



**THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY
ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
IN A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Research report presented to the
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by

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DECLARATION OF OWN WORK

I, **Sharon Strydom**, declare that the content presented in the thesis titled "**The impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a Construction company in South Africa**" is the result of my original work. I conducted this research independently, with the guidance and assistance of my supervisor, Dr. Mthoe Mpfu. All research and academic references utilised in this study have been properly cited and acknowledged. Additionally, neither this entire study nor any portion of it has been previously presented at any other university or higher educational institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree.



Signature:

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Heavenly Father, our Lord God Almighty, for all the endurance, strength of character, perseverance, and wisdom that He has imparted on me throughout my life.

This thesis is also dedicated to my late parents, Melvyn and Estelle, and to my two late grandmothers, Ada and Connie, for their guidance in my formative years which laid a steadfast and steady foundation for learning with enthusiasm and the love of learning. Encouraging me to do my best, no matter what.

To Mekhaela, Nelson and Elizzon Caldeira; to Tracy Strydom and Anushka Putter; to Lynne, Billy, Sharae, Jessica, and Lillian Theron; to John, Robert, and Amy Strydom; and to the rest of my family, each and every one of you, as well as my friends and my colleagues; thank you for being a pillar of strength, unceasing support, and encouragement throughout my academic journey. I highly appreciate everything you have contributed towards my personal and professional life and towards the completion of my studies, giving me the ability to complete each endeavour successfully and with ease and confidence.

May God Bless you all most abundantly!!

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAD	Computer-aided design
EEA	Employee Equity Act
EP	Employee Performance
FWA	Flexible Working Arrangements
H&S	Health and Safety
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IT	Information Technology
MS	Microsoft
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses
SA	South Africa
SCWF	Sharon's Consequences of Workplace Flexibility
SMS	Short Messaging System
SWFPF	Sharon's Workplace Flexibility and Performance Framework
TA	Thematic Analysis
TERS	Temporary Employee Relief Scheme
UNISA	University of South Africa
WBO	Work Based on Objectives
WF	Workplace Flexibility
WFH	Work-from-Home

ABSTRACT

The primary goal and objective of this research study was to establish how workplace flexibility impacted employee performance at a South African construction company. Research highlighted that workplace flexibility had grown in popularity because of its cost reduction opportunities and that remote workforces have created competitive advantage in the industries they work for. This study is important because flexible employees who work remotely and are engaged and enabled in the workplace positively affect employee performance, which ultimately positively affects organisational performance, keeping a company competitive in its sector.

The approach that was used for the research was qualitative, and the targeted population consisted of administrative workers who work remotely and participate in workplace flexibility practices in a construction company where most of the employees from this type of industry usually work on-site. Ten participants were purposively selected, and the framework used to collect data from the participants was semi-structured interviews. Before data collection, the interview framework was tested with pilot testing four participants from the construction company.

Data were analysed, interpreted, and categorised into themes using thematic analysis methods. The study findings led to the development of the three main themes, together with subthemes, as was shown in the researcher's own compilation figure 4.3 in Chapter 4, named Sharon's Workplace Flexibility and Performance Framework (SWFPF), which illustrates the thematic relationships of the findings.

The findings strongly supported a positive relationship between workplace flexibility and employee performance, where participants highlighted improved job satisfaction, which heightened their organisational commitment and performance. They attributed this improvement to the flexibility of their work arrangements, predominantly working-from-home or any preferred location, which improved their performance and strengthened their commitment to their job and additionally lowered their stress levels. However, challenges were noted, particularly in managing organisational conflicts that arose from the implementation of workplace flexibility and its impact on work-life balance.

Recommendations for improvement to workplace flexibility practices to optimise their effectiveness included strategies to mitigate biases in data collection, the participant pool to be expanded beyond a single company, and the ensuring of comprehensive understanding and utilisation of workplace flexibility policies amongst employees.

In addition, recommendations for resource investment to improve the effectiveness of workplace flexibility included training programs, technological infrastructure, and communication channels. Stakeholder motivation remained crucial in maintaining a positive impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance. The proposed avenues for future research were designed to explore more depth into the effects of flexibility at work in multiple construction companies, evaluating differences in performance, satisfaction, and turnover rates. Longitudinal studies were recommended to monitor the evolving impact of workplace flexibility over time, while an examination of technology's role in enabling workplace flexibility within the construction industry was also suggested.

The researcher's own compilation figure 5.1 in Chapter 5, named Sharon's Consequences of Workplace Flexibility (SCWF), illustrates the conclusions that the researcher had drawn from the findings and from the results that were highlighted in Chapter 4.

Keywords: Workplace Flexibility, Employee Performance, Construction Company

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study introduced workplace flexibility (WF) and examined how it affected employee performance (EP) in a South African construction company chosen for the research. This study is important because engaged and enabled employees who have flexible working arrangements (FWA) and work remotely in organisations positively affects employee performance, which in turn positively affects organisational performance (Roy, 2023). Positive employee performance help achieve organisational goals as employees are an integral part of the organisation, forming teams that work toward achieving the objectives of the organisation and performing various activities to achieve these organisational goals. This study's main aim was to identify and determine the impact of WF on EP.

The selected sample of the study were administrative workers who worked remotely and participated in workplace flexibility practices in a construction company where most employees from this type of industry usually work on-site. The selected administrative employees provided relevant input for the study due to the concept of WF being their current and continuing working environment. Employees are the catalysts of business success, helping firms gain competitive advantage by providing exceptional employee performance (Hatten, 2020). In this study, EP was investigated by established personal identification that originated from different job descriptions, tasks, and responsibilities of the sample (Prescott, 2022).

Chapter one was dedicated to the introductory segment of the study, and emphasised the background, the problem statement, research questions, and objectives. Moreover, it addressed the collection and analysis of data, along with ethical considerations. The independent variable, workplace flexibility, was autonomous and remained unaffected by the dependent variable, employee performance, which was the subject of measurement. The dependent variable EP was affected by variations in WF, the independent variable.

Employee performance, the dependent variable, was the condition that the researcher sought to measure to understand the degree to which the independent variable,

workplace flexibility, impacted it (Helmenstine, 2023). In light of this context, the research aimed to evaluate the experiences of workplace flexibility and examine the influence of WF on the performance of administrative employees who work remotely and participate in workplace flexibility practices in a construction company where most employees from this type of industry usually work on-site.

Workplace flexibility is a Human Resource Management (HRM) best-practice, focused on flexible working arrangements (FWA) for attainment of excellent employee performance. Employee performance responds to the changing circumstances of workplace flexibility (Klindzic & Marić, 2019).

Workplace flexibility “at the level of practice” attempts to balance the needs of the organisation and individuals, from a positive perspective but could render negative perspectives as well, so HRM Managers must enhance HRM competencies for positive employee performance (Roy, 2023). Workplace flexibility is an HRM practice for shifting work environments; an example of this was the global COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated the transition of millions of workers from their traditional offices and workplaces to their homes for the purpose of self-isolation, a practice that continues to be observed today.

Employee performance is characterised as the proficiency with which an individual carries out their job duties and responsibilities (Ratnasari, Sutjahjo & Adam, 2019). Diverse aspects of employee performance encompass the quality of work (precision, comprehensiveness, competence), quantity of work (productivity, time management, meeting deadlines), job knowledge (skills and comprehension of the work), and working relationships (collaborative abilities, communication skills) for efficient performance management (Herrity, 2023).

1.1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Research, from an international perspective, revealed that virtual organisations are gaining momentum worldwide. Organisations use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to communicate and coordinate the fulfilment of objectives or tasks. Workplace flexibility is increasingly popular in organisations as it saves organisations money (Raišiene, Rapuano, Varkuleviciut & Stachová, 2020). Firms that

wish to compete with other firms that have flexible workforce strategies are forced to adopt flexible workforce management strategies themselves, evolving a “simultaneous integration of work processes”, with the influence of the labor force and the workplace culture that resemble each other, which has an intensely positive impact on the workplace culture, together with a favorable effect on employee performance and significant contribution to organisational performance. Workforces, “with different attitudes toward work”, in remote and virtual workplaces, are technologically diverse with competitive advantage in their industries globally and locally (Stokes, 2023).

From the perspective of the African continent, the unemployed on the continent are vulnerable. These unemployed individuals rarely have opportunities with permanent employment prospects and normally embark on gig work, which is defined as “temporary positions for hire to independent workers for short-term commitments” (Lewis, 2021). Gig work provides individuals with the “freedom and flexibility” to work at their preferred time and location (Anwar & Graham, 2020). The aforementioned advantage was contradictorily argued by maintaining that, moreover, Gig work also offers precariousness and added critical deliberations of how remote work practices impacted the livelihoods of vulnerable African ‘flexi-workers’ in Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda (Anwar & Graham, 2020).

Narrowing the study down to South Africa (SA), where the COVID-19 pandemic accentuated the significance of gig workers, specifically the large number of service delivery drivers who courier parcels and deliver takeaway food and grocery orders to customers, highlighting the necessity of delivery services, which was vital to South Africans as well as many global communities during lockdown and the pandemic (Katta, 2020). Ultimately for their future well-being, and because gig economy drivers are not considered ‘employees’ by official standards (Anwar & Graham, 2020), finding a legal resolve for the status of their employment has become increasingly urgent with a preferably favorable outcome for both the workers and their dependents in the future. Uber drivers are gig workers who strain to make ends meet and their families also suffer (Anwar & Graham, 2020). About 500,000 South African people are greatly affected by the gig economy, making it a crucial social and economic issue for the

country (Lewis, 2021). The livelihood of this 'informal sector' impacts the livelihood of their families and all the people directly reliant on them (Lewis, 2021).

The construction company was paramount in this study, with predominant investigation into the influence of WF on EP within the company. The construction company used in the study is a successful South African company, it is also an African-continent diversified construction business and uses innovative practices and the latest technologies to unlock sustainable value (Cirule & Uvarova, 2022). At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the construction company made employee health and safety (H&S) a top priority and implemented a WF policy for the administrative staff, to safeguard their well-being. This flexible arrangement has continued beyond the pandemic, becoming a part of the company's ongoing work setup.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

The knowledge gap centered on the association between workplace flexibility and its influence on employee productivity in organisational settings. While it holds critical significance for achieving optimal organisational productivity and excellence, the precise effect of workplace flexibility on employee performance remained uncertain. This lack of clarity prompted a fundamental question: Does the implementation of workplace flexibility have a positive or negative impact on the overall productivity and performance of employees within an organisation?

Furthermore, an exploration into the intricate mechanisms through which workplace flexibility directly influences employee performance was essential. Comprehending these mechanisms was crucial, as it elucidated how the ensued transformed employee performance either aided or impeded overall organisational productivity and performance excellence (Raišiene et al., 2020).

This research endeavored to address the existing knowledge gap through an empirical examination into the influence of workplace flexibility on employee performance within the distinct background of a South African construction firm. In light of this context, the study aimed to explore the effects of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a South African construction company.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study, primary questions and secondary questions related to the research were deliberated.

1.3.1. PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary and main question guiding this research was:

- What is the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa?

1.3.2. SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the main research question in this investigation, the subsequent secondary research questions were explored:

- What is the perception of the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa?
- Does workplace flexibility increase or decrease the performance of employees in a construction company in South Africa?

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives were categorised into primary objectives and secondary objectives.

1.4.1. PRIMARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary research objective was to establish the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa.

1.4.2. SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The secondary research objectives were:

- Examine the perception of the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa.
- Determine whether workplace flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a construction company in South Africa.

1.5. ABBREVIATED LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of current literature from the past decade was detailed in Chapter 2, with discussion on the seven subheadings below:

1.5.1. WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Workplace flexibility, also known as flexible work arrangements (FWA), are HRM best-practices, which aim to achieve the best match between organisational interests and personal-professional interests of employees to improve their performance (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020). Workplace flexibility includes home-based work, also known as 'work-from-home (WFH),' flexible working hours, compressed workweek, shift-based work, and hot desking (Anwar & Graham, 2020). Virtual team processes and outcomes measure success (Mysirlaki & Paraskeva, 2019).

Alternate work schedules balance work and family life. Flexitime allows employees to choose their work hours. In 2020, COVID-19 required workers to work-from-home. Remote working became embedded as a labour code (Raišiene et al., 2020). In 2020, the SA government was cash-strapped and WF programs required support from multilateral organisations (Anwar & Graham, 2020). In South Africa, the social safety net, such as the Temporary Employee Relief Scheme (TERS), did not cover 20% of the informal sector workforce or the gig economy drivers who are not considered 'employees' by official standards (Anwar & Graham, 2020).

1.5.2. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Workplace flexibility, particularly in terms of flexible working hours, emphasises effective time management and must not be associated with the reduction of work hours. This approach directly impacts employee performance (Conradie & De Klerk, 2019). Employees with flexible schedules have the same tasks as their office-based counterparts but differ in their work timetables and environments. Castrillon (2022) noted that workplace flexibility leads to increased work output, reduced turnover, heightened engagement, and improved work-life balance.

Ebrahim (2022) observed a significant rise in flexible work arrangements, which indicated that flexibility has become the standard expectation among employees. Studies showed a substantial preference for remote and flexible work roles, with CareerBuilder indicating seven times more applications for such positions compared to in-person roles. Moreover, according to ManpowerGroup Solutions, around 40% of worldwide candidates considered workplace flexibility as one of the top three factors influencing their job choices (Castrillon, 2022). Flexible work not only appeals to top talent but also improves productivity and employee performance.

1.5.3. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Workplace flexible jobs refer to positions that can be done remotely, allowing individuals to work-from-home or any location. These roles typically require an internet connection for communication and collaboration with colleagues and supervisors. This flexibility provides employees with the freedom to complete their tasks from various locations, promoting independence and potentially leading to better performance at work (Herrity, 2023).

The advantages of WF are less or no time spent commuting, work hours are more flexible, WF employees work more hours than office workers, additional and new technological devices are made available for WF, changed physical and location space, and less time spent in meetings (Castrillon, 2022). The advantages of flexible work arrangements within a construction company included enhanced efficiency which benefits the company and was declared as beneficial for employees' career advancement. Flexible work hours significantly impacted productivity and employee performance positively, contributing to an improved work-life balance and enhanced organisational performance (Conradie & De Klerk, 2019).

However, there are drawbacks and disadvantages to remote work. Approximately 26% of respondents noted a decline in productivity. Connectivity issues and technological changes were cited as primary reasons for this decrease (Castrillon, 2022). Additionally, if there are no policies for flexibility in organisations and WF is offered on an informal basis, this causes problems in the management of the human resource (Conradie & De Klerk, 2019).

1.5.4. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employee performance is crucial for organisational sustainability (Abdullahi et al., 2022). It refers to how well an individual fulfills their job responsibilities (Ratnasari et al., 2019). Different facets of employee performance encompass the quality of work, quantity of work, job knowledge, and working relationships, all of which are essential for efficient performance management (Herrity, 2023). Work based on objectives (WBO) is a performance measurement method focused on predetermined goals rather than time spent on tasks. It emphasises individual responsibility for managing work performance based on agreed-upon objectives (Spacey, 2020).

1.5.5. WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Work environments that are adaptable provided numerous benefits, contributing to an improved work-life balance for employees. This outcome led to heightened job satisfaction and increased morale. This improved satisfaction and commitment positively impacted employee performance, ultimately benefiting the organisation (Conradie & De Klerk, 2019).

Technology exists to manage repeat processes (Klein, 2023). Organisations support, enable, and empower WF employees by providing resources, such as information technology (IT) hardware and equipment, viz laptops, and communicative online channels which include Microsoft Outlook email, Short Messaging Service (SMS), and MS Teams, Zoom, and Skype.

Organisations also provide data packages for WF employees, which bills the organisation for data used, plus an online digital signature for document approval, to assist WF employees approve confidential documents digitally (Balu, 2020), and assists with positive influences on employee performance which simultaneously assists with positive influences on organisational performance.

1.5.6. IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Howington (2023) emphasises a positive correlation between FWA and attracting top talent, citing increased employee performance as a result. Goasduff (2021) underscores the productivity benefits, reporting that flexible working hours and

reduced commuting time significantly contributed to increased productivity, with remote workers dedicating more time to work than their office-based counterparts.

Castrillon (2022) additionally reinforced this point by stating that remote employees work 1.4 more days per month compared to office workers, summing up to an extra 16.8 days per year. The consensus across these studies was that flexibility led to heightened productivity, with remote work environments often enabling increased focus and fewer interruptions compared to traditional office setups.

Moreover, FWA significantly impacted employee motivation, work-life balance, and overall productivity. Employees reported an 83% increase in motivation, an 80% improvement in work-life balance, and a 70% boost in focus and productivity under flexible arrangements (Howington, 2023).

Beyond individual benefits, FWA also positively impacted organisational outcomes. It reduced turnover rates, enhanced staff retention, and decreased the expenses associated with recruitment and training. Flexjobs survey (Howington, 2023) found that 80% of respondents would exhibit greater loyalty to their employers if offered FWA. This aligns with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) assertion in 2023 that work-life balance policies, including FWA, created a mutually beneficial scenario for both employees and employers, yielding positive outcomes for enterprises (ILO, 2023).

1.5.7. OVERVIEW OF THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SPHERE

The construction value chain in South Africa encompasses various stages and activities essential for the successful execution of construction projects. It begins with market research and feasibility studies, which involve evaluating potential projects, analysing market trends, and assessing financial viability (Findlay & Hoekman, 2021).

Preconstruction services follow, including project proposals, environmental assessments, and securing permits. Collaborating with architects and engineers, administrative employees develop detailed project plans that comply with regulations (Calzada Olvera, 2022). The administrative staff also estimate project costs, create budgets, and provide cost savings recommendations. Project management is crucial,

encompassing the oversight of construction, managing timelines, and ensuring compliance with scope, quality, and budget.

Quality control processes ensure that standards are met, while post-construction services handle inspections and project closure. Facility management services for completed structures are also provided. In addition, specialised advisory services are offered, such as sustainability consulting and risk assessment, to optimise project outcomes (Sawhney, Riley, Irizarry & Perez, 2020).

The participants of this study work within the construction company in SA, which encompasses a range of services such as architectural design, project management, and engineering consultancy (Gabrieyel, 2021). Though these professionals engage in remote work and participate in workplace flexibility arrangements, their essential function involve providing expertise and guidance to clients, ensuring project efficiency and successful results. The WF arrangements allow them to leverage technology and digital platforms to collaborate with clients and team members, offering advantages such as increased productivity and improved work-life balance. While facing challenges related to communication, project management, and technological limitations, their adaptability and resilience highlight the company's ability to thrive in changing circumstances (Stevens, 2021). As WF employees, they continue to contribute their expertise and dedication to driving construction projects forward using virtual means.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology served as the structure that outlined how the researcher acquired credible and reliable data, allowing readers to evaluate the overall reliability and validity of the study. It delineated the selected research design, the methods for collecting data, the sampling approaches, the analysis of data, and the interpretation techniques applied to fulfill the study's objectives (Bhandari, 2020).

In this specific study, a qualitative research method was employed, emphasising the collection and analysis of non-numeric data to understand concepts, opinions, and

experiences. The primary data collection technique utilised was semi-structured interviews, comprising open-ended questions that enabled the researcher to gather information from participants. This methodological approach was consistent with previous works on qualitative research by Bhandari (2020) and also corresponds to the definition of semi-structured interviews as outlined by George (2022). The approach was detailed in Chapter 3.

1.6.1. RESEARCH STRATEGY

A research strategy can be comprehensively described as a meticulously designed and strategically formulated blueprint that a study diligently embraced and effectively implemented to investigate and explore a particular research question or problem. Qualitative research, particularly phenomenological studies, delve into individuals' perceptions of events and circumstances through methods like interviews, conversations, and participant observation (Li, 2020). This specific study utilised interviews, incorporating extensive notes, MS Teams recordings, jottings, and other records that necessitated comprehensive analysis (McCombes, 2019). Such thorough examination enabled the description, evaluation, and comprehension of various facets of the research problem, and offered detailed insights. Analysis entailed careful scrutiny of textual and auditory data to grasp the context, discern crucial themes, and identify underlying issues within each source (McCombes, 2019).

1.6.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Asenahabi (2019) describes research design as the blueprint researchers use to tackle research problems through data collection, analysis, and presentation. In this specific study, an exploratory research design was employed. Exploratory studies are utilised for relatively new topics lacking extensive research, with the goal of bridging knowledge gaps and uncovering novel insights (Joseph, 2022). This design was favored for its ability to provide fresh and comprehensive perspectives into the subject under investigation. Notably, it facilitated direct engagement with participants, enabling the collection of firsthand information from those directly involved in the studied situation. Open-ended questions are best for exploratory research because

they allow the researcher to probe deeper into topics of interest. Exploratory research gathered information that can be used in future studies.

1.6.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

The approach employed in this study was qualitative and focused on inductive approaches which delved into the deeper meanings and insights within the specific context. Girardin (2023) suggests that this method enables researchers to intricately describe participants' emotions, viewpoints, and encounters. This detailed understanding assisted in explaining the significance of these elements and their impact on participants' behavioral performance.

1.6.4. POPULATION AND SAMPLE FRAMEWORK

A population refers to the complete group about which the researcher draws conclusions. In the context of this study, the population comprised 40 employees of a construction company. The sample represented a chosen smaller subset of the population from which data were collected for research purposes, and the study's outcomes were derived from the sample (McCombes, 2019).

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants. The sample size, as defined by Nikolopoulou (2022), pertains to the number of individuals or units involved in the research. It should strike a balance by being small enough for ease of handling but large enough to prevent overgeneralisation. The maximum recommended sample size was around 10% of the population if the population did not surpass 1000. Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that between 10 and 50 participants may suffice based on research type and questions. For smaller research projects, a sample size of between 6 and 10 individuals was recommended to partake in interviews, as suggested by Fugard and Potts (2014). In this study, 10 persons were selected from a population of 40 as the sample.

The 10 individuals included 8 managers and 2 nonmanagerial employees. Inclusion criteria for the interviews were 3 years+ working experience in the construction company in SA, with knowledge and information about WF trends as an important

aspect. The exclusion criteria were less than 3 years of working experience in a construction company in SA and no knowledge or information of the trends of WF.

1.6.5. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The process of data collection entails gathering information from diverse sources, including individuals and publications, to gain insights into a research problem (Bhandari, 2020). Two fundamental methods exist: primary and secondary. Primary data collection involves acquiring raw data directly, whereas secondary methods entails obtaining information from published materials. In this particular study, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary method. These interviews are esteemed for investigating unfamiliar topics and probing into participants' perspectives to achieve a more profound understanding of the research issue (George, 2022).

The researcher was the interviewer who conducted 40-minute MS Teams interviews, maintaining a formal conversational style, while the participants were the interviewees. Throughout these interviews, the researcher took notes to capture important points, whilst also recording the MS Teams interview for later transcriptions. A pilot study was initially executed on a smaller scale compared to the ensuing main study and involved four participants. The researcher transcribed the pilot interviews and engaged in discussions with the study leader (supervisor) to seek approval and permission to proceed with the interviews (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020).

1.6.6. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The process of analysing the data entailed interpreting the viewpoints and perspectives expressed by the research participants. It involved the identification of themes, patterns, categories, and consistent similarities within the data, as outlined by Warren (2020). Calzon (2023) emphasised that collected data must undergo analysis, measurement, and interpretation to be meaningful. Specifically, the significance of collected data emerges only after analysis (Calzon, 2023). In this study, the analysis of data was conducted using thematic analysis and focused on identifying trends (themes) within the results and categorising these themes and patterns based on the research question (Mortensen, 2020).

1.6.7. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness means that the investigation was done carefully and that the results and explanations are believable. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (De Vault, 2019) are the four principles of trustworthiness and are described as follows:

Credibility is a central concern in qualitative research, indicating confidence in the authenticity and interpretation of the data. The aim was to improve the credibility of the research outcomes and establish credibility with others. To support this, the researcher provided a summary of the process and procedures of the research.

Transferability is the ability to apply the study's findings to different backgrounds or groups of people. The researcher provided sufficient descriptive information in the reports so that others could assess how the findings are relevant in various contexts.

Dependability relates to the consistency and stability of data across various conditions and timeframes. Achieving dependability involved ensuring that research outcomes can be replicated in similar circumstances. This was established through a well-documented and traceable research process, for which the researcher of this study took responsibility.

Conformability pertains to the fairness, accuracy, and alignment of data with the experiences of various independent individuals. The goal was to eradicate biased interpretations, ensuring that research findings authentically mirrored the perspectives of participants and the investigative context, rather than being influenced by the personal opinions or biases of the researcher.

1.7. EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study will contribute to prevailing knowledge on employee performance resulting from workplace flexibility management by all HRM decision-makers. Existing literature does not sufficiently address the integrated human resource architecture (Apascaritei & Elvira, 2022), enhancing workplace flexibility in relation to employee performance output. The intended audience is researchers, as well as students, employers, and HRM specialists, who competitively keep abreast of WF due to its impact on EP.

1.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are crucial in safeguarding the rights of participants, enhancing research validity, and upholding scientific integrity (Barrow, Brannan, & Khandhar, 2022). The researcher ensured compliance with ethical standards by obtaining approval from the construction company before the research commenced. This approval granted the researcher the authorisation to conduct the study within the company. Prior to initiating the research at the construction company, ethical clearance was acquired from UNISA SBL, as evidenced by the ethical clearance certificate with the reference number '2023_SBL_MBA_026_FA -1544' in Annexure A herewith.

Furthermore, the ten individuals that participated in the study were duly informed about various aspects including the nature, duration, and purpose of the research, as well as the methodology employed. To ensure transparency and compliance with ethical guidelines, the participants were provided with a consent form. Signing this form indicated their voluntary agreement to participate and granted permission for the researcher to utilise their responses for the study.

The consent form was obtained before the start of the study. The researcher ensured that the necessary protection was afforded to the study participants and the construction company for which they work.

1.9. STUDY LIMITATIONS

Although the researcher had no control over limitations, the study limitations must be addressed to carry out the study (Nel, 2020). The study initially expected various benefits, both in theory and practical application. However, during the research process, limitations emerged, affecting the ability to significantly impact the quality of the findings and address the research objectives and problem statement. What occurs in one organisation or industry might not necessarily apply to another. The study was not intended to generalise its findings to the entire population, which restricts the researcher from further investigation.

1.10. CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the opening chapter of this study, the introduction set the stage by providing a thorough background and context. It delineated the primary research problem, central questions, and the objectives guiding this investigation. A comprehensive description of the research methodology, encompassing the strategic approach, design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques, was presented. Furthermore, ethical considerations and acknowledged limitations of the study were discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The literature review focused on the theoretical frameworks surrounding workplace flexibility and its correlation with employee performance. Particular emphasis was placed on contextualising these theoretical perspectives within the dynamic environment of a construction company and providing an insightful exploration of these concepts within this specific industry.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The methodology for the research, covering all aspects of the research design, was discussed. This chapter incorporated discussions on sampling techniques, data collection methodologies, and the approaches adopted for analysis. In addition, it carefully elucidated the means employed to validate the trustworthiness of the data collected, aligning with ethical standards upheld throughout the research process.

Chapter 4: Research results and findings

This significant segment of the study presented the core research results and findings. A meticulous analysis of the gathered data was presented in a structured manner. The perspectives and viewpoints of the employees who partook in the interviews, were outlined in thematic form, unveiling their perceptions regarding WF and its impact on EP in the context of the South African construction company that they work for.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

Lastly, Chapter 5 presented the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations gleaned from the preceding chapters. Drawing upon the insights garnered from the findings in Chapter 4, this section formulated comprehensive conclusions and actionable recommendations. It succinctly summarised and interpreted the research findings, culminating in the proposal of pragmatic solutions aimed at addressing the identified gaps, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on the subject matter.

1.11. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher introduced WF and identified it as a suitable HRM practice for shifting work environments. The researcher also introduced and discussed the performance of the employees. The background of WF from an international perspective, from the African continent perspective, from SA perspective, and then from within the construction company perspective was detailed in this chapter. This study's goal was to determine the impact of WF on EP and, ultimately, the contribution to organisational performance. The company used was a construction company.

The interrelated literature, which was conferred in detail in Chapter 2, was introduced in this chapter and the methodology of the study, which was qualitative and conferred in detail in Chapter 3, was also introduced in this chapter. Ten individuals, who participate in WF arrangements, were identified as the sample from a target population of 40 administrative workers, who work remotely and participate in workplace flexibility practices in a construction company where most of the employees from this type of industry usually work on-site. The purposive sampling technique was selected for this study, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten employees. The responses of the ten participants were analysed through TA, and the detailed findings are discussed in Chapter 4, with recommendations in Chapter 5. The subsequent chapter addresses the deliberations on the literature review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this section various studies by different authors concerning the research variables and associated ideas found in existing scholarly works were examined. The chapter focused on exploring the influence of workplace flexibility on employee performance, a subject gaining significance in today's competitive business landscape. The chapter delved into existing studies to understand how workplace flexibility impacted employee performance, emphasising its increasing importance in modern businesses striving to retain talent by offering flexible work arrangements.

2.2. SEARCH CRITERIA

The study examined literature that specifically explored the influence of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a South African construction company. Existing literature was analysed to comprehend the effects of workplace flexibility on both employee performance and productivity within the unique context of the construction industry. To carry out this review, the study adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) method. This method provides a structured approach for scientific authors to report systematic reviews and meta-analyses, ensuring a thorough and evidence-based review process (Page et al., 2021).

The literature sources included scholarly articles, magazines, books, conference proceedings, case studies, and reports related to workplace flexibility and employee performance in a construction company. A systematic review of the literature was adopted as the strategy for conducting an in-depth analysis of existing research and its findings. This approach ensured a comprehensive and rigorous review of the literature and allowed the identification of relevant studies that have already used this approach in the field of workplace flexibility and employee performance.

The protocol for literature review included determining databases, search terms, and literature selection criteria. In this study, two major databases, Google Scholar and

ScienceDirect, were considered. These databases are known to contain a significant number of peer-reviewed research articles, book chapters, and reports related to workplace flexibility and employee performance.

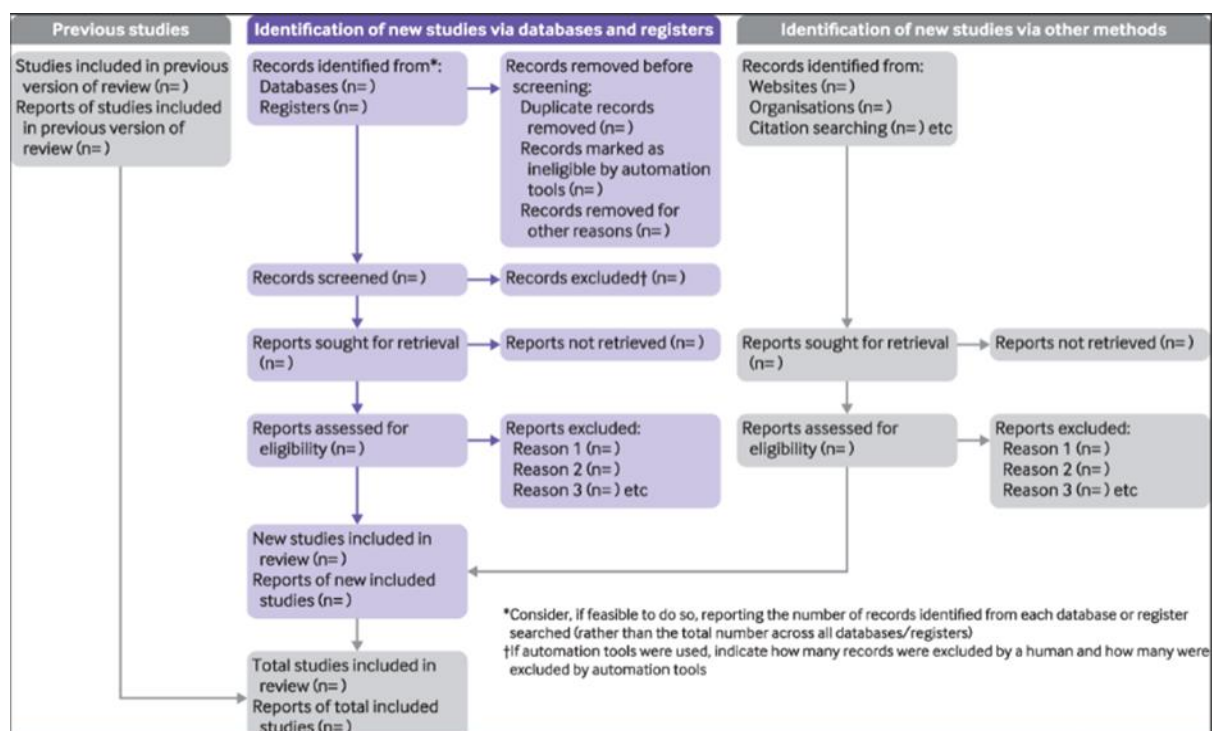
To perform the literature search, the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the publications were used. The suggested search terms and Boolean operators for the Google Scholar database are as follows:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (("workplace flexibility" OR "flexible work arrangements" OR "flexible scheduling" OR "telecommuting") AND ("employee performance" OR "productivity" OR "job satisfaction") AND ("construction company" OR "construction industry") AND ("South Africa")).

Using the ScienceDirect database, the following Boolean operators were used: ("workplace flexibility" AND "employee performance" AND "construction company" AND "South Africa").

Using these search terms and operators, the study aimed to identify relevant literature that addressed the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee performance in a construction company in South Africa. The literature review explored the effects of flexible work arrangements, such as flexible scheduling and telecommuting, on employee performance and productivity. Additionally, the review examined the specific factors within a construction company in South Africa that may impact the outcomes of workplace flexibility on employee performance.

In general, this systematic review of the literature provided a comprehensive analysis of existing research on the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance within a construction company in South Africa., The findings enhanced comprehension of the correlation between workplace flexibility and outcomes in employee performance providing valuable information to industry professionals, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in the promotion of effective work practices in this context. Figure 2.1 illustrates the PRISMA method.

Figure 2.1: PRIMSA method

Source: Page et al. (2021)

2.2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Study types: The literature review encompassed articles offering pertinent details and perspectives on how workplace flexibility influences employee performance within the context of a construction company. These comprised empirical studies, case studies, qualitative research, and quantitative research.

Study timelines: The incorporated studies were published within the past decade, ensuring current alignment with the present situation of a construction company operational in South Africa.

Participant categories: The articles centred on insights regarding employees, managers, and other pertinent stakeholders within a construction company located in South Africa.

Language: The articles were written in English to ensure accessibility and understanding.

Types of intervention: The articles discussed workplace flexibility strategies, approaches, or interventions that have the potential to impact employee performance within a construction company. These included flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, flexible scheduling, work-life balance initiatives, and other relevant factors.

Publication Date: The included studies have been published within the last decade to guarantee that the publication material was relatively up-to-date and reflect the current context of a construction company in South Africa.

2.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework furnishes the theoretical assumptions that guide the research, elucidating the existing theories that underpin the variables of the study (Vinz, 2022). The psychological contract theory and the social contract theory both delved into the expectations and assumptions between employees and their employer regarding workplace flexibility and its influence on performance.

The psychological contract theory outlined the anticipated mutual understanding between the two parties and pertained to the administrative employees and the construction company (Yu, 2022). On the other hand, Turk and Krastev (2022) focus on the social contract theory, which highlights the diverse employment relationships shaped by workplace flexibility and its impact on employee performance. This theory proposed that employees assess their commitment levels depending on their perceived support and sense of community from their employer.

Both theories highlighted the significance of these expectations and assumptions in defining the working relationship between employees and their company concerning WF and its effects on EP.

2.3.1. Psychological Contract Theory - Workplace Flexibility

Understanding how EP was impacted by WF was made easier with the aid of the psychological contract theory. This idea defined the psychological contract as the

unspoken, implicit promises and commitments that exist between workers and their employers (Kutaula, Gillani, & Budhwar, 2020).

Oberoi, et al., (2022) emphasises that employees often have specific expectations related to WF, such as choosing their schedules, working remotely, or adjusting work hours to meet personal responsibilities. Organisations are encouraged to exhibit commitment to improving employee well-being and work-life balance by recognising these expectations and providing workplace flexibility options that meet those needs.

According to Kutaula et al. (2020), organisations help the formation of a constructive psychological contract by meeting these expectations. Employees are more likely to acquire a sense of loyalty and devotion if they believe that their company was helpful and sensitive to their demands. Their propensity to invest more time, effort, and energy into their job leads to a greater sense of dedication to both their individual responsibilities and the business. Employees are encouraged to go above and beyond their fundamental job requirements because of their greater dedication, leading to higher levels of employee and organisational performance (Oberoi et al., 2022).

Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) found that job flexibility leads to an increase in discretionary effort among employees. Discretionary effort refers to the extra work employees willingly undertake on their own accord, surpassing their expected responsibilities. Employees put extra effort into their job when they believe that their company gives them the freedom they need. When granted the flexibility to work when and where they are most productive, employees can optimise their output and contribute to the performance objectives of the company (Oberoi et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the psychological contract theory offered a theoretical framework for understanding how WF affected worker performance. Organisations improved the psychological contract and boosted employee happiness, commitment, and discretionary effort by meeting employees' expectations for flexibility. The outcomes were beneficial to both the individual and the firm by increased performance levels.

2.3.2. Social Exchange Theory: Relationship of workplace flexibility and employee performance

Qi, Xu, and Liu (2023) are of the point that social exchange theory offers an insightful framework for comprehending how WF affects employee performance. In accordance with this notion, people interact reciprocally with the companies for which they work and their co-workers, exchanging resources and advantages. Employees view workplace flexibility as a vital advantage offered by the company and show their appreciation by putting more effort into their work, being more devoted and performing at a higher level (Cortez & Johnston, 2020).

Employees feel more in control over their job when their companies permit flexibility regarding working hours, workplace location, or techniques (Qi et al., 2023). Employees feel that the organisation appreciates their needs and well-being, which fosters a good exchange dynamic. Employees are more inclined to react by exerting more effort and energy into their work, leading to improved performance outcomes. Furthermore, when staff members view their company as accommodating and supportive, they create favourable views regarding their working conditions (Cortez & Johnston, 2020). They get a sense of fulfilment and believe that the company is doing everything it can to live up to its end of the bargain. This positive perception fosters an emotional connection between the employee and the company, which increases job satisfaction and organisational loyalty, and overall enhanced performance (Qi et al., 2023).

Wang and Xie (2023) contend that flexibility in the workplace increases an employee's propensity to engage in extra-role activities, which are optional actions taken beyond the scope of their professional duties. These actions could be lending a hand to co-workers, imparting information, participating in corporate activities, or accepting more responsibility (Qi et al., 2023). The availability of workplace flexibility fosters a positive atmosphere that motivates individuals to contribute beyond their primary duties (Cortez & Johnston, 2020).

Because they feel that the company has gone above and beyond to meet their demands, employees are encouraged to contribute beyond their core job responsibilities when workplace flexibility is offered (Wang & Xie, 2023). By fostering cooperation and collaboration, these extra-role actions not only help the business, but also improve employee performance (Cortez & Johnston, 2020).

Workplace flexibility, as per Qi et al. (2023), has been found to enhance worker well-being by reducing stress and conflicts between work and personal life. The reduction in stress and improved work-life balance resulted in decreased burnout, heightened job satisfaction, and increased motivation among employees. According to Wang and Xie (2023), these positive changes in well-being contribute to enhanced productivity and performance outcomes in the workplace.

In conclusion, the social exchange theory contributed to the understanding of the relationship between EP and WF, highlighting employers' dedication to addressing staff members' requirements and fostering fruitful interactions between parties. As a result, workers showed greater devotion to their jobs, loyalty, and improved performance. Positive attitudes, extracurricular habits, and better well-being are encouraged by a sense of corporate support and flexibility, all of which promoted employee performance and penultimately promoted organisational performance.

2.4. WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

According to Hogarty (2021), the concept of "Workplace Flexibility" comprises a combination of rules, procedures, and arrangements, and offers employees greater freedom and choice over how, where, and when they work. Davidescu, Apostu, Paul, and Casuneanu (2020) emphasise the importance of providing employees with the flexibility to adjust their work schedules, engage in remote work, and make other modifications to accommodate personal needs or obligations while fulfilling their professional duties. The primary goal of workplace flexibility is to ensure a work-life balance, enhance employee well-being, and promote engagement and productivity, ultimately leading to higher performance levels (Wang & Xie, 2023).

2.4.1. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

The presence of well-managed WF programs within organisations was associated with fostering a positive culture that significantly influenced employees' work experiences, their state of mind, and their commitment, which subsequently led to improved EP. These programs contributed to creating a conducive environment for employees, positively impacting their state of mind and dedication to their work (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020),

Furthermore, workplace flexibility has been recognised as a factor that positively impacted employee behaviour, leading to excellent employee performance, and concurrently enhanced overall organisational performance. This suggested that the flexibility afforded by remote work arrangements contributed positively to employee behaviour, thereby elevating both individual and organisational performance levels (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020).

Human Resource (HR) practitioners within the construction company play key roles as employee champions, administrative experts, change agents, and strategic partners, as outlined by academic and HR advocate Dave Ulrich (O'Donoghue, 2021). Their responsibilities included aligning employees with the strategic goals of the organisation and maximising employee performance of remote workers through positive employee behavior. This, in turn, contributed to gaining a competitive advantage for the company through excellent employee performance in the organisation (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

By focusing on workplace flexibility and allowing employees to WFH and work-from-anywhere, organisations fostered positive employee behaviour, which ultimately contributed to excellent employee performance (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022). This improved employee performance was beneficial to the individual employees who WFH and also provided a competitive advantage to the organisation.

External factors such as technical improvements and the worldwide pandemic have further accelerated the move towards remote work and the implementation of WF initiatives (O'Donoghue, 2021). Remote working arrangements provided employees with increased flexibility in choosing their work schedules, and also reduced commute

time, creating a productive environment and improved performance. These elements helped to boost employee happiness and work satisfaction, which, in turn, encouraged greater dedication and output toward greater performance (Wang & Xie, 2023).

Workplace flexibility is not universally applicable, and varies across industries, job roles, and organisational cultures (O'Donoghue, 2021). Although WF has advantages, it has challenges like sustaining communication, collaboration, and work-life balance. Creating tailored WF programs is crucial, considering organisational specifics and employees' unique needs (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020). O'Donoghue (2021) is of the opinion that it is crucial to keep in mind that workplace flexibility is not a universally applicable solution and may have various effects depending on the sector, job functions and corporate culture. Despite WF having many advantages, it also has drawbacks, including difficulties with cooperation, efficient communication, and work-life balance (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020). Employers must carefully plan and implement workplace flexibility programs that fit their particular status quo and consider the individual requirements of their staff.

In conclusion, workplace flexibility programs can meaningfully affect workers' work experiences, well-being, and overall performance when they are properly handled. To align employees with business goals and improve WF employee performance, HR professionals play a crucial role in advocating and executing these initiatives. Flexibility in the workplace helps companies become more competitive. By utilising their workers' positive behaviours and top-notch performance in the dynamic and changing business environment, firms that embrace WF also increase their competitive edge.

2.4.2. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF REMOTE WORKING

2.4.2.1. Benefits of remote work

Remote workers benefit from WF, with more flexibility in their work schedules, allowing them a degree of controlled manageability (O'Donoghue, 2021). Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) state that remote workers have more autonomy over their flexible planned working timetables and workplaces, allowing them to better combine personal and professional lives. This adaptability frequently results in greater work satisfaction

and general well-being. Furthermore, remote work eliminates the need to go to an actual workplace, reducing both the time and expense of commuting. Employees could use the commute time and cost of transportation that they save for personal or productive purposes, increasing productivity. Remote labour has the potential to increase performance output (Wang & Xie, 2023).

According to Qi et al. (2023), there are less distractions for remote employees than for in-office workers, which helps them concentrate and pay attention more intently. In addition, the calmer and more pleasant work environment that remote workers frequently experience has a good effect on their productivity. The improved work-life balance that remote work provides was another benefit. People's personal and professional lives are integrated more effectively, allowing them to spend more time with their families, participate in hobbies, and pursue personal interests. This harmony results in greater job satisfaction, less stress and better health overall, which ultimately enhances performance, productivity, and competitive advantage (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

Wang and Xie (2023) state that remote workers benefit from greater empowerment and autonomy. They are empowered to choose how to complete their assignments and manage their time, which promotes motivation and a sense of ownership. In the end, both individual employees and their companies benefit from this freedom, which fosters creativity, innovation, and job happiness, leading to greater performance outcomes and competitive advantage.

2.4.2.2. Challenges of Remote Work

Qi et al. (2023) the prospect of less social connection was one of the major difficulties of distance employment. Employees may miss out on casual interactions, networking opportunities, and social connections that often occur in a typical office setting. Wang and Xie (2023) support this by saying that this might make people feel alone and make it harder to function as a team. Working-from-home sometimes can be lonely, especially for those who thrive in a collaborative setting. Feelings of isolation and alienation from co-workers may emerge from the absence of face-to-face interaction and the few possibilities for casual discussions and bonding (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

Collaboration and communication can be difficult while working remotely. Although online meetings and other digital communication technologies are practical, they may not completely replace the advantages of in-person encounters (O'Donoghue, 2021). Teamwork and collaboration could be hampered by poor communication, slow response times, and problems communicating nonverbal signs.

The blurred boundaries between work and personal life present another challenge. Employees may struggle to disconnect from work, leading to extended working hours, heightened stress, and adverse effects on their well-being (Douglas, 2021). The impact of remote work on an employee's well-being and mental health was also envisioned. Blurred boundaries, feelings of isolation, and a lack of social engagement could contribute to increased stress, anxiety, and burnout. Organisations must prioritise employee well-being and allocate resources and support to address these challenges, as they can have a detrimental impact on employee performance (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

2.5. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employee performance refers to how well a person performs their job duties and complies with or exceeds the expectations and standards established by their company (Zhenjing et al., 2022). In the view of Herrity (2023), employee performance includes an employee's productivity in terms of quality, quantity, efficiency, and effectiveness as well as their contributions to attaining corporate objectives. A variety of indicators are used to evaluate an employee's performance, including meeting deadlines, completing goals, exhibiting job knowledge and abilities, showcasing initiative and innovation, and participating in cooperation and collaboration (Hasan & Kamalanabhan, 2021).

Employee performance refers to the effectiveness with which employees complete assigned tasks based on organisational criteria like quantity, quality, and efficiency (Siregar, 2021). Two key determinants influencing employee performance are job resources and personal resources. Job resources, including autonomy, work relationships, advancement opportunities, coaching, mentoring, and necessary equipment, aid employees in achieving their goals (Thisera & Wijesundara, 2020). On

the other hand, personal resources encompass an employee's skills, experience, knowledge, and character, impacting motivation and performance. These resources support growth and development, helping individuals tackle job demands more effectively. Emotional intelligence stands out as a powerful personal resource that alleviates job-related stress (Hasan & Kamalanabhan, 2021).

Employee performance stems from job satisfaction, how employees feel about their work and workplace, thus affecting organisational commitment from these employees, with vigilant consideration of how employers could impact all factors for the better (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020). Organisations have a responsibility to care for their employees and ensure that employees are satisfied with their WF environments.

2.6. IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Workplace flexibility involves granting employees the autonomy to determine aspects like their work schedule, location, and method of work (Hasan & Kamalanabhan, 2021). This includes offering choices like flexible hours, remote work, compressed workweeks, job sharing, and other setups enabling employees to manage their work and personal obligations. Research by Raišiene et al. (2020) suggests that workplace flexibility can exert a substantial influence on employee performance, affecting multiple facets of their work.

2.6.1. Improved work-life balance

Employees experience increased opportunities to better balance professional and personal commitments thanks to workplace flexibility (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020). Improved work-life balance results in lower stress levels, higher work satisfaction, and improved general health. Enhanced work-life balance encourages people to be motivated, engaged, focused, and with heightened organisational commitment all of which improves performance.

2.6.2. Increased job satisfaction and morale

The ability to work in a style that best matches each individual's requirements and preferences may make a big difference in how happy and motivated employees are. Employees tend to have better levels of work satisfaction, which results in greater

dedication and productivity in their positions, when they feel respected and trusted by their employers (Hasan & Kamalanabhan, 2021).

2.6.3. Enhanced productivity

Employee productivity may benefit from workplace flexibility. Employees are more likely to complete tasks with more efficiency if they have the freedom to work at times when they are most productive or in settings where they could focus better. Additionally, remote workers have more time for work-related activities due to shorter commute times, and this enhances their performance and productivity output (Hasan & Kamalanabhan, 2021).

2.6.4. Attraction and retention of talent

Flexibility in the workplace is a powerful asset in attracting and keeping great personnel. Many workers value work-life balance and flexibility in their job search in the highly competitive job market of today (Raišiene et al., 2020). Employers who provide flexible work alternatives are more likely to attract and retain high performers and have a loyal, happy, and talented workforce.

2.6.5. Increased employee engagement

Increased levels of employee participation can be attributed to flexible work environments. Employees are more likely to feel empowered and invested in their positions when they have a sense of autonomy and control over their work. Higher levels of creativity, invention, and problem-solving skills result from this increased participation, which ultimately increases performance (Raišiene et al., 2020).

2.6.6. Reduced absenteeism and presenteeism

Employers can contribute to a decrease in both absenteeism and presenteeism (present, but not contributing, and not fully functioning) by providing flexible work arrangements. Employees are better able to handle personal obligations or take care of health issues while still carrying out their professional responsibilities with the help of flexible choices, such as remote work. Less unplanned absences and presenteeism, due to illness or other reasons, follow from this (Qi et al., 2023).

Leaders must keep their employees motivated, managing the attitudes, feelings, thinking, behaviours, and activities of employees within the organisation. Leadership from a virtual platform is a challenge, as some employees may display procrastination behaviour and do social loafing, creating a loss of team cohesion and performance (Raišiene et al., 2020). Workplace flexibility prevent managers from practicing desired leadership behaviours, for example: being visible and having an 'open-door policy'.

Furthermore, workplace flexibility may make it more difficult for managers to demonstrate some required leadership traits. For instance, it may be challenging for leaders to maintain an "open-door policy" where staff members feel at ease approaching them with questions or suggestions due to the physical distance brought on by flexible work arrangements. This distance can affect staff engagement and performance and provide obstacles to successful leadership (Qi et al., 2023).

To overcome these obstacles, managers must develop new strategies to inspire and retain their staff. Employee attitudes, sentiments, thought processes, actions, and activities within the company must all be actively managed. This could involve using technology to promote virtual team building exercises, giving frequent feedback and praise, and setting precise performance goals and targets for their employees. Leaders can help offset the potential negative impacts of WF on employee performance and maintain a productive and cohesive team by adjusting their leadership style to accommodate the virtual work environment (Raišiene et al., 2020).

2.7. IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Workplace flexibility, encompassing options like WFH, offers numerous advantages to both individuals and companies (Yang, Kim & Hong, 2021). One key benefit was the enhancement of work-life balance. When employees have the flexibility to manage their work schedules, they can effectively balance personal and professional responsibilities as well. This contributes positively to staff performance within the construction company by boosting job satisfaction and reducing stress levels (Dobrucali, at al., 2022). Productivity growth was another benefit of WF. When working-from-home, administrative employees in the construction company frequently

experience fewer interruptions and distractions than in a conventional office setting (Raišiene et al., 2020). The ability to work in a comfortable and familiar environment helps WF employees focus and pay attention. They demonstrate increased productivity and efficiency, leading to a positive influence on organisational performance, which proves advantageous for the company (Dobrucali et al., 2022).

In addition, flexibility in the workplace raises morale and job satisfaction. Employees experience a sense of value and trust from their employers when they have the autonomy to select both their work environment and schedule. Higher levels of participation and devotion to their work result from this boost in morale. Benefits include reduced travel time and expenses (Raišiene et al., 2020). Employees save a significant amount of time and money by avoiding the daily commute. Long commutes and peak hour traffic are avoided, reducing fatigue and stress. As a result, individuals may devote more effort and focus to their professional tasks.

Offering WF also enables the construction company to tap into a larger talent pool. Employers can now attract a wider variety of candidates because geographic location is no longer a barrier. For example, employers could tap into talent from different locations (Dobrucali et al., 2022). This makes it possible to employ the top applicants, regardless of where they live in relation to the workplace. In the end, this results in a diverse and high-performance workforce that is more innovative and skilled (Johanssen & Hastwell, 2023).

Flexibility in the workplace is beneficial for EP by allowing flexible working hours and less travel to and from work, more work-life balance, and less work-life conflict, which has a significantly encouraging consequence on employee performance (Isa & Indrayati, 2022). But on the downside, WF can also be linked to factors related to isolation, such as loneliness, no interaction with colleagues, loss of group cohesiveness, no furthering of career opportunities and no further progression in the construction company, which could create negative attitudes towards performance (Huang, et al., 2016).

Management must trust that WF employees are performing in accordance with organisational values of 'Integrity and Accountability' and demonstrate good behaviour of organisational citizenship, with commitment and an excellent performance output while working remotely and without their usual supervision on the job. Employee performance appraisals must be altered, taking into account the WF environment situation (Raišiene et al., 2020). On the contrary, it is argued that work patterns change continuously (Wild, 2023). The evolving roles of men and women in the workplace influence how people are managed and their ability to request flexible work. This shift has given rise to challenges such as a pervasive long hours culture, a glass ceiling for women, and other workplace diversity issues. Additionally, the ongoing technological revolution is reshaping the nature of work and how people engage in their professions.

Despite the benefits, WF in the construction company may present certain challenges, namely lack of cooperation and communication was one problem. When working as a team, collaboration and clear communication are frequently required (Martinelli, 2022) and since WF flexibility setups can prevent face-to-face communication, it could influence the effectiveness and quality of cooperation. The construction company and other employers must use digital tools and platforms to promote efficient communication and teamwork among remote team members to address this (Dobrucali et al., 2022).

Reduced responsibility and visibility are another issue. It may create difficulty for management to monitor worker development and maintain accountability when working remotely. Concerns of lower productivity or unfinished activities may arise as a result of the lack of direct supervision. Employers must create precise expectations, define targets, and implement measures to address these problems (Martinelli, 2022). In addition, employers must create goals, communicate all expectations and targets, and put procedures in place for monitoring and reviewing remote workers' performance to address these problems.

The challenges include potential infrastructural and technological limits. Working-from-home requires a strong internet connection and a lot of equipment (Herrity, 2023). In some circumstances, workers may experience technical setbacks or insufficient

infrastructure that could impair their ability to perform tasks effectively. To guarantee that remote workers have the apparatus and infrastructure needed for remote work, employers should offer the appropriate resources and assistance (Martinelli, 2022).

Workplace flexibility agreements may also affect the organisation's corporate culture and sense of togetherness. Employees may feel cut off from their co-workers and the bigger business without face-to-face contact. The management of the construction company must cultivate a strong remote work culture through virtual team building exercises to maintain a solid business culture, regular check-ins, and opportunities for social interaction to have a positive impact on employee performance in the company (Qi et al., 2023).

2.8. WAYS OF IMPROVING WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY THAT ENABLE IMPROVEMENT OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Improving WF can have a positive effect on EP. Here are several ways to enhance workplace flexibility and enable improvements in employee performance:

2.8.1. Flexible Work Hours

Grant employees the flexibility to determine their work hours, including options like flexible start and end times or compressed workweeks. This empowers them to effectively handle personal responsibilities, contributing to heightened job satisfaction and work-life balance, which assists improved performance (Davidescu et al., 2020).

2.8.2. Remote Work Options

Implement remote work policies that allow employees to work-from-home or in other locations. Remote work provides flexibility in terms of where and how work is performed, reducing commuting time, and improving work-life integration. This flexibility leads to increased productivity and employee engagement (Castrillon, 2022).

2.8.3. Job Sharing and Part-Time Work

Offer options for job sharing, where two or more employees share the responsibilities of one full-time position. Additionally, provide employees the opportunity to work part-time, allowing them to change their hours to suit personal obligations while still

contributing to the company. These arrangements can increase staff commitment to their jobs and work satisfaction and a subsequent work environment that prioritises results above strict adherence to established work schedules (Davidescu et al., 2020). Employee autonomy in time and task management can be strengthened by focusing on goals and deliverables that improves output and performance.

2.8.4. Policies for Flexible Leave

Offer flexible leave options in addition to standard sick and vacation days. This could apply to options such as sabbaticals, personal days, or parental leave. Such rules take into account the various demands of employees and provide them the ability to handle personal duties without jeopardising their professional obligations, improving job satisfaction and overall performance (Davidescu, et al., 2020).

2.8.5. Technology Enablement

Make an investment in software and hardware that enables task management, communication, and remote collaboration (Davidescu et al., 2020). Employees are able to work flexibly while continuing to interact and be effective because of this. To guarantee the efficient use of these instruments, training and assistance must be offered. Establish clear expectations and norms for workplace flexibility.

2.8.6. Clear Communication

According to Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020), inform people about the possibilities and procedures for obtaining flexible work schedules. Regardless of work hours or locations, clearly establish performance objectives, deliverables, and deadlines. Employees could better understand how to balance performance expectations and flexibility because of this.

2.8.7. Encourage Managerial Support

Ask managers to back and promote workplace flexibility. Teach them how to effectively manage distributed and virtual teams and evaluate performance based on results rather than just presence (Garro-Abarca, Palos-Sanchez, & Aguayo-Camacho, 2021). Managers can foster a high-performance culture that actively promotes flexibility and cultivates an inclusive work environment.

2.8.8. Employee Involvement and Input

Regularly ask employees for input on their experiences with workplace flexibility. Participate in the development of flexible work policies and practices with them (Birt, 2023). Employees who feel heard and respected at work perform better and are more satisfied with their jobs.

2.8.9. Continuous Learning and Development

Provide employees with the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills through adaptable learning alternatives. Online classes, webinars, or self-paced learning modules fall into this category. Continuous learning is beneficial for worker development and performance improvement (Mikołajczyk, 2021).

2.9. OVERVIEW OF A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SPHERE

The construction value chain in South Africa encompasses various stages and activities essential for the successful execution of construction projects. It begins with market research and feasibility studies, which involve evaluating potential projects, analysing market trends, and assessing financial viability (Findlay & Hoekman, 2021). Pre-construction services follow, including project proposals, environmental assessments, and securing permits. Collaborating with architects and engineers, consultants develop detailed project plans that comply with regulations (Calzada Olvera, 2022). They also estimate project costs, create budgets, and provide cost-saving recommendations.

Project management is crucial, encompassing the oversight of construction, the management of timelines and the assurance of compliance with scope, quality, and budget. Quality control processes ensure standards are met, while post-construction services handle inspections and project closeout. Facility management services for completed structures may also be provided. Additionally, specialised advisory services are offered, such as sustainability consulting and risk assessment, to optimise project outcomes (Sawhney, et al., 2020).

The participants of this study work within a construction company, which encompasses a range of services such as architectural design, project management, and

engineering consultancy. Although they work remotely from home, these professionals play a crucial role in providing expertise and guidance to clients, ensuring project efficiency and successful outcomes. The work-from-home arrangement allows them to leverage technology and digital platforms to collaborate with clients and team members, offering advantages like increased productivity and improved work-life balance. While facing challenges related to communication, project management, and technological limitations, their adaptability and resilience highlight the industry's ability to thrive in changing circumstances (Stevens, 2021). As WF employees, they continue to contribute their expertise and dedication to driving construction projects forward using virtual means.

2.10. RESEARCH GAP

The research gap lay in the limited attention given to a construction company in SA, the unique contextual factors within the country, the need for appropriate measurement tools, the specific mechanisms linking WF and EP and the impact of organisational and individual factors. Research to address these gaps provided valuable information to practitioners, policymakers, and researchers at a construction company in South Africa, allowing them to develop strategies to promote employee performance through effective WF initiatives.

2.11. EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Numerous studies on WF and worker performance have been conducted. A study by Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015), viz. "How effective is telecommuting? Assessing the status of our scientific findings" reviewed previous research on telecommuting and EP and found that the effectiveness of telecommuting varied, depending on the nature of the job. The research suggested that telecommuting has the potential to improve employee performance outcomes. The study by Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015) also explored how telecommuting influenced society and the community, particularly in terms of traffic and emissions, business continuity, and work opportunities, as well as its potential impact on societal bonds. For instance, telecommuters typically make fewer commutes to work, potentially conserving natural fossil fuels, reducing pollution, and alleviating strain on urban infrastructures such as highways and public transit systems.

Bloom, Liang, Roberts, and Ying (2015) conducted a separate study on telecommuting, viz. “Does working-from-home work? Evidence from a Chinese experiment”, which examined how employee performance was impacted by working-from-home. The research focused on a Chinese experiment where employees were randomly assigned to work either from the office or from home. The findings suggested that working-from-home enhanced employee performance and productivity, contributing to overall corporate performance. It also indicated that working-from-home led to increased job satisfaction, reduced staff turnover, and heightened worker performance, ultimately improving organisational performance. The study observed a 13% increase in performance when working-from-home, with approximately 9% attributed to working longer shifts (with fewer breaks and sick days) and 4% from an increased call rate per minute (attributed to a calmer working environment).

Mihalca, Irimias, and Bredea (2021) carried a study on “Teleworking During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Determining Factors of Perceived Work Productivity, Job Performance, and Satisfaction”, which exemplified that teleworking became a widely adopted strategy for maintaining business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both individual aspects (such as self-management strategies) and home-family aspects (such as the need for suitable telework settings) significantly influenced workers’ performance, productivity, and satisfaction when working remotely. Furthermore, the study by Mihalca, Irimias, and Bredea (2021) revealed that employee performance, telework satisfaction, and work productivity are all significantly influenced by workload or job demands. The findings suggest that three key factors, viz. the telework-supportive work environment, an employee's capacity for self-management, and the nature of their job, particularly their workload had a substantial impact on how well individuals navigated the unique demands and challenges associated with remote work.

In another study conducted by Bieńkowska, Koszela, Salamacha and Tworek (2022) on “COVID-19 oriented HRM strategies influence on job and organisational performance through job-related attitudes”, the study’s results show that the combined set of “hard” HRM strategies related to financial aspects and “soft” HRM strategies related to maintaining employees’ well-being during the COVID-19 crisis, whilst working-from-home, yields the best results in shaping job performance through job-

related attitudes and strengthening organisational performance. The study highlighted the expanding importance of HRM experts in effectively developing these HRM strategies, which might enhance job performance through attitudes connected to the job, such as organisational commitment, work motivation, and job satisfaction, especially while working remotely.

A comprehensive evaluation of studies on telework and organisational economic performance indicators was carried out by Mutiganda et al. in 2022, viz. “A systematic review of the research on telework and organizational economic performance indicators”. Indicators of organisational economic success, such as self-reported employee performance, organisational performance, real employee turnover rates, or intentions, are examined in this study in connection to telework. The findings demonstrated that employees who worked remotely reported better levels of self-assessed performance than their counterparts in traditional office settings. The amount to which teleworking was practiced within the organisation and individual characteristics determined the degree of performance change. Telework was also associated with improved organisational performance, particularly in homogeneous samples with unique work tasks. When telework is voluntary, it appears that both actual employee turnover rates and intentions to leave the organisation are lower.

The most recent investigation into this research area conducted by Kossek, Perrigino, and Lautsch (2023), viz. “Work-Life Flexibility Policies From a Boundary Control and Implementation Perspective: A Review and Research Framework”, proclaimed that despite over 40 years of management research on work-life flexibility policies, the field remains underdeveloped and yields inconsistent results. The workforce has undergone significant changes, characterised by increased diversity in terms of gender, age, and family characteristics. Work itself has evolved, incorporating more virtual, global, and 24/7 on-demand features. Additionally, societal environments are becoming more turbulent, marked by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events due to climate change. In light of these transformations, employers are urged to realign Human Resource (HR) policies to accommodate future work trends. To address these challenges, employers are swiftly expanding the availability of discretionary flexibility policies. These policies grant employees the

flexibility to choose when, where, how much, or how continuously they work, serving as a strategic approach to enhance overall performance.

2.12. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the review of the literature provided a comprehensive assessment of the existing literature on WF and its impact on employee performance. It revealed the increased significance of this topic in today's dynamic and competitive business environment, where organisations actively seek ways to attract and retain talented employees. The findings of the literature review highlighted the need for organisations to adopt FWA and policies that accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of their workforce.

The literature review highlighted the relationship between WF and employee performance and highlighted the positive impact that FWA could have on employee productivity and performance, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall well-being. By accommodating flexible working hours, remote work options, and alternative work schedules, organisations could create an environment that promoted employee engagement and improved performance outcomes. Furthermore, the literature review also identified various factors and mechanisms that contributed to the successful implementation of WF initiatives. These included effective communication and collaboration strategies, managerial support, technological advancements, and an organisational culture that values work-life integration.

In general, the review of the literature underscored the importance of understanding and leveraging WF as a strategic tool to improve employee performance. It provided a foundation for further research and practical implications for organisations seeking to improve their workforce management practices and create a more flexible and productive work environment. Recognising the potential benefits of WF and adopting appropriate strategies, organisations could foster a positive and supportive work culture that positively affected employee performance and organisational success. The subsequent chapter concentrated on elucidating the research methodology employed for gathering and analysing data in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive details of how the data was gathered and analysed for the study was made evident in this chapter. The chosen approach was fundamental in guaranteeing the credibility and dependability of the respondents' results. It covered various sections such as research strategy, design, sampling technique, data collection and analysis methods, limitations, reliability, ethical considerations, and conclusions, each forming a subheading within the chapter.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

The approach used for the research in this study was qualitative. This approach emphasised the use of inductive methods to delve into the meanings and insights within a specific context (Busetto et al., 2020). Qualitative methods are praised for their ability to uncover detailed feelings, opinions, and experiences of participants, allowing researchers to comprehend the significance of these aspects and their influence on participant behaviour. This approach facilitated the access to nuanced data like sentiments, decisions, and social interactions that might be elusive through other means (Bhandari, 2020). In this study, the qualitative methodology specifically assisted in understanding how workplace flexibility impacted employee performance within a South African construction firm by examining participant attitudes and experiences.

3.3. RESEARCH STRATEGY

A research strategy embodies a meticulously crafted plan used to investigate specific research questions or issues (McCombes, 2019). Qualitative research, particularly phenomenological studies, aims to comprehend individual perceptions through methods like interviews, conversations, and participant observation (Li, 2020). In the referenced study, a semi-structured interview method was employed, generating extensive interview notes, MS Teams recordings, jottings, and other records for analysis (McCombes, 2019). This, thorough analysis, aided in comprehensively

describing, evaluating, and understanding various facets of the research problem, offering detailed insights. The analytical process involved reviewing textual and audio materials to identify key themes and issues, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the data.

3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

Asenahabi (2019) defines research design as the roadmap used by researchers to tackle problems by collecting, analysing, and presenting data. In the study, an exploratory research design was chosen, typically employed when a subject is novel and lacks extensive research. The aim was to fill knowledge voids and obtain fresh insights (Joseph, 2022). The exploratory design was chosen because it provided the advantage of offering fresh and in-depth insights into the phenomenon being studied. With this research design, the researcher interacted with the participants and collected information from those who had directly experienced the situation being studied. Open-ended questions are best for exploratory research because they allowed the researcher to probe deeper into topics of interest. Exploratory research gathered information that could be used in future studies.

3.5. RESEARCH SAMPLING METHOD

A population refers to the complete set of individuals or elements from which a researcher draws conclusions in a study (Bhandari, 2020). The population of this study was administrative employees from a construction company. A sample is a selected and smaller subset of the population from which data was collected to conduct research, with the results of the study based on the sample (McCombes, 2019). The target population encompassed 40 administrative workers who work remotely and participated in workplace flexibility practices in a construction company where most of the employees from this type of industry usually work on-site.

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants. Nikolopoulou (2022) defines sample size as the number of individuals or units forming the study's basis, emphasising the need for a manageable yet representative size. An optimal sample size is often around 10% of the population when it does not surpass 1000 individuals.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) noted that dependent on research types and questions, 10 to 50 participants may suffice. For smaller research projects, a sample size of between 6 and 10 participants are recommended for interviews (Fugard & Potts, 2014). In this instance, 10 individuals were chosen from a population of 40 to partake in the study. These 10 individuals included 8 managers and 2 nonmanagerial employees. The inclusion criteria for the 10 participants that were interviewed included 3 years + work experience in the construction company in South Africa, knowledge and information of workplace flexibility trends was also an important aspect of the inclusion criteria.

Table 3.1. illustrates the sample criteria, namely the work experience of the sample from the construction company, the sample method chosen by the researcher, the population from which the sample was selected and the sample size.

Table 3.1. Sample Criteria

Area Section	Work experience	Sample Method	Population	Sample Size
Construction Company	+3 years	Purposive Sampling	40	10

3.6. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The process of data collection involved acquiring information from individuals and various origins, contributing to a comprehensive comprehension of the investigated research problem (Bhandari, 2020). Data collection comprise primary, which involves direct gathering from original sources, and secondary, which entails extracting information from published materials. In this particular study, interviews served as the primary instrument for data collection. An interview is a formal dialogue between an interviewer posing questions and an interviewee providing responses. The study employed semi-structured interviews, recognised for their effectiveness in exploring unfamiliar subjects by allowing probing and detailed insights from participants, facilitating a deeper grasp of the research problem (George, 2022).

3.6.1. Qualitative pilot study

According to Malmqvist et al. (2019), pilot testing allows the study instrument, in this study it was the interview framework, to be pre-tested before the main study, to ascertain how well the interview questions had been structured and if the participants understood the questions posed. A pilot study is conducted on a smaller scale than the main study. Before data collection began, the researcher conducted a pilot study in which interviews were conducted with four participants.

The researcher transcribed the pilot interviews and discussed the transcripts with the study leader (supervisor), who after reviewing the interview guide, gave the researcher permission to continue with the interviews. The responses of the four participants in the pilot study were not included in the final coding and data analysis of the report (Busetto et al., 2020).

3.7. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis serves as the fundamental procedure aimed at comprehending the perspectives and viewpoints expressed by research participants concerning various situations. This process involves scrutinising corresponding patterns, themes, categories, and consistent similarities within the data (Warren, 2020). Calzon (2023) emphasises the post-data collection phase, asserting that data necessitates analysis, measurement, and interpretation to be rendered meaningful. According to Calzon (2023), collected data remain inert without undergoing analytical scrutiny.

In this specific study, thematic analysis was the chosen method for data analysis. Thematic analysis involved a systematic approach to identifying and exploring trends within the data, aiming to reveal overarching themes (Mortensen, 2020). It is a technique dedicated to categorising and unveiling patterns aligned with the research question, and thereby provided a structured framework to interpret the dataset.

3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to De Vault (2019), credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are described as follows:

3.8.1. Credibility

Credibility means having confidence in the authenticity and interpretation of the data. The goal was to make the research results more credible and to show credibility to others. The research process, procedures, and participant details were summarised to support this (De Vault, 2019).

To improve credibility, the researcher, through purposive sampling, only interviewed participants who contributed from their experiences and their perspectives bearing upon workplace flexibility and employee performance.

3.8.2. Transferability

Transferability is the ability to apply research findings to different backgrounds or groups of people. The researcher provided descriptive information in the report so that others can assess how the findings may be relevant in various contexts. The researcher enhanced the transferability of the study by employing a technique called "thick description." This method involved offering comprehensive details about the study site, participants, and the specific methods or procedures used during data collection. By focusing on providing rich contextual information and outlining the fundamental assumptions guiding the research, the researcher successfully improved the transferability of the findings (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

3.8.3. Dependability

In qualitative research, dependability refers to the consistency and stability of data across time and different conditions. De Vault (2019) highlighted that if research findings can be replicated under similar circumstances, it enhances their dependability. The researcher bore the responsibility of presenting a thorough, traceable, and well-documented research process to establish dependability. To ensure dependability, the researcher detailed the research methodology, enabling other researchers to replicate the study and achieve comparable results. The researcher was committed to being accountable and responsible for ensuring a coherent, traceable, and clearly documented research process.

3.8.4. Conformability

In research, conformability refers to ensuring fairness and accuracy in data by aligning it with the experiences of diverse individuals. It emphasises the authenticity of data, aiming to prevent biased interpretations and reflect participants' voices and investigation conditions rather than biases of the researcher (De Vault, 2019). The researcher maintained detailed records, including field notes and instrument summaries, allowing external reviewers to assess the results and reach similar conclusions. Comprehensive documentation was kept for potential external audits.

3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of research participants, upholding research credibility, and preserving the integrity of scientific or academic work in accordance with established ethical norms (Bhandari, 2021).

3.9.1. Informed consent

To ensure informed consent, participants were required to provide a signature on a consent form to confirm their voluntary involvement in the study, certifying they were not coerced or compelled to participate.

3.9.2. Confidentiality and privacy

In terms of confidentiality and privacy the researcher prioritised protecting participants' confidentiality and privacy. Personal information was withheld in the study report, and participant transcripts were coded with unique identifiers to maintain anonymity. The study's findings were presented in a manner that prevented individual participants from being directly linked to the results.

3.9.3. Data Storage

The researcher took measures to ensure the security of collected data. Written transcribed data was securely stored in a lockable safe accessible only to the researcher. Additionally, MS Teams recordings were stored on OneDrive for Business, a platform known for its secure data storage capabilities, and research data retention periods of up to 7 years.

3.9.4. Feedback

Participants received clear and comprehensive information, assuring them that all gathered data would exclusively serve academic purposes only. Furthermore, they were explicitly informed that the outcomes of the investigation would be shared solely with the stakeholders who actively took part in the study. Additionally, participants were given the guarantee that any information pertaining to the study was accessible to them upon request for review.

The initiation of the research occurred subsequent to the issue of the ethical clearance by UNISA SBL, under the approved certificate number '2023_SBL_MBA_026_FA - 1544.' The corresponding document is attached for reference as Annexure A.

3.10. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations that were experienced during the process of this investigation. Interviews were carried out in MS Teams with only a few selected employees. The reason for the interviews being done on MS Teams was that construction sites are often fast-paced environments with strict project schedules, the limited availability of participants due to their work responsibilities, and time constraints made it challenging to schedule and conduct face-to-face interviews.

Another reason for MS Teams being the mode of interviews was that the selected employees work remotely, remote work being the crux of the study, and their remote work arrangements limited face-to-face interviews, as well as limitations experienced due to the different remote working locations of the participants. Limitations caused a smaller sample size with difficulties in reaching a more diverse range of participants. The sample size was limited to 10 participants only. The presence of background noise and poor network connectivity on MS Teams also affected the clarity of audio recordings, potentially affected data analysis, and was therefore also considered a research limitation (Nel, 2020).

3.11. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the methodology employed for the research, including research design, sample technique, data collection, and analysis methods, was outlined. Each of these approaches was elucidated and substantiated as effective in attaining the study's objectives. The reliability of the study was emphasised, and ethical considerations, along with any study limitations, were thoroughly addressed. The following chapter revealed the research findings, accompanied by an in-depth discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter delved into outlining the methodology used, while Chapter 4 showcases the study's findings, coupled with an analysis and explanation of those research outcomes. The structure of this chapter was strategically crafted to effectively meet the study's aims and objectives. It consists of multiple sections. The initial section furnished demographic information about the participants, illustrated their backgrounds and representative status within the target population, and highlighted findings thereto. The findings from the respondents' data was presented using TA.

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- Establish the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa.
- Examine the perception of the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa.
- Determine whether workplace flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a construction company in South Africa.

4.2. DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Demographic information identifies the qualities and characteristics of the population being examined (Mialki, 2023):

- Job title
- Gender
- The highest qualification
- Work experience.

4.2.1. Job title

The study focused on participants' job titles as they reflected the sample's work positions. Sonmez Cakir and Adiguzel (2020) highlighted the job titles' importance in influencing participants' perceptions and attitudes toward the studied concept. Table 4.1 presented the breakdown of participants according to their job titles and the corresponding number of individuals in each category.

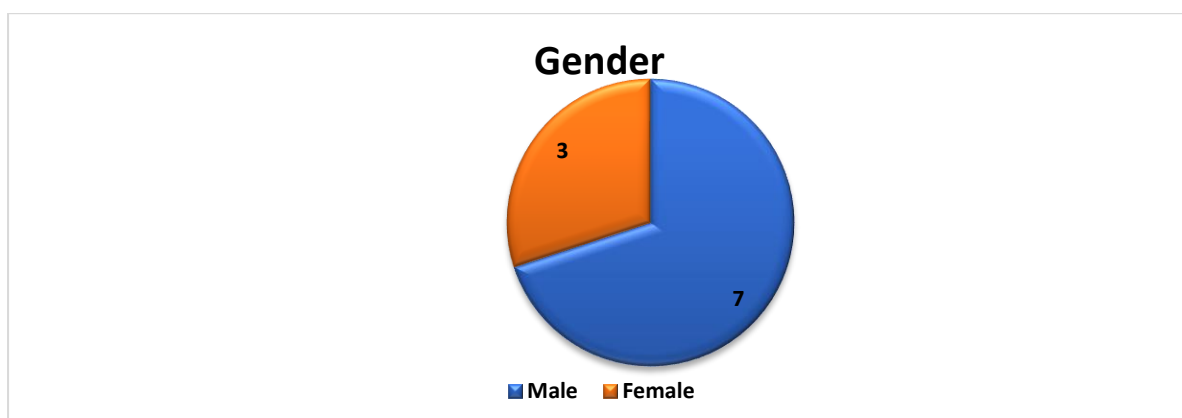
Table 4.1: Job title

Item	Number
Employee	2
Middle manager	5
Senior manager	3
Total	10

The findings on the job title of the participants showed that the positions were almost evenly distributed within the study. Most of the participants were managers with five middle managers and three senior managers, whereas the general employees were only two. Therefore, as suggested by Zhenjing et al. (2022), the research may lack the necessary complexity to understand the research issue if it does not cover a comprehensive range of positions of employees within the organisation. Hence, it was evident that employment level influenced the grasp of the research problem.

4.2.2. Gender

Sectors in South Africa have dedicated significant attention and effort towards achieving gender equality. As a result, this investigation also examined the gender composition of the participants. In understanding a research concept, gender offered a unique viewpoint, as indicated by Cypress (2018). This was why the study aimed at determining the gender of the individuals. Figure 4.1 disclosed the proportion of male participants versus female participants.

Figure 4.1: Participant gender

The study results on the gender of the participants indicated a higher proportion of males compared to females. Specifically, 70% of the participants were males, while women comprised 30%. This indicates an uneven gender representation within the organisation with respect to the Employment Equity Act (EEA) criteria of South Africa.

The study by Pamidimukkala and Kermanshachi (2021) emphasises the persistent underrepresentation of women in construction, particularly in leadership roles, due to various obstacles like management structures, cultural barriers, and work environments that favour men. This results in a workforce with a vast gender gap, where women make up only a fraction of the workforce. Factors such as the absence of role models and insufficient opportunities for career advancement were highlighted as contributors to this issue.

Additionally, Namian et al. (2020) shed light on the challenges faced by construction workers, including workplace hazards and inefficient health and safety standards. Female employees encounter demanding tasks, heavy workloads, stress, and potential health issues due to the lack of flexible work options, childcare programs, and adequate leave policies like maternity leave. These challenges significantly limit professional opportunities for women and could impact their overall performance within the industry.

4.2.3. Highest qualification of participants

As a component of the demographic data, the study also documented the highest educational attainment of the participants. This inclusion was based on the idea that an individual's understanding and viewpoint on a particular subject are significantly shaped by their educational background, as noted by Cooper and Schindler (2014).

Table 4.2: Participant highest qualification

Item	Number	Percentage
Diploma and below	4	40%
Bachelors Degree	6	60%
Total	10	100%

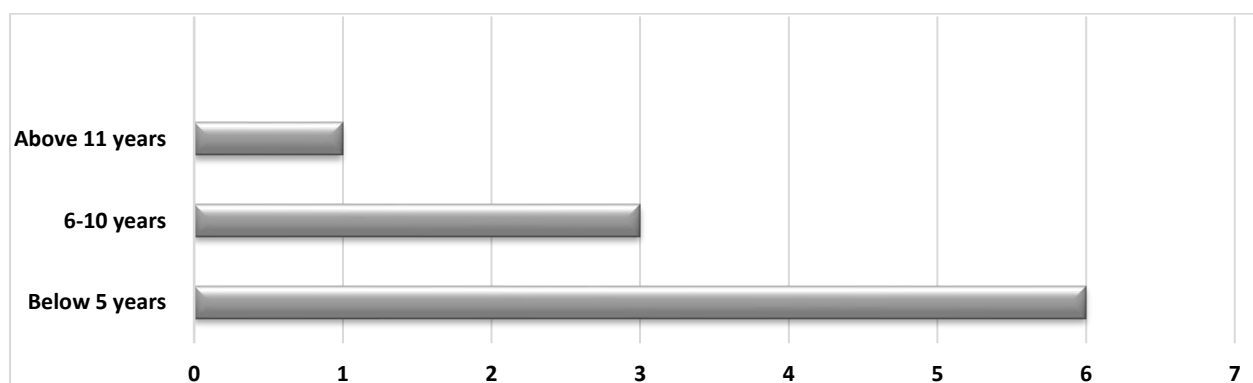
The recorded qualification outcomes of the participants are shown in Table 4.2 above. The organisation was primarily characterised by two qualification types, mainly diplomas and degrees, with a distribution of 40% and 60%, respectively. This finding indicated that the individuals involved in the study have a solid academic foundation, suggesting their familiarity with the subject of the investigation.

Another finding regarding these qualified participants' familiarity with the subject of the investigation was that they are the selected sample of the study and are the administrative employees who participate in flexible working arrangements at the construction company in South Africa. These selected administrative employees provided relevant input for the study due to WF being their current, ongoing, and constant working environment.

4.2.4. Work experience

Work experience has significant implications in enhancing participants' understanding of a study and it was highlighted that work experience offered a distinct perspective, by way of the time that is spent working, contributing to an individual's knowledge and experience (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The inclusion criteria for the study were 3 years+ working experience in the construction company in SA, with knowledge and information about WF trends as an important aspect. The study presented findings related to the employee work experience. Experience of the participants was detailed in the subsequent figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Work experience of participants



The findings regarding the work experience of participants revealed a diverse range of employee backgrounds, as highlighted in Figure 4.2 above. Most, which comprised 60% of the sample, had less than 6 years of experience. Those with 6 to 10 years accounted for 30%, while those with over 11 years represented 10% of the total group. The varied years of experience among the participants allowed them to effectively communicate the current organisational situations and dynamics relevant to the study.

4.3. Presentation and discussion of findings

From the process of coding the qualitative data, integral to TA, the following three main themes and sub-themes linked to the objectives emerged (Ho & Limpaecher, 2020):

Theme One: Establish the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa, with subthemes:

- Current work arrangement and the level of flexibility.
- Workplace flexibility and its importance in relation to job performance.
- Work-life balance and its influence on employee performance.
- Reduction in commute stress and its impact on improved productivity.

Theme Two: Examine the perception of the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa, with subthemes:

- Ways in which workplace flexibility affects job performance.
- Effects of workplace flexibility on collaboration and communication between team members.
- Specific work tasks or responsibilities become easier to accomplish due to workplace flexibility.
- Impact of workplace flexibility on employee well-being and stress levels.
- Influence of workplace flexibility on employee accountability and productivity.

Theme Three: Determine whether workplace flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a construction company in South Africa, with subthemes:

- Challenges experienced as a result of workplace flexibility.

- Changes in work-life balance since adopting workplace flexibility.
- Employee satisfaction and engagement.
- Impact on employee performance and productivity.
- Improvements or adjustments that could be made to improve the effectiveness of workplace flexibility.

The related findings of the themes, inclusive of the sub-themes, are conferred in the following segments:

4.3.1. Theme One: Impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa.

The first research objective was to ascertain the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa. The emerging subthemes are discussed in detail below:

4.3.1.1. Current work arrangement and the level of flexibility

Several participants highlighted that their flexibility in the workplace was impacted by their current work arrangements and their level of flexibility. These participants highlighted that they spent much of their time working-from-home, since the target population was the administrative staff who WFH or from other locations, and their current level of FWA allowed them to work better. The following are some excerpts on current work arrangements and level of flexibility and its impact, as highlighted by the participants:

Participant 6 highlighted: *"Currently, I have a flexible work arrangement where I spend three days a week working from the office and have the choice to work remotely for the two days left over. This level of flexibility allows me to better manage my schedule and avoid long commutes on certain days."*

In the same vein, **Participant 2 added** that *"I am mostly working-from-home. This allows me to work-from-anywhere with a reliable internet connection. This flexibility eliminates the need to relocate for work and makes it easy for me in balancing my personal and professional life."*

Participant 10 had this to say: *"Currently, I am working-from-home entirely. This permits me to have more control regarding working hours. It gives me flexibility in when and how work is completed". "*

Participant 4, in support, shared that: *"I have the flexibility to work-from-any location, whilst working-from-home. This arrangement has been instrumental in enhancing my productivity and performance, as it allows me to adapt my work conditions to match the task at hand."*

These views, disclosed above, from the participants are findings that suggest that the administrative staff of the organisation under study, current work arrangement and level of flexibility were mainly remote. The work arrangement allowed their employees to work better and for the organisation to be more effective. These findings were supported by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, as stated by Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020), that organisations with well-managed WF programmes endorse a culture, which has a favourable impact on employees' working experiences, state of mind, and well-being and thus increases commitment and positive employee performance. An additional literature review finding, from Chapter 2, was that WF had a constructive influence on employee behaviour toward excellent employee performance and concurrent organisational performance (O'Donoghue, 2021).

4.3.1.2. Perception of workplace flexibility and its importance in relation to job performance

Participants highlighted their perception of WF and its importance with relation to their job performance. These participants elaborated that workplace flexibility was an important phenomenon, as it allowed them to perform better.

Participant 1 emphasised the importance of workplace flexibility, stating that *"Workplace flexibility is an extremely crucial consideration in the output necessary for my job. Being able to work from various locations helps me achieve a good work-life balance, which is a solution to stress, which in turn enhances my job satisfaction and results in improved performance, elevating my ratings in my performance appraisals. The performance evaluation ratings are related to my bonus and my salary increase."*

Participant 6 pointed out: *"My workplace flexibility allows me to have more grasp over my work deadlines, which led to improved work-life balance. **Flexible work arrangements are the reason for** my increased job satisfaction, and reduced burnout, leading to **better job performance.**"*

Participant 10 highlighted: *"Workplace flexibility holds **immense significance when it comes to my job performance.** The option to work remotely with the ability to adapt my work hours and location **allows me to optimise my productivity** during periods when I am most focused and energised. As a result, I can accomplish tasks more efficiently and deliver high-quality work consistently."*

These findings showed that the perception of workplace flexibility and its importance was very high with the administrative staff of the construction company. These results were supported by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Setyaningrum and Muaffi (2022) declare that by emphasising WF and enabling employees who WFH and other locations, organisations foster positive employee behaviour, which ultimately contributes to excellent employee performance and ultimate excellent organisational performance as well.

The results showed that employees currently have more control over their work schedules due to WF and FWA which assisted with creating a productive work environment for all. These elements boosted employee happiness and job satisfaction, and reduced stress and burnout, which in turn encouraged greater levels of dedication and performance output (Wang & Xie, 2023).

4.3.1.3. Work-Life Balance and Its Influence on Employee Performance

The research underscored the importance of maintaining a work-life balance concerning remote work and employee performance in a South African construction company. Respondents emphasised the need for a work arrangement that allows them to effectively navigate both professional and personal aspects of their lives. It became evident that establishing a harmonious balance between work responsibilities

and personal life was a significant priority for employees in this setting, underscoring the pivotal role of work-life balance in influencing employee performance.

This work-life balance, as conferred by **Participant 8**, significantly affected job performance: *"A healthy work-life balance reduces stress, which **positively impacts my overall productivity** and job satisfaction, enabling me to **perform better at work**. I see **workplace flexibility as a crucial aspect of my job performance**. Working-from-home or from anywhere else allows me to maintain the balance between work and home that is needed for optimal performance at work and an optimal lifestyle at home as well."*

Participant 6 echoed these sentiments by pointing out that *'A **balanced work-life dynamic** not only improves employee well-being, but also improves our focus and energy levels, ultimately leading to higher work efficiency and **consistent delivery of high-quality work**. **Workplace flexibility** allows me to be hands on with planning my working timelines, which assists in a better-quality balance between work and home. This reduction in stress and burnout from conflicting personal and professional obligations, in turn, **contributed to improved job performance**. '*

Participant 5 reinforced this viewpoint, highlighting that *"The **purposeful work-life balance** that I have nurtures my well-being and **allows for exceptional performance results** and additionally assisted with my life priorities as well. Taking this into account and acknowledging the **benefits derived from the flexible work arrangements** provided me with better direction over my work tasks and projects."*

The concept of work-life balance aligned with the research findings discussed in Chapter 2, where Setyaningrum and Muaffi (2022) disclose that WF, particularly the ability to WFH or any preferred location, fostered positive employee behaviour which was precipitated by a healthy and balanced work-life, ultimately contributed to excellent employee performance and organisational performance. In essence, by offering remote workers the flexibility to balance their work and personal lives, the construction company fostered a work environment that encouraged greater

commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance, all of which are crucial for organisational success.

O'Donoghue (2021) said that a flexible work environment, particularly one that allows employees to work remotely, is a catalyst for positive employee behaviour, contributing significantly to both individual and organisational performance. As construction firms in South Africa and throughout the world ponder strategies for success in an increasingly competitive environment, they would do well to recognise the pivotal role that work-life balance plays in fostering employee commitment and job satisfaction. By nurturing this work-life balance, the company created an atmosphere where employees thrived and this generated a culture and work ethos of consistent delivery of high-quality work, which are vital components of long-term sustainable success in the construction industry.

4.3.1.4. Reduction in commute stress and its impact on increased productivity

The impact of WF on reduced commute-related stress and improved employee productivity was another recurring theme among the study participants. Participants highlighted that modern workplace landscapes have undergone a significant transformation with the advent of WF, especially in the wake of technological advancements and changing work dynamics. The participants agreed on a notable aspect that had come to the forefront in this study, which was reduction in commute-related stress and concurrent improvement of employee productivity.

Participant 7 noted, *"The flexibility to work in an environment, where I work-from-home entirely, suits my preferences, as it reduces commuting stress, and there are less disruptions normally caused by traffic delays, when commuting, and from arriving late at work. No commuting contributes to enhanced productivity and performance."*

Participant 2 supports the above discussion: *"By eliminating the daily commute to the office, employees can start workdays with a fresher mindset, reducing the physical and mental toll of travel. Furthermore, when working in a comfortable environment, at home or in another location of their choice, employees experience fewer distractions and interruptions, allowing them to focus better on their tasks."*

Participant 10 added that 'Reduction in commute stress, which is often associated with long travel times and traffic congestion, has a direct influence on overall improved well-being and job performance of employees'.

Findings are that remote work eliminated the requirement to go to an actual workplace, reducing both the time and the expense of commuting. Employees could use the time they saved for personal or productive purposes, which increased production and reduced the cost of transportation. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 supported these findings. Wang and Xie (2023) highlighted that remote working arrangements not only save time, but also create a more productive work environment. Reduced commute times and a less distracting work environment precipitated by WF, contributed to increased employee happiness and job satisfaction. As a result, employees are more dedicated and produced higher-quality work, which ultimately improved the performance of the construction firm.

Eliminating daily commutes not only alleviated the physical and mental toll of travel, but also allowed employees to start their workdays with a refreshed mindset. Furthermore, the reduction in distractions and interruptions, together with the reduction of commute time and traffic disruptions, endorsed an environment that promoted better concentration and focus on tasks, and consequently increased employee and organisational productivity. Remote labour has the potential to increase performance output due to increased time and energy available to remote workers (Wang & Xie, 2023).

4.3.2 Theme Two: Examine the perception of the impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a Construction company in South Africa

The study pursued to analyse the perception of the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa. Several questions were asked in the interviews and several subthemes developed from their answers. A detailed discussion of the subthemes was outlined below:

4.3.2.1 Ways in which Workplace Flexibility affects job performance.

Participants highlighted positive ways in which workplace flexibility affected their job performance. These participants disclosed that workplace flexibility improved their motivation which concurrently improved their job performance.

This is supported by **Participant 9 who said:** *"Workplace flexibility **greatly influences my job performance** in several ways. First, working-from-home or any other location allows me to adapt my work hours to when I feel **most productive**, leading to better quality outputs. Second, the flexible work arrangement enables me to handle personal commitments without affecting my work commitments, increasing my focus on tasks."*

Participant 1 highlighted: *"Workplace flexibility, especially **working-from-home entirely**, offers a less noisy and less deterrent workplace, which enables people who work remotely to have improved focus on their duties, which **results in excellent performance**."*

Participant 10 added that: *"The **flexible work arrangements** gives me flexibility in adjusting my work-life balance, and this led to heightening my job satisfaction and reducing my job stress, which ultimately **improved my job performance**."*

Participant 2 contributed *"Workplace flexibility has a big impact on how well I do my job in many ways. The option to **work flexibly** lets me adjust my work hours to when I work best, so I can **produce better quality results**."*

These results illustrated that there were several ways that workplace flexibility affected job performance. This was in accordance with the findings of the literature that was reviewed. Employees who engage in WF practices, benefitted from more flexibility and more dominance over the FWA offered by the company (O'Donoghue, 2021). Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) state that these employees have more freedom over their planned working hours and locations, allowing them to better combine their personal and professional lives. This adaptability frequently results in greater work satisfaction and general well-being, which assisted in boosting performance outputs.

The research of Wang and Xie (2023) reinforced these findings by highlighting the efficiency of remote working arrangements and their positive impact on employee happiness and job satisfaction. Ultimately, this culminated in increased dedication and the delivery of higher quality work, which, in turn, benefitted organisations by improving their performance output and productivity, which enhanced competitive advantage.

4.3.2.2. Effects of Workplace Flexibility on collaboration and communication among team members

The majority of the participants indicated that workplace flexibility affected collaboration and communication between team members. These participants highlighted that workplace flexibility had a great impact on how well they did their job in many ways.

Participant 2 highlighted that: *'Remote work, especially working entirely from home, often **leads to communication gaps between managers and subordinates**, making it harder to maintain a clear line of communication.'*

Participant 9 contributed: *"Because of flexible work arrangements, which sometimes involves different times and locations to our office counterparts, **the flow of information between managers and team members can be hindered**, potentially causing delays in decision making and task execution."*

Participant 1 had this to say: *"Lack of spontaneous interactions with managers in remote settings and the consequence of these flexible work arrangements ensue in **reduced clarity on tasks, expectations, and project updates**."*

Participant 10 had another view that: *"Workplace Flexibility, which for me is working-from-home or any other chosen location, offers me a noiseless and tranquil environment, **allowing me to concentrate better on my work** and thus am more able to **communicate well, without interruptions experienced at the office**. I use communication platforms such as phone, MS Teams, Zoom or Skype, and/or emails, SMS and WhatsApp, depending on the situation."*

The study results from participant views showed that collaboration and communication among team members was considered important for WF to be successful. This was in agreement with the findings of the reviewed literature, in chapter 2, that collaboration and communication could be difficult while working remotely. Although online meetings and other digital communication technologies were practical, they may not completely replace the advantages of in-person encounters (O'Donoghue, 2021). Teamwork and collaboration could be hampered by poor communication, slow response times, and issues of communicating nonverbal signs.

Another finding from the reviewed literature in Chapter 2, viz. was that the blurring lines between work and personal life provided added difficulty to WF. Employees may find it difficult to switch off from work, which can result in longer working hours, more stress, and a bad influence on their well-being (Douglas, 2021). The effects of remote work on an employee's well-being and mental health were also possible. Blurred boundaries, feelings of isolation, and lack of social engagement could all lead to more stress, anxiety, and burnout. Organisations must give employee well-being the top priority and allocate resources and support to mitigate these challenges (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

4.3.2.3. Specific work tasks become easier to accomplish due to Workplace Flexibility

The majority of the participants pointed out that several work tasks became easier to accomplish due to their use of workplace flexibility.

In support of this, **Participant 4 shared this experience:** *"An excellent example of workplace flexibility **positively impacting my task performance** is **during tight project deadlines**. On occasions when I need to work outside of regular office hours and complete tasks for deadlines, I do so from home. **Working-from-home helps me concentrate better, focus on the task and deliver excellent results for the task on time.**"*

Participant 9 mentioned: *"As a project manager, **I can coordinate and oversee construction projects remotely**, with the opportunity to work-from-home or any other location, and by means of various project management software, video conferencing, and communication tools."*

Participant 5 elaborated: *"I am an engineer. When doing my architectural and engineering design, blueprint creation, and project planning, flexible work arrangements are important. I do tasks remotely using computer-aided design (CAD) software and virtual collaboration tools."*

Participant 3 stated a task challenge: *"In construction projects, being 'on the ground' is important for us to check ground-level types. This challenge is solved by going on-site for this specific task only, which is a hybrid flexible work arrangement with the company, partly remote and partly on-site. "*

The findings of the study showed that there were several tasks that became easier if done remotely. This was in agreement with what was discussed in the review of literature of Chapter 2, highlighting several tasks which are easier to do using WF. According to Qi et al. (2023), there are fewer distractions for remote employees than in-office workers due to the calmer and more pleasant work environment that remote workers experience, which helps them concentrate and pay attention to tasks more intently and consequently led to increased employee and organisational productivity. Remote labour has the potential to increase performance output due to increased time and energy available to remote workers for the completion of tasks (Wang & Xie, 2023).

The improved accomplishment of tasks that remote work provided was an added benefit as it gave the administrative employees more control over their work tasks and deadlines, which could then be integrated more effectively. This allowed them to have better direction over their work tasks, projects, and deadlines with additional leisure time for family, hobbies, and the pursuit of personal interests. This harmony resulted in greater work satisfaction, less stress, and better health all around, which boosted performance levels (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

4.3.2.4. Impact of Workplace Flexibility on Employee Well-being and Stress Levels

Several participants highlighted the impact of WF on their well-being and stress levels. It was important to note that, while WF could improve well-being for some, it may have different effects on others. The impact of WF on employee well-being and stress levels

was a multifaceted issue that has received substantial consideration in recent times. The study participants showed that while WF could be a blessing for some individuals, it may pose distinct challenges for others. The experiences of the participants in this study echo the sentiments of a broader workforce, highlighting the dual nature of WF. On one hand, it allowed employees to better manage their personal lives, with potential reduction in stress and enhanced overall well-being. On the other hand, it could blur the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to increased stress levels and difficulties in disengaging from work-related responsibilities.

The diverse perspectives shared by **Participant 4 and Participant 6** below exemplified the complexities surrounding this issue, which underscore the need for a nuanced exploration of its effects.

Participant 4 expressed concerns: *"While workplace flexibility allows me to manage my lifestyle more effectively, it also blurs the boundaries between work and personal life. This has led to increased stress levels, as I often find it challenging to switch off from work."*

Participant 6 shared a different perspective: *"Workplace flexibility has greatly improved my overall well-being. I have more time for exercise, family, and hobbies, which has reduced my stress levels and improved my mental health. This positive change has directly impacted my job performance, as I am now more focused and motivated at work."*

The impact of WF on well-being and stress levels was a complex issue. It is consistent with the literature findings discussed in the second chapter (Douglas, 2021; Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022), which emphasised the importance of work-life balance in determining the success of WF. Although some employees experienced improved well-being due to a better balance between their professional and personal lives, others struggled with the challenges of maintaining boundaries. Furthermore, remote work led to feelings of isolation and a lack of social interaction, which contributed to stress and anxiety as highlighted by Douglas (2021). Therefore, organisations should prioritise employee well-being and provide support to address these challenges, as suggested by Setyaningrum and Muaffi (2022).

Although some participants flourished in a flexible work setting, others might falter in the absence of a structured office environment, which is in line with Birt (2023). As organisations sought to harness the benefits of WF, it became paramount that they acknowledged the need for additional support mechanisms, such as training, time management tools, and regular check-ins, to ensure that employees maintain high levels of accountability and productivity. In doing so, organisations could strike a delicate balance between giving their employees the freedom of flexible work arrangements and ensuring that work objectives were met efficiently and effectively.

4.3.2.5. Influence of Workplace Flexibility on Employee Accountability and Productivity

Employee accountability and productivity are critical factors in any organisation, and workplace flexibility was impacted both positively and negatively on these aspects.

Participant 7 stated: *"Workplace flexibility, especially remote work, requires a high level of self-discipline and accountability. I realise that **I have increased productivity when working remotely** because **I am accountable** for my own tasks and deadlines."*

In contrast, Participant 8 shared a different perspective: *"**I sometimes struggle with accountability when working-from-home**. There are more distractions, and it is easier to procrastinate. In the office, I have a structured environment that keeps me on track."*

Participant 3 underscored the importance of self-discipline and accountability in workplace flexibility, remarking, *"Workplace flexibility, especially remote work, **demands a high level of self-control and responsibility**. I have noticed that my productivity soars when working-from-home because **it is my absolute obligation to fulfil work** that has been assigned to me within the **target timelines** set by the company."*

These contrasting experiences align with the findings of the literature review (Birt, 2023), which emphasised the importance of employee self-discipline and motivation when working remotely. While some people thrived in a flexible work environment,

others might struggle with the lack of a structured office setting. Organisations must recognise that maintaining high levels of accountability and productivity among employees in a flexible work setting could require additional support, such as training, time management tools, and regular check-ins to ensure that employees are on track.

4.3.3. Theme Three: Determine whether Workplace Flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a Construction company in South Africa.

The study sought to determine whether WF increased or decreased the performance of employees in a construction company in SA. Participants were presented with several questions, which led to the emergence of various subthemes that demonstrated how workplace flexibility could both increase and decrease employee performance. This was presented and discussed below:

4.3.3.1. Challenges experienced as a result of Workplace Flexibility

The participants highlighted that there were several challenges faced as a result of WF. Organisational conflicts were a challenge when it came to implementing the strategy, as stakeholders often clashed on certain aspects during the implementation.

Participant 9 mentioned an initial barrier: *"Initially, we faced technology barriers when the company implemented flexible work arrangements. This was solved through the commitment of senior management when they committed themselves and acquired the required technology."*

Participant 5 supported this subtheme by stating: *"While workplace flexibility has numerous benefits, there have been some challenges. One challenge is the potential for communication gaps among team members when working remotely and especially when working-from-home entirely. To overcome this, I make sure to have regular check-ins with colleagues and use collaboration tools effectively."*

Participant 8 highlighted a specific challenge: *"Certain construction tasks require physical presence, and remote workers who work-from-home or any other location may face challenges ensuring on-site safety protocols are followed properly. This was solved by training."*

Participant 4 addressed time zone challenges: *"Time zone differences are a challenge when working-from-home or any other location. We rotate meeting times to accommodate various time zones, so no single group consistently bears the burden of attending meetings outside of regular working hours."*

The findings of the study concluded that several challenges associated with workplace flexibility such as the technology barrier and the communication gap were experienced. In addition to this and according to the study findings, Qi et al. (2023) argued that the prospect of less social connection is an additional major difficulty of distance employment. Employees may miss out on casual interactions, networking opportunities, and social connections that often occur in a typical office setting. Wang and Xie (2023) support this by saying that this might make people feel alone and make it harder to function as a team.

The findings revealed that working-from-home can occasionally be lonely, especially for those who thrive in a collaborative setting. Feelings of isolation and alienation from co-workers could emerge from the absence of face-to-face interaction and the few possibilities for casual discussions and bonding (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

4.3.3.2. Changes in Work-Life Balance Due to Workplace Flexibility

Participants stated that WF impacted their work-life balance. They indicated that WF has brought about encouraging changes in work-life balance by providing them with the tools to modify their work arrangements to their individual requirements and preferences.

Participant 8 supported this and **shared this experience:** *"Yes, by adopting workplace flexibility and the opportunity to use flexible work arrangements, it has significantly improved my work-life balance. I can spend more time with my family and attend to personal interests, which has boosted my morale and indirectly improved my performance at work."*

Participant 2 pointed out: *"Since working-from-home entirely, I can now enjoy extra family time, which motivates me. I now feel more enabled."*

Participant 7 highlighted the benefits: *"My improved work-life balance, due to flexibility, such as working-from-home or any other location, contributed to a boost in my overall productivity. I can work during my most productive times of the day and in environments where I can focus better. Reduced commute time also means more available working hours. There is no more struggle to balance work and life, and that is inspirational for me."*

Participant 4 noted: *'Yes, since flexible work arrangements were introduced, I now have more work-life balance than before, and this has made my life manageable.'*

The findings of this study showed that flexibility in the workplace impacted work-life balance. Participants highlighted the positive impact of WF on work-life balance. This was as per the findings of the study, which highlighted the positive impact. In this regard, Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) reveal that employees have the opportunity to improve the balance between their professional and personal commitments thanks to WF. This resulted in lower stress levels, greater job satisfaction, and better general health. An improved work-life balance made people prone to be more motivated, engaged, and focused, all of which improved performance and increased output.

4.3.3.3 Employee Satisfaction and Engagement

The study participants also expressed that flexibility in the workplace significantly impacted employee satisfaction and participation. They noted that the ability to work flexibly, from home or from other locations, had contributed to higher levels of satisfaction and engagement among employees. These participants went on to say that in today's rapidly evolving work landscape, the concept of WF has gained significant attention and recognition for its profound impact on employee satisfaction and participation. This phenomenon became a central aspect of modern work culture, and the testimony of the participants underscores its importance.

Participant 3 shared this experience: *"I feel more satisfied with my job now that I have the option to work-from-home when needed. It reduces the stress of commuting and provides a better work-life balance."*

Participant 1 stated: *"Working-from-home has given me a sense of trust and autonomy from my employer, which has made me more engaged and committed to my job. I am more motivated, and I find that **my performance has greatly improved.**"*

Participant 2 highlighted the importance of choice: *"Having the choice to work-from-home or the office has allowed me to customise my work environment. This customisation has **positively impacted my satisfaction with my job.**"*

Participant 7 shared this perspective: *"I find that I am more engaged when I have the freedom to choose where and how I work. It **makes me feel valued as an employee.**"*

The findings of this study suggested that WF positively influenced employee satisfaction and engagement. This aligned with research reviewed in the literature review in Chapter 2 by Castrillon (2022), who found that flexibility in the workplace leads to increased job satisfaction and heightened levels of employee engagement. When employees feel trusted and empowered to choose how and where they work, it increases their motivation and commitment to their roles.

This finding is associated with current insights (Stoyanchev, 2023), who reinforced the idea that flexibility in the workplace is a catalyst for increased job satisfaction and increased levels of employee engagement by underpinning and adding to this finding that not only employees, but employers as well, value flexibility because it leads to improved employee engagement, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and increased productivity. Therefore, the satisfaction and engagement of the employees were derived from the WF.

4.3.3.4. Impact on Employee Performance and Productivity

In addition to the challenges, the changes in work-life balance, and employee engagement and satisfaction, the study participants also discussed the impact of WF on EP and productivity. Most of the participants highlighted that in the modern landscape of the workplace, the concept of WF has developed as a significant game changer. They went on to divulge that as organisations sought to adapt to evolving

work dynamics and the ever-growing influence of technology, this approach was under the spotlight for its potential to transform the way we work.

Participant 3 expressed this view: *"I have noticed a **significant improvement in my performance** since we adopted workplace flexibility. I can structure my work in a way that suits me best, and this has led to increased productivity."*

Participant 5 mentioned: *"The flexibility to choose my work location has allowed me to work in environments where I can focus better. This has directly translated into **higher productivity and better results.**"*

Participant 6 discussed the ripple effect: *"The **increase in my productivity** has also positively affected my team's overall performance. When individuals have the autonomy to work in a way that suits them, it **enhances the collective performance of the team.**"*

Participant 7 emphasised the importance of trust: *"Trust is key in this. Knowing that my employer trusts me to deliver results regardless of my location has **motivated me to perform at my best.**"*

The study findings suggest that WF could lead to improved employee performance and productivity. This is in accordance with research reviewed in Chapter 2, conducted by Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020), who found that employees who have the freedom to choose their work arrangements tend to be more productive and produce higher quality work. When employees were permitted to choose how, when, and where they work, they gained a sense of autonomy, which resulted in ownership. This meant that they had more control over their work and were more motivated to be productive. For instance, some people are productive when they awaken, other people may perhaps take some time before starting work, whilst others are more active in the evening (Pappas, 2023). Employees and organisations benefit from this freedom of choice.

The anecdotal evidence presented here, along with the empirical evidence conducted by Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020), highlighted a consistent narrative, viz. WF yields

improved individual and collective performance. The new freedom to work in ways that resonated with employees' productivity rhythms and the newfound WF environments have proven to be a catalyst for increased performance and better productivity results. Participant views and literature showed that WF motivates employees to go above and beyond when performing tasks, thus expanding production output (Pappas, 2023).

Furthermore, it was found that it is all about trust in this working arrangement. Workplace flexibility instils trust which leads to confidence, and motivated employees to deliver first-rate performance, regardless of location. Trust made flexibility possible (Nauman, 2021). Trust empowered teams and reduced micromanagement. Trust made employees feel more valued and felt they had a safe place to give feedback and be heard.

4.3.3.5. Improvements or adjustments that could be made to enhance the effectiveness of Workplace Flexibility

The participants highlighted that although there is increased performance due to WF, the organisation needs to make improvements. These participants highlighted several improvements or adjustments that the organisation should make to improve the effectiveness of WF.

Participant 1 suggested: *"To enhance the **effectiveness of workplace flexibility** and the flexible work arrangements in the company and industry, **it would be beneficial to implement more flexible scheduling options**. For instance, introducing compressed workweeks or allowing employees to set their core hours, using flexitime, could optimise productivity."*

Participant 10 indicated: *"Organisations must invest in technology to facilitate better flexibility whilst working-from-home or any other location. The organisation must **embrace technological solutions that can empower adaptability and agility**."*

Participant 3 emphasised: *"Training is necessary for better implementation. Proper **training equips individuals with the skills needed to effectively integrate new strategies that align with flexible work arrangements**."*

Participant 4 recommended: *"Investing in robust technology and infrastructure can significantly support remote work and collaboration whilst working-from-home."*

Participant 8 highlighted: *"Encouragement and awareness about the importance of flexibility and the options to work from remote locations needs to be incorporated into educational institutions."*

Participant 7 stated: *"Encouraging flexibility through reduced office duties, when working-from-home entirely, such as fewer printing and scanning and thereby encouraging paperless environments, by saving documents on shared servers and signing documents electronically to avoid enlarged office duties, can all drive positive change."*

Participant 9 suggested: *"Providing comprehensive training for managers to lead diverse flexible work arrangements effectively is crucial."*

Participant 2 added: *'Organisations must provide essential remote work materials, when employees work-from-home and at other locations, such as laptops or desktop computers, noise-cancelling headphones, internet access, and digital signature platform.'*

The findings of the study show that although there was increased performance due to WF, the organisation still needed to make additional improvements. This was in accordance with the findings of the primary study that it was necessary to offer employees opportunities to enhance their skills and competencies through adaptive learning alternatives. Online classes, webinars, or self-paced learning modules fall into this category. Continuous learning is beneficial for worker development and performance improvement (Wang & Xie, 2023).

Investment in software and hardware enabled task management, communication, and distant collaboration (Davidescu et al., 2020). Employees can work flexibly while continuing to interact and be effective because of this. To guarantee the efficient use

of these instruments, training and assistance must be offered. Establish clear expectations and norms for workplace flexibility.

A major finding in this study was that WF increased employee performance, and penultimately increased organisational performance for the construction company. The findings lean towards the ideology that job satisfaction leads to organisational commitment. Research by Steinmann, Klug, and Maier (2018) revealed that employees with even a modest degree of flexibility in their work hours and location exhibited significantly higher job satisfaction, increased commitment to their roles, enhanced collaboration and engagement with the company, and markedly lower stress levels. These factors collectively contributed to outstanding employee performance and organisational success.

The study results revealed that participants allocated less time to traveling and commuting. Consequently, they could spend this time with their families, fostering a more balanced integration of home and work life. Ninety percent of the participants, as depicted in Table 4.3, reported that having a FWA had a highly positive influence on enhancing their productivity.

To determine whether WF increased or decreased employee performance, Table 4.3 below summarised the findings, outlying participant views as percentage:

Table 4.3. Findings of causes for and against increased or decreased performance.

FINDINGS			
ADVANTAGES	Participant view	DISADVANTAGES	Participant view
Increased productivity	90%	Lack of support, inadequate equipment	10%
Better balance of home and work life	80%	Blurring of boundaries between work and home and overwork	20%
Increased flexibility and autonomy	80%	Presenteeism	20%
Reduction in commuting time	90%	Social isolation	10%
Higher morale and job satisfaction	80%	Career progressions or promotions	20%
Avoidance of office politics	70%	Resentment from colleagues	30%

Source: Strydom (2023)

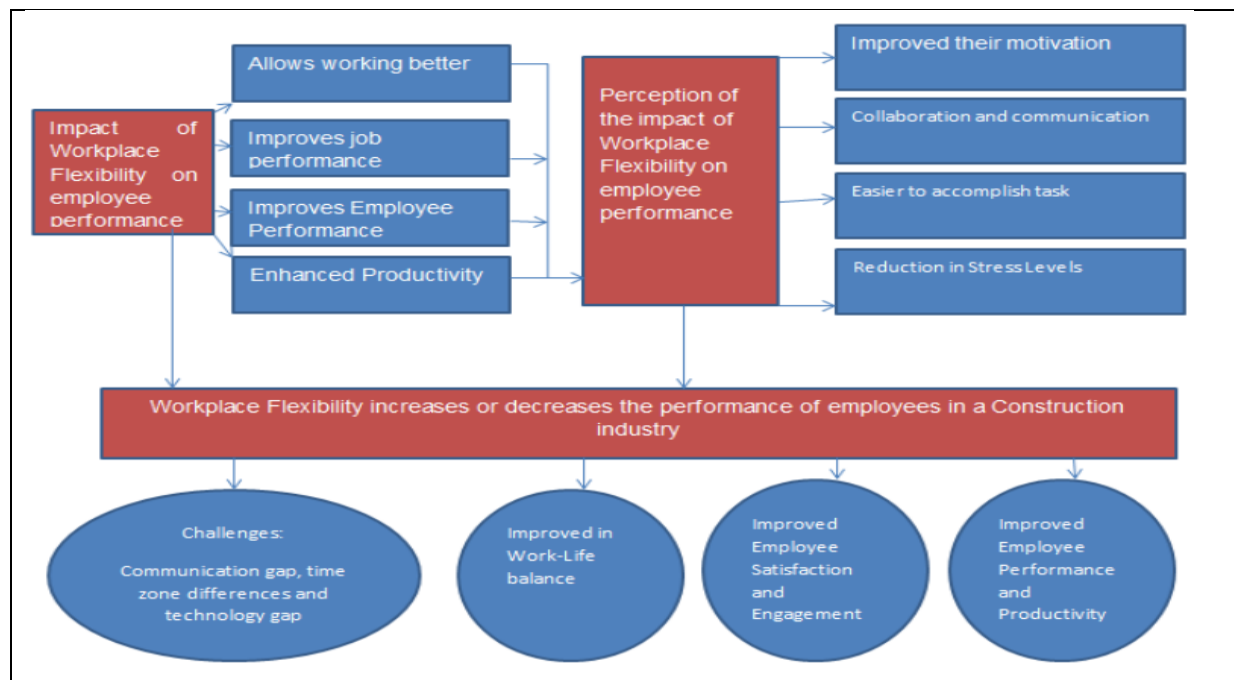
The findings of causes for and against increased or decreased performance are listed in Table 4.3 with the participants' views outlined as percentages. A discovery was that the study participants predominantly held qualifications in the form of diplomas and degrees, as detailed in Table 4.2, with a distribution of 40% and 60% respectively, demonstrating that the individual participants, who were interviewed, possess a strong academic background. This indicates their familiarity with the subject under investigation and adds credibility to the percentage views presented in Table 4.3.

An additional finding related to the familiarity of the participants with the subject was that the sample selected from the study were administrative employees who participate in flexible working arrangements at the construction company on a daily basis. These selected administrative employees offered relevant input for the study due to the concept of WF being their current, continuing, and constant working environment.

The study findings regarding the work experience of participants, detailed in figure 4.2 revealed a diverse range of employee backgrounds. Most of the sample, viz. 60% of the sample, had less than 6 years of experience. Those with 6 to 10 years accounted for 30%, while those with over 11 years represented 10% of the total group. The diversity of years of experience among participants allowed them to effectively communicate the present organisational situation and dynamics relevant to the research questions and objectives.

The findings of the research led to the development of the three main themes, as shown in the researcher's own compilation in figure 4.3 named Sharon's Workplace Flexibility and Performance Framework (SWFPF), which illustrates the thematic relationships from the findings (Strydom, 2023). The themes were listed in red, namely theme one being "Impact of Workplace Flexibility on Employee Performance", theme two is "Perception of the Impact of Workplace Flexibility on Employee Performance" and theme three being "Workplace Flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a Construction Industry", depicted in Figure 4.3 and discussed below.

Figure 4.3. SWFP Framework: Thematic relationships from Findings



Source: Strydom, S (2023)

In the first theme “Impact of Workplace Flexibility on Employee Performance”, subthemes emerged which generally showed that workplace flexibility positively affected employee performance and allowed working better, improved job performance, improved employee performance and improved productivity.

In the second theme of “Perception of the impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance”, it was found that workplace flexibility is perceived as improving employee motivation, collaboration, and communication, making tasks easier to accomplish and reducing stress levels. All of this added to the finding of increased accountability, leading to enhanced performance and productivity.

The last identified theme was “Workplace flexibility increases or decreases employee performance”, Few participants mentioned challenges and decreased performance due to issues such as communication gaps. With the majority of participants highlighting that workplace flexibility increased improved changes in their work-life balance, employee satisfaction and engagement, and employee performance and productivity.

4.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, demographic details were discussed such as job title, gender, highest qualification, and work experience. This information is essential for comprehending the composition of the sample and its significance in relation to the research focus. Utilising TA the chapter presented an overview and disclosed findings pertinent to the study, which were derived from the insights of the participants. These findings confirmed that WF positively influenced employee performance, with the thematic relationships from the findings illustrated in the researcher's own compilation, named Sharon's Workplace Flexibility and Performance Framework (SWFPF), in figure 4.3. The following chapter will delve into the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations arising from the research study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding section emphasised research outcomes and findings. This current chapter served as the conclusion, summarising the main research findings alongside insights gathered from the literature review and the primary study. These collective findings played a crucial role in shaping the study's conclusions, specifically in assessing the impact of WF on employee performance in a construction company located in SA. Additional to conclusions, the limitations are addressed, and recommendations are offered. Furthermore, it puts forward suggestions for future research, culminating in a comprehensive conclusion.

5.2. FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

5.2.1. Main research findings

In this research a sample was utilised where male participants outnumbered female participants, constituting 70% and 30% respectively, revealing an imbalance in gender representation, and is a concerning criteria as outlined in the Employment Equity Act (EEA) of South Africa (Namian et al., 2020). This disproportion, coupled with a lack of flexible work options, childcare provisions, and adequate leave (such as maternity leave), poses challenges limiting the professional opportunities and potentially affecting the overall performance of women from this company.

Pamidimukkala and Kermanshachi (2021) has noted a persistent underrepresentation of construction roles for women, especially in positions of leadership, attributing this to structural, cultural, and environmental barriers. They highlighted a stark gender gap, with women forming only a fraction of the male-dominated workforce, citing issues like the lack of role models and insufficient prospects for the career advancement of women.

Additionally, Namian et al. (2020) emphasised that female employees face numerous workplace hazards and burdens, including demanding tasks, heavy workloads, stress, and inadequate coping mechanisms. The absence of supportive programs like flexible

work options and childcare exacerbated these challenges, potentially hindering performance of women in construction roles.

In a separate study by Johanssen & Hastwell (2023), it was recognised that workplace flexibility stands as a pivotal aspect for construction companies. Embracing flexible work arrangements was deemed essential for enhancing performance, efficiency, and decision-making quality. The findings gleaned from this study highlighted numerous advantages of WF associated with the construction company of the research, consequently positioning the researched organisation favourably within the industry.

5.2.2. Findings from the literature review study

Objective One: Impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a Construction company in South Africa.

The first research objective established the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company. A review of the literature showed that flexibility in the workplace had a positive impact on employee performance in a construction company. Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) agreed that organisations with well-managed workplace flexibility programs endorsed a culture that had a positive impact on employee work experiences and state of mind, their well-being, and therefore increased commitment and positive employee performance. Remote work had a positive impact on employee behaviour toward excellent employee performance and simultaneously enhanced organisational performance (O'Donoghue, 2021).

Setyaningrum and Muaffi (2022) maintained that by emphasising workplace flexibility and enabling employees to work-from-home, organisations fostered positive employee behaviour, which ultimately contributed to excellent employee performance. Employees had more choice over their work schedules, with reduced commute time that had created a productive environment. These elements helped to boost employee happiness and work satisfaction, which in turn encouraged greater dedication and performance output (Wang & Xie, 2023).

Objective Two: Examine the perception of the impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a Construction company in South Africa.

The study determined the perception of the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company. In this regard, the literature showed that employees who worked remotely benefitted from greater flexibility and more control over their work schedules (O'Donoghue, 2021). Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) stated that employees have more freedom over their work schedules and locations, allowing them to better combine their personal and professional lives. This adaptability frequently resulted in greater work satisfaction and general well-being. In addition, remote work eliminated the requirement to go to an actual workplace, reducing both the time and the expense of commute with reduced transportation costs. Employees used the time and money they saved for personal or productive purposes, which helped boost production. Remote labour has the potential to increase output (Wang & Xie, 2023).

According to Qi et al. (2023), there are less distractions for remote employees than in-office workers, which helped them concentrate and pay attention more intently. Additionally, the calmer and more pleasant work environment that remote workers frequently experienced had a good effect on their productivity and performance. The improved work-life balance provided by remote working was another benefit. People's personal and professional lives were integrated more effectively, which enabled them to spend more time with their families, participate in hobbies, and pursue personal interests. This harmony resulted in greater job satisfaction, less stress, and better health (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

The downside was that although online meetings and other digital communication technologies were practical, they could not completely replace the advantages of in-person encounters (O'Donoghue, 2021). Teamwork and collaboration could be hampered by poor communication, slow response times, and issues of communicating non-verbal signs.

Objective Three: Determine whether Workplace Flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a Construction company in South Africa.

The study sought to determine whether workplace flexibility increased or decreased the performance of employees in a construction company. In this regard, Qi et al. (2023) deliberated that the prospect of less social connection was one of the major difficulties of distance employment. Employees could miss the casual interactions, networking opportunities, and social connections that often occurred in a typical office setting. Wang and Xie (2023) supported this by saying that this could make people feel isolated and make it harder to function as a team. Working-from-home occasionally might be lonely, especially for those who thrive in a collaborative setting.

The lack of in-person interaction and limited opportunities for casual conversations and connection among colleagues could lead to feelings of isolation and alienation (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022). Weideman and Hofmeyer (2020) suggested that workplace flexibility allows employees to manage their work and personal responsibilities more effectively, leading to reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and better overall health. Achieving a better balance between work and personal life tended to enhance motivation, engagement, and focus, ultimately contributing to improved performance.

An investment in software and hardware that enabled task management, communication, and distance collaboration was made (Davidescu et al., 2020). Employees were able to work flexibly while continuing to interact and be effective because of this. To guarantee the efficient use of these instruments, training and assistance should be offered. Online classes, webinars, or self-paced learning modules fell into this category. Continuous learning was noted to be beneficial for worker development and performance enhancement (Wang & Xie, 2023). Clear expectations and norms for workplace flexibility were established and was effectively monitored.

5.2.3. Findings from the primary study

Objective One: Impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a Construction company in South Africa.

The first research objective was to establish the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa. The findings revealed that there was a positive association between workplace flexibility and employee performance. A major finding in this study was that workplace flexibility resulted in an increase in employee performance and penultimately, an increase in organisational performance. Most of the participants highlighted that their WF was affected by their current work arrangements and their level of flexibility.

These participants highlighted that they spent much of their time working-from-home, since the target population was the administrative staff who work-from-home and work-from-anywhere and this level of work arrangement allowed them to work better. These participants declared workplace flexibility as an important phenomenon, as it allowed them to perform better. The findings leant toward the notion that job satisfaction led to organisational commitment. Workers who had some flexibility in their work schedule and location showed much higher job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement with the company. Additionally, they experienced notably lower stress levels, which contributed to outstanding performance for both the employees and the organisation. Table 4.3 shows that 90% of participants in the construction company reported that flexible work arrangements significantly boosted their productivity.

The findings echoed the conclusions of the literature and indicated a positive relationship between workplace flexibility and employee performance. A notable discovery was that the substantial improvement in employee and organisational performance was attributed to workplace flexibility. A significant portion of the participants attributed their improved performance to freedom to work-from-home, which was consistent with the remote work benefits highlighted in the literature (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020; O'Donoghue, 2021; Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022; Wang & Xie, 2023). This affirmed that workplace flexibility was in fact a key factor that promoted job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and reduced stress levels.

Objective Two: Examine the perception of the impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a Construction company in South Africa.

The study examined the perception of the impact of WF on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa. Participants highlighted the positive ways in which WF affected their job performance. These participants showed that flexibility at work improved their motivation as perceived by them. The majority of the participants pointed out that several specific work tasks became easier to accomplish due to their use of workplace flexibility. Many of the participants disclosed that workplace flexibility affected collaboration and communication between team members. These participants highlighted that workplace flexibility had a significant impact on how well they did their job in many ways.

From empirical evidence in the literature review, as well as anecdotal evidence from the participants, it was observed that workplace flexibility granted employees more control over their work schedules and locations, promoted work-life balance, and reduced the burden of commuting, with work satisfaction and well-being being elevated (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020; O'Donoghue, 2021; Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022; Wang & Xie, 2023). Furthermore, remote work was identified to involve decreased distractions and allowed more focused and productive work, as mentioned by Qi et al. (2023), and resulted in an improved work-life balance brought about by higher job satisfaction and better overall health (Setyaningrum & Muaffi, 2022).

Objective Three: Determine whether Workplace Flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a Construction company in South Africa.

The research aimed to investigate how workplace flexibility impacted the performance of construction company employees in South Africa. Those involved in the study noted multiple difficulties that arose from workplace flexibility. Implementing strategies was particularly challenging due to organisational conflicts, where stakeholders frequently disagreed on certain aspects during the implementation process.

Participants maintained that workplace flexibility affected work-life balance. They indicated that WF brought about positive changes in work-life balance and provided them with the tools to tailor their work arrangements to their individual needs and preference. Participants highlighted that though there was increased performance due to workplace flexibility, there was a need for the organisation to make some improvements. These participants highlighted several improvements and adjustments that could be made to enhance the effectiveness of workplace flexibility.

Consistent with the observations of Qi et al. (2023), it was identified that a potential downside of remote work was the reduced social interaction and opportunities for informal and casual communication found in a traditional office setting (Qi et al., 2023). This lack of face-to-face interaction led to feelings of isolation and hindered teamwork, as noted by Setyaningrum and Muaffi (2022) and Wang and Xie (2023). However, the study found that workplace flexibility, when effectively managed, allowed employees to balance professional and personal commitments, which resulted in less stress, increased work satisfaction, and overall better health, and thus reinforced arguments from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 (Weideman & Hofmeyer, 2020; Wang & Xie, 2023).

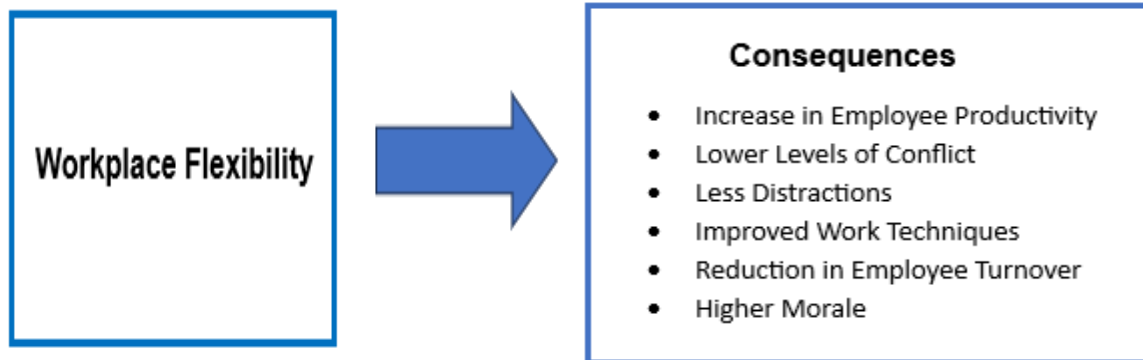
In addition, it was found that investment in software and hardware that facilitated task management, communication, and remote collaboration, as suggested by Davidescu et al. (2020), mitigated the potential drawbacks of workplace flexibility and enabled effective interaction and collaboration in a flexible work environment. It was clear from the research that defining clear expectations and norms for workplace flexibility was essential to ensure its efficient use and was in line with recommendations from reviewed literature in Chapter 2 (Davidescu et al., 2020).

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions based on the contribution of the participants to the study stemmed from the fact that most of the respondents saw the need to implement workplace flexibility arrangements in the construction company. They were convinced that lack of flexibility would be detrimental to their performance and that of the company. The researcher drew conclusions from the findings and results highlighted in the previous

chapter and are illustrated with the researcher's own compilation figure 5.1 below, named Sharon's Consequences of Workplace Flexibility (SCWF):

Figure 5.1: Sharon's Consequences of Workplace Flexibility (SCWF)



Source: Strydom (2023)

Objective One: Impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a Construction company in South Africa.

It was revealed in the study that workplace flexibility significantly influenced employee performance in the construction company, and concluded that their current work arrangements, which involved a substantial amount of remote work, contributed positively to the employees' job performance. Emphasis that workplace flexibility played a pivotal role in enabling people to perform better and presented increased employee productivity through improved work techniques and less distractions was also revealed. The less distraction work environment that remote workers frequently experienced had a good effect on their productivity and performance, as it helped them concentrate and pay attention more intently, which greatly improved their performance. Performance evaluations highlighted the difference in performance between remote workers and office workers.

Objective Two: Perception of the Impact of Workplace Flexibility on Employee Performance in a Construction Company in South Africa.

The perception of workplace flexibility among the participants was largely positive. The study concluded that due to flexibility in the workplace, there is increased motivation and higher morale and thus improved job performance from employees. Furthermore,

the study concluded that specific work tasks became more manageable due to the flexibility offered. Workplace flexibility was also observed to have an impact on team collaboration and communication, with lower levels of conflict at the employee level, which ultimately improved job performance at the employee and organisational level and reduced employee turnover.

Objective Three: Determine whether Workplace Flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a Construction company in South Africa.

The study concluded that while workplace flexibility offered numerous benefits, it also presented challenges. Organisational conflicts emerged as a challenge, particularly during the implementation of flexible work strategies. However, it was concluded that the effect of workplace flexibility on performance was positive because it allowed tailored work arrangements to individual needs and preferences. Although the increase in performance associated with workplace flexibility was acknowledged, the study suggested that the organisation could make improvements to improve the effectiveness of workplace flexibility, these improvements included training and improved communication for improved employee performance.

5.4. STUDY LIMITATIONS

5.4.1 The findings cannot be generalised.

A limitation of this study was that the findings cannot be extrapolated to the broader population of this particular construction company or other construction companies in the sector without further reproductions, because the participants in this study were drawn from one chosen construction company in South Africa and did not include other companies. Future studies must include a few more construction companies, with a larger sample, in the SA framework or internationally.

Another limitation regarding generalisation is that the views of the participants were predominantly personal. These participants consisted of the administrative workers who work remotely and who participate in WF practices in the construction company where most of the employees from this type of industry usually work on-site. While the participants were selected as representatives of the construction company's

population, it was crucial to acknowledge that individuals within the same organisation may hold diversely different perspectives on the topic. Future investigations could employ quantitative research methods, allowing for a broader sample size and thereby a more comprehensive generalisation of findings could be facilitated.

5.4.2 Data collection: non-probability sampling

A limitation with regards to data collection was that the sampling procedure used was the non-probability sampling, which limited the overview of results, since the sample drawn could not have been representative of the entire construction company's population. Selected participants for the sample had characteristics that was necessary for the research results to be trustworthy. In purposive sampling, the samples are selected “on purpose” (Nikolopoulou, 2023). To avoid this limitation for going forward, similar studies could be done on samples selected via probability sampling procedures, the studies could be conducted on even larger sample sizes.

5.4.3 Data collection at a single point in time

Sharma (2022) cautioned about the limitation risks of data collection at a single point in time as it aggravated same-source or common-method biases and did not consider maturational effects that could occur during a very short term, specifically within a few hours or days. People's behavior and perceptions could change. However, Cherry (2022) proposed that a longitudinal design could reduce this potential influence as it extended beyond a single moment in time and facilitated the assessment and evaluation of changes in work practices. This observational research technique involved studying the same group of individuals over an extended period.

5.4.4 Data collection: interviews

The instruments utilised for data collection in this study were acknowledged as a limitation. Given that interviews were the primary method for data gathering and considering that construction sites frequently operate in fast-paced environments with stringent project schedules, this posed a constraint. The limited availability of participants for interviews due to their work responsibilities and time constraints also made it challenging to schedule and conduct interviews. This limitation resulted in a smaller sample size with difficulties in reaching a more diverse range of participants. The research study was limited to 10 participants only. Interviews have been criticised

for subjectivity as they could be prone to falsification if participants decided to manipulate the answers or provide only socially desirable responses (Shah, 2019). This attitude by participants could negatively affect the information supplied.

5.4.5 Data collection: gender

Uneven gender representation in the sample was a limitation. There were more male participants than females, specifically 70% were males, while females comprised 30%. In understanding a research concept, gender offered a unique viewpoint, as indicated by Cypress (2018).

5.4.6 Data collection: MS Teams

Another limitation was the fact that the interviews were conducted in MS Teams, with only a few selected employees. As construction sites could be noisy and crowded, with various distractions such as heavy machinery, ongoing construction activities, and interruptions, these environmental factors were limitations, because they could affect the quality of the interview process, making it difficult for participants to concentrate and provide thoughtful responses. Background noise and poor network in MS Teams could affect the clarity of audio recordings, with data analysis potentially affected (Nel, 2020).

5.4.7 Data collection: Employment level

Furthermore, as suggested by Zhenjing et al. (2022), the research could have lacked the necessary intricacy to comprehend the research issue if it did not encompass a comprehensive range of positions of employees within the organisation. Therefore, it was evident that employment level influenced the grasp of the research problem. The diversity of years of experience among participants allowed them to effectively communicate current organisational situations and dynamics relevant to the study.

5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were recommendations that the researcher paired with the objectives of the study:

Objective One: Impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa

5.5.1. Employee and stakeholder motivation

The initial aim of this research was to assess how workplace flexibility influenced employee performance within a construction company. The study revealed a favourable connection between workplace flexibility and employee performance. As a result, the recommendation was made for management to maintain high motivation among employees and stakeholders across all levels within the construction company to achieve top-notch performance and gain a competitive edge.

5.5.2. Participants in this study were drawn from one selected construction company only

This first objective study sought to determine the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company. The study observed one construction company in SA and did not include other companies. A recommendation to avoid this limitation, for going forward, was that similar studies might be done that included a few more construction companies, with a larger sample, in the South African framework or internationally. A longitudinal study should be conducted over several years to examine how the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance evolved over time. This could help identify long-term trends and the sustainability of flexible working arrangements. To delve deeper into the variables of workplace flexibility and employee performance, a quantitative research approach, utilising a survey questionnaire with a larger group of participants, could be employed.

Objective Two: Perception of the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa.

5.5.3. Adequate knowledge on workplace flexibility

The study's second goal was to explore how WF impacted employee performance within a South African construction company. The findings indicated a positive relationship between workplace flexibility and employee and company performance. Consequently, the study suggested that management should ensure all employees understood the significance and proper utilisation of workplace flexibility arrangements

and related policies. To achieve this, implementing policies and practices supporting work-life balance, like flexible schedules and remote work options, was recommended. This aimed to enhance employees' understanding and utilisation of workplace flexibility for optimal performance outcomes.

5.5.4. Awareness of biasness in data

The study aimed to explore how remote work impacted employee performance within a South African construction company. It emphasised the importance of researchers' understanding biases in data when creating reliable machine learning models and accurately reporting on remote work studies. Biases like reporting bias, publication bias, and participant bias were highlighted. To counter participant bias, it suggested employing open-ended questions to encourage truthful responses and avoiding leading questions that might prompt agreement without genuine input. If needed, researchers should rephrase questions or offer multiple-choice options to obtain more accurate and honest responses.

5.5.5. Enhance communication channels

The second objective examined the perception of the impact of WF on employee performance in the construction company in South Africa. Effective communication is crucial to the success of workplace flexibility. It was recommended that the construction company establish a structured communication plan that included regular updates, feedback sessions, and status reports. This would help remote employees stay informed about company developments and project updates. Implement and promote the use of collaboration tools such as video conferencing, instant messaging, and project management software to facilitate seamless communication between remote and on-site teams. Encourage a culture of open and constructive feedback. Create platforms or mechanisms where employees could share their concerns, suggestions, and experiences related to flexibility at work.

Objective three: Determine whether workplace flexibility increases or decreases the performance of employees in a construction company in South Africa

5.5.6. Invest in resources to enhance and improve workplace flexibility

The study explored the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a South African construction company. Results indicated that while employees were generally content with workplace flexibility, they highlighted the need for enhancements. The recommendation suggested the company invest in refining workplace flexibility through appropriate methods, techniques, and policies to ensure improved effectiveness and efficiency.

5.5.7. Investment in training and development

The study aimed to investigate how workplace flexibility impacted employee performance in a South African construction company. It concluded that to enhance performance through flexibility, the company should invest in training and development programs. These programs should focus on equipping both employees and managers with skills to effectively manage time, workload, and tasks in a flexible work setting. The recommendation included creating training modules tailored to help employees thrive in a more adaptable work environment. Training should include time management, goal setting, and adaptability skills. Provide training for managers and supervisors on how to effectively manage remote or flexible teams. This should have included communication strategies, team building, and conflict resolution techniques tailored to a flexible work environment. Ensure that employees were proficient in using the latest digital tools and technologies necessary for remote work. This should include training in virtual collaboration tools, project management software, and cybersecurity awareness.

5.5.8. Invest in technology

The third objective was to establish the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa. To enable and support workplace flexibility effectively, it was recommended that the construction company invest in technology solutions. Ensure that the company's IT infrastructure could support remote work seamlessly. Invest in high-speed internet, robust VPNs, and

secure cloud storage solutions. Consider providing employees with the necessary hardware, such as laptops or mobile devices, to ensure that they could work efficiently from various locations. Invest in robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive company and client data. Provide training on cybersecurity best practices to all employees working remotely.

5.6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Construction company managers should recognise the positive impact of WF on employee performance, as revealed in this study. They must actively promote and embrace WF as a key element of their organisational culture. Encourage managers and supervisors to support and accommodate flexible work arrangements for employees whenever possible. To effectively implement WF initiatives, construction company managers should invest in training and development programs. These programs should equip employees and managers with the necessary skills to thrive in a flexible work environment.

Training should focus on time management, goal setting, adaptability, and remote team management. Develop a structured communication plan that keeps remote and on-site employees informed about company developments and project updates. Invest in modern communication tools and technologies, such as video conferencing and instant messaging, to facilitate seamless communication among teams working in different locations. Create a culture of open and constructive feedback to address any concerns related to workplace flexibility.

Ensure that the company's IT infrastructure could support remote work efficiently. Invest in high-speed Internet, secure VPNs, and cloud storage solutions. Provide necessary hardware to employees, such as laptops or mobile devices, to enable WF employees to work effectively from various locations. Prioritise cybersecurity measures to protect company and client data when employees work remotely.

Acknowledge the significance of achieving work-life balance for the well-being and performance of employees. Encourage employees to tailor their work arrangements to their individual needs and preferences. Consider implementing policies and practices that support work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling options and

remote work opportunities. Managers should prioritise employee well-being and mental health in a flexible work environment.

Offer resources and support to help employees manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Consider initiatives such as wellness programs, counselling services, and flexible leave policies to support employee well-being, which promotes all productivity and performance initiatives.

5.7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future study 1: Conduct a comparative study between construction companies in South Africa that have implemented workplace flexibility policies and those that have not. Analyse the differences in employee performance, productivity, job satisfaction, and turnover rates to assess the impact of flexibility.

Future study 2: Perform a longitudinal study over several years to examine how the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance evolves over time. This could help identify long-term trends and the sustainability of flexible work arrangements.

Future study 3: Analyse the role of technology in enabling workplace flexibility within the construction industry. Evaluate the effectiveness of remote work tools and their impact on employee performance.

5.8. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of workplace flexibility on employee performance within a construction company in South Africa. It found that WF had a significant positive influence on employee performance, with remote work arrangements contributing positively to job performance. The participants had a largely positive perception of WF, with findings from the interviews, as well as from the literature review in Chapter 2, showing increased motivation, improved job performance, and more manageable work tasks due to WF. The participants also highlighted improved job satisfaction, which heightened their organisational commitment and their job performance, which ultimately improved organisational performance, giving the company a competitive edge in their industry and sector.

However, the study also identified challenges, such as organisational conflicts during the implementation of flexible work strategies, the potential communication gap, and

the technology barrier. These challenges were resolved through the commitment of senior management when they committed themselves and resolved these challenges. In example to overcome the organisational conflicts, management negotiated with all stakeholders and a reasonable solution was agreed upon. To overcome the communication gap, management made sure to have regular check-ins with employees and used the collaboration tools effectively. The technology barrier was resolved when the required technology was acquired at implementation stage. Despite these challenges, WF positively affected work-life balance and overall performance.

The study findings led to the development of three main themes, together with subthemes, as shown in the researcher's own compilation figure 4.3 in Chapter 4, named Sharon's Workplace Flexibility and Performance Framework (SWFPF), which illustrated the thematic relationships of the findings. The researcher also illustrated the conclusions that the researcher drew from the findings and results from Chapter 4 with own compilation figure 5.1 in Chapter 5, named Sharon's Consequences of Workplace Flexibility (SCWF). The recommendations were discussed in Chapter 5.

The study recommended ways to improve and boost workplace flexibility in the company with better training and communication. These improvements could assist in elevating employee performance. The findings held significance both academically and for the construction industry as a whole. These findings added to our understanding of how workplace flexibility impacted employee performance and offered insights for construction companies who aim to boost sustainable organisational success and growth and competitive advantage through improved and enhanced employee performance.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC

Date: 28/08/2023

Dear: Ms Sharon Strydom

Ref #: 2023_SBL_MBA_026_FA -1544

Name: Ms Sharon Strydom

Student #: 30173663

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
August 2023 to December 2024**

Researcher: Ms Sharon Strydom

Sibanye-Stillwater (Pty) Ltd, Hex River Main Offices

Rustenburg

30173663@mylife.unisa.ac.za 0795239053

Supervisor: Dr Mthokozisi Mpofu ; mpofum@unisa.ac.za

THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Qualification: Master of Business Administration (90070)

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC for the above-mentioned research study Ethics approval is granted for two years.

The **low-risk application** was **reviewed** by Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC on **16 august 2023** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC .
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study, Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**December 2024**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal, for Ethics Research Committee approval.

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from Unisa,
2. De-identified data must be safely stored on password protected PCs,
3. Care should be taken by the researcher when publishing the results to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the university.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle 7 referring to Social awareness, must be ensured: "Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible." Unisa will not be liable for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

The reference number 2023_SBL_MBA_026_FA-1544 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Prof N Mlitwa
Chair of Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC
E-mail: wiltonb@unisa.ac.za



Prof P Msweli
Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC
E-mail: mswelp@unisa.ac.za



**ANNEXURE B: SIGNED LETTER OF CONSENT BY SUPERVISOR
CONSENT TO SUBMIT MBA / MBL RESEARCH REPORT FOR EXAMINATION
2023**

CONSENT TO SUBMIT MBA / MBL RESEARCH REPORT FOR EXAMINATION 2023

Consent is hereby given to:

Student name: **Sharon Strydom**

Student number: **30173663** to submit her research report in its final form.

Supervisor Signature: ... *Mthoe!!* Date: ... 14/12/23.....

Supervisor Name: ... Dr ~~Mthoe~~ Mpofo.....

The student acknowledges that sufficient feedback was provided by the supervisor and that s/he took the responsibility to attend to the feedback in a way that satisfies the requirements of a doctoral degree on NQF level 9.

Student signature *[Signature]* Date: ... 14/12/23.....

ANNEXURE C: LANGUAGE EDITING



Antinash Academic Coaching
261 Justice Mohamed Street
Muckeneuk, Pretoria
South Africa
Reg No: 9369491452
Email: antinashcounselling@gmail.com
Cell: (+27)848302282

To whom it may concern

RE: Confirmation of language editing- the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in south africa

STUDENT'S NAME: SHARON STRYDOM (30173663)

This letter serves to confirm that the above referenced thesis was language-edited by professional editors at Antinash Academic Coaching.

The edit included the following:

Spellings; Tenses; Vocabulary; Punctuation; Pronoun matches; Word usage; Sentence structure; Content (limited); and Format.

The edit excluded the following:

Correctness or truth of information (unless obvious); Correctness/spelling of specific technical terms and words (unless obvious); Correctness/spelling of unfamiliar names and proper nouns (unless obvious); Correctness of specific formulae or symbols or illustrations.

We confirm that the English language in this work is of acceptable standard. The final corrections remain the responsibility of the author.

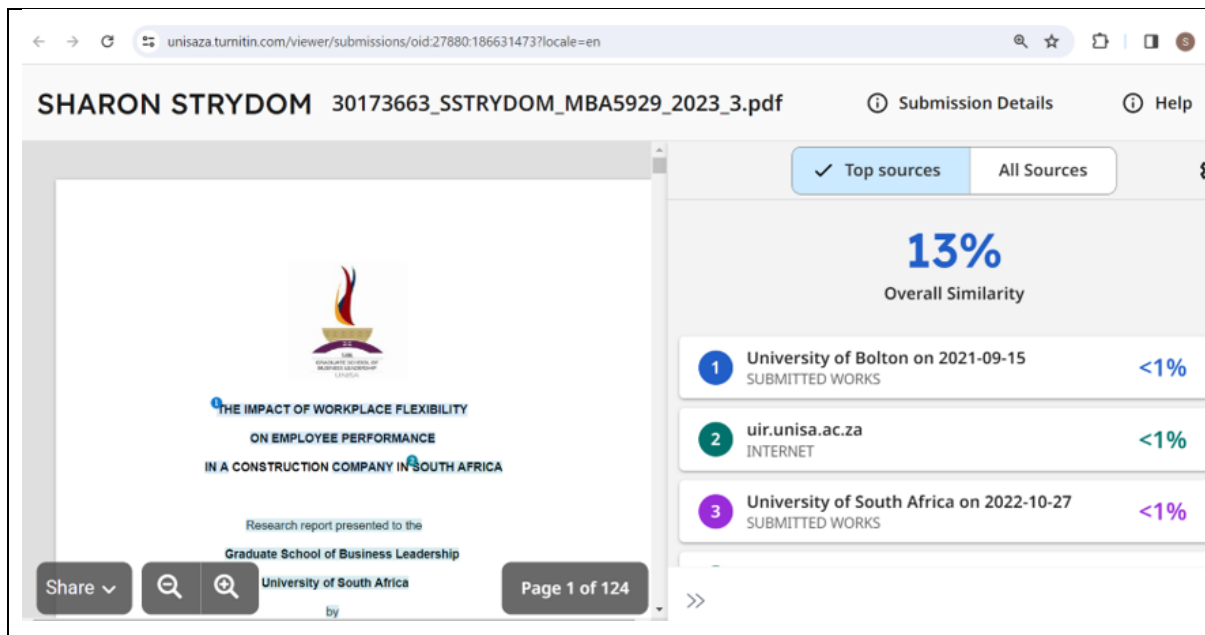
Yours Sincerely



Dr. L. Chapungu

Director: Editorial services

ANNEXURE D: TURNITIN REPORT



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SHARON STRYDOM 30173663_SSTRYDOM_MBA5929_2023_3.pdf

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THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY
ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE
IN A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Research report presented to the
Graduate School of Business Leadership
University of South Africa

Page 1 of 124

ANNEXURE E: INTERVIEW GUIDE



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP

DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC HUMAN CAPITAL
MANAGEMENT

INTERVIEW GUIDE

PROJECT TITLE: THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Introduction

The purpose of this interview is to investigate the impact of workplace flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa. The research is conducted by the researcher as a requirement for the fulfilment of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The information, sought for academic purposes, will be treated with total confidentiality. No personal details will be on the report findings. Personal details will be replaced with a reference number.

The interview will be preceded by an introduction where the study constructs (Workplace Flexibility and employee performance) are clarified. The interview will also be preceded by distribution of the consent forms. Once the consent forms are signed by the participants, the interviews will proceed until completion. The interviewees are eight managerial and two non-managerial staff members. The inclusion criteria for the participants to be interviewed will be inclusive of 3 years+ working experience in the construction company and knowledge of Workplace Flexibility. The interview will be divided into two sections, namely Section A and Section B herewith:

SECTION A: Background information

1. What is your job title?
2. What is your gender?

3. What is your highest level of professional qualification?
4. How long have you been working at the organisation?

SECTION B: Workplace Flexibility and employee performance questions

5. Can you provide an overview of your current work arrangement and the level of flexibility you have in your workplace?
6. How do you perceive Workplace Flexibility and its importance in relation to your job performance?
7. In what ways does Workplace Flexibility affect your job performance?
8. Can you share any specific examples of how Workplace Flexibility has positively impacted your productivity or performance?
9. Are there any challenges or drawbacks you have experienced as a result of Workplace Flexibility? If so, how do you manage or overcome them?
10. Have you noticed any changes in your work-life balance since adopting Workplace Flexibility? If yes, how has it influenced your performance?
11. How do you think Workplace Flexibility affects collaboration and communication among team members, particularly in a construction company setting?
12. Are there any specific work tasks or responsibilities that you find easier to accomplish due to Workplace Flexibility? Conversely, are there any tasks that become more challenging?
13. How does the level of support from your supervisors and colleagues impact your ability to take advantage of Workplace Flexibility options?
14. From your perspective, what improvements or adjustments could be made to enhance the effectiveness of Workplace Flexibility in promoting employee performance in the construction company as well as the construction industry?
15. Is there anything regarding this topic that you would like to add or express that could help or add knowledge in understanding the impact of Workplace Flexibility on employee performance in a construction company in South Africa?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study.

ANNEXURE F: PERMISSION LETTER TO COLLECT DATA



Number 2 Transnet Avenue,
Capital Park, Pretoria.
Contact: +27 82 951 6487

20 May 2023

Dear Mrs. SHARON STRYDOM

REF: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN SOUTH AFRICA

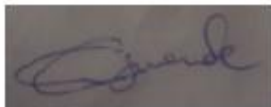
We are pleased to inform you that your request to conduct research at our organisation Johannesburg Tennis courts on the above topic has been granted. Your initiative is appreciable and we are in support of participating in the research.

This permission is given on condition that the identity and information gathered in this regard be strictly kept confidential and only be used for research study purpose.

Kindly contact our admin@johannesburgtennis courts.co.za Operations Executive for verification as required in this regard.

Wishing you all the best with your research

Courage Chigwende



Executive: Operations

Email: admin@johannesburgtennis courts.co.za