Advantages of flexitime

Drew & Murtagh (2005) have identified various advantages of using flexitime. These advantages should assist employees and organisations to achieve their goals through flexitime schemes which include:

- **Family-friendly**

This work flexibility system helps employees to maintain a stable work and family life.

- **Staff attraction and retention**

Flexible work options will be helpful to attract and retain qualified, skilled staff who would not like to join or to leave their organisation. The resultant effect would be decreased employee turnover and secure personnel. Additionally, managers are spared considerable effort in terms of work investment, training and career development.

- **Workplace integration**

Flexible work practices may be effectively used by employees during retirement. It is also an effective method of reintroducing employees into the workplace after a leave of absence, for example, maternity leave or extended sick leave (depending on the employee's condition). Flexibility may also accommodate the ability to use employees on a project-based or seasonal basis.

- **Extra skill sets**

Job-sharing may offer employees opportunities in the workplace to gain skills and experience. It can assist employees to be more motivated and productive, particularly in connection with ordinary or regimental work tasks.

- **Benefits for homemaker's careers**

This flexible work option is particularly used to attract women. Literature indicates that women predominantly carry the burden of duty such as child care and protection, as well as family and household care.

- **Environmentally friendly**

Flexible work practices mitigate negative impacts on environmental conditions as they result in fewer cars on the road as well as fewer traffic jams and accidents in parking lots.

- **Increased morale**

There is little productivity difference between those who work usual hours and those working flexibly. However, the equivalent intensity of pleasure in terms of confidence, promise, consistency and productivity are

dissimilar. Most of the cases are the same for those working standard time and those using flexible work practices.

2.5 Flexible work practices

In order to attain and retain a competitive advantage in business, it is important to have high expectations of employees. Work flexibility may contribute to this by allowing employees to control their work and family responsibilities. Through the employment of flexible work practices, employees who have responsibilities to their families may improve levels of productivity and decrease investments. This is beneficial for managers and to coordinate employee tasks.

Furthermore, contemporary issues should be dealt with in a flexibility session, which will allow managers and workers to discuss necessary changes needed to attain their personal needs and simultaneously resolve specific problems in the workplace (Internet 2).

2.5.1 Examples of flexible work practice in the workplace

Employees, who choose when they can start and finish their work, and hence save considerable time, should easily fulfill responsibilities, such as caring for their children or parents. Studies show that within a flexible workplace workers are likely to stay with their organisation, and hence be productive. A compressed working week accommodates employees, allowing them to work more hours than usual per day and fewer days per week (Internet 2).

- **Job-sharing**

With job-sharing, two or more employees divide one full-time job. It is a useful method of enticing and retaining employees who have been employed by the organisation for many years. It is particularly those with caring duties and who are incapable of performing full-time.

Job-sharing may result in individual employees learning a wide range of knowledge and skills thereby creating broader staffing options, and allowing job sharers to learn from each other.

Furthermore, job-sharing may decrease profits, and accommodate trades in order to extend working hours without providing overtime payments.

- **Part-time work**

In general, part-time work is useful for mothers coming back to work after being on maternity leave or for those people who are preparing for retirement.

Many older employees desire part-time work to:

- Take care of their grandchildren, friends or elderly relatives.
- Help or work in their community.
- Pursue lifelong learning.
- Travel and discover new places (Internet 2).

Part-time work offers workplace defence, fixed times and access to the same profits of full-time service on a pro rata basis. This may allow older employees to control their work and take care of their duties.

Part-time work allows companies to:

- Retain qualified and experienced older employees.
- Organise work according to hectic or slow periods.
- Prolong or delay times of job process.
- Decrease work costs or investments in the workplace.
- Minimise absenteeism (Internet 2).

- **Purchased leave**

In an organisation, managers may grant employees extra annual leave by discounting regular weekly wage deductions throughout the year. In terms of older employees leave arrangements allow for more freedom to travel or follow other interests.

Employees who complete their duties during extra time away from work deserve a break. This allows them to care for their work and private responsibilities.

- **Seasonal work**

Several older employees, such as those with numerous responsibilities, have no desire or are incapable of performing throughout the year. However, they may be able to work through school holidays, over the Christmas period, or throughout hectic times.

Managers who allocate seasonal work to older employees during difficult times can use this as a strategy for enticing and retaining employees who may not be available all year round (Internet 2).

- **Working from home**

Working from home is another option of flexible work practices. This helps managers to retain qualified and experienced older workers who might possibly leave the organisation. This may improve output in the company as it decreases traveling hours and there are fewer discontinuities in work.

Working from home could be implemented on a permanent basis or it can be applied when it is required to assist older employees to achieve their work goals and take care of other tasks or duties.

2.5.2 The emergence of flexible work practices

Over the past 20 years, there have been several reasons why flexible work practices (FWP) have appeared quickly. Much literature and various opinions have shown how FWP have emerged, as well as factors contributing to its entrenchment within organisations. Administrations which inspire work market flexibility have certainly had a good result, as they identify methods of flexible work which makes the job easier, for instance teleworking and accessing control. Lewis (1997 cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008) has identified five main motives for introducing flexible work practices:

- to achieve work requirements;
- to attain family friendly objectives;
- administrative plans;
- fairness program; and
- management with skills deficiencies, employee retention, prevention of a stressful workplace and to reduce absenteeism.

Sheridan and Conway (2001, cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008) affirmed that corporate issues have been the main cause for implementing the option of different work arrangements. Lewis (2001) maintains that traditional opinions about profession and gender are also the realities of the labour market. This imposed modifications in the workplace methods, disagreement of career assumption stand on an andocentric line model not suitable for men's or women's knowledge in the modern labour market. These engagements have changed due to:

- the requests of work market were not appreciated for people pleasing;
- the public-sector replied to political compression and equal opportunity principles;

- the administration of variety at work; and
- the absence of knowledge, employment, retaining, stress prevention and absenteeism (Lewis, 2001).

The related literature indicates that increasing flexible work practices in the labour market has become essential, because it has focused on employees' need to resolve several non-work commitments. Furthermore, from this literature four key causes for the endurance of work flexibility practices in the company may be identified, which include:

- to control variable workloads,
- to make sure that there is office cover during weekend hours,
- to maintain qualified employees with experience, and
- to meet employees' demands.

According to the studies of Olorunsola and Ibegbulam (2003, cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008), 78 per cent of Jamaican librarians agreed that flexible work practices reinforced and encouraged one's independence. Therefore, novel methods have to be used to attract, encourage and build workers in their careers. Also, one of these was to improve stability in employees work/life balance. Four important policies have been introduced to promote work/life balance:

- to allow employment with employee's choice and counteracting bad work practices for example, longer working hours.
- to be more receptive to the employees' changing and different needs.
- to support the work environment by improving organisational culture, as well as intensification of morale and motivation among employees.
- to permit equality by improving access.

Wise and Bond (2003) specified the reasons why flexible working has arisen and continued to develop. A central reason includes the vast development of flexible working in Europe. The European work market has been reformed completely in the last two decades by the mobilisation of goods and labour. The increase of free movement has caused an active work market by intensification of innovative technology and also the globalisation of commerce has more influence on this modification with the 24/7 world of work.

The submission of this supervision by organisations and the control of working time were indeed major influential issues in the development of flexible work practices, which are one of the most universally valued by management.

According to Lewis (1997, cited in O'Brien & Hayden 2008) a combination of varying work market power and legislation are possibly the two major significant issues regarding the emergence of flexible work practices. As a result of these, work/life balance and flexible work practices have developed in response to the value of their prospective worth to workers and managers.

2.5.3 Workplace flexibility

Mondy and Noe (2005) have explained and shown the factors involved in workplace flexibility, and they include:

Employees' stress: It looks at balancing employees work needs and their life styles. Time is almost as vital as money and in some cases even more important for certain people. It is for this reason that more and more employees are asking for flexible advantages, which include telecommuting from home, flexitime, and a compressed workweek.

Employers' stress: Flexibility in the workplace can be an important strategic factor in keeping a good number of brilliant employees. The advantages of a flexible workplace are generally, the improvement of productivity and better recruitment and retention of staff, all of which provide the company with a better image.

2.5.3.1 Further examples of flexibility in the workplace

According to Mondy and Noe (2005) flexitime and other similar work plans are compatible with the desires of employees to have greater control over their work conditions, which include:

- **A compressed work week** is an agreement whereby an employee will work for longer hours, but fewer days in the week, for example, they will work 10 hours a day for 4 days of the week rather than 8 hours a day for 5 days. Employees have shown a greater degree of job satisfaction when working according to this arrangement, as they are able to utilise the extra day during the week for their own pursuits. Employers have, in some instances, recorded increased productivity and a decrease in staff turnover and absenteeism.
- **Job sharing** is a system which allows more people to be employed, and accommodates those who desire to work less than 40 hours weekly, or who are unable to work a full week because of a lack of child-care facilities. In job sharing, two part-time people divide the responsibilities and the amount of time required for one job, and are salaried according to the number of hours worked. Job sharing has potential benefits, in that a greater number of skilled people are employed and share the tasks. In order for job sharing to work, the

partners sharing a particular job must be compatible, have good communication skills, and a bond of belief with their employer.

- **Telecommuting** is an agreement whereby employees work from home and communicate with their employers by means of email or fax. These employees are referred to as teleworkers or telecommuters. Modern communication and information technologies permit people to work just about anywhere. Telecommuters generally perform jobs involving analysis of data, research, and the generation of various types of documents, auditing and preparation of budgets, data capturing, or computer programming. Teleworkers generally consist of illustrators, loan executives, architects, lawyers, graphic designers and publishers. Employees are able to perform their duties and train others via the internet, without the loss of job efficiency or quality. The benefits of telecommuting apply to the company, the employee and the community, and remove the requirements for additional office space.
- **Modified retirement** is an alternative solution that permits older employees to work less than their usual hours for a period of time before their retirement. This alternative solution assists employees by allowing a gradual transition into retirement, as opposed to a rapid change in lifestyle. It also affords employers the opportunity to capitalise on needed experience at a relatively low cost.

In addition, Mondy and Noe (2005) have identified that in order to prosper with a diverse workforce, the organisation needs to develop workplace flexibility. Flexitime appears to be the solution with which to achieve the job in a climate characterised by the freedom to choose your own working hours, trust in the system, acceptance of individual responsibility and assessment. It is inspiring that some organisations have changed their traditional approaches to jobs and work, with the aim of reducing costs, resolving the conflict between work and family responsibilities, and motivating and retaining qualified employees. When organisations attain these objectives, it is logical that they will become more creative and viable, globally.

2.5.4 Potential barriers and challenges for flexible work practices

O'Brien and Hayden (2008) agreed that there were significant difficulties and disagreements regarding flexibility in the workplace. There was frequent resistance towards those in favour of flexitime, both from colleagues who felt threatened by the scheme and from managers who were uncertain of how to deal with non-traditional work schedules. In some examples, this opposition ranged from anxiety experienced by supervisors

who might have needed other control techniques in order to run the concept of flexitime (Goulding, et al 1996; Kerslake, et al 1997, cited in O'Brien & Hayden 2008).

O'Brien and Hayden (2008) identified possible barriers to the introduction of flexitime, which included:

- the lack of a definite policy regarding flexitime within the organisation,
- a lack of resources,
- excess reliance on the optional feature of workplace flexibility,
- insufficient right to use the flexitime plan and generally deficient understanding of the scheme.

An over-dependence on the family model also tended to favour female employees in the implementation of the scheme. The four important challenges or barriers to the fruitful implementation of flexible work practices and effective employee comfort include:

2.5.4.1 Training

Training and growth are important mechanisms of structural supervision. Flexible information or practices require employees to get specific training and when these are not satisfied, it can cause a destructive structural effect within the organisation. Employees may be discouraged when they are not paid for access. Furthermore, this may cause issues for employees who use flexible work practices (Kerslake & Goulding 1997 cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008). For training of flexible information of employees, Kerslake and Goulding (1997) have identified important barriers that include monetary and logistical issues. Also, to ensure that the right employees are in the right position at the precise hour. Also, making sure if those employees have knowledge to attain organisation goals. Regarding employee comfort, important teaching areas include:

- organisational time,
- operational conferences,
- stress control, and
- Information system practice.

The important necessity for employees must be the right information set up of many formal and informal arrangements.

2.5.4.2 Management

The related literature indicates that one of the major barriers was the actions and responses of supervisors to flexible work practice. Most frequent issues ranged from a comprehensible concern to negativity to absolute rejection of flexible work practice. This regular rejection came from an absence of information, specific rules or misinterpretation. It is, nevertheless, a challenge which should be discussed and emphasised.

Lewis (2001) states that the top or line management is a vital cover which has been taken as value to the organisation in terms of flexible work practices. With aggressive stress within several companies on consequences and closing of product, the qualities of flexitime are occasionally concealed or distorted by the number of hours that a person works. The traditional work condition keeps infusing particularly in the United Kingdom; it was also recognised in many British workplaces (Lewis, 2001 cited in Brien & Hayden, 2008). Other problems which affect supervision and flexible work practices are connected to issues like the supervisors' determination, and the lack of precision and simple understanding of rules (by managers and workers). Employee dissatisfaction may be regular in circumstances where there is no transparent and justifiable cause for rejection.

The study approved by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, on companies in the Scottish financial services sector, established that there was an extensive range of flexible work rule activities in companies which operate unions (Wise & Bond, 2003). In addition, there was a lack of official rule in organisations with no women in top administration. O'Brien and Hayden (2008) also argued that where there is a lack of female workers in top supervision, there are less official strategies on flexitime practices. This gives more credibility to the awareness of the nature of flexible work arrangements. Some supervisors are distressed by concentrating on employees and co-worker anger. They may get relief via flexible work practices, and this could be fear about the introduction of conduits and destructive career results (especially in teleworking or homeworking). The request for transparency and precision and non-official arrangements is of the equivalent meaning to workers and managers. They could create consistent, well-advised choices which will provide advantages for the company and workers. Regarding this information, the aim of training is significant to supervisors and has arisen as a factual and significant subject. The trail to more recognition of flexible work may also be attained when, for example there are more supervisors.

According to Drew and Murtagh (2005 cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008), a few top supervisors are using or practising flexible or other similar working arrangements. Furthermore, organisational principles may relieve efforts to attain a better work/life balance in the environment. This supports research by top managers, who believe that flexible arrangements are not perceived as suitable to support a top supervisor's situation. This unwillingness among supervisors in endorsing work/life balance or work flexibility practices is a key barrier and appears deep-seated in several organisational values. Managers and senior managers specifically must set good examples by taking more of a leadership role in this matter. The introduction of motivation and a strategy of creativities, for instance, are by giving some arrangements or breaks for the personnel which could assist in correcting that unwillingness. This could form the foundation of best practice strategies.

2.5.4.3 Communication

According to Hannabuss (1998, cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008), another main barrier or challenge for managers and workers is communication. This has two elements:

- communication transfer and dissemination of information, and
- communication among employees who practice flexible work with line supervisors.

This includes what employees and employers should be informed through a communication process. It is authoritative when employees cannot know why and which choices have been made, although this may be the requirement for endurance and constancy of the methods applied in the organisation. The significance of clear rule choices created on lightheartedness and fairness is different to a managerial tendency and also a better practice.

Hannabuss (1998) affirmed that communication is vital when everyone is treated fairly and is conscious of the employees' need in the workplace. Most managers desire to keep their employees informed and conscious of what has been done during their absence at work. This can be attained via a steady stream of messages by internet or telephone. It is vital that a direct assembly must be apprehended as frequently as possible. Other practical methods to deal with these barriers are job records, journals, structural group days and teaching days. The facility of ICT maintenance and harmless broadband establishment may also assist in upholding the two communication relations or two elements of communication that were mentioned above (Hannabuss, 1998, cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008).

2.5.4.4 Career

There is much research regarding the possibility of career development or determination for those who use flexible work practice. There is however some undesirable insights in connection to work/life balance, in relation to the apparent incompetency or unsuitability of manager's ability to carry out such arrangements. Some managers have an impression that it could hurt their career or have consequences on their status and their investments. The career disadvantages should not be a factor. The awareness that there could be a development or elevation of cost is a genuine and major barrier (Stennett, 1994 cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008).

An important barrier or challenge is to escape an identical path in which males are in a firm way connecting to full-time work, partially from their homes. Females are in search of reducing work time and therefore choose interruptions in their work. If these identical circumstances endure or are emphasised, it may add to the current indication that work/life balance is for mothers of small children and hence to be avoided by all workers.

Stennett (1994, cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008) asserts that career disadvantages are more likely to be knowledgeable by those who work in management or seek managerial positions. As a barrier it becomes riskier when one has progressed on the career level. Similarly, one can assume that lower level employees may not have comparable worries.

Other literature shows that, there is an indication that 90 percent of supervisors (both male and female) think that flexible work practices may have a negative influence on their career progress (Stennett, 1994 cited in O'Brien & Hayden, 2008). To overcome the career challenges or negative consequences, there is a need to concentrate on considering work achievement and not just presence. These results show how organisations who raise consciousness, encourage high performers and approve of it, offer the best example to their employees. Similarly, beneficial or informative presentations should be addressed to the personnel from persons who have many choices and continually receive promotion, and also have gratitude of constructive advantages of better work/life balance at a senior level. In addition, an acknowledgment of common actions which accommodates family should be an extra responsibility and an encouragement (O'Brien & Hayden, 2008).

2.6 Drawbacks of flexitime

Flexible work schedules have definite benefits. Conversely, Ridgley et al. (2005) have identified potential drawbacks of flexitime, which could have a negative impact on employers and employees. These drawbacks include:

For employers

- Flexitime can create potential difficulties for employers when there is insufficient employee coverage during and outside core office hours.
- The fact that employees start and finish at different times of the day may prove difficult to keep track of and to manage, and employers would then require a more advanced method of tracking.
- Some employees may officially start their working day earlier than others, but not actually do any real work when there is no-one to monitor them. This is a risk to the organisation. Setting employees specific objectives may resolve this.
- Scheduling meetings could become more complicated, with difficulties experienced in setting up of long-standing regular meetings as a result of the unavailability of all employees at the required times.
- There could be a further negative impact on business if customers were to call outside of the core working hours and not be able to reach the staff member required.
- Additional time would be required by management to check timesheets and to book and manage flexi leave, but the utilisation of a shared spreadsheet for this purpose could reduce the amount of time taken.
- Smaller teams can often be more flexible and work more closely together than larger teams. This could however result in difficulties in arranging for flexi leave for the group, thereby creating problems for employers who have to accommodate the flexi-leave requests.
- A consistently heavy workload could also result in employees readily accumulating credit hours, but being unable to book flexi leave because of workload constraints.
- It can be a critical issue for employers when employees choose to work during a period of time where they will not be needed as there is insufficient work for them. Therefore, flexitime needs to suit the job, and careful consideration needs to be given to the tasks performed before any decisions are made regarding a change to the working times.
- Most employers find it awkward to deal with so many variations to the working day, and prefer a more standard working day, where all staff start and finish at the same time. It is thus an issue of employees starting at different times, as well as being unavailable during lunch times which makes it difficult to schedule training. Support from advisors and the Human Resources Department could help address this and find a solution.

For Employees

- Employees need to be careful of how many hours are accumulated or how much credit is built up during periods of increased workload, as it is possible that they may not be able to take all of the time off and will therefore have to forfeit it.

- In some instances, the core time period could prove to be limiting. An example of this would be that schools finish within the core period, and employees would thus be unable to leave to collect their children from school.
- Depending on the core time period designated by the employer, employees who start their workday very early could possibly have to work longer hours, in order to be present during this core period. This would basically mean that they would not be able to start as early as they would like to start.
- Some positions do not lend themselves to flexible start and finish times. Examples of these are supervisory and management positions where an employer has stipulated that these positions have to be staffed during standard working hours as a business requirement; or a production-line employee, who can only perform their duties at a specific point in a work process. This could become a potential source of conflict and stress for employees, and could create division and discontent among the workforce if the scheme was limited to certain groups.
- It may be perceived as closer monitoring when employees are required to record times taken for lunch and short breaks.
- Employees may become stressed if pressure is applied, either by colleagues or by management, for them to change their working hours to suit the colleagues or the organisation's requirements, when it does not suit them to do so.

2.7 Instructions for the success of flexitime implementation

In order to achieve flexitime implementation and to cover employees' needs which are important for both employees and the organisation employing them; Javitch (2006) provides certain guidelines:

- **Organisational objectives for any employee working flexitime need to be clear:**

The objectives should be precise. The parties have to be in agreement on the real range of the job. For example, when an employee desires to work by information or if the outcome is to be announced by handset, internet or in privacy.

- **The worker's function in the organisation requests to be obviously definite:**

Every supervisor should identify the prospects and duties of self and others. Everyone should recognise precisely who he/she must work with or who is required to give a report. This is particularly important when workers are operating out of the workplace and are only in communication via handset or e-mail. Although the task may be unclear and uncertain, ensure, resistance and rivalry may be some of the outcomes.

- **To establish the regularity and form of message you need, before your workers start to use their flexible plan:**

Workers should make clear that management values and meets their desires or orders from the supervisors. Several managers desire a review of their workers on paper, in the early morning starting the weekdays; whilst others are pleased with a call or e-mail. However, there are some supervisors who consider a reunion necessary. Managers or employers need to feel comfortable with the work. They need to know what their employees are doing and therefore need to have some guidelines in place so that they can track progress.

- **Set up several standard of operational time to communicate with workers:**

It looks like the fewer workers are working in their workplace, the more they desire to be in contact with their supervisors. Telecommunication workers need to draw up a standard time within which they will be accessible via telephone or e-mail, or to draw up a standard time to be present in their workplace. Within work flexibility, workers have become exposed to the notion called core time; which is the period when all workers are actually required to be at the workplace.

2.7.1 Steps in flexitime implementation

According to Anonymous (2009) the phases that will assist the organisation's scheme for a flexible plan which is suitable with the principles and organisation's strategy include:

- **Improve the organisation's situation**

Classify the matters that flexitime could deal with and prepare an internal investigation to deliver confirmation. It is also important to consider other organisations experiences and see if their efforts were successful.

- **Evaluation of organisation's experience**

It is important to evaluate any present flexible scheme or rule which means that the following questions need to be asked: Is it working? Can it be improved? This requires interviewing employees who are using flexitime about their practices. It also entails the creation of a task force including managers to reflect choices and set up a novel strategy.

- **Describe rules and applications**

To define which flexitime choices will be selected to increase an organisation's proposal, a test group of individuals should be identified, consulted and used to implement the flexitime system. This is when an organisation is introducing such a system for the first time. This test group can be used to identify and resolve any problems before the system is rolled out to the organisation as a whole.

- **Create tools and resources**

The strategies of negotiation and implementation of flexitime should guide everyone in the company by offering employees many opportunities. Furthermore, it may also assist to deal with matters such as regularity and techniques of connecting with homeless employees, how communications can be given through break time and accessibility of employees who use flexitime to attend sessions, to know which message is to be swapped between employees and their employers, and which responses will be met and considered.

- **Communicate**

It is important to inform all workers and supervisors about the company's flexitime scheme and the implementation process. Therefore, a system of communication needs to be put in place to record employees' comments and requirements. This may need adjustment over time. Regular reviews of the system should be conducted at departmental meetings in order to deal with any issues that come about and to make sure that the system is still efficient and effective. At the very least, an annual review should take place. New employees joining the organisation need to be communicated with and cultured, with regards to the flexitime scheme. In addition, job specifications may change over time, resulting in changes to work schedules.

- **Evaluate use and effectiveness of flexitime**

It is a program to review how flexitime is working for employees, departments, supervisors, and customers. Employees must continue working the number of hours specified in their employment contracts. Some may, within reason, be permitted to change their starting and finishing times, or to change the number of hours worked. The operational requirements of the department, as determined by the manager, must however remain the main focus when determining whether flexitime can be implemented or not.

In addition, managers must ensure that employees are working the required number of hours and are not accumulating too many hours in either way. They also need to ensure sufficient staff coverage at all times. Flexi leave must be incorporated into workload planning and must be applied fairly across the organisation.

- **Share success stories**

Using internal bulletins to debate the use of flexitime will assist employees in learning from other experiences. Employees who are new to the concept of flexitime may need time for discussions with their line managers during the first few weeks or months of lessons, or maybe through specific briefings or training from the experiences of others.

2.8 Conclusion

One of the major objectives to introduce flexitime is to renounce control to employees. This includes how employees and managers attain their work goals. This belief is extremely empowering, and when effected properly, frees employees to gain a greater balance between their work and their life style. In all cases, using excellent management practices must reduce stress and the requirements of the workplace should take main concern. Good messages and conversations of what needs to be completed and when, assists in planning work time, time off and flexi hours. Therefore, an employee needs to work by goal-setting. When they have been employed for inflexible hours they might need training and support from human resources, their own employers and more knowledgeable co-workers. Employees must be given a chance to get some control when they work. Prudent, clever and firm-working employees work smarter, and create their own example on how to balance their private needs and attain their work goals. There must be flexibility within the flexible scheme, because rarely does it take only a small transformation in working hours to help employees to balance their work and personal lives. Stress will be sufficiently discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Stress in the Workplace

3.1 Introduction

Employees who are stressed are more likely to be unsafe at the workplace because they lack confidence, have poor innovative skills and are insecure in achieving their work. Pressure at work and other psychosocial issues are recognised globally as the most significant challenge to workers. This includes the strength and security of companies. Work-related pressure has been identified as having a hostile impact on employee mental issues and corporeal fitness issues as well as the company's success (Robbins & Decenzo, 2001). A review of related literature indicates that the South African work environment is more demanding and stressful. In this regard, there are reasons such as: the high crime rate, unemployment, reduction in expenditures, and the changing socio-political context.

In order to address the above mentioned issues, the following variables will be explored that will assist employees to deal with these stressors and to help organisations to be more successful: stress reduction, work/life balance, employee commitment and improvement of employee morale within the work context. This chapter takes note of the core areas of stress so that flexitime can be considered as a stress reduction tool in this study.

3.2 Definition of Stress

Stress is spiritual and physical damage due to the body's response to tension, emanating from an individual's environment. These tensions vary in severity and create an impact on individuals, as each person manages stress in a different way and responds in a different way to distinct factors that cause stress. Stressors are the factors around us that cause us to stress (Internet 3).

In general, stress is the corporeal and mental reaction of a person's body to acute circumstances that result in feelings of annoyance, nervousness or pressure. A person can experience stress either at work, at home or at other various locations.

3.2.1 Common causes of stress

According to Robbins and Decenzo (2001, p. 242) “stress originates for many reasons and it is referred to as stressors”. Factors that generate stress can be categorised in two main groups which are organisational and personal:

- **Organisational stressors**

These stressors are factors, such as role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, technological advancement, reengineering, downsizing, and restructuring.

- **Personal stressors**

An individual's stress can be caused by personality type, family matters, and financial problems.

There is no shortage of stressors within an organisation. Stress may arise due to: increased strain to avoid mistakes or achieve duties in a short amount of time, a stern supervisor, and unsatisfied colleagues.

3.2.2 Factors which cause stress

Robbins and Decenzo (2001) have also identified five types of organisational stress factors, which are: task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands, organisation structure, and organisational leadership:

- **Task demands**

Task demands are related to an employee's job. They take into account the person's task requirements (independence, task diversity, degree of mechanisation), work environment, and employee presence. Work sharing can create difficulties for employees. The stronger the interdependence between employees duties, the more stressful the workplace becomes. If there is independence with responsibilities, stress tends to be less (Robbins & Decenzo, 2001). However, jobs that include high temperature, loud noises, or ergonomic factors which are unsafe or undesired can raise levels of nervousness. Working in an overcrowded or small space in which interruptions are regular can also cause stress.

- **Role demands**

Role demands are tensions placed on an employee as a reason of the specific function he or she is performing in the organisation. *Role conflicts* generate scenarios that may be hard to resolve. *Role overload* is acknowledged when the employee achieves his/her work in a greater amount of time than expected. *Role ambiguity* results when job opportunities are not clearly communicated and the employee is uncertain in terms of what s/he expected to do (Robbins & Decenzo, 2001).

- **Interpersonal demands**

Interpersonal demands are tensions produced by co-workers. The absence of social support from colleagues and poor interpersonal relationships can be a significant source of pressure, particularly amongst employees with high social needs (Robbins & Decenzo, 2001).

- **Organisational structure**

Organisational structure can cause stress. Too many policies and an employee's need to contribute to decisions that can affect him/her can be significant reasons for stress (Robbins & Decenzo, 2001).

- **Organisational leadership**

Organisational leadership is the managerial method of the organisation's government. Certain managers create a culture characterised by pressure, fear and nervousness. They make impractical demands to achieve work in a short time, provide excessively firm supervision, and consistently dismiss employees who are not competent. This method of organisational leadership generates distress in the workforce (Robbins & Decenzo, 2001).

3.2.3 Other factors that cause stress at work

Furthermore, Nelson and Quick (2006) provide three factors which cause stress which include: physical demands, home demands and personal demands:

- **Physical Demands**

These are extreme surroundings, strenuous actions; dangerous matters and global travel which cause corporal strain for individuals in the workplace. When the work environment is very cold, it causes unreasonable physical demands on a person and causes danger. Extremely hot conditions which affect human comfort are an unacceptable work environment for human beings. Lack of fluids in exceedingly hot climates, and frostbite in cold climates are examples of unreasonable physical demands (Nelson & Quick, 2006).

- **Home Demands**

Generally, not all employees are focused on family needs related to weddings, child education, and parent care. The extensive choice of home and family arrangements in modern American society has generated a great variety of stress in this field. For those in outmoded families, such requests could produce role conflict or workloads that are hard to achieve. The connection between work and family life might result in a struggle to achieve stability (Nelson & Quick, 2006).

- **Personal Demands**

This results from a personality burden which can cause stress in the workplace. Workaholism might be the most distinguished of the personality-enforced demands; personal demands are also the reason for stress for individuals at work and have been recognised as a type of addiction. Some of the initial symptoms of workaholism comprise: no commitment to work, incapacity to like one's career and breaks from work, worrying about work difficulties outside the workplace and continually having to work at home whilst others get a break (during weekend). Another form of personal demand comes from public events, helper at the workplace, and nonwork organisational commitments, for example churches, synagogues, and public service organisations. Those stressors become more or less demanding dependent on their congruence with the individual's work and family life and their ability to deliver options of gratifications for the employee (Nelson & Quick, 2006).

Table 3.1 reflects two categories of factors that cause stress at work and this include:

Work Demands: which cover task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands and physical demands.

Nonwork Demands: Home demands and personal demands.

Table 3.1 Illustration of source of stress : work and nonwork demands

WORK DEMANDS	
Task Demands	Role Demands
Change	Role conflict
Lack of control	Interrole
New technologies	Person-role
Interpersonal Demands	Physical Demands
Emotional toxins	Extreme environments
Sexual harassment	Strenuous activities
Poor leadership	Hazardous substances
	Global travel
NONWORK DEMANDS	
Home Demands	Personal Demands
Family expectations	Workaholism
Child rearing/day care arrangements	Civic and volunteer work
Parental care	Traumatic events

Source: Nelson and Quick (2006), Foundations, Realities and challenges, 5th edition, Southwestern/Thomson Publishing, p. 218.

3.2.4 Insecurity at the workplace

One of the central causes of stress for most employees is a high level of job insecurity and fear of job losses. Proclamation of dismissals and restructuring with short notice can provoke shock, unhappiness, and even psychological illness causing a negative impact on social and family life. Managers can exacerbate this by not pronouncing modification plans until the last minute. Job losses itself is a cause of stress. Apart from the understandable monetary deficiency, unemployed persons suffer from personality disorder, monotony, social separation, for example divorce and social shame or embarrassment. Current studies have identified a full variety of stress-induced illnesses due to unemployment. The stress of redundancy will also affect those who persist to perform in poor working conditions. Frequently, managers intensify the burden of work for those who retain their job (Page, 2001).

Insecurity may also occur if employees do not feel self-assured about their attitude to do their work well and do not get sufficient time, evidence or training. In addition, they may delay work to ensure no errors are made. When they do not get self-assurance that retention is imminent, if errors are created and corrective actions are strictly useful, these results in people feeling unsafe. Also, when there have been too many changes in work supervision, tools designs or arrangements and method of administration and insufficient information is specified ahead of the modification being made, or any utilisation of new techniques or gear, employees will not feel confident or unsafe at the workplace. Sharpley, Reynolds and Acosta (1996, cited in Nortjé, 2007, p. 39) explain that job insecurity ends in, "...indecision in terms how mergers will power me", and that was one of the most frequent reports of the cause of unemployment. Kreitner et al. (1999, cited in Nortjé, 2007) established that work security is a influential stressor which has important control over employees' mind-set and performance. When work safety is not controlled, it may affect a decrease in work contentment, organisational commitment and performance.

Insecurity at work can also take place when workers are still engaged in the organisation but do not actually have what they need to work, because of modifications and conditions, which can happen throughout the organisation's information system process. Insecurity generates indecision; Frankl (1984, cited in Nortjé, 2007, p. 39) states that: "...A man who cannot perceive the end of his 'conditional being' was incapable to seek at a final objective in existence. Consequently the entire arrangement of his internal being altered; signs of decompose set in which are predictable from other locations of life. Those who recognise how shut the link is between the mind-set of a man, and his bravery or absence and the condition of resistance of his body will know that the unexpected defeat of trust and guts can have a fatal consequence".

3.2.5 Harassment at work and workplace aggression

Harassment at work is one of the number one increasing forms of aggression in the world. Workplace maltreatment includes: harassment, unpleasant actions, racial discrimination, refusal to hand over, removal of responsibilities, monetary issues, unstable or nervous interaction with colleagues, and attack by supervisors, amongst others. These problems destabilise persons. Burton (2001), describes co-worker harassment as a type of endurance behaviour.

The more employees perceive themselves to be endangered, weighed down and harassed, the more they will allow harassment to carry on. Burton's view has been supported by Marais & Herman (1997 cited in Nortjé, 2007, p. 43), who state that, "...the persecution of employee is indicative of company endurance actions".

According to Marais-Steinmann (2007 cited in Nortjé, 2007, p. 43), "...People who are being intimidated build up hopelessness and mental disease and must leave the workplace". The main risk that Marais-Steinmann has encountered in her research was the vengeance from the intimidated person, which could become manifest in actions, such as theft and damage to property. In addition, Landy and Conte (2004 cited in Nortjé, 2007), state that stress is a reason for workplace aggression, and that workplace hostility is a reason of stress.

The four critical phases of stress are outlined in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2 Illustration of four phases of stress

Phase	Signs/Symptoms	Action
Phase 1 – Warning Early notice signs are frequently more emotional than corporal and may take a year or before they are noticeable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts of unclear worry. • Hopelessness. • Monotony. • Lack of concern. • Emotional weakness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion about mind-set. • Take a holiday. • Create a modification from regular activity. • Take care of yourself.
Phase 2 - Mild Symptoms Warning signs have developed and increased. In excess of 6 to 18 months, corporal signs may also be evident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep turbulences. • Intense headaches/colds. • Strength pains. • Intensified corporal and emotional tiredness. • abandon connection with friends. • Irritability. • exaggerated depression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra destructive lifestyle modifications may be wanted. • Short-term of treatment.
Phase 3 - Entrenched Cumulative Stress This phase arises when the above phases continue to be unnoticed. Stress begins to generate a deeper force on profession, family life and individual fitness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augmented taking alcohol and smoking, non prescription of medicines. • Hopelessness. • Corporal and emotional tiredness. • Defeat of sexuality. • Strong pains of stomach. • Marital disagreement. • Crying spells. • Intense anxiety. • inflexible thoughts • Extraction. • Impatience. • Insomnia. 	The assistance of health check and mental experts is much suggested.
Phase 4 – Severe/ Debilitating Increasing Stress Reaction This phase is frequently measured ‘self-destructive’ and tends to arise after 5 to 10 years of continual stress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers end prematurely. • Asthma. • Heart conditions. • Extreme hopelessness. • Less confidence. • Failure to achieve someone's work. • Failure to control your life. • Abandonment. • Hysterical rage, misery. • Desperate or murderous thoughts. • Muscle shakes. • Intense and unceasing exhaustion. • Over-reaction to insignificant actions. • Agitation. • Numerous accidents. • Negligence, poor memory. • Paranoia. 	Important involvements from experts.

Source: Nortjé, G.S. (2007). *Stress in the workplace: a case study*, a research proposal for dissertation, Faculty of Management Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology, p. 31.

3.3 Stress Reduction

Decreasing stress can present an impasse for managers. Some stress in organisations is necessary. Stress can be a stimulant. Therefore, when one considers stress reduction, the issue is the reduction of its useless aspects.

Robbins and Decenzo (2001) indicate that one of the first means of reducing stress is to confirm that employees are correctly suited to their works and that they appreciate the capacity of their ability. Also, by allowing employees to know exactly what is expected of them, role conflict and ambiguity can be reduced. Redesigning tasks can also help ease stressors connected to working too hard. Employees should also have some input in redesign that affects them. This indicates that when employees are more involved; they are less stressed. In addition, Robbins and Decenzo (2001) mentioned that as a manager, you must recognise that no matter what is done to eliminate organisational stressors; some employees will still be stressed. One has little or no control over the personal factors, and a person can face an ethical issue if personal factors are causing stress.

3.3.1 Preventive Stress Management

In their study, Nelson and Quick (2006) found that stress is a predictable aspect of work and person life. They also agreed that it is neither essentially bad nor critical. Stress can be managed through preventive stress management, an organisational approach that advocates that the person and organisation take joint responsibility for sustaining fitness and averting suffering and harm. Preventing the control of stress is fixed in the health analysis of prevention which was first applied in preventive medicine. In their research, Nelson and Quick (2006) have identified three stages of prevention:

- **Primary prevention**

Primary prevention is planned to reduce, regulate, or remove the cause of the stressor. The thought behind primary prevention is to reduce or restructure the source of a problem. Accurate anticipation of organisational stress is vitally important as it modifies and outlines organisational requirements on employees in the workplace.

- **Secondary prevention**

Secondary prevention is proposed to modify or transform the individual's or the organisation's reaction to the demand or stressor. Employees should learn to deal with the predictable work stressor and demands so as to eliminate distress and strain while endorsing health and safety.

- **Tertiary prevention**

Tertiary prevention has been created to cure employee or organisational signs of pain and nervous tension. The symptoms of stress that may appear range from early warning signs (such as headaches or absenteeism) to more serious forms of distress (such as hypertension, work stoppages, and strikes).

3.3.2 Reducing stress by taking care of employees

It is important to take action when job stress is interfering with employee ability to work, care for themselves, or manage their personal life. It is very important for employees to pay attention to how stress is affecting their fitness. When an employee's needs are supported, he or she is stronger and more resistant to stress. A good employee will be able to deal with stressful work without becoming overwhelmed. To take care of employees does not require a full standard of living. Employees moods can also been improved by small things, such as increasing their energy, which makes them feel as though they are back in the driver's seat. Furthermore, it is important for employees to take things one step at a time, and as they create a more optimistic way of life, they will rapidly see a visible decrease in their stress levels at home and at their workplace (Segal, Horwitz, Smith & Segal, 2008).

3.3.3 Reducing stress in the workplace with emotional attitude

When employees are emotionally mature, they are more able to avoid stress from the workplace. Unfortunately, emotional intelligence is not something employees are born with; however, it can be taught and developed (Segal et al., 2008).

- The knowledge that allows employees to obtain these abilities may be studied. It demands the development of exciting, written ways of communicating that include: knowledge of specific stress reactions that become associated with physical signs that can quickly tranquilise and strengthen employees.
- Employees must stay in touch with their internal emotional experiences in order to appropriately deal with their feelings. Employees with knowledge of their feelings will not only increase their determination, but also be more sympathetic of others and assist to make more gratifying relationships.
- It is important for employees to recognise and successfully use the non-verbal cues that make up 95-98% of their information procedure, such as eye contact, facial expression, and tone of voice, mind-set, sign and feel. The way employees send that communication can affect their colleagues positively or negatively.

- To develop the ability to accomplish challenges with humour. There is no greater stress reliever than a resilient laugh and nothing decreases stress faster at work than when something funny is reciprocally shared. However, when the expression of amusement is at someone else's cost; it is good to finish up with more rather than less stress.
- Employees must have some knowledge of conflict resolution by becoming a better listener and someone who can manage conflict bravely with the hope that resolute dissimilarities will reinforce the relationship.

3.3.4 Programs to overcome stress

To overcome stress in the workplace, Robbins and Decenzo (2001) have proposed two interesting programs to help particular employees to deal with their environmental stressors. These are:

- **Employee assistance programs (EAPs)** are programs implemented by organisations to assist the employees to overcome individual and health-related work issues. The foundation for these programs, which still holds today, is helping a productive employee return to his job immediately. It can also be an advantage to the organisation regarding a return on investment.
- **Wellness programs** are planned to maintain employee health. These programs may deal with smoking cessation, managing weight, controlling stress, physical fitness, nutrition education, control of tension, prevention and defense against violence, or problems with work team involvement. Wellness programs are also intended to decrease manager fitness charges, reduce absenteeism and to augment income by avoiding health matters associated with work.

3.3.5 Input of managers and employers in reducing stress at work

In order to reduce employees stress employers have made contributions. According to Segal et al. (2008) it is in the interest of employers to avoid stress at work. Employers should take encouraging action employing better methods, particularly in situations of extreme stress. In their research, they have also identified the organisational changes that can allow managers and employers to decrease workplace stress. These include:

a) Improve communication

- When employers share information with employees, it significantly reduces employee uncertainty of their jobs and their future.
- The communication between employers and employees allows employees' role and duties to be clearly defined.
- It is important for employees to make pleasant, coherent communication, rather than manipulative or insignificant communication (Segal et al., 2008).

b) Consult your employees

- Employees feel important when employers give them the opportunity to be involved in solutions and this will result in a positive impact in their work.
- Employers must always consult employees regarding their work schedule and their job roles.
- It is essential for employers to ensure that the workload is suited to employee skills and to avoid giving them unrealistic deadlines.
- Employers should show their employees how important they are and make them feel respected (Segal et al., 2008).

c) Offer Rewards and Incentives

- Employers should provide recognition for good work performance both verbally and institutionally.
- Any organisation needs to offer employees the opportunities for career development.
- Employers have to support an entrepreneurial work environment which allows employees to better manage their workload (Segal et al., 2008).

d) Cultivate a Friendly Social Climate

- There is a need for employers to offer occasions for social contact among employees.
- Employers must set up within the organisation, a zero tolerance rule for harassment.
- It is necessary that employers make management decisions consistent with organisational values (Segal et al., 2008).

3.4 Stress and work/life balance

3.4.1 Work/life balance

The stability of a person's work/life and personal/life is recognised as the acceptable level between many responsibilities in a human being's life. Although meanings and reasons differ, work and personal lives are usually linked with a balance, or a continuous, overall agreement in life. To learn about work/life balance tests employees' ability to manage the complex requirements in their life style.

Although the same amount is typically allocated to work and non-work functions, in recent times this idea has become more multifaceted and has been developed to integrate additional components. A current revision investigated and considered three features of work/life balance (Internet 4):

- The equilibrium of time, which stresses the amount of time agreed upon work and non-work functions.
- Participation of stability means the level of mental connection in, or dedicated to, work and non-work functions.
- Satisfaction of constancy or the level of pleasure obtained from work and nonwork functions.

This form of work/life balance, including time, participation and fulfilment mechanism, enables a broader and more comprehensive image to emerge. For example, someone who works two days a week and stays with his/her family for the rest of the week could be upset in terms of time (which means an equivalent method of work and life), but may be dedicated to the work and non-work roles (involvement of stability) (Internet 4).

3.4.2 Conflict in work/life balance

Williams (2010, p. 1), describes stress as the “unfavorable reaction an employee has to extreme tension or other types of demands placed on them”. Negative, destructive stress occurs in the workplace when an employee faces excessive demands for prolonged periods of time, but can also occur when an employee is placed in the incorrect job (poor job fit) or if he/she is being treated unfairly. Negative stress outside of the work environment can be caused by significant changes in the employee life, for instance a death in the family, but family life can also become tense if it is dominated by conditions at work. Some employees in similar situations may manage adequately and even thrive when working under constant pressure, whilst others may find it difficult to handle and suffer the effects of negative stress. It is important that the individual has some degree of control over their workplace situations, actions, and work-life balance, in order to appropriately deal with the extent of negative

stress that they experience. Those with a greater degree of control will avoid stressors and accept and deal with their stress levels more appropriately.

Williams (2010), identified work/life balance as the balance between the demands, time and effort required by work and the workplace, and the effect that it has on a person's individual, family and social life, and vice versa. A suitable work/life balance is attained when the work does not dominate the person's life and cause harm through the effects of negative stress. Whilst workplace activity frequently impacted negatively on the person's behaviour outside the work environment, Williams (2010) found it unusual that the majority of employees had a work/life balance that was influenced negatively by their life outside the workplace. For experts examining personal and job development behaviours, the positive action of an individual's promotion/progress has to be vigorously managed in order to make sure that it does not result in undue stress and damage the person's work/life balance. Williams, (2010) also affirmed that the improved awareness regarding the importance of dealing with stress effectively and maintaining an adequate work/life balance has led to approaches for maintaining this balance. Time management, stress management, attaining work/life balance, the management of personal growth and associated approaches such as coaching and mentoring are tools that can be used to achieve this.

3.4.3 Identification of strategies and actions that will assist employees

Williams (2010) identified strategies and actions which will help employees to balance their lives and their work. These strategies and actions are well established:

- Employees must be conscious of their own mistakes and effectiveness.
- They must consider and accept that certain things cannot be changed.
- They must accept that it is in their best interest to take action to decrease or eliminate stress in their workplace.
- They have to divide problems into smaller, more manageable parts and then set targets for dealing with the individual parts.
- They have to manage their time effectively.
- They should replace bad relationships with those of a more positive nature.
- They have to adopt a healthy living approach and engage in external activities to promote their wellbeing, for example hobbies, studying, and engaging in social or sporting activities.
- They must take ownership of their career development.
- They must not be afraid to seek advice and support from others if necessary.
- They must develop a tolerance to deal with stress and work-life balance.

3.4.4 Challenges to work/life balance

The poor economic climate has placed employees under tremendous personal and workplace stress. According to the Corporate Executive Board (CEB) analysis, only a small number of employees have been given contracts since the beginning of the economic downturn, whilst a significant increase in unemployment was observed in the first quarter of 2009 (Internet 5). With financial pressures fueling demands in many areas of employees' lives, hence a flexible working environment and maintenance of the correct work/life balance increases employee engagement overall. By redesigning jobs and restructuring without significantly influencing workloads, and by offering various opportunities, employee morale will be increased, giving rise to a better work-life balance. This, in turn, can have positive financial implications for the business. It can, however, be difficult to instill effective work/life balance initiatives, and this is directly related to how well today's employers can state and offer the right mix of advantages which are extremely valued by the workforce (Internet 5).

3.4.5 The preservation of work/life balance: policy and practice

Moore (2007) considers the way in which companies, employees and supervisors were treated in work/life balance. However, evaluating the best group of organisations will allow employees and employers to balance commitments both within and outside the workplace.

Managers

As managers of companies profit from the organisation's work/life balance policies, they also perceive it very difficult to preserve a suitable work/life balance in practice, because of long working hours rule from British decision-making, coupled with a competition between the British and the Germans (Moore, 2007).

Within the organisation, there were certain rules and plans in place to allow confident employers to maintain a good stability between job and private commitments. Arrangements that had been set up include child care and flexible work practices; proposals that incorporated changes to extended work and to take an extended break on a weekly basis, amongst others. During Moore's research, teamwork had been chosen to deal with the matter of work/life balance. The results showed that employers are well provided for by the organisations' work/life balance rules (Moore, 2007).

According to Frame and Hartog (2003, p.360), managers in the HR department confessed that the organisation was in a similar circumstance as: “the long working time from British industry’s culture which is linked with employees’ dedication to their efficiency. Work time is perceived as a product, meaning that those who offering more time are expected to be appreciated more than others who do their work in fewer hours. They are seen to be less innovative and dedicated to their work. Related literature indicates that HR specialists have confirmed with the company that there is an antagonism between employers in terms of how many hours each worked. Furthermore, employees are on leave when they are wanted, which gives them a thought to be more needed.

According to Moore (2007), the aim is to get work/life balance programs acknowledged. Also, they have to be understood in various stages. With regards to the method of work/life balance, the argument is whether the fundamental difficulty will be dealt with by these plans. Moore (2007, p. 391) continues to explain that different opinions on time had become something important: “as previous studies in banks suggested that the Germans are likely to be better than their British generation to preserve a great work/life balance, here there appeared to be rivalry between the team as to who could work the best”.

However, it also appeared to be a growth of pressures between the two teams within the company with freedom of national culture. The work/life balance matter was therefore deteriorating due to the separation within the organisation. However, some rules have been established to support the managers to sustain a good work/life balance. The method of working long hours and experiencing internal competitions showed that the plans have been achieved with little victory. Flexible working has therefore accomplished far more issues in keeping managers’ work/life balance.

Workers

In the employees’ field, the condition was different to the managers’. As few of the companies’ work/life balance rules were used in practice with this team of personnel, they were more capable of keeping a great work/life balance than the supervisors due to the use of the shift technique, and, in the last investigation, through choosing suitable work for their standard of living. According to Moore (2007), in that field of employees, there were few legal rules applied in terms of work/life balance maintenance. The major policy was one which allowed some employees to work on a regular day-shift instead of irregular day and night shifts as most employees did (which was unusual, and those who had completed this agreement were open to charges of laziness). The expression work/life balance was rarely present at that line of employees. The temporary work force was at the centre of almost no legal policies in order to improve their work/life balance.

The situation was different, on an informal level. However, employees were rather experienced to improve and develop their own means of retaining a work/life balance, even if this irregularity came into disagreement with the supervisors. For example, an illegal prayer place had been arranged for Muslim employees (Moore, 2007). Although, Moore (2007) stated that employees who were incapable of obtaining a legal break to be involved in private interests would simply stop working; which means unjustified absenteeism would consequently involve punishment. The maintenance of work-life balance became paramount in the organisation, especially an employee's choice of work. Although, after salaries, one of the major motivations employees mentioned for working at the place, was the shift arrangement that allowed for an extra break day per week than is usual in the region's companies, where they were capable of spending time to take care of their children. Also, the option to get or quit a job at this place may be observed as a type of work/life balance protection. With that information, cases of employees who left their work due to incongruence with family commitments were frequently accounted. According to Moore (2007, p. 391) there were a number of employees who were only working at the company for a short time, intending to leave when conditions changed, such as students working during their summer holiday, ex-refugees, and artists going through a lean period, housewives wanting to make "Christmas present money" and so on. Working temporary contracts could consequently be perceived as a method of preserving work/life balance over time and was taken as such by the employees in their explanations of their existence.

Therefore work/life balance is more of a significant priority for employees than it is for employers. Employees have far less legal support from the company in their attempts to uphold this stability. Conversely, judged by their explanations of their life needs, employees have performed better than employers in terms of keeping an optimistic work/life balance including: setting their options of works, their selection of employer and their external commitments.

3.4.6 Work /life balance benefits

The aim is to balance employees' life style and work needs; Bird (2006) has affirmed the benefits for them as well as for the organisation. These benefits include:

To the organisation

- With a greater work/life balance workers will be much more responsible and confident in their job and the organisation may consider the increase in his/her personal output.

- With a best work/life balance, the organisation will build a better collaboration in the workplace with good communication.
- When there is a greater work/life balance employees' morale is raised which is important because it will allow the organisation to be more productive.
- With a work/life balance plan, the organisation will have less negative organisational stress.

To the employees

- With an excellent work/life balance; employees are more valued in workplace and that helps them to balance their life style and work needs.
- It is important for employees to know why it is important to get a good work/life balance.
- With better work/life balance, employees will be able to improve their productivity.
- Best work/life balance will allow an excellent relationship between employers and employees within the workplace and also outside of work.
- Employees will be less stressed with a great work/life balance.

3.5 Employee Commitment

3.5.1 What is employee commitment?

Employee commitment is a link between an organisation and employees which, in the constructive type, makes them more ready to commit to the organisational goals. However, from the perception of the employer; employees can also feel removed from the positive connection with the organisation. There are three types of commitment:

- ***Affective commitment***: an employee continues to work in the organisation because he/she desires it; he/she trusts it and feels familiar with it.
- ***Normative commitment***: An employee keeps on working for an organisation, because he/she feels forced to carry on with his/her job.
- ***Continuance commitment***: an employee continues to work with an organisation, because he/she feels that the individual costs of leaving are excessively more than staying, such as time limits associated with the probability of getting a new job.

It is important that an organisation only retains emotionally committed employees. The maintenance of employee commitment is also in organisational collaboration. It is vital to distinguish and limit this collection and to pay the right attention to the first set that feels a positive link in order to increase their numbers. When employee commitment is affective this increases his/her value to the organisation. This is practical and raises productivity and quality (Internet 6).

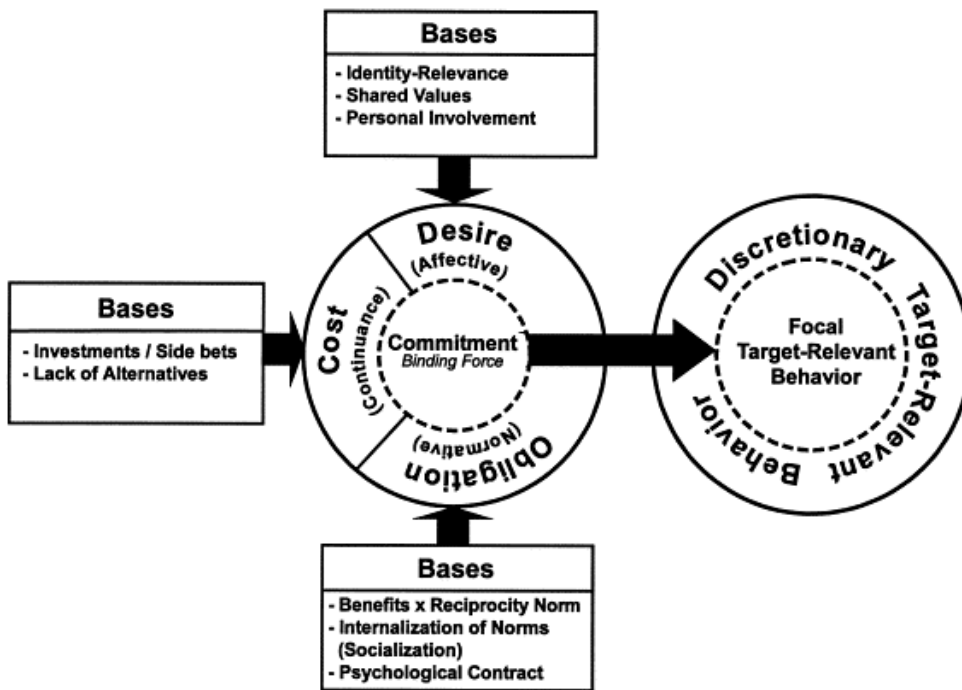
3.5.2 General Model of Workplace Commitment

In this form, commitment is signified by concentric circles. The internal circle depicts what is defined as commitment which is a force which impasses an employee to develop behaviour which is important for the achievement of one or more goals.

Commitment is evident from change based on types of inspiration and from approach, and can influence performance even without an extrinsic incentive or affirmative thoughts. The core essence of commitment is a feeling of being elevated to a way of achieving a specific objective. The external circle depicts the diverse ways of thinking which may describe any commitment. The way of thinking associated with commitment could take diverse forms such as wishes, perceived cost, or compulsion to carry on a way of achievement. These mind-sets reflect discernible constituents of the fundamental commitment creation. The power of each way of thinking could be considered and, jointly, these events replicate an employee's "commitment profile" (Internet 7). These ways of thinking reproduce desire, perception of cost and feelings of responsibility.

According to Figure 3.1, a commitment can reflect varying degrees of all three of these mind-sets.

Figure 3.1: Illustration of Workplace Commitment



Source: Adapted from Meyer and Herscovith (2001) online: www.sciencedirect.com, p. 317.

3.5.3 Well-being and employee commitment

Employee safety has been identified as a vital issue in organisations mostly in cases of stress related illness at work continues to rise (Cooper & Cartwright, 1996 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009). The comforts of employees depend on the stability between the corporal, emotional, intellectual and spiritual features of a person (Seaward, 1994 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009). According to Sutherland and Cooper (1993 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009), employee comfort does not necessarily need to be in a space, the presence or absence change in the atmosphere involves how an employee will proceed or respond to the circumstances. Investigations have demonstrated an obvious relationship between employees' working climate and their knowledge of what constitutes both psychological and physical fitness. Generating a pleasing and helpful working climate may therefore improve an employee's feeling of well-being.

Cunha and Cooper (2002 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) conclude that the cost of a stressful climate may include physical ill health symptoms (for instance: cardiovascular and gastro-intestinal problems) cerebral ill-health symptoms (for example: pressure, nervousness and despair) and less work approval. Guest and Conway

(2004 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) described employee well-being in six categories: a convenient workload; a certain individual control over the work; caring co-workers and employers; positive relations at work; a logically obvious function and a feeling of supervision or participation in modification at the workplace.

Both Spreitzer and Bandura (1996 cited in McGuire & McLaren 2009) maintain that employees' consciousness of the working situation is extremely important. This forces a win situation regarding the aptitude of employees to take over their job and level of pressure in the workplace. The two major reasons behind employee well-being are received control and social hold up. Guarantying an employee is not imposed and is in control of work is critical to employee well-being and to driving employee performance and organisational productivity. According to McGrath (1976 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009): there is a possibility that stress can present the working conditions with strain which threatens the employee's capacities and incomes for gathering it. Research has shown that perceived control guides to reduce stress levels and enhanced staff fitness (Heaney et al; 1993, cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009, p. 37) . As a result, employee empowerment and contribution enhance an employee's sense of control and increase employee health and well-being. Sustaining staff in the workplace can have a positive result on employee well-being. Employees who get a sense of being supported in the workplace have been identified to have excellent commitment (Wayne et al., 1997, cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) and are more likely to be excellent performers (Eisenberger et al., 1990 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) . Heaney et al. (1993 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) state that within organisations, employee support may enhance their comfort in three ways: firstly, it may assist an employee to deal with a stressful circumstance; secondly, it may facilitate workers to develop a new, positive perception of a stressful condition and thirdly, it may reduce the emotional distress connected with a difficult situation.

3.5.4 Physical environment and employee commitment

According to Satt (1994 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) , the contemporary work environment is characterised by electronic systems and furniture, which through constant interaction, tack our brains with sensitive information (Kornhauser, 1965; Sutherland & Cooper, 1990 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) . They have also agreed that in order to achieve high levels of employee commitment, organisations must ensure that the physical condition is conducive to organisational desires to assist interaction and privacy, formality and informality, functionality and cross-disciplinarily. Consequently, the physical environment is an instrument which can influence both parties (organisation and employees) to enhance business results and employee well-being (Huang, Robertson & Chang, 2004). To ensure that sufficient services are given to employees, it is important to create a great commitment to employees. The provision of insufficient equipment and a n

unfavourable work environment has been found to negatively affect the commitment of employees, intention to stay with the organisation, levels of job satisfaction and the perception of equality of remuneration (Bockerman & Ilmakunnas, 2006).

From a safety perspective, Gyekye (2006) indicates that environmental conditions affect employee safety perceptions, which impacts employee commitment. According to Stallworth and Kleiner (1996 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) the notion with innovation and creativity can be shaped through alteration or redesign of work settings has important implications for businesses and organisational change consultants. Hedge (1982 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) argues that open workplaces offer better levels of flexibility and promote bigger team contact as they provide interpersonal permit and ease of communication contrasted to confidential enclosed offices. Nenonen (2004 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) states that the environment conditions can maintain a sense of space permitting for the formation of unspoken information and better social contact among persons. An extra inventive working atmosphere is also linked with improved employees teamwork and higher efficiency also more optimistic employment approach and enlarged job satisfaction (Lee, 2006; Lee and Brand, 2005 cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009).

3.5.5 Management implications in employees' commitment

Fisher (2002) and Muse, Harris, Giles and Field (2008) have suggested that employees affective commitment is vital for endorsing employees and organisational fitness. Although, organisations and supervisors may encourage that connection if they devote in employee pleasure at the workplace.

Also, to promote performance, an asset of management implications may create not only committed employees, but a more creative one. Encouraging a psychologically happy employee is a precious objective in itself. To show the insights of organisational asset to predict emotional commitment, either openly or by an arbitrating role of contentment provides practitioners with possible ways to take action in support of a happier, more committed and productive personnel.

According to Graham (2005), to construct a good psychological environment and organisational fitness, managers should take care how employees recognise the organisation and its managers, also they have to pay attention to these features:

- a good sense of purpose in the organisational procedures and strategies;
- a positive perception headed for challenges, complexities and occasions;

- a respectful and trustful method to allow performance;
- a high level of sincerity and openness at each organisational level;
- interpersonal relationships distinguished by kindness and sympathy;
- the mixture of high values of performance with a culture of forgiveness and learning from mistakes.

3.6 Improving employee morale

According to Kartha (2010), when employees have a secure job where they are paid well, valued by their supervisors and where their contributions are considered important, employee morale is expected to be elevated. This should influence the value and competence of the other employees. The increase of employee morale may reduce absenteeism, employee abrasion, and disasters at the workplace. Nevertheless, supervisors tend to frequently forget that employee morale is important for the development and progress of the company. Issues such as absenteeism, tardiness, moping, and an increase in errors and decrease in quality are rather common in organisations where employee morale is very low. This can create a negative result in the development of the company. Therefore, it is vital for managers to be aware of methods of increasing employee morale.

3.6.1 Advice to enhance employee morale

Before seeking techniques for increasing employee morale, it is vital to find out the fundamental reasons for the issue. This means, managers must detect particular causes which influence a low morale amongst employees. However, the reason for poor morale amongst workers will not necessarily be the same in each organisation, but there are certain issues which may be shared by all organisations. Although, a meager wage can be one of the causes for poor employee morale, an organisation that pays high salaries to its employees doesn't necessarily have a high morale. In some cases, for example, when an employee is dismissed, this can be a source of discontent among his or her colleagues. Occasionally, when someone in the organisation is promoted, while others are overlooked, this may also be a cause for reduced morale among workers. Besides these influences, other effects that may cause poor employee morale are: intensive work, unacknowledged work, unstable working conditions, uncooperative supervisors, etc. When the cause of the issue is discovered, it can contribute toward the enhancement of employee morale within certain divisions that are specified below (Kartha, 2010).

3.6.1.1 To be grateful to the employee

All employees desire to be respected for the effort they have contributed and this is a great method to enhance their morale. Managers need to understand that when their employees are valued by them, that raises their confidence and this assists them to perform better in future endeavours. Appreciativeness can be defined as 'good job', 'well done', etc. or can be achieved through financial encouragements or bonuses. The best method of recognising a good job completed by employees is by implementing 'employee of the month' awards. The person who is the employee of the month can receive a small gift for example, a bouquet of flowers and a card (Karth, 2010).

3.6.1.2 To show some respect to the employee

Certain managers are impatient with their workers or assistants to finish their work. However, this technique can be ineffective for the achievement of work, when they do not understand that it may be a source of discontent among workers. They have to understand that employees need to be respected. Employees who are treated with admiration

and consideration by their supervisors increase morale.

3.6.1.3 Open the channel of communication

The greatest contributor toward a poor morale among employees is the perception that their thoughts and contributions do not matter to the organisation. This is mostly due to ineffective communication between workers and managers on a consistent basis. It is important for managers to request criticism on a new rule enforced by the company on workers. They must be requested to give their participation on various significant problems. If workers perceive that their thoughts are appreciated in the organisation, it will assist in improving their output (Karth, 2010).

3.6.2 Additional tips for improving employee morale

Karth (2010) has given some more advice regarding what an employer should do to enhance employees' morale. These include:

- An arrangement for an easy life for employees is one of the good methods of improving morale.
- Implementing flexible work practices or the possibility of working from home will be appreciated by the employees.

- Organising celebrations for employees once a year is a great technique of achieving excellent employee morale.
- The organisation could organise small outings or picnics for the employees and their families.

It is important to identify factors within the work setting that may have an influence on excellent job and employee performance. Creating various modifications in the workplace such as restoring it, the addition of certain good images and introducing a break room are some good ideas that an employer should implement in order to satisfy employees (Karthi, 2010).

3.7 Conclusion

Several critical areas have been explored in this chapter. Stress is perceived as a person's reaction to the environment. In addition, common causes of stress in the workplace have been developed in this chapter which may be either organisational or personal. Insecurity, harassment and aggression at the workplace have been perceived also as reasons of stress. Clearly, stress in the workplace has contributed to high levels of absenteeism and employee turnover. Identification of strategies and actions assists employees to deal with their stress. However, stress reactions can be good or bad depending on the circumstances. Stress is valuable when it protects employees in terms of risk or a change situation. Hence, employees are motivated and stimulated in their work, allowing them to be productive and creative. Stress becomes an issue when it continues over a long period, or when it occurs regularly. Furthermore, employee health can be affected. When stressors persevere for a long time, the body's defenses can no longer cope. Therefore, it is vital to provide solutions for these stressors which affect employees and organisations. Some of these solutions have been given in this chapter such as assistance to the employees to overcome their stress, assist them to become more committed to their work and also it has to be some management implications regarding their motivations, that is, in order to perform in good conditions.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology is described and explained. The research outlined the objectives of the study and the hypotheses that the researcher wishes to test. Information of target population, sample size and sampling methods are provided. Discussions focus on data collection methods and data analysis techniques for the study.

4.2 Objectives

- To determine whether flexitime as a tool can reduce the stress of administrative employees in a tertiary institution.
- To determine the influence of biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, job category and number of years in company) on flexitime.
- To determine the influence of biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, job category and number of years in company) on stress.
- To determine the extent to which the sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, work flexible practices and drawback of flexitime) and the sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment) influence the key dimensions.

4.3 Hypotheses

- There exists significant inter-correlations amongst the sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime) and sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment) respectively.
- There is a significant difference in the level of employees' perception on flexitime varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, job category, academic qualification and year in company) respectively.
- There is a significant difference in the level of employee perceptions on employee stress varying in biographical profile (age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job category and years in the company).

- The sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks) significantly account for the variance in determining the perceptions of flexitime.
- The sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment) significantly account for the variance in determining perceptions of employee stress.

4.4 Sampling technique and descriptive of the sample

4.4.1 Sampling technique

Polit and Beck (2004) define sampling as a selection of elements within a population that are measured to precisely reflect the population studied in relation to the variables under investigation and other factors that may influence those variables. The sample is a separation of population elements. There are two ways to sample individuals from a population: probability sampling and nonprobability sampling:

- **Probability sampling**

Probability sampling is a sampling technique in which each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected to be part of the sample (Jackson, 2009).

- **Nonprobability sampling**

Nonprobability sampling is used when the individual members of the population do not have an equal chance of being selected to be a member of the sample. Nonprobability sampling is typically used because it tends to be less expensive; it is easier to generate samples using this technique (Jackson, 2009).

In this study, the sample random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Simple random sampling is a sampling process that gives the same chance of choice for each part in the population, and the sample is a fair representation of the larger population (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995).

A sample of 103 employees was utilised. Questionnaires were distributed to 103 administrative employees at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville and Howard College Campuses), and 97 questionnaires were returned which represents 94 % of the sample and that represents over 50% of the population.

4.4.2 Description of the sample

The following descriptions were provided from the biographical data: age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job category and number of years in the company. A tabular illustration of biographical data is provided in Tables 4.1. to 4.6 below with brief comments:

Table 4.1: Frequency and Percentage of Age Groups

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage
20-29 years	13	13%
30-39 years	27	28%
40-49 years	37	38%
+50years	20	21%
Total	97	100%

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 illustrates that the largest percentage of the sample 38% ($n = 37$) is between the ages 40-49, followed by the age group 30-39 with 28% ($n = 27$), and 50 years and over with 21% ($n = 20$). The smallest percentage are those in the 20-29 with 13% ($n = 13$). Hence, it shows that most of the employees in the organisation, and for the sample that was taken, fall mainly into the 30-50 years and over age category.

Figure 4.1: Sample composition by Age

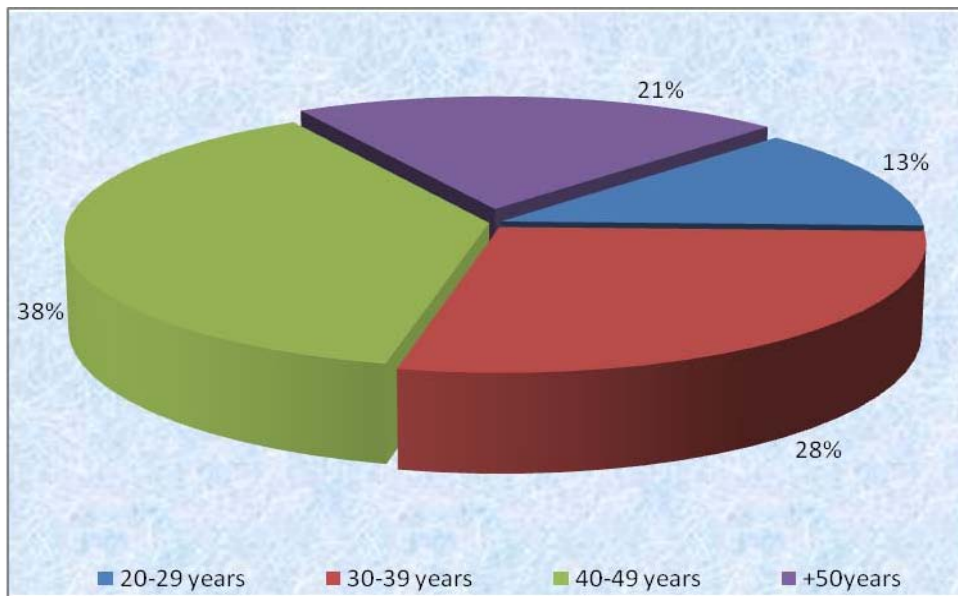


Table 4.2: Frequency and Percentages of the Gender Group

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Male	45	46 %
Female	52	54 %
Total	97	100%

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 illustrate the composition of the sample in terms of gender. Of the total sample of 97 individuals, 52 (54%) were female and 45 (46%) were male.

Figure 4.2: Sample composition by Gender

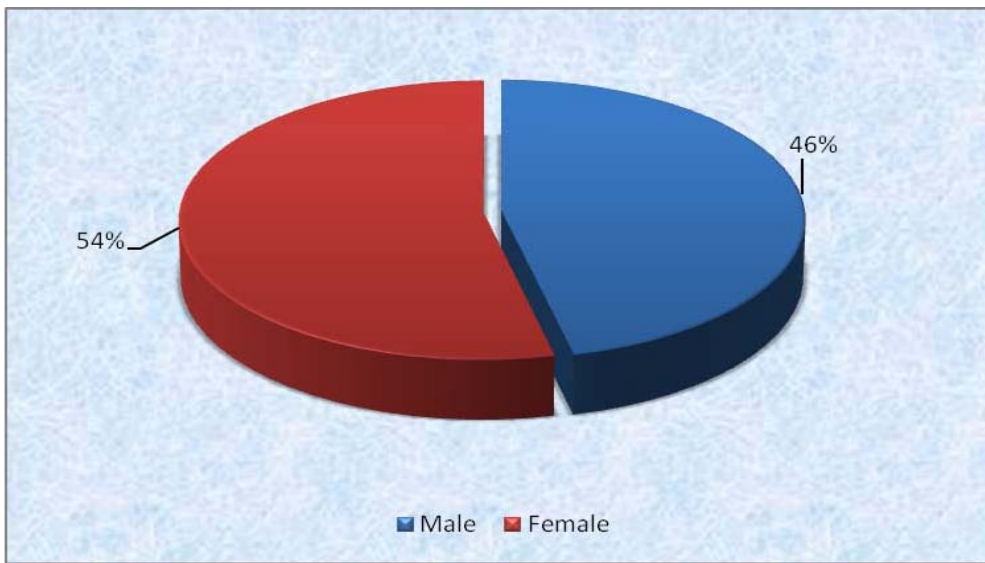


Table 4.3 Frequency and Percentages of the Marital Status

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Never married	37	38%
Married	45	46%
Divorced	13	14%
Widowed	2	2%
Total	97	100%

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 illustrate the composition of the sample according to marital status. It is evident that 46% (n = 45) are married, 38% (n = 37) never married, 14% (n = 13) are divorced. Only 2% (n = 2) were widowed in this organisation.

Figure 4.3: Sample composition by Marital Status

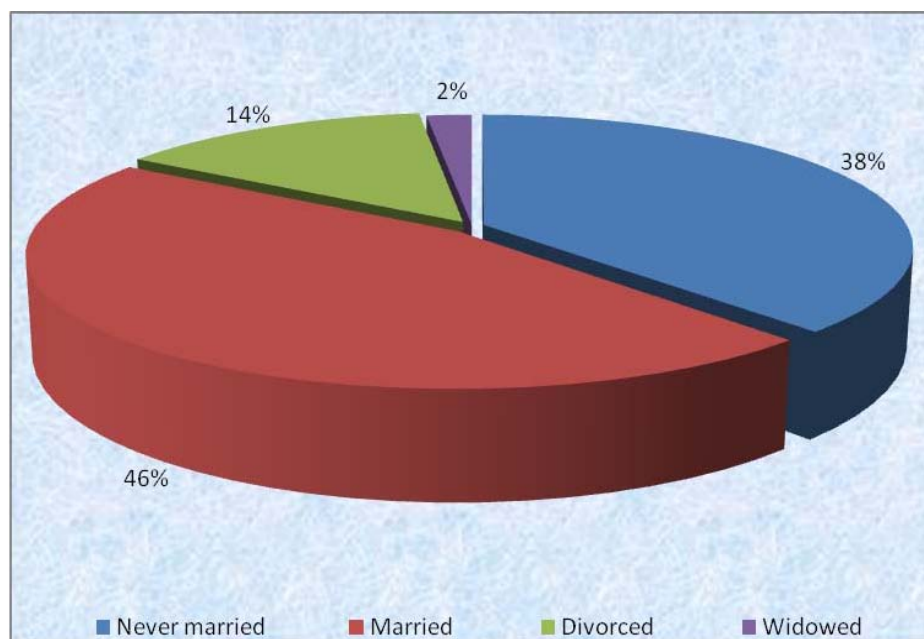


Table 4.4 Frequency and Percentages of academic qualification

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Standard 8-10	11	11%
Diploma/certificate	28	29%
Undergraduate degree	24	25%
Postgraduate	34	35%
Total	97	100%

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 show that the sample composition in terms of academic qualifications. Of the total sample, 35% (n = 34) have postgraduate qualifications, whilst 29% (n = 28) have diplomas or certificates, followed by undergraduate degree 25% (n = 24), and only 11% (n = 11) of the respondents have Standard 8-10. The majority of the administrative employees have qualifications.

Figure 4.4: Sample composition by academic qualification

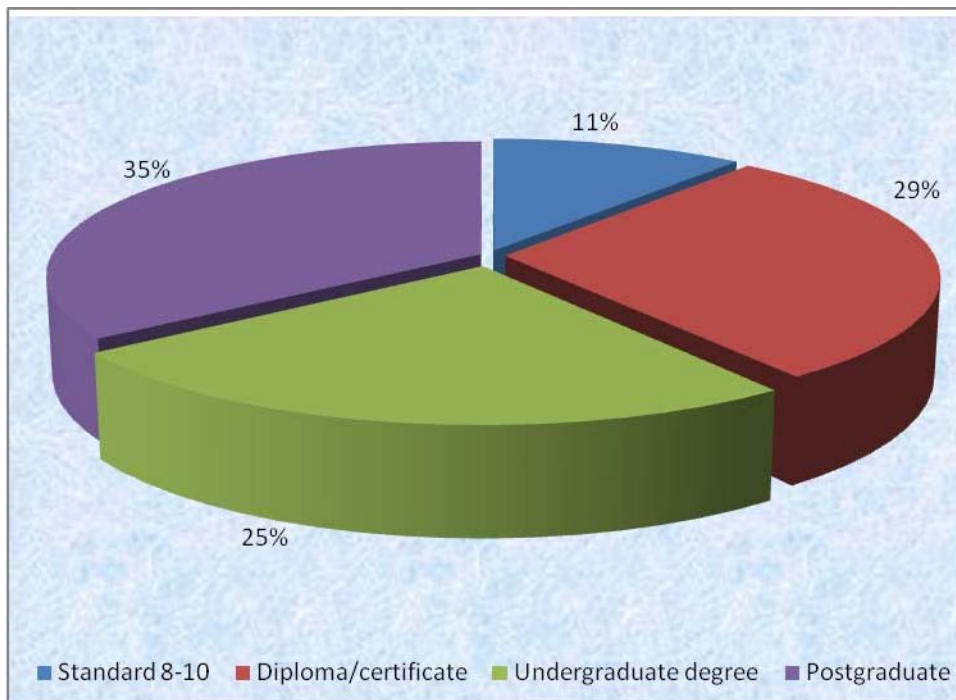


Table 4.5: Frequency and Percentages of job category

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Manager	3	3%
Supervisor	10	10%
Employees	84	87%
Total	97	100%

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 illustrate the composition of the sample in terms of job category. Of the total sample of 97 individuals, the majority were employees 87% ($n = 84$), followed by supervisors 10% ($n = 10$) and then by managers with 3% ($n = 3$). Hence, the majority of the sample comprises employees.

Figure 4.5: Sample composition by job category

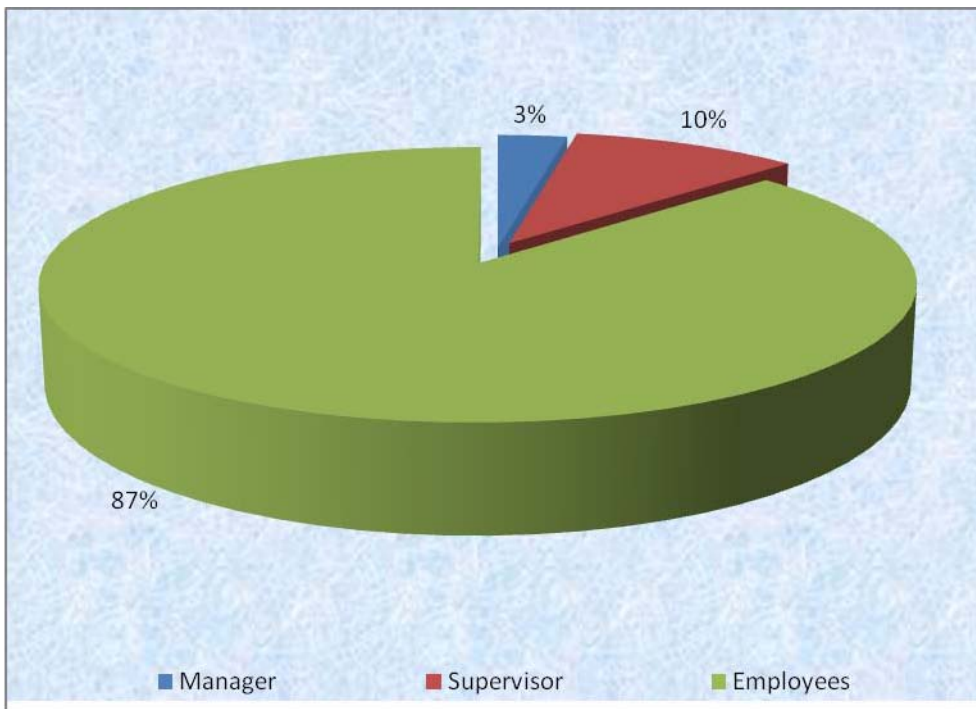


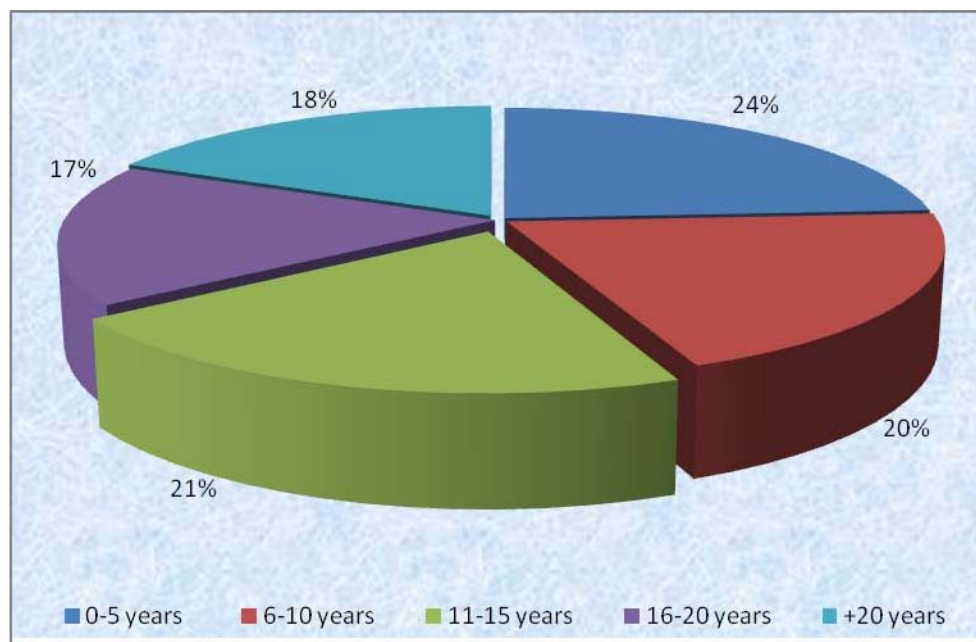
Table 4.6: Frequency and Percentages of length of service

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage
0-5 years	23	24%
6-10 years	19	20%
11-15 years	20	21%
16-20 years	17	17%
+20 years	18	18%
Total	97	100%

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 illustrate the composition of the sample according to length of service. It can be established that the highest percentage of newcomers were 24% ($n = 23$), followed by those who have 11-15 years of experience 21% ($n = 20$), then followed by those who have 6-10 years of service 19% ($n = 19$) and

those have more than 20 years were 18% (n = 18). In last place are those who have 16-20 years of service 17% (n = 17). It is evident that a greater percentage of employees 24% (n = 23) have 0-5 years of service.

Figure 4.6: Sample composition by length of service



4.5 Data Collection Method

According to Kumar (1996), certain techniques can be applied to collect data. Data collection method comprise dialogues; questionnaires personally administered, transmitted throughout mail or electronically. Although the observation of individuals and actions with or without videotaping or audio recording, and a diversity of other motivational process, such as projective investigations (Sekaran, 2000). The questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents also indicating the purpose of the study. The respondents were informed about their rights and duties. They were informed that participation is voluntary, and only completed questionnaires will be used. Respondents were requested to sign the informed consent document, which was attached.

4.5.1 Description of Questionnaire

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), the term questionnaire suggests a set of questions; a typical questionnaire will possibly have many statements as questions, particularly if the researcher is involved in determining the range to which respondents hold a certain position or perception. Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that the fundamental purpose of a questionnaire is to get evidence and views about experiences from persons on a particular matter. Generally, questionnaires are mainly the instrument used the most.

4.5.1.1 Construction of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire applied in this study comprised four parts, which are:

Section 1: Biographical identification

The biographical information requests subjects to provide data on: age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job category and professional experience in the organisation.

Section 2: Perception of Flexitime at the workplace

- 1) Questions 1 to 5 tapped benefits of flexitime,
- 2) Questions 6 to 10 tapped flexible work practice
- 3) Questions 11 to 15 tapped drawbacks of flexitime

Section 3: Stress scale with 15 items

- 1) Questions 1 to 5 tapped stress reduction,
- 2) Questions 6 to 10 tapped work/life balance
- 3) Questions 11 to 15 tapped employee commitment

All responses of the questionnaire are made on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). The respondents need to indicate the level in which they agree or disagree by marking the block. A high score shows a stronger respondent perception with flexitime in their workplace and a low score shows that respondents are not attracted by flexitime.

The questionnaire used in this study are instruments, and was adapted from Brien & Hayden (2008) and from Wickramasinghe & Jayabandu (2007). This was for perception of flexitime and stress scales respectively.

4.5.1.2 Psychometric Properties of the Questionnaire

An instrument relates to any device that is used for the measurement of data and in this study the questionnaires are instruments. There is an important criterion that instruments must fulfill, that is reliability

4.5.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the capacity of measurement to produce consistent results. Reliability is equivalent to consistency. Therefore, a method is reliable if it produces the same results whenever it is repeated, and is not sensitive to the researcher, the research conditions or respondents. Reliability is also characterised by precision and objectivity. In reliability, there are two major aspects, which are internal reliability and external reliability (Sarantakos, 2005). Internal reliability means consistency of results within the site, and that data are plausible within that site. External reliability refers to consistency and replicability of data across sites. The purpose of reliability testing is to ensure that the instruments in question are robust and not sensitive to changes of the researcher, the respondent or the research condition (Sarantakos, 2005).

In this study, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was computed to determine reliability of the data.

4.5.3 Administration of the questionnaire

A pilot test was conducted to ascertain that the respondents were able to understand the questionnaire without any ambiguity and to complete it correctly. The pilot study was tested for appropriate wording and to check whether it was meaningful to the respondents, or whether the questions asked are appropriate (Sekaran, 2003).

After the pilot study, the questionnaires were distributed to the administrative employees at two campuses of the target organisation. Every questionnaire was accompanied with a letter of consent outlining the nature and purpose of the research project. The respondents were informed about their rights and duties. Furthermore, respondents were requested to sign the informed consent document. The respondents with the questionnaire identified no inconveniences. However, certain respondents were reluctant to complete the questionnaire. It has taken about 3 weeks to receive the questionnaires. From the 103 questionnaires, 97 questionnaires were completed with; a response rate of 94 %.which is statistically acceptable to conduct a research with that sample.

4.6 Analysis of Data

Data analysis procedures can be divided into quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative techniques employ a variety of statistical analyses to make sense of data, whereas qualitative techniques begin by identifying themes in the data and relationships between these themes (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). From a design perspective, it is important to ensure that the type of data analysis, which is employed, matches the research paradigm and data, and can answer the research question.

In this study, quantitative techniques were used. In addition, descriptive and inferential statistics are used in this study to analyse the data obtained.

4.6.1 Descriptive statistics

They include frequencies, measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. In addition, descriptive statistics give details of data and do not show the conclusions of data (Trochim, 2009). They inform the researcher the central tendency of the variable, significance of standard score of a participant on a specific research evaluation. The researcher could also establish the delivery of scores on some research gauge or the scope in which scores emerge. Furthermore, descriptive statistics can be applied to inform the researcher the frequency with which certain answers or scores occur on a certain study measure (Trochim, 2009).

4.6.1.1 Frequency

Frequencies may be described as the number of times a response occurs within a given category. It allows the researcher to calculate percentages of the occurrence and represent the data, such as, bar charts, pie charts and histograms. Frequencies have been used in this study to get a summary of the sample (Sekaran, 2000). Frequencies are used in the current study to obtain a profile of the sample.

4.6.1.2 Measures of Central Tendency

Measures of central tendency include mode, median and mean:

- **Mode**

Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2005) state that mode is the least stable and least common of the three measures of central tendency. However, it is also the only one that is appropriate for nominal data. The mode is also the

simplest measure of central tendency, as it is simply the significance that arises most frequently in a distribution and can therefore be easily read from any frequency distribution.

- **Median**

The median is the middlemost point in a distribution of data, ordinal or interval, which has been set up in order of size. Although, median is typical in the sense that it captures the central point rather than either extremes. The median cuts the distribution into two equal parts. When there is an odd number of a measurement, the median is the middle number on the scale; on the other hand, when there is an even number of measurements, it is the average of the two middle observations (Strydom et al., 2005).

- **Mean**

Strydom et al. (2005) maintain that the mean is the addition of the measurements divided by the number of measurements. It is influenced by both the magnitude of the individual measurements and by the numeral of measurements placed. The mean also specifies the centre of gravity or balance point of the distribution. Strydom et al. (2005) state that the mean is the most stable and versatile of measures of central tendency and it is the most widely used for statistical inference.

4.6.1.3 Measures of Dispersion

According to Sekaran (2003), measures of dispersion reflect how spread out the data is. The measures of dispersion are the range, the standard deviation and the variance:

- **Range**

The range is the difference between the largest and smallest measurement of the raw scores. It is obtained by the smallest value from the largest value. It is considered an unstable measure of variability, and it can also be misleading. It depends entirely on the two extreme values, and does not utilise the other values in the sample. Two data sets with the same maximum and minimum values will have the same range, regardless of the spread of the values in between (Strydom et al., 2005).

- **Standard Deviation**

The standard deviation is a measure of dispersion and can be thought of as a measure of how much, on average, people differ from the sample mean (Gilbert, 2008, p. 168). Cooper and Emory (1995) state that standard deviation is the most frequently used measure of spread because it improves interpretability by removing the variance's square and expressing deviation in their original units. Like the mean, extreme scores affect the standard deviation (Cooper & Emory, 1995).

- **Variance**

The variance and standard deviation are the most useful and widely employed of the measure of dispersion (Strydom et al., 2005, p. 234). The variance of a variable can never be negative. The more variation there is between the sample values, the larger the average deviations will be, resulting in a larger sample variance.

4.6.2 Inferential Statistics

According to Trochim (2009), the inferential statistics permit the investigator to start the creation of inferences about the hypotheses on the foundation of the data collected. Inferential statistics look for the generalisation further than the data in the research to discover patterns that apparently exist in the target population. The different inferential statistical techniques that will be used to test the various hypotheses include the t-test, analysis of variance, multiple regression, correlation, Cronbach's co-efficient alpha.

4.6.2.1 Correlation

According to Sarantakos (2005), a correlation is a method that examines the relationship between two variables. More specifically, correlations examine three major aspects of relationships. These are:

- The presence or absence of a correlation, that is, whether or not there is a correlation between the variables in question.
- The direction of correlation, that is, whether an existing correlation is positive or negative. The strength of a correlation, that is, whether an existing correlation is strong or weak.

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) state that the research's correlation is used to detect the existence of a relationship between variables, and to allow for an estimation of the type and strength of non-causal relationship.

4.6.2.2 t-test

According to Strydom et al. (2005) t-test, which are, tests of statistical significance have been developed to ascertain whether the results obtained by data analysis are statistically significant, or whether they are meaningful and not merely the result of chance. These tests are excluded on what is called a level of significance (Strydom et al., 2005).

4.6.2.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

This technique is used when there are more than two independent groups that need to be compared on a single quantitative measure or score. Specially, it tests whether the groups have different average scores. (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, Clark, Westhuizen, 2007).

ANOVA is appropriate if:

- The quantitative variable is normally distributed in each population.
- The spread (variance) of the variable is the same in all populations.

According to Cooper and Emory (1995), the statistical method for testing hypotheses is that the significations of certain population are identical. This is recognised as analysis of variance. Furthermore, they identified that the only way of analysis of variance uses one factor, to make effects model to compare effects of one factor on incessant dependent variable.

4.6.2.4 Multiple Regression

According Sekaran (2000) multiple regression is an analysis where more than one predictor is jointly regressed against the criterion variable. Sekaran (2000) states that multiple regression allows the understanding of how the variance in the dependent variable is explained by a set of predictors. Multiple regression analysis is one of the most commonly used multivariate procedures in the social sciences, and is used to build models for predicting

scores on one variable (the dependent variable) from scores on a number of other variables (the independent variables) (Blanche, 2006).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology and statistical methods used to analyse the data from the questionnaire. It highlights the research design used and all procedures utilised for data collection and analysis. A statistical analysis of the data will provide conclusions about this study. The next chapter presents the findings.

Chapter 5

Presentation of results

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, data was captured on MS Excel spreadsheets and processed using both the internal function of MS Excel as well as the Stata IC version 11. The results were obtained after applying the statistical techniques identified in chapter 4. These statistical methods include descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and statistical analysis for the questionnaire.

5.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics identifies the essential characteristics of a random variable to produce a profile of its behaviour. In this study, it was achieved through summary measures, which included means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, which were calculated for each of the variables in the study. For this study, responses were required to respond according to a five point of Likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree, to disagree, to neutral, to agree and to strongly agree.

The items and the responses are related to the sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime) and employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment). This provides the researcher to determine the perceptions of the administrative employees on flexitime and employee stress in the organisation. The greater the mean score value, the greater the level of employees perceptions on flexitime and employee stress. The results were processed using description statistics in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Descriptive statistics of flexitime and stress

Dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Critical range
Flexitime					
Benefits of flexitime	3.6	0.8	1.8	5.0	3.0 - 4.2
Flexible work practices	3.8	0.8	1.0	5.0	3.4 - 4.2
Drawbacks of flexitime	3.0	0.6	1.4	5.0	2.6 - 3.2
Employee Stress					
Stress reduction	3.6	0.7	1.8	5.0	3.2 - 4.0
Work/life balance	3.2	0.8	1.4	5.0	2.6 - 3.8
Employee commitment	3.7	0.7	2.0	5.0	3.2 - 4.2

The mean score value for the sub-dimensions of flexitime (Table 5.1) is such that flexible work practice has the highest mean ($M = 3.8$), followed by the benefits of flexitime ($M = 3.6$) and lastly, drawbacks of flexitime ($M = 3.0$). The analysis of the flexitime sub-dimensions as indicated in Table 5.1 reflects that there are varying levels with the administrative employees perception. Hence, the administrative employees have a greater perception regarding flexible work practices in the organisation and they support flexibility with work. This is verified when the mean score value is compared against a maximum attainable score of 5.

In terms of the sub-dimensions of employee stress (Table 5.1) employee commitment has the highest mean with ($M = 3.7$), followed by stress reduction ($M = 3.6$) and lastly, work/life balance ($M = 3.2$). The analysis of employee stress sub-dimensions in Table 5.1 reflects that there are varying levels with the administrative employees' perception. The analysis of the stress variables as indicated in Table 5.1 reflects that administrative employees are convinced moderately in terms of work/life balance, stress reduction and employee commitment.

The mean scores for key dimensions of flexitime and employee stress are reflected in Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2, respectively.

Figure 5.1: Descriptive statistics key dimensions of flexitime

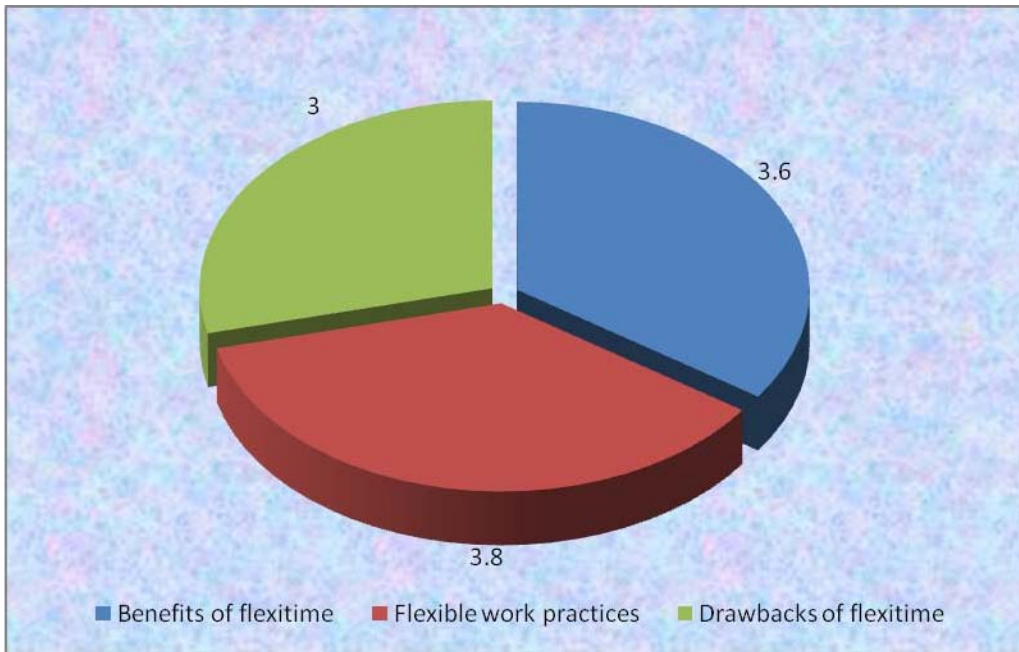
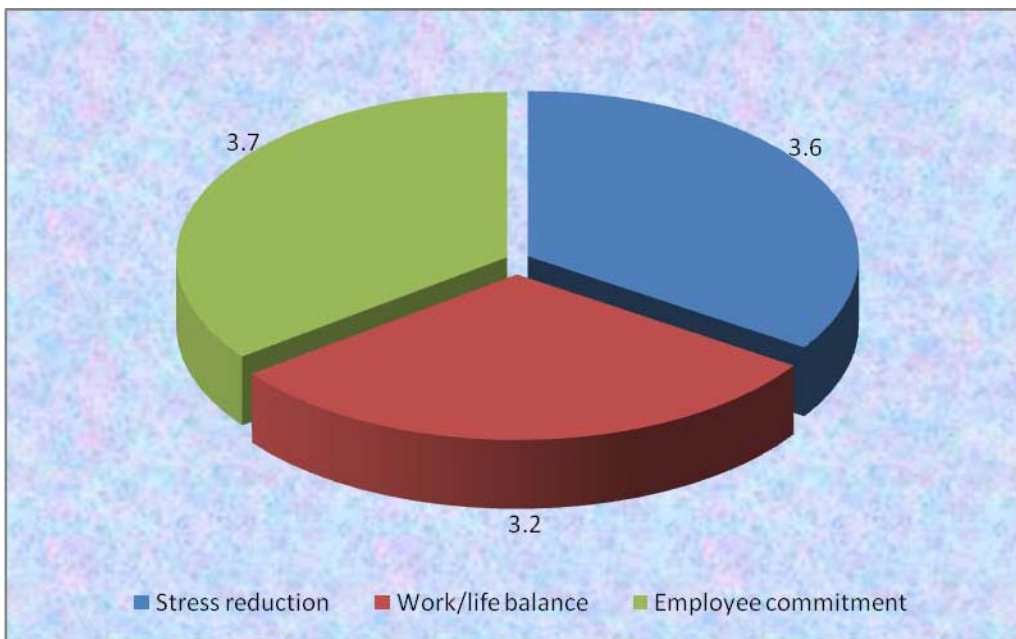


Figure 5.2: Descriptive statistics key dimensions of employee stress



5.3 Inferential statistics

In order to make decisions on the hypotheses of the study, inferential statistics are used, namely intercorrelations, t-test, ANOVA, and multiple regression. Inferential statistics enable the researcher to draw conclusions regarding the hypotheses of the study.

Hypothesis 1

There exists significant inter-correlations amongst the sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime) and sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment), respectively (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Inter-correlation amongst the sub-dimensions of flexitime and employee stress

Sub-dimensions of flexitime and employee stress	Benefits of flexitime	Flexible work practice	Drawbacks of flexitime
Stress reduction			
r	0.421	0.422	-0.090
p	<0.001**	<0.001**	0.379
Work /life balance			
r	0.190	0.309	-0.028
p	0.062	0.002**	0.784
Employee commitment			
r	0.558	0.462	0.001
p	<0.001**	0.001**	0.994

**p<0.01

Table 5.2 indicates that:

The benefits of flexitime significantly correlate with stress reduction and employee commitment, respectively, at the 1% level of significance.

Flexible work practices significantly correlates with stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment, at 1% of level of significance.

However, Table 5.2 indicates that there are no inter-correlations between benefits of flexitime and work/life balance, and with drawbacks of flexitime and sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment). Hence, hypothesis 1 may be partially accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant difference in the level of employee perceptions on flexitime varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, job category, academic qualification and years in company) respectively (Table 5.3 and Table 5.4).

Table 5.3 Analysis of variance: Difference in flexitime based on biographical profiles

Biographical profiles	Benefits of flexitime		Flexible work practice		Drawbacks of flexitime	
	F	p	F	p	F	p
Age	0.84	0.477	1.09	0.356	1.71	0.171
Marital status	1.18	0.321	1.67	0.178	0.35	0.792
Job category	7.23	0.001**	3.23	0.044*	1.3	0.277
Academic qualification	1.02	0.402	0.37	0.828	3.42	0.012*
Years in company	1.02	0.403	0.86	0.494	1.2	0.316

**p<0.01

*p<0.05

Table 5.3 indicates that there is a significant difference in the benefits of flexitime sub-dimensions amongst employees varying in job category, at the 1% level of significance. In order to determine where these differences lie, the post hoc Scheffe's test was conducted (Table 5.4).

Table 5.3 indicates that there is a significant difference in the flexible work practice sub-dimension amongst employees varying in job category at the 5% level of significance. Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the drawbacks sub-dimension of flexitime amongst employees varying in academic qualification at the 5% level of significance. In order to determine exactly where the differences lie, the post hoc Scheffe's test was conducted (Table 5.5).

Table 5.4: Post Hoc Scheffe's Test: Job Category

Sub-dimensions of flexitime	Job category	Mean	Standard deviation
Benefits of flexitime	Manager	4.867	0.231
	Supervisor	4.160	0.645
	Employee	3.521	0.781
Flexible work practice	Manager	4.733	0.306
	Supervisor	4.020	0.945
	Employee	3.686	0.773

Table 5.4 indicates that managers with the highest mean score in this organisation, perceived the benefits of flexitime positively, followed by the supervisors, whereas employees with a low mean score have some reservations and do not view the benefits of flexitime with great expectations as managers and supervisors.

Table 5.4 indicates that managers followed by supervisors support flexible work practice positively, whereas employees with a low mean score, were the least concerned and do not perceive flexible work practices positively as managers and supervisors.

Table 5.5: Post Hoc Scheffe's Test: Academic Qualifications

Sub-dimensions of flexitime	Academic qualifications	Mean	Standard deviation
Drawbacks of flexitime	Std 8-10	2.844	0.477
	Dip/Certificate	2.977	0.656
	Undergraduate	2.918	0.435
	Postgraduate degree	3.193	0.599

Table 5.5 indicates that the administrative employees with postgraduate qualification have reservations as they have the highest level of drawbacks of flexitime. Employees with Std 8-10 have the least level of drawbacks with the introduction of flexitime in this organisation.

Table 5.5 indicates that the other biographical variables (age, marital status and years in the company) did not influence employee perceptions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks), respectively.

Table 5.6: t-test: Benefits, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime based on gender

Biographical profiles	Benefits of flexitime		Flexible work practice		Drawbacks	
	t	p	t	p	t	p
Gender	0.296	0.768	1.147	0.254	1.670	0.098

The result presented in Table 5.6 indicates that gender did not impact on the sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits, flexible work practice and drawbacks) respectively.

Accordingly, hypothesis 2 may be partially accepted.

Hypothesis 3

There is a significant difference in the level of employee perceptions on employee stress varying in biographical profile (age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job category and years in the company).

Table 5.7: Analysis of variance: Differences in stress based on biographical profile

Biographical profiles	Stress reduction		Work/life balance		Employee commitment	
	F	p	F	p	F	p
Age	0.55	0.6513	1.03	0.385	1.43	0.240
Marital status	0.85	0.469	0.26	0.855	1.67	0.179
Job category	0.39	0.677	0.46	0.633	2.64	0.076
Academic qualification	0.94	0.443	0.49	0.740	0.9	0.467
Years in company	0.52	0.718	0.21	0.931	0.7	0.596

The results presented in Table 5.7 indicate that there is no significant difference in the sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment) and biographical profiles (age, marital status, academic qualification, job category and years in the company).

Table 5.8: t-test: Stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment based on gender

Biographical profile	Stress reduction		Work/life balance		Employee commitment	
	t	p	t	p	t	p
Gender	0.863	0.390	0.681	0.497	-0.855	0.395

Table 5.8 indicates that there is no significant difference in the stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment sub-dimensions of employee stress varying in gender. Hence, hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Hypothesis 4

The sub-dimensions of flexitime (benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks) significantly account for the variance of determining the perceptions of flexitime.

Table 5.9: Multiple regression for flexitime

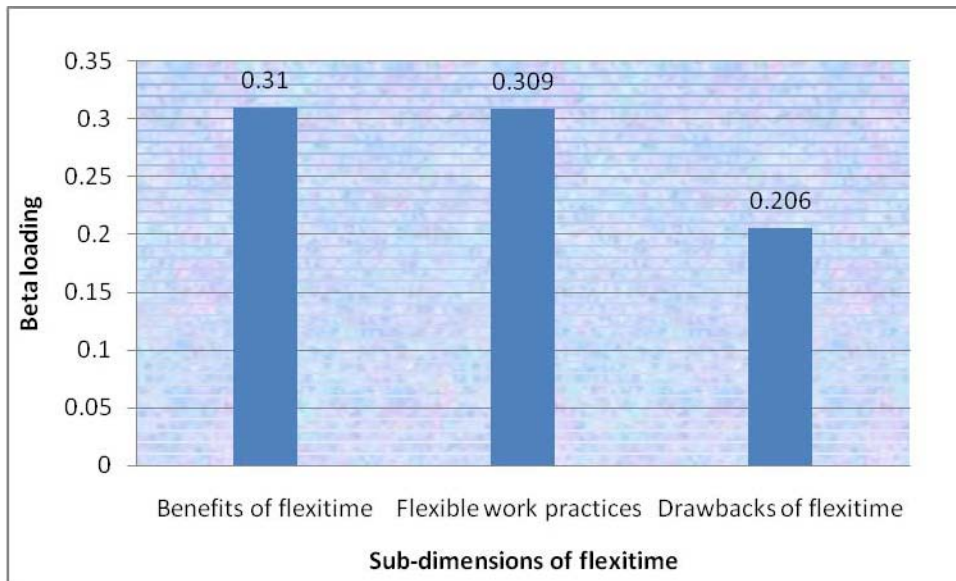
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the estimation
1	0.691	0.966	0.965	0.128
2	0.736	0.964	0.963	0.136
3	0.796	0.932	0.930	0.148
Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	p
Benefits of flexitime	0.345	0.000	0.310	0.008**
Flexible work practices	0.340	0.000	0.309	0.014*
Drawbacks of flexitime	0.168	0.000	0.206	0.259

**p<0.01,

*p<0.05

Table 5.9 indicates that the sub-dimensions of the benefits of flexitime, flexible work practice and drawbacks of flexitime significantly account for 96.5% of the variance in determining administrative employees perceptions of flexitime. The remaining 3.5% are factors that lie outside the jurisdiction of the study. Hence hypothesis 4 may be accepted. However, each of the sub-dimensions impact on flexitime to varying degrees. Based on the Beta loadings in Table 5.9, it is evident that the benefits of flexitime (Beta = 0.310), followed closely by flexible work practice (Beta = 0.309), and lastly drawbacks (Beta = 0.206) impact on flexitime at a diminishing level. This is depicted in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Impact of benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime



Hypothesis 5

The sub-dimensions of employee stress (stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment) significantly account for the variance in determining perceptions of employee stress.

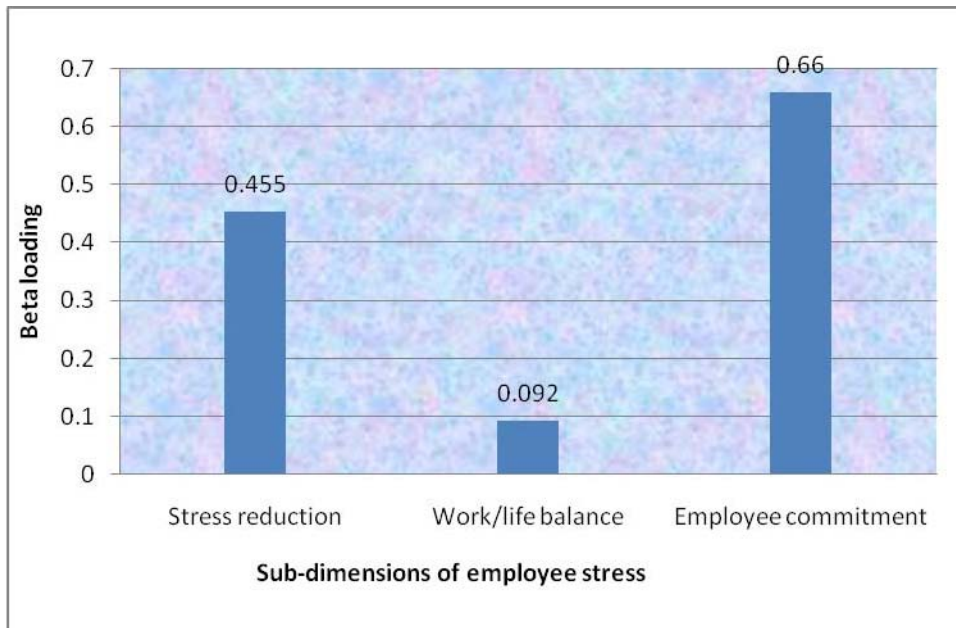
Table 5.10: Multiple regression for employee stress

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the estimation
1	0.761	0.959	0.957	0.137
2	0.888	0.928	0.926	0.160
3	0.697	0.968	0.967	0.126
Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	p
Stress reduction	0.409	0.000	0.455	0.004 **
Work/life balance	0.095	0.000	0.092	0.555
Employee commitment	0.595	0.000	0.660	<0.001**

**p<0.01

Table 5.10 indicates that the sub-dimensions of stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment significantly account for 95.7% of the variance in determining employee stress. The remaining 4.3% are factors that lie outside the jurisdiction of the study. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be accepted. However, each of these sub-dimensions impact on employee stress to varying degrees. Based on the Beta loadings in Table 5.10, it is evident that employee commitment (Beta = 0.660), followed by stress reduction (Beta = 0.455) and lastly, work/life balance (Beta = 0.092) impact on employee stress to varying levels. The level of impact of the sub-dimensions of employee stress is graphically depicted in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Impact of stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment on employee stress



5.4. Reliability

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha measures the reliability in this study. The reliability analysis was conducted separately on the dimensions of flexitime and employee stress respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha values are indicated in Table 5.11 for flexitime and Table 5.12 for employee stress respectively.

Table 5.11: Reliability: Flexitime

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha
0.850

Table 5.11 indicates that the items in the Flexitime questionnaire have consistency and are reliable.

Table 5.12: Reliability: Employee Stress

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha
0.890

Table 5.12 indicates that the items in the Stress questionnaire have consistency and are very reliable.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the study objectively by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Furthermore, tabular and graphical representations were used. Descriptive and inferential statistics provided a description and interpretation of results by using a number of methods.

Chapter 6

Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. Where comparative literature is available, reference is made to previous researchers and findings of others researchers. The current research is valuable when one compares and contrasts the findings obtained with that of other researchers.

6.2 Dimensions of flexitime

In the organisation, flexible work practice had the greatest impact on employees, followed closely by the benefits of flexitime and lastly the drawbacks of flexitime. The discussions are based on input from the mean for each variable.

6.2.1 Benefits of flexitime

In this study, when assessing employee perceptions on the benefits of flexitime, it was found that the benefits of flexitime was second out of the three sub-dimensions of flexitime. This implies that the administrative employee perceptions in this regard are at a moderate level in this organisation.

However, against a maximum attainable score of 5, benefits of flexitime (Mean = 3.6) reflect that employees have some reluctance and are skeptical. Ridgley et al. (2005) indicate that globally, flexible work schedules have been increasingly accepted and provide potential benefits for both employers and employees. The authors also indicate that the use of flexitime is extremely important and it is easy to reach agreement on it. The ability or opportunity to set their own start and end times for their working day improves employee morale and productivity, as employees are able to attain a greater fit between their workplace and personal commitments. Mondy and Noe (2005) assert that flexibility in the workplace can be an important strategic factor in keeping a good number of brilliant employees. The advantages of a flexible workplace include the improvement of productivity and better recruitment and retention of staff, all of which provide the company with a better image.

6.2.2 Flexible work practice

When assessing employees' perceptions on the introduction of flexitime in the organisation, it was found that flexible work practice was first out of the three sub-dimensions of flexitime. Furthermore, against a maximum attainable score of 5, flexible work practices (Mean = 3.8) reflect that these employees perceive flexible work practice with potential value. According to Brien and Hayden (2008), over the past 20 years, there have been several reasons why flexible work practices (FWP) have quickly emerged. Research has indicated how FWP have emerged, as well as factors contributing to their entrenchment within organisations. Administrations which inspire work market flexibility have certainly had a good result, as they identify methods of flexible work which make the job easier, for instance teleworking and accessing control. Brien and Hayden (2008) have identified five major reasons for the introduction of flexible work practices: to achieve work requirements; to attain family friendly objectives; administrative plans; fairness program; and management with skills deficiencies, employee retention, and prevention of a stressful workplace and to reduce absenteeism.

Drew and Murtagh (2005) state that flexible work options will be helpful to attract qualified, experienced employees who would not ordinarily join an organisation, as well as retain those who may want to leave. The resultant effect would be decreased employee turnover and secure personnel. Furthermore, managers are making a considerable effort in terms of work investment, training and career development.

6.2.3 Drawbacks of flexitime

When assessing employees' perceptions on the introduction of flexitime in this organisation, it was found that drawbacks of flexitime surfaced third out of the three sub-dimension determining employee perceptions of flexitime. This implies that employees are cautious in this regard.

However, against a maximum attainable score of 5, drawbacks of flexitime (Mean = 3.0) reflect a high level of employee reservations as flexitime is non-traditional work and employees may be required to fill in for work colleagues who are on flexible leave. Ridgley et al. (2005) indicate that flexitime can create potential difficulties for employers when there is insufficient employee coverage during and outside core office hours. Employees need to be careful of how many hours are accumulated or how much credit is built up during periods of increased workload, as it is possible that they may not be able to take all of the time off and will therefore have to forfeit it. Depending on the core time period designated by the employer, employees who begin their

workday very early could possibly have to work longer hours, in order to be present during this core period. This means that they would not be able to start work early. A further negative impact on business is if customers were to call outside of the core working hours and not be able to reach the staff member concerned. Scheduling meetings could become more complicated, with difficulties experienced in setting up of long-standing regular meetings as a result of the unavailability of all employees at the required times.

Brien and Hayden (2008) identified possible barriers to the introduction of flexitime, which include the lack of a definite policy regarding flexitime within the organisation, a lack of resources, excess reliance on the optional feature of workplace flexibility, insufficient right to use the flexitime plan and a deficient understanding of the scheme.

6.3 Dimensions of employee stress

In this organisation, employee commitment has the greatest impact on employees, followed closely by stress reduction and lastly by work/life balance. The discussions are based on input from the mean score for each variable.

6.3.1 Stress reduction

In this study, when assessing employee perceptions on stress reduction, it was found that stress reduction was second out of the three sub-dimensions of employee stress. This implies that the administrative employees view stress reduction with discretion and awareness in this organisation. Hence, against a maximum attainable score of 5, stress reduction (Mean = 3.6) reflects that employees view stress reduction with moderation. Segal et al. (2008) state that when an employee's needs are supported, he or she is stronger and more resistant to stress. A good employee will be able to deal with stressful work without becoming overwhelmed. To take care of employees does not require a full standard of living. Employee moods can also be improved by small things, such as increasing their energy, which makes them feel as though they are back in the driver's seat.

Robbins and Decenzo (2001) indicate that one of the first means of reducing stress is to confirm that employees are properly suited to their jobs and that they appreciate the extent of their authority. Furthermore, by allowing employees to know exactly what is expected of them, role conflict and ambiguity can be reduced. Redesigning tasks can also help ease stressors connected to working too hard. Employees should also have some input in redesigns that affect them. This indicates that when employees are more involved, they are less stressed.

6.3.2 Work/life balance

In this study, when assessing employee perceptions on work/life balance, it was found that work/life balance was third out of the three sub-dimensions of employee stress. This implies that employees have reservations, are not supportive and associate barriers to this sub-dimension. However, against a maximum attainable score of 5, work/life balance (Mean = 3.2) may address a critical issue of compatibility with certain positions in this organisation. Williams (2010) identified work/life balance as the balance between the demands, time and effort required by work and the workplace, and the effect that it has on a person's individual, family and social life, and vice versa. A suitable work/life balance is attained when the work constituent does not dominate the person's life and cause harm through the effects of negative stress.

Bird (2006) shares the same sentiment as Williams (2010) with regard to balancing lifestyle and work needs. Furthermore, Bird (2006) asserts that with a good work/life balance, employees will be able to improve their productivity, and there will be less stress.

6.3.3 Employee commitment

In this study, when assessing perceptions on employee commitment, it was found that employee commitment was the first out of the three sub-dimensions of employee stress. This implies that employees perceive employee commitment as a critical factor for a more harmonious work environment. However, against a maximum attainable score of 5, employee commitment (Mean = 3.7) reflects that these employees perceive employee commitment and stress reduction positively.

McGuire and McLaren (2009) highlight that employee commitment may enhance their comfort in three ways: firstly, it may assist an employee to deal with a stressful circumstance; secondly, it may facilitate workers to develop a new, positive perception of a stressful condition; and thirdly, it may reduce the emotional distress connected with a difficult situation.

According to Wayne et al. (1997, cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009), employees who have a sense of being sustained in the workplace have been identified to have excellent commitment and are more likely to be excellent performers.

6.4. The relationship between flexitime and employee stress

In terms of the study, the benefits of flexitime significantly correlate with stress reduction and employee commitment. Ridgley et al. (2005) assert that flexitime is trusted by employees because it has given them some control over their working conditions. With flexitime, employees are less stressed when dealing with emergencies because they are able to work back any time taken off to deal with these situations. In addition, employee stress levels are usually reduced, and their morale is increased as they enjoy their work more, and feel more valued. Therefore, they are likely to be more supportive of their organisation.

According to McGrath (1976, cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009), there is a possibility that stress can present the working conditions with strain which threatens the employee's capacities. However, received control guides to reduce stress levels and enhanced employee health. Wayne et al. (1997, cited in McGuire & McLaren, 2009) state that employee empowerment and involvement can augment an employee's sense of control and develop employee health and well-being in the organisation.

According Fisher (2002) has suggested that employee affective commitment is vital for endorsing employees and organisational fitness. Organisations and supervisors may encourage that connection if they support in employee well being in a workplace.

Respondents to the study also indicated that flexible work practices significantly correlate with all the sub-dimensions of employee stress, that is stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment.

Lewis (2001) states that increasing flexible work practices in the labour market have become essential, because they have focused on the employee's need to resolve several non-work commitments. Furthermore, from this literature four key causes for the endurance of work flexibility practices in the company may be identified, such as the control of variable workloads, ensuring that there is office cover during weekend hours, maintaining qualified employees with experience, and meeting employees' demands.

According to Mondy and Noe (2005), in order to prosper with a diverse workforce, the organisation needs to develop workplace flexibility. Within a flexible workplace workers are likely to stay with their organisation, and hence be productive. Flexible work practices appear to be the solution with which to achieve the job in a climate characterised by the freedom to choose your own working hours, trust in the system, acceptance of individual responsibility and assessment. It is inspiring that some organisations have changed their traditional approaches to jobs and work, with the aim of reducing costs, resolving the conflict between work and family

responsibilities, and motivating and retaining qualified employees. When organisations attain these objectives, it is logical that they will become more creative and globally viable.

Muse et al. (2008) state that to show the insights of organisational asset to predict emotional commitment, either openly or by an arbitrating role of contentment provide practitioners with possible ways to take action in support of a happier, more committed and productive personnel.

Thus, the study indicates that a relationship exists between flexitime and employee stress. Ridgley et al. (2005) indicate that flexitime will help employees to deal with their stress and be more focused and conscious of their work; this will result in higher levels of productivity and creativity within the organisation. Furthermore, with flexitime, employees and organisations will both be able to attain their goals.

6.5 Biographical correlates and flexitime

This study indicates that there is a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of the benefits of flexitime and flexible work practice amongst employees in the job categories. According to O'Brien and Hayden (2008), some supervisors, distressed by concentrating on employees and co-worker anger, may be well established through flexitime and that could be unaffected errors about introduction of conduits and likely destructive career results.

Lewis (2001) states that the top line or line management is a vital cover which has been taken as high meaning to the organisation in terms of flexible work practice. With aggressive stress on the results of the end product, flexitime is sometimes concealed by the number of hours that a person works. Other problems which affect supervision and flexible work practices are connected to issues such as the supervisors' determination, and the lack of precision and simple understanding of rules.

This study also indicates that employees with postgraduate degree have drawbacks with flexitime, followed closely by those with diplomas/certificates and undergraduate degrees. Employees with an education level of grades 8 to 10 have the least drawbacks with flexitime. Reilly (2001) maintains that flexibility benefits employees by enabling them to acquire more skills. Some employees have to seek themselves out through education and training as more skills become necessary and to employers seek to continuously up skill their workforce. This is due to the constant pressure from competitors and customers. For this reason, organisations should recognise the need to allow employees to request flexible working as it could be a good return on investment for the firm.

Dyer (1998) identified a model of flexibility as providing a hierarchy in the labour markets between the “core” and the “periphery” workforce. The core workforce comprises experienced staff who are able to contribute in executive and is immediately in use by an organisation. In Dyer’s argument, the issue with this model is that core workers are provided with job security and high salaries that reflect their skill levels and their importance to the organisation. However, the tangential personnel is characterised by low salaries, low job security and having small or dependence in their work.

The study found also that there is no significant difference in the benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime sub-dimensions, and gender. According to Stennett (1994, cited in Brien & Hayden, 2008) there is an indication that 90 percent of supervisors (both male and female) think that flexitime may have a negative influence on their career progress. In order to overcome the career challenges or negative consequences of flexitime, there is a need to concentrate on considering work achievement and not just presence in the workplace.

Other biographical variables (age, marital status and years in the company) did not influence the perception of benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime respectively. However, other studies have found a relationship between the sub-dimensions of flexitime with gender. Casner-Lotto (2000, cited in Sylvia, 2009) comments on Ernst and Young with regard to how they saved an estimate of \$17 million in turnover-related costs between 1997 and 1998, when they adopted the flexible working arrangements. It improved their retention rates, particularly among women, as about 65 percent of the people who were working flexibly had initially considered leaving the company earlier in the year. Hom and Griffeth (1995, cited in Sylvia, 2009) also identified that another reason for employee turnover relates to conflicts between the demands of work and family, which has become worse due to the number of single-parent families.

Johnson (1995, cited in Sylvia, 2009) has found that employees experiencing conflict between their family responsibilities and work are three times as likely to consider quitting their jobs, compared to those who are not experiencing conflict. Thus, flexitime helps to reduce turnover rates. Social justice also predicts that employees will have a more positive attitude towards organisations which they perceive as treating employees fairly (Greenberg, 1990, cited in Sylvia, 2009).

According to Taylor (2008), recent research in the United States suggests that 33 percent of women see these conflicts as a contributing factor for quitting their jobs in contrast with one percent of men.

6.6 Biographical correlates and stress

Although this study did not indicate that any of the biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job category and years in the company) have an influence on employee stress. However, other researchers did find a correlation between specific biographical variables and stress.

Sulsky & Smith (2005) state that gender stands for a person difference, which can differentiate how persons observe and react to stress. In addition, males and females are trained to act in a different way and to have dissimilar outlook in life, resultant in the two sexes experiencing stress dissimilarly. Women tend to increase psychological stress reactions such as hopelessness and exhaustion; whereas men tend to increase physiological or corporal stress reactions, such as high blood pressure, heart illness and diabetes.

According to Page (2001) frequently, managers intensify the burden of work for those who retain their job. The author has also identified that social separation, for example divorce can be the main reason for stress in an individual.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the discussion of the results which was then compared and contrasted to previous research. The next chapter details recommendations and conclusions for this study.

Chapter 7

Recommendations and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this study, the literature on the key variables of the study, that is flexitime and employee stress were explored. In addition, empirical analysis using both descriptive and inferential statistics was conducted. The results of this study were compared and contrasted with the findings of other researchers in the area of the study. This chapter provides recommendations and conclusions based on the findings of the study.

7.2 Major findings of the study

There is a significant relationship between flexitime and employee stress.

7.3 Recommendations for future research

In this study, a sample of 97 respondents drawn from administrative employees from a tertiary institution was used. For the enhancement of the generalisability of the results and reliability, future research can be conducted with a larger sample size.

The respondents surveyed in this study were limited to administrative employees from two campus sites of a tertiary environment. Future studies should focus on surveying employees from other similar institutions to obtain a wider focus with results. In this regard, there is room for various comparisons with institutions. Hence, assessments can be made on factors relating to flexitime and stress in this institution. Future research can also focus on other related variables.

7.4 Recommendations based on results of the study

The recommendations provide guidelines for the future. Some of the recommendations also reflect the views of authors. Of importance, the study reflects that there is a significant impact of flexitime on stress reduction in this organisation.

In this study, a significant number of respondents indicate a level of skepticism with the benefits of flexitime. A strong emphasis should be placed on clarity with issues concerning the benefits of flexitime for employees in this organisation. In this regard, management needs to have clear guidelines and transparency so that employees view the benefits of flexitime in a more positive light.

In terms of the study, there are respondents who believe that flexible work practices may not balance their work and family lives better than if they had to work full time. In order to nurture flexible work practices, managers need to inform staff that flexible working also means that employees are under less stress and that there is reduced absenteeism. Furthermore, flexible work practices are a contributory factor in attracting and retaining employees, and this important information should be communicated to all staff.

In this study, some respondents have considerable drawbacks with flexitime. It is important for managers or human resource personnel to evaluate the disadvantages of flexitime before introducing it and to inform employees in this regard as it affects them negatively. Furthermore, the introduction of flexitime should be considered taking note of employee interests. Also, managers need to balance the needs of employees with those of the organisation.

In this study, a significant number of respondents have revealed their support on stress reduction. A strong emphasis should be placed to deal with stress by introducing techniques or programmes, such as, employee assistance and wellness programs which will assist employees to deal with stress in the workplace as this also affects employee health. It is important that managers and employers to provide their input in terms of reducing stress at work. Organisations need to make every attempt to reduce employee stress rates especially where employees can perform to their best and their ability, and to take cognisance of core business objectives.

Employees in this organisation, also feel that their work schedule conflicts with their family life. In order to create a more harmonious work environment, organizations need to practice work/life balance strategies, such as, flexitime so that employees can balance their work and family demands. In this way, performance is at an optimum level and productivity is evident.

The study indicates that numerous employees feel that with flexitime employee commitment to organisational goals will be evident. Clearly, it is imperative to institute flexibility for the main purpose of reducing stress. Organisations should take note that with the help of flexitime, employees are less stressed and it is important that they institute work/life balance practice in their organisation.

7.4.1 Relationships between the sub-dimensions of flexitime and the sub-dimensions of employee stress

In this study a relationship exists between the sub-dimensions of flexitime and stress.

The sub-dimensions of flexitime, namely, benefits of flexitime, flexible work practices and drawbacks of flexitime impact on flexitime to varying degrees with benefits of flexitime having the greatest impact followed closely by flexible work practices and lastly drawbacks of flexitime, respectively.

Likewise, the sub-dimensions of employee stress, namely, stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment impact on stress to varying degrees with the greatest impact being employee commitment, followed by stress reduction and lastly work/life balance, respectively. The sub-dimensions of flexitime and employee stress correlate with each other.

There are significant differences between the sub-dimensions of flexitime and biographical variables (job category and academic qualification).

In terms of the study, benefits of flexitime significantly correlate with stress reduction and employee commitment. Therefore, managers should make every effort to promote the benefits of flexitime and employee commitment in this organisation.

Respondents of this study, also indicate that flexible work practices significantly correlate with stress reduction, work/life balance and employee commitment. Hence, emphasis must be placed on flexible work practices and stress reduction.

This study indicates that there is a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of the benefits of flexitime and job category, and with flexible work practice and job category amongst employees in various job categories in this organisation. As a result, organisations should pay greater attention by enhancing these sub-dimensions for employees from all job categories.

In addition, there is a significant difference in the drawbacks of flexitime sub-dimension and academic qualification. Thus, organisations can make every effort to shift the focus in this area and pay attention to employees furthering their qualifications.

7.5 Conclusion

The overall aim of the study was to explore flexitime as a tool to reduce stress. The administrative employees in a tertiary institution, in the KwaZulu-Natal province were the target population for this study. In this study, staff perceptions revealed that there is a significant impact of flexitime on stress reduction. It seems that the introduction of flexitime is advantageous for the whole organisation. Organisations should consider flexitime and stress reduction as important strategic issues. It can result in a motivated workforce with reduced absenteeism. Employer-employee relations, trust and communication, amongst others are critical factors for success. Of importance, co-worker support is essential.

Hence, employees can perform to the best of their ability in a supportive work environment. An awareness must be created with tertiary managers on the advantages of introducing flexitime to reduce employee stress in a tertiary environment.

References

- The American Institute of Stress (AIS), 2001, "Job Stress *Statistics* or General Stress *Statistics*", New York.
- Anonymous. (2009). Why Flex Work Is Even More Important Now. *HR Focus*, 86(1), 5-6; Available from: www.ioma.com (Accessed 10/5/2010).
- Appia-Mfodwo, A. (1998). Flexible Work Practices: A *Qualitative study in three South African Provinces*. Unpublished master's thesis, Graduate School of Business Management, University of Cape Town.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Bird, J. (2006). *Employment Relations Today*, Wiley Periodicals, Inc. www.justice.nt.gov.au (Accessed 3/8/2010).
- Blanche, M.T., Durrheim, K. & Painter, D. (2006). *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the social sciences*. University of Cape Town. South Africa.
- Bless, C. & Higson-Smith, C. (1995). *Fundamental of Social Research: An African perspective*, 2nd edition. Cape Town: Juta & Company.
- Bockerman, P. & Ilmakunnas, P. (2006). Do job amenities raise wages or ruin job dissatisfaction? *International Journal of Manpower*, 27(3), 290-302.
- Brien, T. O. & Hayden, H. (2008). Flexible Work Practices and the LIS sector: Balancing the Needs of Work and life? *Management*. 29(3), 199.
- Burton, L. (2001). Violence at work in South Africa. *People Dynamics*, 19(3), 24-25.
- Cooper, D.R. & Emory, C.W. (1995). *Business Research Methods*. 5th edition. USA: McGraw Hill.
- Creswell, J.W, Ebersohn, L., Eloff, I., Ferreira, R., Ivankova, N.V., Jansen, J.D., Nieuwenhuis, J., Pietersen, J., Clark, V.L.P. & Westhuizen, C. (2007). *First steps in Research*. Pretoria Hatfield University.
- Drew, E. & Murtagh, E.M. (2005), "Work/life balance: senior management champions or laggards?" *Women in Management Review*, 20(4), 262-278.
- Dyer, S. (1998). The flexibility Models: a critical analysis. *International Journal of Manpower*, 19 (4), 223-233.
- Fisher, C. (2002). Antecedents and consequences of real-time affective reactions at work. *Motivation and Emotion*, (26), 3-30.
- Frame, P. & Hartog, M. (2003), "From rhetoric to reality. Into the swamp of ethical practice implementing work-life balance". *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 12(4), 358-367.
- Gilbert, N. (2008). *Researching Social Life*. 3rd edition. London: Sage Publication.
- Graham, C. (2005). The economics of happiness: Insights on globalization from a novel approach. *World Economics*, 6(3), 41-55.

- Gyekye, S.A. (2006). Safety management: perceptions of workplace safety. *Professional Safety* 51(7), 34-41.
- Hannabuss, S. (1998), Flexible jobs: changing patterns in information and library work, *New Library World*, 99 (1141), 104-111, available at: www.emeraldsight.com (Accessed 26 March 2006).
- Hedge, A. (1982). The open-plan office: a systematic investigation of employee reaction to their work environment. *Environment and Behaviour*, 14(5), 519-542.
- Huang, Y.H., Robertson, M.M. & Chang, K.I. (2004). The role of environmental control on environmental satisfaction, communication, and psychological stress: effects of office ergonomics training. *Environment and Behavior*, 36(1), 617-638.
- Internet1: Definition of flexitime: [www.flexibility.co.uk/flexwork/time/time options](http://www.flexibility.co.uk/flexwork/time/time%20options). (Accessed 05/10/2010).
- Internet 2: www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au (Accessed 30/09/2010).
- Internet3: Definition of stress [Sa]. [0]. Available: www.articlesbase.com/business (Accessed on 2010/10/05).
- Internet 4: The case of work/life balance: *closing the gap between policies and practices* [Sa]. [0]. www.au.hudson.com (Accessed 2010/10/05).
- Internet 5: www.scribd.com (Accessed 05/08/2010).
- Internet6: *European Motivation Index: employees 'commitment*. [Sa].[0]. www.motivationindex.com (Accessed 2010/08/05).
- Internet 7: Meyer & Herscovith (2001), *Commitment in the workplace: toward a general model*. www.sciencedirect.com (Accessed on 2010/09/20).
- Jackson, S.L (2009). *Research Methods and Statistics: A critical thinking approach*. 3rd edition. CA, USA: Belmont.
- Javitch, D. (2006). *Entrepreneur Connect*. www.entrepreneur.com (Accessed 9/3/2010).
- Kartha, D. (2010). *Employee morale*. [0]: buzzle.com (Accessed on 2010/09/24).
- Kerslake, E. & Goulding, A. (1997), "Current practice in training flexible information workers". *Library Management*, 18 (3), 135-47.
- Kornhauser, A. (1965). *Mental Health of the Industrial Worker*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Kumar, R. (1996). *Research Methodology: a systematic guide for beginners*. London: Sage publications.
- Lee, S.Y. (2006), "Expectations of employees towards the workplace and environmental satisfaction". *Facilities*, 24 (9/10), 343-353.
- Lewis, S. (2001). Restructuring workplace cultures: the ultimate work-family challenge? *Women in Management Review*, 16(1), 21-91.
- McGuire, D. & McLaren, L. (2009). The impact of physical environment on employee commitment in call centers. *The mediating role of employee well-being*, 15(1/2), 35-48.

- Mondy, R.W & Noe, M.R. (2005). *Human Resource Management*. 9th edition. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Moore, F. (2007). *Work/life balance in an MNC*. London, UK: Royal Holloway.
- Muse, L., Harris, S. G., Giles, W. F. & Field, H. S. (2008). Work/life benefits and positive organisational behavior: Is there a connection? *Journal of Organisational Behavior*, 29(2), 171-192.
- Nelson, D. & Quick, J. C. (2006). *Organisational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, Challenges*. 5th edition. Southwestern: Thomson Publishing.
- Nortjé, G.S (2007). *Stress in the workplace: a case study*, a research proposal for dissertation, Faculty of Management Sciences, Tshwane University of Technology.
- Odendaal, A. & Roodt, G. (2002). *Australian and South African perspectives on the implementation of flexible work practices (FWP): An exploratory study*, 28(3), 75-82.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (1999). *Employment Outlook*. OECD Press: Paris.
- Page, A. (2001). Preparing staff for retrenchment beyond quick fixes. *People Dynamics*. 19(4), (Accessed 15/04/2010).
- Polit, D.F. & Beck, C.T. (2004). *Principals and methods*. 7th edition, Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Reilly, P. (2001) *Flexibility at work: Balancing the interest of employer and employee*, Hampshire, Gower Publishing.
- Ridgley, C., Scott, J., Hunt, A. & Harp, C. (2005): *Work/life balance*. (Online). www.staffs.ac.uk (Accessed 9/3/2010).
- Robbins, P.S. & Decenzo, A.D., (2001). *Fundamentals of Management*. 3rd edition. USA: Prentice Hall.
- Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social Research*. 3rd edition. New York: Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Segal, J., Horowitz, L. J.G.E, Smith, M. & Segal, R. (2008). *Stress at Work*. [0] Available: www.jeannesegal.com (Accessed on 2010/05/16).
- Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research methods for business*. 4th edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sekaran, U. (2000). *Research methods for business: a skill building approach*. 3rd edition. Hoboken, New York: John Wiley.
- Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. (2005). *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions*. 3rd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Sulsky, L. & Smith, C. (2005). *Workstress*. Canada: Webcom.
- Sylvia A. (2009). *The Impact of flexibility on staff in a banking industry: A case study of the Royal Bank of Scotland*. Bishen Metropolitan University Business School, UK.
- Taylor, S (2008). *People Resourcing*. 4th edition. London, Chartered Institute of personnel and development.

- Trochim, W.M.K. (2009). *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. www.socialresearchmethods.net. (Accessed on 02/24/09).
- Williams, C.J. (2010). *Stress and work/life balance* [0]: buzzle.com (Accessed on 4/12/2010).
- Wise, S. & Bond, S. (2003). Work/life policy: does it do exactly what it says on the tin? *Women in Management Review*, 18(1/2), 20-31.

QUESTIONNAIRE: FLEXITIME AS A TOOL TO REDUCE EMPLOYEE STRESS: AN

EXPLORATORY STUDY

INSTRUCTION: Please mark a cross(x) in the appropriate block (mark only in one block)

SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

6. MARITAL STATUS

1. JOB CATEGORY

Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	3

Never married	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/>	4

2. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

0-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
6-10	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
11-15	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
16-20	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
21+yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

3. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

Standard 8-10	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Diploma/ certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Undergraduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Postgraduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

4. GENDER

Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	2

5. AGE (years)

20-29	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
30-39	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
40-49	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
50 +yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	4

SECTION TWO (PART A): PERCEPTION OF FLEXITIME AT WORKPLACE

INSTRUCTION: Please mark a cross(x) in the appropriate block (mark only in one block).

1=Strongly Disagree - SD

2= Disagree - D

3=Neutral -N

4=Agree -A

5= Strongly Agree -SA

		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Flexitime will attract experienced and qualified employees in the organisation.					
2	Flexitime may result in a lower staff turnover and a more stable workforce in this organisation.					
3	With flexitime, staff will be less stressed and more focused.					
4	Flexitime will allow staff in my organisation to adjust to their time management.					
5	Managers in my organisation should rethink the structuring of traditional employment to introduce flexitime.					
6	Employees in my organisation would have an opportunity to further their qualifications with flexible work practices.					
7	With flexible work practices, I will have a good work/life balance, hence accommodating my personal commitment.					
8	Some flexible practices such as job-sharing can be a good way to ease into retirement.					
9	Using flexible practices, my organisation will reap the benefits in the long-term.					
10	My organisation should view flexitime as a new work pattern and adopt this as soon as possible.					
11	If my organisation fails to introduce flexitime, they will be less able to attract and retain a talented workforce.					
12	Flexible work practices can have a negative impact on teamwork in my organisation					
13	My organisation may not view flexitime in a positive light and may feel that flexitime is not ideal for this organisation.					
14	There can be less consistency in task performance if people are not working full-time.					
15	There may be little difference with output regarding those employees who work normal hours and those that work flexitime.					

SECTION THREE (PART B): STRESS SCALE

INSTRUCTION: Please mark a cross(x) in the appropriate block (mark only in one block).

- 1=Strongly Disagree -SD
 2= Disagree -D
 3=Neutral -N
 4=Agree -A
 5= Strongly Agree -SA

SD D N A SA

1	I feel that I need flexitime because my job is stressful.					
2	Flexitime is one solution to reduce my stress level at work.					
3	I never finish my work due to high stress level that I experience.					
4	With reduced stress levels, I would be more productive and have job satisfaction.					
5	I would be more focused in my job with a more relaxed work environment.					
6	I always think about my work outside my working hours.					
7	My work schedule often conflicts with my family life.					
8	With my work being demanding at times, I am irritable at home.					
9	I have so much work to do that it impacts negatively with regards to my personal interests.					
10	I find that extra time reduces workplace learning opportunities.					
11	With flexitime, I would be much more committed with my job.					
12	With flexitime, morale towards work will increase with employees.					
13	Employees' commitment to organisational goals will be enhanced.					
14	Flexitime will help employees to put in extra effort to what will be required of them.					
15	With flexitime, I will commit myself to all future plans in this organization.					

SECTION FOUR:

The questions in the survey may not have allowed you to report some things you may want to say about your job, organisation, or yourself, that may improve the research.

Please make further comments in the space provided.

[illegible]

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE