

RUNNING HEAD: The effects of flexible work arrangements and childfree-friendly culture on organisational commitment

University of Cape Town



School of Management Studies

**CHILDFREE EMPLOYEES: THE EFFECTS OF FLEXIBLE WORK
ARRANGEMENTS AND CHILDFREE-FRIENDLY CULTURE ON
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

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Abstract

Organisations are increasingly introducing flexible workplace practices and policies such as flextime and flexplace to increase the commitment of their employees and assist them to balance the competing work-life demands. At first, they were designed to create a family-friendly workplace for working mothers and, later, also for working fathers. Childfree employees (i.e., those with no children) were not included. There is little research on the impact of these work arrangements on the organisational commitment of these childfree employees. This dissertation tries to close that gap. Childfree employees ($N = 134$) working in over a dozen South African organisations participated in a self-report quantitative survey. It seems that the availability and use of flexible work arrangements did not significantly predict their organisational commitment. Organisational commitment related to only one dimension of the childfree-friendly culture scale, equal work expectations. Perceived organisational support (POS) mediated the relationship between organisational commitment and equal work expectations.

Keywords: flexible work arrangements, childfree-friendly culture, organisational commitment, perceived organisational support.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Globalisation and concomitant economic challenges have increased the demands that jobs make on employees across the world. They are expected to work longer hours, which directly affects their job performance. At the same time, demographic changes have increased the diversity of family structures (Allen, 2001; Dancaster, 2006; Grady & McCarthy, 2008). Work and life have intertwined (ten Brummelhuis & Van Der Lippe, 2010; Panisoara & Serban, 2013), and employees have to meet the challenge of finding a balance between the competing demands of their work, family and personal life (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003; Glass, 2009), including religious activities and obligations (Workplace Flexibility, 2010).

Meeting the demands of work and life responsibilities has become such a source of stress that organisations have created ways of addressing its effect on employees' performance and attitudes (Swanberg, Pitt-Catsouphes, & Drescher-Burke, 2005; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). Some of these are flexible work schedules, which may be seen as a support mechanism (Carless & Wintle, 2007) that help employees to harmonise their work and their personal life (Beauregard, 2014).

Work-life balance initiatives were previously offered only to working mothers and fathers, but employees without children are now requesting assistance (Casper, Weltman, & Kwesiga, 2007). 'Childfree employees' is the term usually given to the employee individuals without children. Workforce demographics show that childfree employees have become common in modern organisations (Casper, et al., 2007; Durham & Brathwaite, 2009). The number of childfree individuals in the workplace is increasing and organisations need to accommodate their needs (Chang, Gudmundsson, Yuile, 2005). Like their colleagues with children, childfree employees face personal life demands. For example, their life outside of work involves personal appointments, running errands, and exercise and other activities. However, childfree employees value and desire different things from their colleagues who have children (Casper, et al., 2007). In today's society, it is common for all employees to have multiple responsibilities in their lives and the need for flexibility has become more apparent.

It is self-evident that a workforce that is able to perform optimally and is committed to the organisation for which it works strongly affects the success of the organisation (Affum-Osei, Acquah, & Acheampong, 2015). Modern organisations thus offer flexibility in order to

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enhance their workforce's commitment to them (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Workplace flexibility is defined as the 'the ability of employees to make changes on where, when and the total time they would spend or engage in work-related tasks' (Rau & Hyland, 2002; Hill Grzywacz, Allen, Blanchard, Matz-Costa, & Shulkin, 2008, as cited in Choo, Desa, & Asaari, 2016). Flexible work arrangements, like flexible work hours, flexplace, and telework (Wise, Bond & Meikle, 2003) are often used to help employees balance their work and personal life (Choo, et al., 2016). Flexible work arrangements offer an alternative to the traditional "9 to 5" work day and enable an employee to define when, where and how their work is completed. This has been a popular research topic amongst professionals and academics for the past few decades (Fisher, Bulger & Smith, 2009).

According to Society for Human Resource Management (2009), flexibility enables employees to manage their work and non-work responsibilities. However, employers also benefit from flexible work arrangements (Swanberg, et al., 2005; Warner & Hausdorf, 2009): employee commitment increases and turnover decreases (Burud & Tumolo, 2004). The gain for employers is that productivity is increased, while employees are able to balance work and personal life (Beauregard, 2014).

In recent years, the expansion of flexible work arrangements is reflected by the increase in research, and the number of organisation's which offer these practices. According to Royal (2013), however, only 43% of Southern African employees saw flexible work arrangements as having positive benefits, a 9% decrease since 2011. The benefits of flexible work arrangements are less evident in South African organisations than in the United States. Kaupins and Coco (2013) conducted research among Human Resources Managers in the United States which revealed that flextime is evident in approximately 77% of organisations and provision of childcare facilities (7%), elder referrals (41%), and 36 % compressed work schedules. Around 63% of organisations implemented wellness programmes for employees and 87 % allowed employees to have time off to attend to personal matters.

The two most common flexible work arrangements practices are flextime and flexplace (Ivanauskaite, 2015). Both of these practices can be informal or formal. They enable the employee to decide on start and end times, and even where and when the work is to be commenced. It has been noted by earlier researchers that an increase in autonomy leads to higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment towards the organisation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Given that flexible work arrangements increase job satisfaction and

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commitment, it has become popular within organisations and a sought-after job benefit according to Stone and Lovejoy (2004). Visser (2012) found that 67% of South Africans claim that they would turn down job offers if their work-life balance would be affected. In similar vein, the Regus Work Life Balance Index found that work-life balance is an imperative human resources tool for business growth (Morgandaal, 2012).

The popularity and benefits of flexible work arrangements suggests that flexibility is seen as a crucial tool to manage the competing demands of work and life of all employees. Organisations need to make these initiatives reasonably accessible to all employees so they can enjoy the benefits of work-life balance and increased levels of organisational commitment and productivity (Haar & Spell, 2004). Employees experience belongingness and commitment when they feel part of the organisation for which they work (Sadar, 2006). Therefore, to increase the size of its committed and loyal workforce, support must be extended to childfree employees (Lambert, 2000; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004). Flexible work practices influence commitment, satisfaction, and non-work commitments in a positive manner (Valcour, Ollier-Malaterre, Matz-Costa, Pitt-Catsoupes, & Brown, 2011). In addition to flexible work arrangements, an organisation's environment plays a key role in shaping work-related attitudes such as organisational commitment (Gordon, Whelan-Berry, & Hamilton, 2007). According to Speelman (2009), there is a direct relationship between the work environment and the work culture of an organisation which addresses the values and needs of the employees (childfree employees). Dijkers, Geurts, den Dulk, Peper and Kompier (2004), and Ribeiro and Semedo (2014) found that the culture of the organisation decides whether flexible work practices are offered and accessible (Kirby & Krone, 2002). According to Timms, Brough, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Siu, Sit, and Lo (2015), some organisations do not have formal policies, but they do have informal policies that insiders are aware of (Haggerty & Wright, 2010).

Up to this point, however, research has focused on the benefits for working mothers and fathers of flexible practices (Beauregard, 2014), rather than on other household structures such as childfree employees (Casper, et al., 2007). Casper et al. (2007), however, did conduct a study on culture and the working environment in which childfree employees are included in flexible work practices, which is termed the 'childfree-friendly culture'. This term has been adapted from the original measure of Casper et al. (2007), the 'single-friendly culture'. The childfree-friendly culture is used for the purposes of this study. The childfree-friendly organisational culture has five different dimensions. The five dimensions are social inclusion,

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equal work opportunities, equal access to benefits, equal respect for non-work life, and equal advancement expectations. This concept refers to a culture where no individual is excluded from any social event, policy or flexible practice. Thus, family status does not affect this. In addition, Casper et al. (2007) contended that family-friendly cultures relate to higher job satisfaction, organisational commitment and a low desire to leave. Clark (2000) and Behson (2005) agreed that family-supportive cultures reduce work-life conflict and enhance citizenship behaviours and increase work satisfaction.

It seems that organisational support that takes account of the different needs that childfree employees have (Waumsley, Houston, & Marks, 2010) enhances the organisational commitment of these employees (Casper et al., 2007). Perceived organisational support refers to the extent to which employees perceive their organisation as valuing their contributions and their well-being (Wikhamn & Hall, 2012). Positive outcomes of organisational support go along with high attendance, organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski, & Aselage, 2009). Thus, the support of colleagues and the organisation play an important role in facilitating work-life balance.

Aims of the Research

The aim of this study is threefold. First, to investigate whether a positive relationship exists between the availability and use of flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace) and organisational commitment amongst childfree employees. Secondly, to investigate whether a positive relationship exists between organisational commitment and all five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture. Thirdly, to support previous research on the perceived organisational support as a mediator of the relationship between organisational commitment and the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture in a South African context.

The goals of this study are to enhance existing theoretical knowledge about flexible work arrangements in South Africa regarding the context of childfree employees (Casper, et al., 2007; Brandi, 2008; Speelman, 2009). It also addresses the gap in research regarding flextime and flexplace use among childfree employees. Hence, the results will add to the body of knowledge. Previous studies have shown that links between certain types of flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace) and organisational benefits such as commitment and engagement exist. Although these connections exist, it is yet clear whether the available of flexibility increases commitment as Casper and Harris (2008) and Karasek and Bryant

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(2012) claimed; or whether the tangible benefits supplement having flexibility available. This is established at a later point in this dissertation. There is a clear connection between the five dimensions of the childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment (Casper, et al., 2007; Speelman, 2009). The scale of organisational commitment (Klein, Molloy, & Brinsfield, 2012) will be applied to the South African context to add to the research and empirical studies done by Klein et al. (2012). Therefore, this work builds on the newly introduced organisational commitment scale of Klein, Cooper, Molloy and Swanson (2014). This study also investigates the notion of perceived organisational support as a mediator, which has been researched before and yielded a positive result.

Research Questions

- 1) Does the availability and usability of flexible work arrangements such as flextime and flexplace make a positive contribution to organisational commitment?
- 2) Do the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture have a positive correlation with organisational commitment?
- 3) Does perceived organisational support mediate the relationship between the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture?

Structure of the Dissertation

This introduction will be followed by a review of existing research on the relationship between flexible work arrangements and organisational commitment, perceived organisational support and the five domains of a childfree-friendly culture. The propositions will conclude the literature review. The method section, Chapter Three explains how the data was collected and analysed. Following this, Chapter Four presents the results produced by the different statistical analyses. The discussion on the findings in Chapter Five reflects on the implications of the study, makes suggestions for future research and draws conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter contains an overview of the theoretical framework that informs this study, the literature on the relationships between flexible work arrangements, organisational commitment, perceived organisational support, and the five dimensions of a single-friendly organisational culture. This section concludes with the research propositions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of a research study affects every decision made in the research process (Mertens, 1998) and guides the logic behind the research study.

Social Exchange Theory. Social Exchange (SE) theory, one of the best-known theories of organisational behaviour, bridges multiple disciplines from anthropology, social psychology, to sociology with roots that can be traced back to the 1920's (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Although there are many perspectives of and views on the theory in the literature, it can be simply described as a reference framework where the transaction of social exchange occurs. It can be applied to diverse areas such as social power, networks, board independence, organisational justice, psychological contracts, and leadership (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The theory assumes that relationships are exchange transactions in which individuals make contributions in response to what they receive (Aboul-Ela, 2014; Mowday, 1991).

The social exchange relationship is based on the reciprocity norm (Wikhamn & Hall, 2012) in which the exchange starts with one party giving a reward or benefits to the other party. If the other party returns a favour, a series of beneficial exchanges occurs which result in mutual feelings of obligation between the two parties (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). In the normal course of events, the exchange encompasses a feeling of obligation to return a favourable reward or benefit regarding the treatment. Employees' sense of obligation relates to care about the organisation's well-being and whether they should help reach the organisation's goals (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). The social exchange which reflects a desire to reciprocate will become stronger according to Aselage and Eisenberger (2003) when both parties exhibit a willingness to provide valuable resources. Employees, value favourable treatment, and organisations seek loyal and committed employees (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007; Wikhamn, & Hall, 2012).

Theoretical Model. Using the SE Theory as a theoretical foundation, Figure 1 demonstrates the proposed relationship between the constructs in this study. Firstly, the use and availability of flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace) may lead to organisational commitment among childfree employees. Secondly, apart from flexible work arrangements, the dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture are introduced which is expected to relate to organisational commitment. Lastly, experiencing the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture, leads to organisational commitment: receiving support from the organisation strengthens the relationship between the childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment.

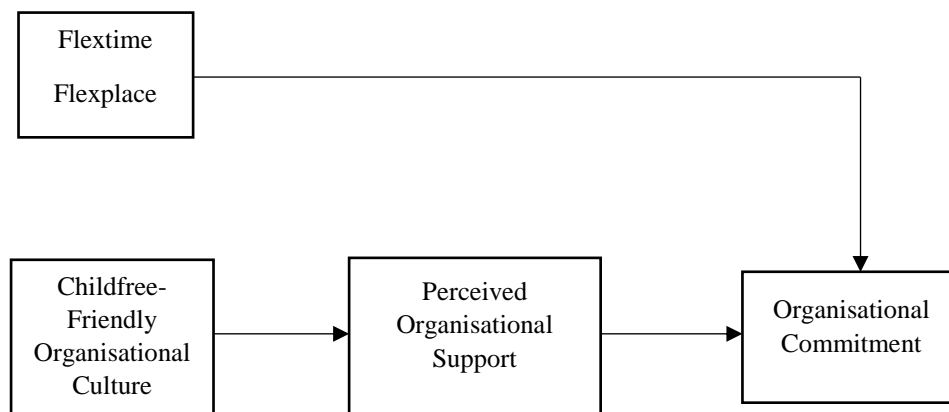


Figure 1: *The hypothesised model of proposed relationships within the study*

The following sections elaborate on each link made by Figure 1 by citing conceptual and theoretical evidence from literature.

Introducing the concept: Childfree Employees

The concept ‘childfree employee’ refers to individuals without children by choice or circumstance (Bulcroft & Teachman, 2004). For the purpose of this dissertation, a childfree employee is an adult who is single, has a co-habiting partner, is married or is widowed with no children. An increasing number of childfree individuals are entering the world of work, and outnumber employees with children (Speelman, 2009). In South Africa, the number of childfree employees has increased (Pirouz, 2004) and more women have been welcomed into the workplace (Casole & Posel, 2002; Statistics SA, 2008). This indicates that there have been world-wide changes in the dynamics of the world of work (Speelman, 2009). According

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to Hendricks (2007), employees are increasingly reluctant to get married or have children. Therefore, organisations need to be aware of this trend and ensure that the values of these employees are understood as different to employees with children (Casper, et al., 2007). Speelman (2009) explained that childfree employees might be more interested in potential work opportunities or organisational benefits. They may have personal obligations outside the workplace. This is valuable information to organisations who view childfree employees differently from those who have children.

Work-Life Balance: Flexible Work arrangements

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) is a work-life balance practice which aims to create an environment in which employees can balance their work and personal life (Shockley & Allen, 2012; Chou & Cheung, 2013). Lambert, Marler and Gueutal (2008) conceptualised flexible work arrangements (FWA) as “employer provided benefits that permit employees some level of control over when and where they work outside of the standard workday” (p. 107). This enables employees to have some control over their work schedule and place of work and may include elements of flexible work scheduling, part-time work, and telecommuting (Bourhis & Mekkaoui, 2010). Employees that are granted some control over their work schedules experience positive outcomes (Hayman, 2009) such as a decrease of work-life conflict; enhanced job performance, less job strain and absenteeism, and increased personal time (Beauregard, 2014). The use of flexible work arrangements thus holds many positives for both the organisation and its employees such as an increase in commitment, organisational citizenship, job satisfaction, employee performance, and a decrease in employee turnover (Warner & Hausdorf, 2009; Allen, 2012).

Typology of Flexible Work Arrangements

The aim of flexible work arrangements is mainly to increase employee’s ability to manage work and personal demands. They have more control over their work schedule than they do when they work traditional hours (Beauregard, 2014). Flexible work arrangements seem to “affect both employee and organisational aspects differently” (Sweet, Pitt-Catsouphes, Besen, & Golden, 2014 as cited in Hayman, 2009, p. 19). In most research studies, however, flexibility, as well as their outcomes and impact on organisational behaviours of employees, is analysed as a homogenous phenomenon in the workplace (Nadler, Cundiff, Lowery, & Jackson, 2010). Masuda, Poelmans, Allen, Specter, and Moreno-Velazquez (2012) and Hayman (2009) listed four different types of flexible work

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arrangements in their respective studies: flextime, compressed work week, telecommuting (flexplace) and part-time work. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (2013) a survey in the United States, the two most popular flexible work arrangements is flextime and flexplace. The survey presented the popularity which showed that over 58% organisations offer flexplace and 53% flextime. Similarly, 60% of European employees have access to flexible work options (Plantenga & Remery, 2009). Flextime and flexplace were chosen for this investigation, because the other typologies of flexible work arrangements mentioned are rarely used in South Africa. It should be noted that, from this point forward in this study, the terms flextime and flexplace, and flexible work arrangement are used interchangeably.

Flextime refers to the flexibility practice in which a framework replaced the normal start and finish times that allow employees to choose their own starting and finishing times (Hicks & Klimoski, 1981; Ivanauskaite, 2015). These can be expressed either formally (organisational documents) or informally (supervisor) (Duncan & Pettigrew, 2012). Whether employees are given the upper hand concerning their choice of their working arrangements, it is important to note that these are not only formal arrangements, but also informal (De Menezes, & Kelliher, 2011), since Healy (2004) made the discovery that in practice flexible work arrangements are quite informal in nature. According to Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman (2001), some organisations set core office hours and employees plan their own working hours accordingly. However, some organisations work on a time worked system: employees are required to work a certain amount of hours per week or month (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, & Wright, 1999). Furthermore, it has been noted that only a few South African organisations offer flextime, as of yet.

Flexplace, also known in the literature as telecommuting, gives employees the opportunity to plan and finish the work at any location of their choice whether working from home or a place of inspiration (Hill et al., 2001; Duncan & Pettigrew, 2012). Flexplace seems to be favoured by married women with children (Duncan & Pettigrew, 2012). According to Gajendran and Harrison (2007), employees who work part-time tend to make use of telecommuting. Bond, Galinsky, Kim, and Brownfield (2005), and Matos and Galinsky (2014) reported that over 67% of organisations offer this benefit to their employees. This benefits companies because it saves time and is more cost efficient. At the same time, the relationship between supervisors and subordinates weakens.

The Availability and Usability of Flexible Work Arrangements

Hayman (2009) described the various characteristics that play a role in the availability and use of flexible work arrangements. According to Sweet et al. (2014), the individual characteristics of employees, the organisation itself and industry created these differences. In response to this, a study conducted by Matos and Galinsky (2014) provided evidence that different levels of flexibility exist within the same organisation. The size of the organisation and individual characteristics account for these findings: of small organisations, only 14% enable employees to make use of flexible work hours as opposed to 5% of large organisations. Employees can decide themselves whether to make use of these voluntary practices, but in some cases, the organisation chooses for them (saving costs) (Johnson, Shannon & Reichmann, 2008). Though, not much research has been done in this area, Young (1999) found that childfree employees felt penalised in various ways such as having to work longer hours than employees who had children.

The availability and use of flexible work arrangements leads to positive organisational behaviours such as organisational commitment.

Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment is the most thoroughly investigated concept within the industrial/organisational psychology research domain (LaMastro, 2000) and, according to some researchers, it is common in the workplace (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Becker, Klein, & Meyer, 2009). Many researchers agree that organisational commitment refers to committed, loyal and productive employees (Elizur & Koslowsky, 2001; Furtmueller, van Dick, & Wilderom, 2011; Ivanauskaite, 2015). The SE theory explains why this phenomenon might be an outcome of flexible work arrangements. Employees perceive the availability of flexible work arrangements as an indication of a caring organisation. Employees thus reciprocate with commitment (Ivanauskaite, 2015).

Commitment is defined in multiple ways. The three-component model introduced by Meyer (2009) uses an inclusive approach that defines commitment as “an internal force that binds an individual to a target (social or non-social) and/or to a course of action of relevance to that target” (p. 39). A variety of elements exists within commitment as defined by Meyer and Allen. The core essence of commitment consists of several mindsets: affective (desires); normative (obligation); and continuance (cost). Klein et al. (2012) explained that each of the three components of commitment explained by Meyer and his associates derive from

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differential underlying processes. However, in the workspace individuals form attachments or bonds towards their organisations, managers, and goals. These multiple psychological attachments have featured in management literature for the past fifty years (Klein, et al., 2012).

For more than half a century psychological attachments and bonds have been coupled under the term ‘commitment’ in management literature (Klein, et al., 2012). Recently, Klein et al. (2012) defined commitment as a “volitional psychological bond reflecting a dedication to and responsibility for a particular target” (p. 137). Commitment is a development of various bonds or attachments that individuals can develop in their workplace. These bonds are characterised in terms of types and targets. A bond refers to the experience of the bond. These bonds are explained in new bottling facets where alienative, moral and calculative bonds are introduced. The foci where an attachment or bonds are formed are known as targets (Becker, 1992; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Examples are: organisations, supervisors, goals and values.

Klein et al. (2012) explained that bonds are conceptualised and formed in different ways. Examples are: *acquiescence*, *instrumental*, *commitment*, and *identification* bonds (Gagne & Deci, 2005). *Acquiescence bonds* are explained by the absence of alternatives or situations whereby individuals view bonds as necessary. *Commitment bonds* refer to the degree of caring bonds which are characterised by volition, dedication and responsibility, whereas *identification bonds* initially start with the target (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). *Instrumental bonds* emphasise the costs (economic, behavioural, and social) or whether a bond or attachment is unimportant, or the value of the future outcomes of these bonds. In addition, Klein et al. (2014) noted that the different types of psychological bonds (e.g., acquiescence, instrumental) had been combined in commitment literature under the label of commitment, which differentiates only among targets to which one can commit (e.g., organizations, supervisors, goals) (Klein et al., 2014). The conceptualisation of commitment is applicable across a full array of workplace targets due to its target-free nature. Commitment is considered to be suited for multiple targets and the ever-changing workplace (Klein, et al., 2012).

The prior typologies required of multiple distinctive categories for the different types of bonds (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Now they were all called commitment. Block (1997) rejects this move saying that commitment is a fallacious term. He supported the work of Klein et al.

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(2012), and argued that different bonds reflect distinctive psychological phenomenon, which reflect different circumstances: individual encounters and the different behavioural outcomes might occur.

Different types of bonds reflect a distinctive construct because individuals differ in the way they make sense of a bond, understand, or react to a type of bond (Klein, et al., 2012). Therefore, he eliminates additional concepts such as bases, mindsets, or rationales (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Klein, Brinsfield & Mollay, 2006). Commitment is defined as target free (Klein et al., 2012).

Haar and Spell (2004) suggest that employee commitment occurs in response to work-life practices in three ways: (1) employees feel a bond when benefiting from these practices and felt comfortable for being available to them; (2) employees feel recognised and appreciated when the organisation helps them balance their work-life commitments, regardless of whether they make use of the policies; (3) employees remain committed when work-family practices are implemented in a fair way (Sadar, 2006). Work-life benefits are offered to all employees to gain the rewards of increased organisational commitment (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004).

Given the view, many organisations provide work-family benefits in part to increase their levels of loyalty and work performance (Konrad & Mangel, 2000; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004). Lambert (2000) saw social exchange theory as supporting the notion that work-family benefits promote an inherent feeling of obligation to the workplace, which leads to helpful behaviours in the organisation.

Relationship between the Availability and Use of Flexible Work Arrangements and Organisational Commitment

Extensive evidence of many different studies provides the positive impact flexible work arrangements have on both the organisations and employees. Positive outcomes such as higher levels of job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, motivation, productivity and improved morale have been shown (Hayman, 2009; Masuda et al., 2012; Ivanauskaite, 2015). Given that, it is not surprising that studies have already found relationships between flextime and flexplace and organisational commitment. According to Casper and Harris (2008), work-life benefits such as flexible work schedules have positive effects on employees'

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commitment. Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, and Brenann (2008) also found that flexible work arrangements reduce work-family conflict.

Given the evidence, it is reasonable to assume employees respond positively towards the organisation that cares for them by providing them with flexible work practices, which make them feel appreciative and included (McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2010). Employees perceive flexible work arrangements in terms of support from their organisation. The social exchange theory explains this: organisations care about employees' well-being and thus offer flexible work arrangements. This, in turn, enhances the employees' experience (Shockley & Allen, 2011) and creates a sense of belonging, which leads to an increased level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Chen, 2015).

The usability of flexible work arrangements gives an employee the autonomy to make different choices regarding where they work and when they want to do their work (Shockley & Allen, 2011). Increased autonomy leads to higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation that could ultimately increase the commitment level of an employee to the organisation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Certainly, research indicates that increased job autonomy generates positive outcomes, which links to job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Chen, 2015). Hence, employees who make use of flexible work arrangements benefit from it in terms of their career and their personal life.

Given the above findings, it may be concluded that flexible work arrangements have a direct effect on organisational commitment (Ivanauskaite, 2015). In addition to being able to balance work-life obligations, it seems that a work-life culture shapes an individual's commitment to the organisation for which they work.

An Organisational Culture for Childfree Employees

As we have seen, an organisational culture that supports employees not only at work but also gives them the opportunity to meet their obligations outside of work helps employees to balance the demands of work and personal life and work more effectively (Koppes, 2008). Organisational culture is believed to be an important factor in the successful implementation and utilisation of work-life policies (Speelman, 2009). This is related to the type of support received from organisational role players such as supervisors and managers. Schein (1990) contended that the organisational culture was embedded and associated with the tangible and observable phenomenon of the culture of an organisation. Organisational culture could thus be conceptualised as "the pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by

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a given group” (Schein, 1990, p. 111). The culture is then taught new members how they should think, perceive and feel.

The organisational culture fundamentals and the manifestation of it can be understood in terms of its levels: (1) artefacts which are observable in enabling employees to have non-work commitments (work-life policies or flextime policies); (2) the values the organisational beholds (valuing) employees by supporting their well-being); (3) underlying assumptions (casual thought process regarding outcomes which are beneficial to both the organisation and the employee (Schein, 1990; Speelman, 2009). Wu (2008) also explained that the organisational culture comprises of a shared set of values and assumptions, which manifests among the employees of an organisation.

It is believed to be created by achieving organisational goals effectively (Wu, 2008) that may include outcomes such as working towards goals, the mission and vision of the organisation which facilitate employees to behave and act in a satisfying manner. In addition, groups and individuals have their own set of values and goals that are broader than the organisational culture. Therefore, whether childfree or being a parent, similar experiences relating to family-friendly or childfree-friendly organisational cultures respectively determine the extent to which level of support they receive regarding non-work commitments (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999; Casper et al., 2007; Speelman, 2009). Based on the previous points, two different cultures exist and organisational culture plays an influential role on the organisational commitment of employees. A clear comparison between them is made below to explain the different organisational cultures.

Family-Friendly culture

A family-friendly culture is defined as the set of assumptions and beliefs held by employees on the extent to which an organisation supports and values the non-work responsibilities and obligations of employees as well as their work obligations (Allen, 2001; Speelman, 2009). This culture sets out to develop over time (Koppes, 2008) and relates strongly to family support. Thus, over time the culture develops and becomes embedded to the point that important key players in the organisation embrace it (Speelman, 2009). Above all, the family-friendly culture offers support to employees with family responsibilities and helps them to balance work and non-work responsibilities in an effective manner (Thompson et al, 1999; Speelman, 2009).

Support for family-friendly practice and benefits as well as the demands of non-work responsibilities are part of this culture. A key element in family-friendly practices is how an organisation defines 'family'. Rothausen (1999) initiated a study to define and measure family in terms of who individuals perceive a family. Four subcategories emerged from her study: (1) single-items (being married, having a child or taking care of an elder); (2) lifecycle measures (people undergo a lifecycle of family); (3) time-based (determining how many hours are spent on non-work commitments); and (4) level of responsibility (number of children or the role of support an employee plays). The role of organisational culture is to ensure that employees who are taking care of family members maintain an effective balance between work and family (Thompson et al., 1999).

A wide span of research has been conducted about the implications of a family-friendly work environment (Allen, 2001) and the beneficial outcomes it offers for employees with children and other responsibilities (Parker & Allen, 2001). Very little research has been done about an organisation culture that includes childfree individuals, yet it is imperative for organisations to take account of this. Casper et al. (2007) conducted a study in which they investigated such a culture known as the single-friendly organisational culture.

Childfree-Friendly Culture

Research suggests that the work-life culture is more than just a family-friendly organisational culture within organisations (Casper et al., 2007). Employees view their organisation in terms of the support they receive relating to their own work-life commitments other than family responsibilities. The childfree-friendly culture is adapted from the original measure of Casper et al., (2007), the single-friendly culture which is applied to the childfree sample to which the study is applied. The childfree-friendly culture is conceptualised as a culture of a set of expectations, beliefs and values to the degree employees receive support and appreciation from their organisation to balance their work and personal life (Speelman, 2009; Casper et al., 2007). Thus, it is a culture that includes all employees no matter the family status. From this point, the single-friendly organisational culture describes employees who are single, married or widowed and have no children. Waumsley et al. (2010) found that childfree employees perceived themselves as being treated less well than employees with children. Furthermore, they did not enjoy an equal chance of being considered for potential work opportunities; the right to benefits; or non-work role respect as employees with children (Waumsley et al., 2010). Thus, they demanded that an acknowledgement of diversity in

deciding on support for employees. Overall, these findings suggest that work benefits package should be equally appealing to all sectors of society.

A variety of policies support most employees who have children, and some practices are only available to those who meet the particular conditions of having a child (Casper et al., 2007). According to Allen (2001) childfree employees may perceive their organisation as more supportive when flexible work arrangements are offered rather than onsite day-care facilities. Speelman (2009) explained that this suggests that flexible work arrangements were a work-life benefit for all employees whether married with children, taking care of an elderly family member or childfree.

Dimensions of a Childfree-Friendly Culture

The childfree-friendly culture is adapted from the original measure, which was developed by Casper et al. (2007), which is based on the family-friendly culture research done by Thompson et al (1999). As discussed above, the aim was to explore these different dimensions, which derive from childfree-friendly organisational cultures. These dimensions are deeply rooted in family-friendly culture, but also include aspects that childfree employees value. The childfree-friendly organisational culture can be understood by unpacking the five domains (see Figure 2). The childfree-friendly culture consists out of five domains namely: (1) *social inclusion*; (2) *equal access to employee benefits*; (3) *equal respect for non-work roles*; (4) *equal work expectations*; and (5) *equal work opportunities* (Casper et al., 2007). These dimensions are discussed in more detail below.

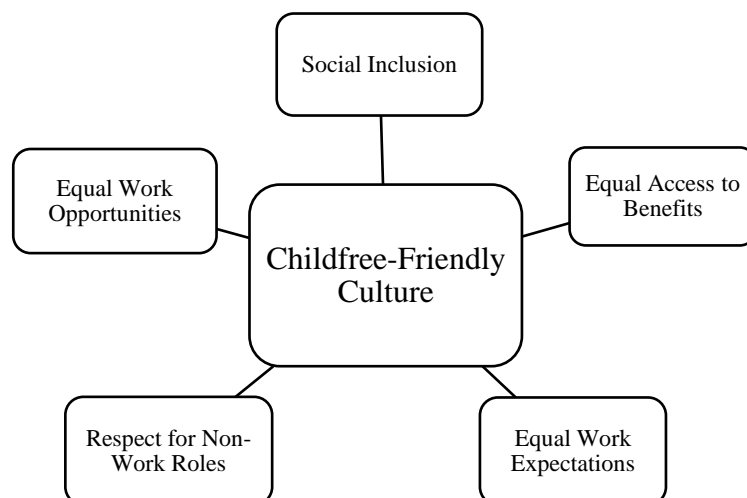


Figure 2: The model of a Childfree-Friendly Culture

Social Inclusion. The social inclusion dimension can be described as "the degree to which there are similar social expectations and opportunities for single employees and those with families" (Casper et al., 2007, p. 480). In response to this, childfree employees should perceive social events as fair as to those who have families. The study of Eby, Allen, Noble, and Lockwood (2004) explored the perceived adaptability and maturity of this different family structure. Their results suggested that childfree employees were perceived by employers to be more immature than employees with children and therefore there was more concern with the needs employees with families than the needs of childfree employees (Eby et al., 2004; Casper, et al., 2007). If a social event were arranged that attracted employees with families, the other employees, for instance childfree employees, might perceive their organisation as undervaluing them.

Equal access to employee benefits. The second domain of the childfree-friendly culture is the extent to which childfree employees perceive the established benefits as equally benefiting both parties, (Casper et al., 2007). The study of Kirby and Krone (2002) found that perceived inequities resulted in a backlash. Benefits that are based on families and marital status are perceived as unfair. As such, the majority of childfree employees feel that most benefits are merely focused on those who have families. Thus they view organisations that offer equitable access to these benefits favourably.

Equal respect for non-work roles. The third domain refers to the respect for both married and single, childfree employees' non-work responsibilities (Casper et al., 2007). Equal respect for non-work roles is conceptualised as "the extent to which equal respect is placed on the role of employees outside of work, irrespective of whether they are married with families or single without young children" (Speelman, 2009, p. 16). Employees that have families assess their organisation to be more supportive and respectful of their non-work roles than childfree employees do. This domain relates to the stereotyping of employees with children as more mature (Casper et al., 2007). It seems that organisations prefer to associate themselves with maturity and respect and equal respect for the non-work roles. Thus, the measure of the childfree-friendly culture is to what extent an organisation bases its respect for non-work roles on family structure.

Equal work expectations. The fifth domain refers to "the degree to which there is a similar work expectation for childfree employees and those with families" (Casper et al., 2007, p. 482). Equal work expectations are perceived by managers, professionals, and

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employees with a higher income as having equal work expectations. For example, every employee is expected to travel for work, to be willing to spend time away from home and to work late hours when an emergency arises. This domain includes cancelling of leave should an emergency arise, with account being taken of family status (Casper, et al., 2007). It is seen as justifiable that childfree employees are frequently required to travel more.

Equal work opportunities. The fourth domain relates to the opportunities that organisations offer to employees who have families and those who are childfree (Young, 1999). Equal work opportunities are understood as “the degree to which employees perceive fairness of job opportunities, promotions or work allocation irrespective of an employee’s parental and marital status” (Speelman, 2009, p. 16). In practice, this domain relates to a promotion opportunity given to an employee (Casper, et al. 2007). For example, should two candidates with the different family structure apply for the same position, the perception would be that the employee with a child is likely to receive the promotion. The rationale is that the promotion should assist the employee to provide for his or her family and consequently, the needs of the childfree employees are overlooked. According to Speelman (2009), this domain may be based on turnover intentions within an organisation. However, Casper et al. (2007) found that childfree employees’ turnover intentions are low when equal work opportunities are given to them as well.

Relationship between the Five Dimensions of a Childfree-Friendly Culture and Organisational Commitment

According to Speelman (2009), the five dimensions of the childfree-friendly culture creates a positive relationship between the behaviour of employees and the organisation which employs them. It seems that a psychological bond is formed with the organisation offering support (Klein et al., 2012). Research has shown that family-friendly environments have particularly positive outcomes for employees with family responsibilities. Speelman (2009) noted that gender differences are evident in the perceptions of a childfree-friendly culture. The use of flexible work arrangements is seen as more useful to women than men in general. This is because females are seen as primary caregivers at home whether as spouses or mothers (Bagilhole, 2006). Thus, women have more positive perceptions of organisations that are concerned about non-work roles.

Both, Casper et al. (2007) and Speelman (2009) found significant differences regarding perceptions of the equal work opportunities and equal access to benefits among

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Black and White employees. Black employees perceived the latter as less favourable in their organisations than White employees did.

Mediator Variable

Mediator variables act as mechanisms to influence a relationship between two more variables (Tredoux & Smith, 2006). According to Casper et al. (2007) and Speelman (2009), perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture and affective commitment. This mediator is discussed in more detail below.

Perceived Organisational Support

The perceptions of support at work have become a major concern for organisations (Kossek, Baltes, & Matthews, 2011). Perceived organisational support (POS) is considered to be a key factor which influences an individual's organisational commitment, satisfaction and quality of life (Rozaini, Norailis & Aida, 2015). According to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), the concept of perceived organisational support refers to the perceptions of employees that they receive valuable support and resources from their organisations that enables them to perform optimally. In today's competitive markets and business environments, employees are seen as exclusive resources that contribute to organisational effectiveness. Organisational support is considered one of the most significant ways of retaining employees in organisations (Eisenberg, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986).

Perceived organisational support continues to play a role in understanding organisational commitment within the framework of social exchange theory (Eisenberger et al. (1986). Wikhamn and Hall (2012); and Eisenberger et al. (1986) both defined perceived organisational support as "the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (p. 504). Perceived organisational support consists of two components: the recognition received from the organisation in terms of tangible resources and compensation; and the socio-economic benefits in the form of organisational policies and practices supporting non-work circumstances and family care (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Worley, Fuqua, & Hellman, 2009).

Previous studies suggested that employees need the support of their direct work environment to establish a balance between their work and personal life (Thompson, et al., 1999; Allen, 2001; O'Driscoll, Poelmans, Spector, Kalliath, Allen, Cooper, & Sanchez, 2003). Lingard and Francis (2002) agreed that the direct working environment plays an

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important supportive role. In general, however, childfree employees receive less support from their organisation than employees with children (Casper et al., 2007). Supportive environments establish job commitment and job satisfaction, which may lead to less work-life conflict (Lingard & Francis, 2002).

Opportunities or support come in the form of work-life benefits to employees such as flexible work arrangement. Flexible work arrangements provide benefits to the organisation and employees such as increased commitment of employees (Casper et al., 2007). Allen (2001) highlighted the importance of perceptions regarding flexible work arrangements. POS relates to positive behaviour arising from the availability of flexible work arrangements. Not only do these policies enhance the employees' performance, but also they reduce stress levels and the desire to leave the organisation (ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010).

On the other hand, receiving support from the organisations creates a self-sense of loyalty and feelings of guilt (Haar & Spell, 2006). In doing so, some research demonstrates that employees who receive this benefit and make use of it may feel inferior and perceived by others as weak. Some research shows that both men and women respond differently; men seem to feel weak that they have to balance career and family, whereas women feel inferior because they struggle to cope as working mothers. These feelings may have self-damaging outcomes for the individuals themselves (Haar & Spell, 2006). It seems that employees who experience high levels of perceived organisational support exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviours in favour of their organisation (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees perceive their organisations positive when they are committed (Beauregard, 2014) and receive enough support (Muse, Harris, Giles & Field, 2008).

According to the Future of Work Institute (2012) in the United Kingdom, flexible work arrangements have a substantial impact on an organisation's capacity to adapt. Increased employee productivity enables employees to operate in environments that best suit them and allow the workload to be handled in the best way possible. The survey also found that employees are more energised, motivated and productive.

Perceived Organisational Support as a Mediator between the five dimensions of the Childfree-Friendly Culture and Organisational Commitment

Casper et al. (2007) and Speelman (2009) found that POS mediates the relationship between the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment

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(Meyer & Allen, 1997). POS has been thoroughly explained in terms of the support organisations offers to its employees (Speelman, 2009). The mediating effect of perceived organisational support is assessed in this study. Casper et al. (2007) found a clear relationship between turnover intentions and citizenship behaviour and perceived organisational support. Employees in these organisations have a clear sense of belonging and a feeling of being valued. It is therefore likely that a relationship between a childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment exists because employees may feel that their work environment supports their needs. This relationship is based on the social exchange theory of Eisenberger et al. (1986) that there is a link between perceived organisational support and organisational commitment. This relates to the signal that the organisation cares about and recognises the employees' needs. The social exchange is the effort made in return for support and fair treatment. Similarly, a concern for the well-being of childfree employees' is indicated by the emphasis on equal practices and fair treatment. In return, these employees feel a commitment to the organisation.

Research Objectives and Propositions

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace) on the organisational commitment of childfree employees. Furthermore, to see whether a relationship exists between organisational commitment and all five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture, and to deepen the understanding of the relationship between organisational commitment and the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture and perceived organisational support as a mediator in a South African context.

The following propositions derived from the literature which has been reviewed and aims to achieve the objectives of this study:

Proposition 1: Flextime positively predicts organisational commitment of employees

Proposition 1a: The availability of flextime positively predicts organisational commitment

Proposition 1b: The use of flextime positively predicts organisational commitment

Proposition 2: Flexplace predicts organisational commitment of employees

Proposition 2a: The availability of flexplace positively predicts organisational commitment

Proposition 2b: The use of flexplace positively predicts organisational commitment

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Proposition 3: A positive relationship exists between the perceptions of all five domains of a childfree-friendly culture and the commitment to the organisation among childfree employees

Proposition 3a: A positive relationship exists between Social Inclusion and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 3b: A positive relationship exists between Equal Access to Benefits and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 3c: A positive relationship exists between Respect for Non-Work Roles and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 3d: A positive relationship exists between Equal Work Expectations and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 3e: A positive relationship exists between Equal Work Opportunities and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 4: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Organisational Commitment and the perceptions of five domains of a Childfree-Friendly Culture

Proposition 4a: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between social inclusion and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 4b: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Equal Access to Benefits and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 4c: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Respect for Non-Work Roles and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 4d: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Equal Work Expectations and Organisational Commitment

Proposition 4e: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Equal Work Opportunities and Organisational Commitment

Chapter 3: Research Methods

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research study. This chapter is divided into different sections: Firstly, the study's research design is presented. Secondly, the participants of the study are described and the information is presented in table form. This is followed by the methods used to collect the data. Finally, the scales used to measure the constructs are explained.

Research Design

A descriptive research design is used to explain relationships between the variables in this study (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003). A cross-sectional time dimension was employed to collect data from respondents, using a non-probability sampling method (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2013; Wilson, 2014). The sampling method used to collect the data is known as purposive sampling (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Delpont, 2011). The data were obtained through a self-report online survey using the Qualtrics platform (Neuman, 2000). The use of an online questionnaire is cost-effective and makes it possible to reach a large number of respondents (Wilson, 2014).

Respondents

The respondents in this study include full-time childfree employees in multiple organisations across different industries in South Africa. Data were collected from organisations in across a variety of industries such as communications, energy, financial, health care, manufacturing and retail. Respondents ($N = 134$) were all full time employees who were childfree (childless) (Struwig & Stead, 2011).

The demographics of the respondents are shown in Table 2 below. There were more female respondents (49%) than male respondents (31%). The racial distribution was as follows: 57% predominantly were white and 13% coloured. Nearly half the respondents were in middle or senior management (48.5%) and over 68.7% had a post-school qualification. The age of the respondents ranged from 22 to 62 years.

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Table 1: *Demographics of Sample*

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	42	31.3
	Female	66	49.3
Race	African	7	5.2
	Coloured	18	13.4
	Indian	6	4.5
	White	76	56.7
	Prefer not to say	1	0.7
Age Groups	Under 22	3	2.2
	23-29	71	53.0
	30-39	28	20.9
	40 and Older	6	4.5
Marital Status	Single	76	56.7
	Married	24	17.9
Educational Level	High School	16	11.9
	Diploma	10	7.5
	Bachelor's Degree	32	23.9
	Post Graduate Degree	50	37.3
Job Level	Junior	43	32.1
	Middle	44	32.8
	Senior	21	15.7
Flexitime			
Available	No	69	51.5
	Yes	65	48.5
Currently Use	No	87	64.9
	Yes	47	35.1
Flexplace			
Available	No	93	69.4
	Yes	41	30.6
Currently Use	No	109	81.3
	Yes	25	18.7

Measures

After reviewing the literature on the various constructs for this study, four scales were employed in order to gather the data for this research study. The full set of items can be found in Appendix A. The items required a response on a 5-point Likert-type scale, or a dichotomous scale (i.e. 'yes' or 'no'). The following scales were used in the research study:

Formal flexible policies – availability and use. Dichotomous questions were asked in terms of formal flexible work policies. The respondent was asked to indicate whether flextime and flexplace are available, and currently in use. It was coded 0 = no, and 1 = yes.

Organisational Commitment (OC). Organisational Commitment was measured using Klein et al.'s (2014) scale. The 4-items required respondents to score items on a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = extremely. Some examples of the items are: "*How committed are you to your organisation?*" and "*To what extent do you care about your organisation?*" Klein et al. (2014), found a high Cronbach alpha reliability ($\alpha = .96$) in their study.

Childfree-Friendly Culture (CFC). The childfree-friendly organisational culture was measured using a 28-item scale which is adapted for the childfree sample initially from the original measure, single-friendly culture, developed by Casper et al. (2007). The scale consists of five dimensions. In this context, childfree-friendly culture includes childfree employees. In the original study, internal consistency reliability ranged from 0.75 up to 0.96 (Casper et al., 2007). Moreover, Speelman (2009) found similar Cronbach alpha coefficients for the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture. The five dimensions derived from the childfree-friendly culture: *social inclusion*, *equal work opportunities*, *equal access to benefits*, *equal respect for non-work roles*, and *equal work expectations*. One item from the equal respect for non-work roles subscale was adapted for the study (item 14) to ensure the relevance of the questions and applicability of the results. The respondents rated their responses on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Some examples of the items are: "*My supervisor encourages single and married employees equally to attend company-sponsored social events*" (social inclusion = nine items); "*My organisation provides equal work opportunities for single and married employees*" (equal work opportunities = five items); "*All employees receive the same level of employee benefits, irrespective of family status*" (equal access to benefits = six items); "*My supervisor treats all employees' requests for time off the same, regardless of why the employee wants the time off*" (equal respect for non-work roles = three

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items); "My supervisor makes work assignments without considering an employee's family situation" (equal work expectations = five items).

Perceived Organisational Support (POS). Five of the six items from Eisenberger et al.'s (2001) scale were used to measure POS. Prior studies have provided sufficient evidence of the reliability and validity of this scale (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Eisenberger et al, 2001). Speelman (2009) obtained a high Cronbach alpha reliability ($\alpha = .89$). All items were changed so that the statements were positive (negatively worded items were edited). The scale items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. An example is: "*The organisation values my contribution to its well-being*".

Demographic variables. Demographics were measured by using single items such as gender, age, marital status, education level, job level and whether flexible work arrangements are available and being utilised. These variables are selected as those might have a bearing on the dependent variables and relationships as well as giving richness to the context of the respondents (Schein & Chen, 2011). Gender was coded (0) for male and (1) for female.

Procedure

This study was part of a larger study on flexible work arrangements in the work-life interface at the University of Cape Town. A questionnaire was compiled containing scales pertaining to flexible work arrangements and childfree employees were related to this study. Before data collection commenced, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Cape Town's Commerce Faculty Research Ethics Committee. The approval for this study to be conducted in organisations was done through the Human Resource Directors from each organisation in the Western Cape and Gauteng. After ethical clearance and permission had been obtained from the organisations, the online survey was created on Qualtrics so the questionnaire could be distributed via an email link. The link was sent to the Human Resource head of each organisation in order to distribute the link among their company employees and encouraged the motivation for participation in the survey. After sending the online platform link to the participating organisations' HR heads, an email letter was sent to individual potential participants inviting them to participate and asking them to send a letter of consent if they were willing to do so. The cover letter gave the relevant information about the research and objectives of the study and emphasised that participation was voluntary and

anonymous. After reading the information on the cover letter, the respondent was able to access the questionnaire via the link provided.

As this study pertains to childfree employees only, two qualifying questions had to be answered first to ensure that the participants were identified correctly. These asked whether the potential participants worked for more than 20 hours per week and if they had at least one child. If the respondents answered “no” to the second question they were allowed to proceed. After completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to fill in their email address to be in line for a prize of a R600 Woolworths voucher. It was hoped that adding an incentive would increase participation and response rates (Dillman, 2011). This method also took account of the time constraints (Burns & Burns, 2008). The data collection was done in Qualtrics and a final data set of 134 respondents who were childfree employees was obtained.

Ethical Considerations

Social research requires that rigorous ethical requirements be met. Two of them are that the researcher must act with integrity and the participants must not be harmed (Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2013). A letter was sent to the respondents giving them full information about the research so that they were aware of the aims of the research and knew that participation was voluntary and thus required their consent (Bryman, 2012). Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured (Silverman, 2013). The researcher alone had access to the data which ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents.

Statistical Analyses

The statistical data analysis was done using the IBM’s Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 after the data has been exported from Qualtrics. After the data were retrieved, they required cleaning and coding for analyses to be commenced based on contemporary statistical conventions (Pallant, 2010). The Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated to indicate the reliability of the data. The quantitative data collected was analysed using exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, mediation analysis by Preacher and Hayes’ (2004) PROCESS script.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter examines the data found. The validity and reliability of each scale are presented, followed by the descriptive statistics of the data, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and mediation analysis by means of Preacher and Hayes' (2004) PROCESS script.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The following section examines the dimensionality of the scales using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Principal axis factor analysis (PAF) was used to extract the factors (Pallant, 2005) and the scale items were subjected to a direct oblimin rotation. According to Henson and Roberts (2006), PAF is recommended as a data structuring method. This focuses on the shared variance between scale items. Principal component factor analysis, which extracts the maximum variance from variables as a data reduction method, was also used (Thompson, 2004).

Before exploratory factor analysis (EFA) could be performed, several conditions needed to be met. Firstly, inter-correlations between items of each scale needed to be below .30 with at least five respondents per scale (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) Test needed to produce values greater than .50 for data to be appropriate for factor analysis (Williams, Brown, & Onsmann, 2012). Furthermore, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity needed to produce significant results to show that the scale items adequately correlated with another. Lastly, Kaiser's criterion factors needed to produce Eigenvalues greater than 1.00 (Kaiser, 1970). Factor loadings greater than .30 were deemed necessary (Hair, Black, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). These conditions were all met.

Organisational Commitment. The four-item organisational commitment scale was subjected to PAF. The EFA revealed that the organisational commitment scale items loaded on one significant factor with an Eigenvalue of 3.57, accounting for 89.25% of the total variance. Results indicated that the scale was unidimensional and could be assumed to be a measure of Organisational Commitment.

Table 2: *Factor Loadings of Organisational Commitment*

Code	Item	Organisational Commitment
OC1	How committed are you to your organisation?	.955
OC2	To what extent do you care about your organisation?	.874
OC3	How dedicated are you to your organisation?	.929
OC4	To what extent have you chosen to be committed to your organisation?	.944
Eigenvalue		3.570
Individual total variance explained (%)		89.248

Note. $N = 111$ after listwise deletion. OC = Organisational Commitment

Childfree-Friendly Culture. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used by Casper, et al. (2007) to assess the five dimensions of the childfree-friendly culture, however, in view of the small sample size an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted (Hair et al., 2003) on each dimension of childfree-friendly culture.

Social inclusion. The four-item *social inclusion* subscale was subjected to PAF. The EFA revealed that the *Social inclusion* subscale items loaded on one significant factor with an Eigenvalue of 3.01, accounting for 75.34% of the total variance. The results indicate that the scale is unidimensional and may be assumed to measure *social inclusion*.

Table 3: *Factor Loadings of Social Inclusion subscale*

Code	Item	Social Inclusion
SI1	My supervisor plans social events for our work group that are appropriate for both childfree employees and those with families.	.784
SI2	My supervisor believes that work-related social gatherings should be appealing to both childfree and married employees.	.867
SI3	My supervisor supports hosting work-related social events that include employees both with and without children.	.825
SI4	My organisation considers the preferences of both childfree and married employees when planning social events.	.801
Eigenvalue		3.013
Individual total variance explained (%)		75.335

Note. $N = 114$ after listwise deletion. SI = Social Inclusion.

Equal access to employee benefits. The four-item *equal access to employee benefits* subscale was subjected to PAF. The EFA revealed that the *equal access to benefits* subscale items loaded on one significant factor with an Eigenvalue of 2.92, accounting for 72.93% of

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the total variance. Results indicated that the scale was unidimensional and it may be assumed to measure *Equal Access to Benefits*.

Table 4: *Factor Loadings of Equal Access to Employee Benefits subscale*

Code	Item	Equal Access to Benefits
EAB1	My organisation provides benefits that are relevant for childfree and employees with children.	.742
EAB2	Childfree employees and employees with families have equal access to employee benefits in this organisation.	.718
EAB3	The benefits provided by my organisation are desirable to both childfree employees and those with children.	.884
EAB4	The benefits that are offered by my organisation are equally useful to a married employee with children and a childfree employee.	.853
Eigenvalue		2.917
Individual total variance explained (%)		72.931

Note. $N = 114$ after listwise deletion. EAB = Equal Access to Benefits.

Respect for non-work roles. The three-item *Respect for non-work roles* subscale was subjected to PAF. The EFA revealed that the *respect for non-work roles* subscale items loaded on one significant factor with an Eigenvalue of 2.20, accounting for 73.20% of the total variance. The results show that the scale is unidimensional and may be assumed to measure *Respect to non-work roles*.

Table 5: *Factor Loadings of Respect for non-work roles subscale*

Code	Item	Respect to Non-work roles
RNWR1	My supervisor treats all employees' requests for time of the same, regardless of why the employee wants the time off	.899
RNWR2	My organisation's policies treat all requests for time off the same, regardless of why the employee requests time off	.867
RNWR3	Workers in my organisation are equally understanding when childfree employees are away from work for personal reasons as when employees with families are away for family reasons	.565
Eigenvalue		2.196
Individual total variance explained (%)		73.202

Note. $N = 114$ after listwise deletion. RNWR = Respect for Non-Work Roles.

Equal work expectations. The four-item *Respect to non-work roles* subscale was subjected to PAF. The EFA revealed that the *equal work expectations* subscale items loaded on one significant factor with an Eigenvalue of 3.22, accounting for 80.57% of the total

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variance. The results show that the scale is unidimensional and assumed to measure *Equal work expectations*.

Table 6: *Factor Loadings of Equal work expectations subscale*

Code	Item	Equal Work Expectations
EWE1	My supervisor makes work assignments without considering an employee's family situation.	.826
EWE2	My supervisor makes decisions about who will travel for business without considering employee family status.	.708
EWE3	In my organisation, work assignments are made without considering family status	.951
EWE4	Work assignments in my organisation are made without considering employees' family situations.	.958
Eigenvalue		3.223
Individual total variance explained (%)		80.573

Note. $N = 114$ after listwise deletion. EWE = Equal Work Expectations.

Equal work opportunities. The four-item *equal work opportunities* subscale was subjected to PAF. The EFA revealed that the *equal work opportunities* subscale items loaded on one significant factor with an Eigenvalue of 2.39, accounting for 59.68% of the total variance. The results show that the scale is unidimensional and assumed to measure *equal work opportunities*.

Table 7: *Factor Loadings of Equal Work Opportunities subscale*

Code	Item	Equal Work Opportunities
EWO1	I don't feel that my supervisor uses family status when making promotion decisions.	.373
EWO2	Family status does not determine what work opportunities are offered to an employee in my organisation.	.753
EWO3	My organisation provides equal work opportunities for single and married employees.	.874
EWO4	In my organisation, there are equal opportunities available for employee advancement, irrespective of employee family status.	.705
Eigenvalue		2.387
Individual total variance explained (%)		59.683

Note. $N = 114$ after listwise deletion. EWO = Equal Work Opportunities.

Perceived Organisational Support. The five-item *Perceived Organisational Support* scale was subjected to PAF. The EFA revealed that the perceived organisational support scale items loaded on one significant factor with an Eigenvalue of 3.87, accounting for 77.46% of

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the total variance. The results show that the scale is unidimensional and may be assumed to measure *Perceived Organisational Support*.

Table 8: *Factor Loadings of Perceived Organisational Support Scale*

Code	Item	Perceived Organisational Support
POS1	This organisation takes pride in my accomplishments	.801
POS2	This organisation really cares about my well-being	.901
POS3	This organisation strongly considers my goals and values	.841
POS4	This organisation values my contribution to its well-being	.794
POS5	This organisation shows concern for me	.899
Eigenvalue		3.873
Individual total variance explained (%)		77.462

Note. $N = 121$ after listwise deletion. POS = Perceived Organisational Support.

Reliability Analysis

Following exploratory factor analysis, the reliability of each scale was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) to assess internal consistency. An alpha value of .70 or above is considered an acceptable level of reliability and served as the cut-off point for the reliability analysis (Hair et al., 2006; Burns & Burns, 2008). The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the scales ranged from .735 to .959, all exceeding the conventional acceptance level of .70 (see Table 10).

Descriptive Statistics

Subsequent to the reliability analysis, descriptive statistics were calculated to assess the value and distribution of the scores (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). Many statistical analyses assume that data are normally distributed, which is uncommon with data in the field of psychology. The data were examined for normality by assessing the skewness and kurtosis. Skewness refers to the symmetry of data distribution, whereas kurtosis is to the shape of the distribution of the data in terms of its height and width (Field, 2013). The closer the skewness values are to zero, the closer the data points are to being normally distributed or are in line (>1 = positively skewed (large valued outliers); < 1 = negatively skewed (low valued outliers)).

All the distributions of *organisational commitment*, *perceived organisational support*, *equal work opportunities*, *social inclusion*, *equal access to benefits*, *respect for non-work*

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roles, equal work expectations had negatively skewed ranges from -.20 to -1.19 (see Table 9). It should be noted that if a skewness value lies beyond the criterion (-.1 and 1), it indicates that the data are not as asymmetrical as the other variables (Williams, et al., 2012). According to Hair et al. (2003), a kurtosis of 3 or more is considered to be peaked, and too flat if a kurtosis is -3. The kurtosis values ranged from -2.03 to .06 (see Table 9). None of the distributions was too flat or peaked.

Respondents reported high levels of *organisational commitment* ($M = 4.20$; $SD = .83$); moderate levels of *perceived organisational support* ($M = 3.68$; $SD = .80$); *social inclusion* ($M = 3.34$; $SD = .84$); *equal work opportunities* ($M = 3.75$; $SD = .66$); *equal access to benefits* ($M = 3.56$; $SD = .84$); *respect for non-work role* ($M = 3.53$; $SD = .88$); and *equal work expectations* ($M = 3.08$; $SD = .94$).

Table 9: Summary of Descriptive Data

Scale	N	M	SD	SE	Skewness	Kurtosis
Organisational Commitment	111	4.196	.8294	.0787	-.867	.060
Perceived Organisational Support	121	3.676	.8022	.0729	-.778	1.611
Childfree-Friendly Culture						
Social Inclusion	114	3.342	.840	.0786	-.657	.857
Equal Access to Benefits	114	3.564	.836	.0783	-1.188	1.935
Respect for Non-Work Roles	114	3.526	.879	.0823	-.593	.471
Equal Work Expectations	114	3.079	.941	.0881	-.198	-.267
Equal Work Opportunities	114	3.754	.655	.0061	-.821	2.878

Note: N = Number of respondents after listwise deletion of missing data; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; SE = standard error of mean.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson-product moment correlation analyses were performed to determine whether all variables in the study related to one another and if they could be used in further analyses. These correlations were interpreted according to the recommendations of Cohen (1988). A correlation coefficient between .10 and .29 was thus seen as indicating a small effect; a correlation coefficient between .30 and .49 a moderate effect; and a correlation coefficient of

.50 and higher a large effect. The correlations for the sample are presented in Table 10. Details regarding the correlations are discussed below.

The inter-correlations between the five dimensions of the childfree-friendly culture values ranged from 0.27 to 0.44. *Social inclusion* moderately correlated significantly with *equal access to benefits* ($r = 0.351; p < 0.01$); significantly weakly with *respect to non-work roles* ($r = .267; p < .01$); and correlated moderately significantly with *equal work expectations* ($r = .360; p < .01$). *Equal access to benefits* correlated significantly with a moderate effect with *respect for non-work roles* ($r = .339; p < .01$). *Equal work expectations* moderately correlated significantly with *respect for non-work roles* ($r = -.378; p < .01$). *Equal work opportunities* had the least overlap. Therefore, it was said to have no relation or significant correlation with any other dimension of the single-friendly organisational culture. None of the significant correlations exceeded .70, which indicates that there were no serious multicollinearity problems (Hair et al., 2003).

Flexitime availability significantly correlated with flexitime use ($r = .476; p < .01$). Flexplace availability correlated significantly with flexplace use ($r = .436; p < .01$). Flexitime availability significantly correlated with flexplace availability ($r = .580; p < .01$). Also, flexitime use significantly correlated with flexplace use ($r = .455; p < 0.01$) with a moderate effect.

In addition, correlations between independent, depend and mediating variables were calculated. *Equal work expectations* correlated negatively with *Perceived organisational support* ($r = -.33, p < .01$) and *Organisational commitment* ($r = -.23; p < .05$). *Perceived organisational support* significantly correlated with the *availability of flexplace* ($r = .24, p < .01$) and the *use of flexitime* ($r = .22, p < .05$). It also correlated significantly with *organisational commitment* ($r = .44, p < .01$). *Perceived organisational support* correlated significantly with *social inclusion* ($r = .43, p < .01$), *equal access to benefits* ($r = .44, p < .01$), and *respect for non-work roles* ($r = .39, p < .01$).

Table 10: *The Correlation Matrix for Scales*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Availability of Flextime	(-)										
2 Availability of Flexplace	.580**	(-)									
3 Use of Flextime	.476**	.402**	(-)								
4 Use of Flexplace	.287**	.436**	.455**	(-)							
5 Organisational Commitment	-.028	.107	.023	-.004	(.959)						
6 Perceived Organisational Support	.186	.248**	.221*	.098	.438**	(.927)					
7 Social Inclusion	.064	.023	.114	-.096	.168	.426**	(.735)				
8 Equal Access to Benefits	.291**	.131	.136	.075	.163	.439**	.351**	(.874)			
9 Respect for Non-work Roles	-.013	-.086	.083	.026	.102	.392**	.267**	.339**	(.815)		
10 Equal Work Expectations	-.008	.066	.028	.163	-.228*	-.328**	-.360**	-.082	-.378**	(.919)	
11 Equal Work Opportunities	.043	-.100	.033	.044	.100	.175	.085	.099	.168	.040	(.814)

Note. $N = 111$ after listwise deletion of missing data. Cronbach's alpha reflects on the diagonal. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to evaluate the proportion of variance in the dependent variables explained by the independent variables. Simple linear regressions and hierarchical multiple regressions were employed to examine the effects of multiple predictors or independent variables on a single outcome variable. The total variance explained by the dependent variables accounted for the changes in R^2 ; the higher the value of R^2 , the greater the variance explained (Hair et al., 2013).

Pallant (2010) stated that several conditions need to be met before regression analyses can be conducted. In line with Tabachnick and Fidell's (2001) formula for sample size ($N > 50 + 8m$), m representing a number of variables in the study, this study met these conditions before commencing the regression analyses. There is no evidence of outliers in the data set and all the residual scores fell within the cut-off criteria of $-.3$ and $.3$. There was no evidence of multicollinearity or homoscedasticity (Pallant, 2010) and all P-Plots of regression residuals were along the zero point distributed.

Regression analyses were not conducted to test propositions 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3e, 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4e, as these correlations were not significant. The following regression analyses aim to examine the proposed relationships depicted in theoretical relationships and how the dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture explain the variance in the dependent and mediating variable.

Equal Work Expectations and Organisational Commitment. The correlation analysis showed a significant correlation between the *equal work expectations* and *organisational commitment* (see table 10). Thus, a simple linear regression was conducted. The *equal work expectations* were entered as the independent variable, and *organisational commitment* the dependent variable. The results revealed that *equal work expectations* explained 5.2% of the variance in *organisational commitment* which revealed to be statistically significant, $F(1, 109) = 5.95; p < .05$. Thus, equal work expectations is a significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = -.23, p = .02$). Therefore, proposition 3d is supported.

Equal work expectations and Perceived Organisational support. The correlation analysis showed a significant correlation between the *equal work expectations* and *perceived organisational support* (see table 10). Thus, a simple linear regression was performed. The *equal work expectations* were entered as the independent variable, and *perceived*

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organisational support the dependent variable. The results revealed that *equal work expectations* explained 10% of the variance in *perceived organisational support* which proved to be statistically significant, $F(1, 112) = 12.38; p < .001$. Thus, equal work expectations is a significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = -.32, p < .001$). It therefore supports the mediation analysis.

Equal Work Expectations, Marital Status, Gender and Organisational Commitment. A two-step hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to explore the relationship between *equal work expectations* and *organisational commitment*. *Marital status* and *gender* were the control variables. In step one of the regression analysis, the control variables explained 2.2% of the total variance in *organisational commitment*. However, the overall model was found to be statistically non-significant, $F(2, 105) = 1.16, p = .32$. After the entry of *equal work expectations* in step two, the total variance explained was 7.6%, $F(3, 104) = 2.84, p = .04$. *Equal work expectations* explained an additional 5.4% of the variance in *organisational commitment* after controlling *marital status* and *gender*. The results indicated that *equal work expectations* ($\beta = -.24, p = .02$) was a statistically significant predictor of *organisational commitment*.

Table 11: *Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results for Dependent Variable: Organisational Commitment*

Variable	Step One			95% CI		Step Two			95% CI	
	B	SE B	β	LL	UL	B	SE B	β	LL	UL
Marital Status	.207	.192	.105	-.173	.587	.170	.188	.086	-.203	.542
Gender	.156	.163	.093	-.168	.480	.077	.163	.046	-.246	.400
Equal Work Expectations						-.207	.084	-.238*	-.373	-.041
R ²			.016					.076		
Adjusted R ²			-.003					.049		
Change in R ²								.060		

Notes. *N* = 108 after listwise deletion of missing data; *B* = unstandardised beta coefficient, *SE B* = standard error of the unstandardized beta coefficient, β = standardised beta coefficient; *CI* = confidence interval for unstandardized beta coefficients; *LL* = lower limit, *UL* = upper limit; **p* ≤ .05, ***p* ≤ .01

Mediation Analysis

Preacher and Hayes' (2004) PROCESS script macro for SPSS was used to assess proposition 4. Unlike Baron and Kenny's (1986) process, it does not assume that all data is normally distributed. Preacher, Rucker and Hayes (2007) states that the PROCESS method is suitable for small data samples in which it accurately determines statistical significance, as opposed to the Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation procedure. Cohen's (1988) requirement for effect sizes was used to ensure the accurate interpretation: .01 (small); .09 (medium); and .25 (large). A mediation analysis can only be conducted on a relationship exist between the independent, dependent and mediating variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Mediation analyses were not conducted to test propositions 4a, 4b, 4c, and 4e, as these correlations were not significant (see Table 10). Therefore, only one dimension of the childfree-friendly culture, *equal work expectations*, correlated negatively with *organisational commitment* and *perceived organisational support* respectively.

The following model presents the effect of the mediator on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable, childfree-friendly culture dimension (*equal work expectations*) are symbolised with an x ; the dependent variable (*organisational commitment*) an y ; and the mediator variable (*perceived organisational support*) with an m (Hayes, 2013).

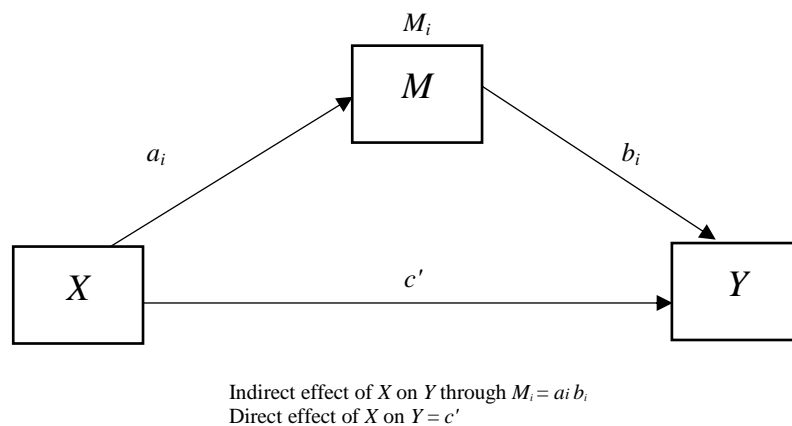


Figure 3: Simple mediation equation model with a single mediator variable M casually located between X and Y .

Perceived Organisational Support as mediator between Equal Work Expectations and Organisational Commitment. Figure 3, represents the conceptual diagram relationship of the *childfree-friendly culture* (x), *perceived organisational support*

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(*m*), and *organisational commitment* (*y*). *Equal work expectations* (childfree-friendly culture dimension) significantly predicted *organisational commitment* ($b = -.20, t(109) = -2.44, p < .05$) and accounted for 5.2% of the variance in *organisational commitment*. *Equal work expectations* significantly predicted *perceived organisational support* ($b = -.26, t(109) = -3.62, p < .01$) and accounted for 10.7% of the variance in *perceived organisational support*. POS significantly predicted *organisational commitment*, $b = .44, t(108) = 4.46, p < .01$. Hence, the mediation process took place and therefore shows that *equal work expectations* no longer predict *organisational commitment*, $b = -.08, t(108) = -1.03, p = .30$. Therefore, the results suggest that a significant indirect effect exists between *equal work expectations* (CFC dimension) and OC through POS ($b = -.12, \text{BCa CI} [-.2375; -.0474]$). The Sobel test found a full mediation effect ($z = 2.77, p < 0.01$), with a medium effect size $k^2 = .04, 95\% \text{BCa} [.0007, .1285]$. This suggests that *perceived organisational support* mediated the relationship between *equal work expectations* and *organisational commitment*, thus confirming proposition 4d.

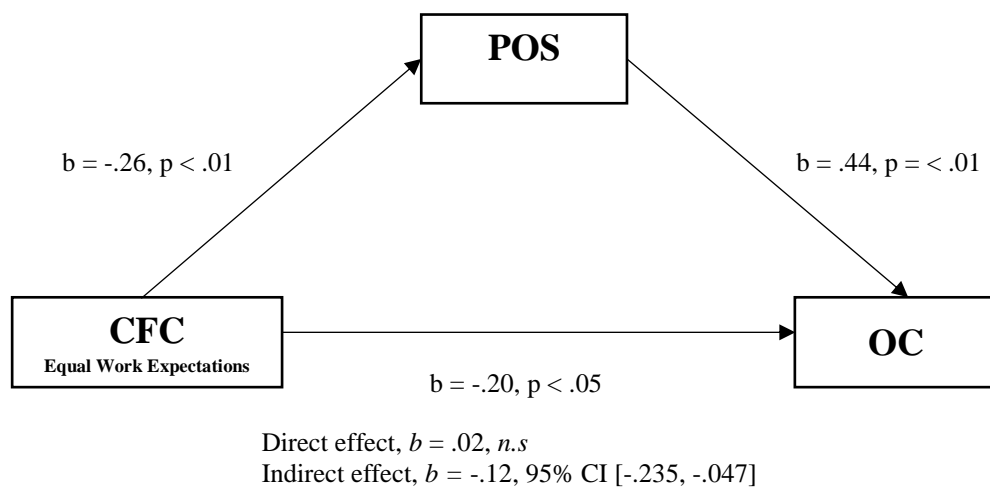


Figure 4: Conceptual diagram of a childfree-friendly culture (CFC) dimension as a predictor of organisational commitment (OC), mediated by perceived organisational support (POS). The confidence intervals in for the indirect effects is a BCa bootstrapped CI founded

Final Notes

The results of this study found positive relationships between the use of flextime and perceived organisational support and the availability of flexplace. Furthermore, perceived organisational support correlated with four dimensions of the childfree-friendly culture, e.g., social inclusion, equal access to benefits, respect for non-work roles, and equal work

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expectations. In addition, organisational commitment correlated with only one dimension of childfree-friendly culture, equal work expectations. The results suggest that perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between this dimension of the childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment. Table 12 summarises the propositions of the study.

Table 12: *Summary of Propositions*

Proposition	Analysis	Outcome
Proposition 1a: The availability of flextime positively predicts organisational commitment	Correlation	Not supported
Proposition 1b: The availability of flexplace positively predicts organisational commitment	Correlation	Not supported
Proposition 2a: The use of flextime positively predicts organisational commitment	Correlation	Not supported
Proposition 2b: The use of flexplace positively predicts organisational commitment	Correlation	Not supported
Proposition 3a: A positive relationship exists between Social Inclusion and Organisational Commitment	Correlation	Not Supported
Proposition 3b: A positive relationship exists between Equal Access to Benefits and Organisational Commitment	Correlation	Not Supported
Proposition 3c: A positive relationship exists between Respect for Non-Work Roles and Organisational Commitment	Correlation	Not Supported
Proposition 3d: A positive relationship exists between Equal Work Expectations and Organisational Commitment	Correlation Regression	Supported
Proposition 3e: A positive relationship exists between Equal Work Opportunities and Organisational Commitment	Correlation	Not Supported

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Proposition 4a: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship social inclusion and Organisational Commitment Mediation Not Supported

Proposition 4b: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Equal Access to Benefits and Organisational Commitment Mediation Not Supported

Proposition 4c: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Respect for Non-Work Roles and Organisational Commitment Mediation Not Supported

Proposition 4d: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Equal Work Expectations and Organisational Commitment Mediation Supported
PROCESS
Script

Proposition 4e: Perceived Organisational Support mediates the relationship between Equal Work Opportunities and Organisational Commitment Mediation Not Supported

Chapter 5: Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of the availability and use of flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace) on the organisational commitment of childfree employees. It also aimed to establish whether organisational cultures valued childfree employees as much as those with children. It also examined whether the relationship between the childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment is mediated by perceived organisational support. Social Exchange theory was used to frame this discussion aimed at deepening the understanding of the relationships found in the study, both in practice and in theory, in a South African context.

This discussion chapter is divided into six sections. The first section discusses the contributions the study makes to the work-family enrichment arena in a South African context. The next section discusses the psychometric properties of the measures employed in the study. The third section gives a detailed account of the sample from which the data were obtained. It then discusses the propositions and findings in relation to the literature. Thereafter, the contributions made by the study, the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are presented. Finally, the findings are summarised in the conclusion.

Contributions of the Present Study

The findings have contributed to the existing knowledge on flexible work arrangements, organisational culture, perceived organisational support and organisational commitment among childfree employees. The following contributions are discussed in detail:

1. An empirical examination of whether the availability and use of flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace) have a positive effect on organisational commitment.
2. An empirical examination of whether the dimensions of childfree-friendly culture have a significant relationship with organisational commitment.
3. An empirical examination of perceived organisational support as a mediator of the relationship between the dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment.

Psychometric Properties of the Measures

Given that, the present study employed internationally developed and validated measures in a South African context, the quality of these measures will be discussed. The decision to use the organisational commitment measure devised by Klein et al. (2012) for the data collection proved advantageous. According to Stanton, Sinar, Balzer, and Smith (2002), people are reluctant to participate in studies that require them to complete lengthy surveys and those that do often fail to complete them. The reliability ($\alpha = .96$) of the findings indicated that this scale was indeed appropriate for the study.

The three measures used all found that the study had good validity and reliability levels, comparable to the findings in the literature (Eisenberger, et al., 2001; Casper et al., 2007; Klein et al., 2014). This added credence to the results. The Cronbach alpha values were found to be high ranging from .74 to .96, much higher than acceptable levels of reliability. This implied that the findings applied to a multiracial South African context. The measures employed were thus appropriate tools for the sample that was diverse in terms of industries, gender and race.

The Availability and Use of Flextime and Flexplace, and Positive Organisational Outcomes

The literature review showed that flextime and flexplace are popular and relevant in 21st-century organisations. Moreover, when these systems are available and are used, there is a positive relation between them and organisational commitment. It seems that the availability of flexible work arrangements creates peace of mind for employees. They are a form of support whose value increases when they are actually used, because they make it possible for the employee to balance the demands of personal life and work (Allen, 2001). In addition, they lead to an increase in organisational commitment (Warner & Hausdorf, 2009). However, the present study revealed that flextime and flexplace are available and are being used across the industries from which the sample was chosen. The detailed results related to the use and availability of flextime and flexplace are presented in Table 1. It was found that there is not a significant relationship between the availability and use of flextime and organisational commitment. This finding runs counter to the findings of Casper and Harris (2008), Warner and Hausdorf (2009), McNall et al. (2010), Pederson and Jeppesen (2012), Sweet, et al. (2014), and Ivanauskaite (2015), who found that the availability and use of

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flexible work arrangements (flextime and flexplace) relate to positive employee behaviour such as organisational commitment.

It seems that employees who have flexible work arrangements available to them, such as flextime and flexplace, are unlikely to make use of them if they are involved in high levels in the organisation. This is consistent with Closkey and Igarria (2003), who found that employees who made use of flexible work arrangements had lower levels of commitment than their cohorts who did not utilise them.

According to the results of this study, the majority of the participants are young and single, childfree individuals. Possibly because they are young and still committed to their job and the organisation, the participants do not make use of flexible work arrangements. They may be able to maintain a balance between work and personal life without making use of flextime and flexplace. Shockley and Allen (2011) argued that the motives for using flextime and flexplace are complex. Their results, which are not congruent with those of this study, showed that employees who are more motivated tend to make use of flexible work arrangements, flextime and flexplace, for work-related motives. These motives are comparable to life management motives (Shockley & Allen, 2011).

In addition, the participants' decision to be a non-user or user of flexible work arrangements may have been influenced by whether the support they receive from their spouse or partner is effective or not. Affum-Osei et al. (2015) found that support had a significant impact on an individual's job satisfaction and commitment. Young people have difference levels of experience, views, habits and work styles from older employees (Yigit & Aksay, 2014), which have been extensively researched (Benson & Brown, 2011; Dixon, Mercado, & Knowles, 2013; Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015). The demographics presented in Table 1 show that 55% of the participants are under 29 years of age. Thus, the perception of the benefits of flextime and flexplace might be influenced strongly by the age of the employee.

The finding suggests that the sample seem to balance the demands of work and life in a harmonious way. It should be noted that young individuals work hard to progress in their careers (Gürsoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008).

It is not clear whether the culture of the organisations they work for influences whether or not they make use of flexible work arrangements. According to Haggerty and

Wright (2010), culture is a strong predictor of adjusted behaviour among employees. Here, culture is conceptualised as a set of informal processes that an employee learns after being introduced into the organisation. Since the participants were all childfree employees who were employed on a full-time basis, it is not unlikely that the culture in the organisation where they work might prevent actively them from using the flexible work practices offered (Kirby & Krone, 2002; Benson, 2005), or not give them access these flexible practices.

According to the Families and Work Institute report in the United States, the numbers of employers offering flexible work arrangement increased from 68% to 81% in 2014 (Matos & Galinsky, 2014). Matos and Galinsky (2004) examined the difference between full and partial access to flexible work arrangements and found that 63% of employees had access to these initiatives. Their study revealed that only 6% of employers allow employees to have access to these benefits. Although not all employees utilise flexible work arrangements that are available (Kirby & Krone, 2002). Prottas, Thompson, Kopelman and Jahn (2007) offered the explanation that some beneficiaries of flexible work arrangements might not be well informed about the available offerings; others may fear not being promoted if they make use of these or receiving less support from managers or co-workers (Leslie, Manchester, Park, & Mehng, 2012). However, these initiatives could greatly benefit both employees and organisations in terms of managing work-life balance, which leads to committed and productive employees (Chen, 2015).

The role of flexibility is to manage the competing demands of work and family (Shockley & Allen, 2007). Yet, managers and supervisors in organisations discourage flexibility because they fear they will lose control over employees and that work goals will not be achieved. Contrary to this, the finding of this study is that participants had high levels of perceived organisational support. Explained in terms of exchange theory, organisational support of another kind encourages feelings of belongingness, which in turn cultivates a sense of obligation and the employees respond by exhibiting positive behaviours towards their organisation (Beauregard, 2006). These behaviours include an increase in organisational commitment, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour (Lambert, 2000; Beauregard, 2014).

The present study also revealed that a relationship exists between perceived organisational support and the availability of flexplace and the use of flextime. This finding is corroborated by Allen (2001) and Ivanauskaite (2015). Employees' feeling that flexible work

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arrangements are available and useful influences their perception of the organisational support they receive. It makes them feel important, and that they are not just employees. A study conducted by Butts, Ng, van den Berg, Dejoy, and Wilson (2007) found that the availability of flexible work practices is associated with organisational commitment if employees perceive that they have high level organisational support. The availability and use of flexible practices create positive perceptions of organisational support whether or not these practices are seen as beneficial. Perceived organisation support is found to be an indicator of favourable treatment, which cultivates positive attitude and behaviours towards the organisations (Allen, 2001). This suggests that flexplace be made available for employees, giving them the autonomy to establish their own daily schedule with the aid of flextime.

Childfree-Friendly Culture and Organisational Commitment

Supportive working environments are encouraged in the literature (Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001; O'Driscoll et al., 2003). These help employees to balance their work and personal life. In turn, employees increase their commitment towards the organisation, which leads to an increase in job performance. Lingard and Francis (2002) also underline that a supportive environment plays an important role in establishing commitment and job satisfaction. Casper et al. (2007) have studied the kind of culture which values employees with non-work responsibilities, and including those who are often excluded because they are childfree. This present study explored the impact of such a culture on the organisational commitment of childfree employees.

The primary goal was to examine childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment. The study made use of a different organisational commitment measure from Casper et al. (2007), Brandi (2008) and Speelman (2009). The chosen instrument was the organisational commitment scale devised by Klein et al. (2012) which conceptualises organisational commitment as a bond or attachment, unlike Allen and Meyer (1990), who measure commitment through affective, normative and continuance commitment. The scale employed was found to be reliable and valid and yielded significant results ($\alpha = .96$). This means that measure could be applied in diverse contexts such as South African organisations.

The relationship between the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture was assessed, which was appropriate for the childfree sample (Speelman, 2009). Previous research by Casper et al. (2007) and Speelman (2009) found that all dimensions namely social inclusion, equal access to benefits, respect to non-work roles, equal work expectations

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and equal work opportunities had positive relationships with affective commitment, while equal work expectations had a negative relationship. The study described here revealed that organisational commitment correlated negatively with one dimension only, equal work expectations. This result supports the findings of Speelman (2009). However, it contradicts the findings of Casper et al. (2007).

The findings suggest that the individual dimensions are different and independent. The different scale used for organisational commitment may explain the contradictory of results relating to the relationships between organisational commitment and the five dimensions of the childfree-friendly culture. According to Casper et al. (2007), this aspect needs to be closely managed, particularly the expectation that childfree employees spend a certain amount of time at work as compared to other employees with children.

Equal work expectations provided by the organisation ensure that childfree and parental employees are given the same time to do the task in hand. Their perceptions about their organisation are influenced by the organisational culture. Equal work expectations and organisational commitment can be explained with reference to social exchange theory. Hence, equality is seen to be an import factor for younger generations (Yigit & Aksay, 2014). Furthermore, personal time has to be given up to ensure that work responsibilities are met. The negative relationship relates to the unfairness of work expectations; if employees feel that they are required to stay longer at work compared to cohorts who have child responsibilities, their commitment towards their organisation will decrease and lead to negative behaviours such as absenteeism, high levels of turnover and decreased levels of productivity (Parker & Allen, 2001).

Childfree-Friendly Culture and Perceived Organisational Support

The concept of perceived organisational support emphasises the importance that support plays in the way organisations are perceived (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Perceived organisational support has been extensive researched within the field of organisational psychology and within the work-life milieu as a mediator (Casper et al., 2007; Speelman, 2009). This kind of support is found to be a mediator of the relationship between affective commitment and the five dimensions of a childfree-friendly culture (Casper et al., 2007; Brandi, 2008). The results of the present study confirm that perceived organisational support indeed mediates the relationship between organisational commitment and one dimension of the childfree-friendly culture, equal work expectations.

Prior to the study, Speelman (2009) found that only two dimensions, social inclusion and equal access to benefits, predict perceived organisational support. The findings are different from the results obtained by Casper et al. (2007) and Speelman (2009). Social inclusion, equal access to benefits and equal work expectations are to be significant predictors of perceived organisational support. Thus, if the culture undergoes change, it might influence the perceptions of those dimensions of the culture (Speelman, 2009). Eisenberger, et al. (1986) argued that a sense of belonging among childfree employees within their organisation enhances their perceptions of support. Being included in social events, social groups, having access to benefits and having equal work expectations support the findings of Klein et al. (2012). Employees form a bond or attachment with their organisation through support, as mentioned before, that leads to committed employees.

The provision of equal work expectations fashions feelings of fairness in terms of equality between childfree and parental employees. According to Speelman (2009), giving up personal time to meet work responsibilities is worthwhile due to the fair treatment they perceive in terms of the equal amount of effort from both employees with and without children. Over and above, childfree employees seek organisations in which they receive adequate and equal support, regardless their parental status. These childfree participants observed that childfree employees are perceived to be committed to their job; they have positive views of the support provided by their organisation. In addition, they perceive the organisations as valuing their non-work responsibilities and lives outside of work. Thus, the participants in the sample contend that they operate in a working environment which supports childfree employees; receive adequate organisational support, and offer high levels of organisational commitment.

Contributions of the Present Study

Theoretical contributions. The present study adds to the existing knowledge of the work-family enrichment domain in many ways, particularly that of childfree employees within organisations in South Africa. The world of work is changing and organisations need to take account of this and redesign their flexible practices so that they are accessible to every employee, including childfree employees. Social exchange theory was used as a theoretical framework to assess and explain the relationships found in this study. It was also used to explain why interactions are positive and how these are influenced. This adds to the current literature of the work-life-family domain within a South African context.

Organisational commitment is assessed differently from the way (Casper et al., 2007) and Speelman (2009) measured it. Meyer and Allen's measure of organisational commitment assess an individual's commitment to a specific target. Other than the measure of Klein et al. (2012) which is a target free and universal measure. This study on organisational commitment among childfree employees in South Africa is one of the few to use Klein et al.'s (2012) measure. Consequently, organisational commitment was measured as a bond formed towards a target (Klein et al., 2012; Klein et al., 2014), adding new knowledge within this field of research.

This study used the Preacher and Hayes' (2004) PROCESS script for SPSS to compute the mediational effect of perceived organisational support between one dimension of a childfree-friendly culture and organisational commitment. This was effective for the sample size (Pallant, 2010), and ensured that non-normal distribution of data was appropriately measured.

Managerial Contributions. Prior to this study, little was known about flexible work arrangements in South African organisations. Despite its being a strong trend in other parts of the world, South African has yet to offer a wide range of flexible work options. This study explored flexible work arrangements such as flextime and flexplace to find out whether these practices are available to employees, in this case, childfree employees, and whether they make use of them to balance their work and their non-work responsibilities. This study attempts to contribute to the creation of an appropriate suitable organisational culture and that every employee is included in flexible work practices. In practical terms, this dissertation explores the sources of workplace support that facilitate the implementation of policies which include all employees. Furthermore, it offers information on the lifestyles of childfree individuals and their motivations and support systems other than family. The findings may be used to implement or adapt various organisational practices, and reshape the concept of family, in ways that include responsibilities other than being a mother or a father.

Limitations of the current Study

The design of this research has possible limitations. The cross-sectional design that was used records only perceptions at one point in time (Struwig & Stead, 2011). Furthermore, causal inferences cannot be assumed and directionality cannot be assessed (Spector, 1994; Burns & Burns, 2008). The limited time available meant that a longitudinal design was not feasible. The cross-sectional approach did, however, enable the researcher to attain a

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satisfactory understanding of the status of flexible work arrangements, organisational commitment, perceived organisational support and the childfree-friendly culture (Spector, 1994). Hence, it made it difficult to examine the status of flexible work arrangements due to the lack thereof in South African organisations.

A non-probability sampling approach was utilised to select the respondents which met the criterion of being childless. Excluding those who were not part of the social group limited the responses in the interests of obtaining focused results. Although the size of the sample appears to be rather small (Pallant, 2005), decisions and analyses could still be followed through.

Data collection was done with Qualtrics, an online survey sent to respondents and completed electronically. This may explain the slow response rate and the fact that the sample was smaller than was hoped. It is possible that using the traditional pencil-and-paper method would speed up the process and reduce the chance of common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). It may also increase the response rate and make the sample more representative (Hair et al., 2003). The present study revealed that over 81% of the employees fell outside the industries mentioned in the survey.

This study set out to understand the work-life childfree employees in a South African workplace. The results were based on data collected from an accessible sample of childfree employees. This should provide a basis on which to build future studies. The sample was an average size ($N = 134$) that compared well with other similar studies.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research has focused on how organisations can improve the work-life balance of employees who have children or offer dependants whom they care for, with little attention to those who do not fall within these parameters. According to Young (1999), childfree employees have asked for benefits in vain. Many other factors such as motives and drivers influence to decisions to make use of flexible work arrangements (Shockley & Allen, 2012). A longitudinal study should be done to obtain richer results and positive outcomes. The present study shows that childfree employees who receive support feel a commitment towards their organisations. Further research could focus on support factors such as spousal and work support to see how they contribute to the overall perceived organisational support and whether they are influenced by the use of flextime and flexplace. This may be useful for

future research. In addition, the childfree-friendly culture scale needs to be re-examined to see whether it can be adapted to make it simpler and more focused. A comparison should also be done between the organisational commitment levels of mothers and fathers and those employees that are childfree. Using family support as a predictor may produce richer results. This could add significantly to our knowledge of childfree employees in a South African context.

Conclusion

Employees around the world, across a wide span of industries, are facing the same challenge: how to create a balance between work and life. Organisations in South Africa are beginning to provide flexible work arrangements in response to this. This often results in greater organisational commitment by employees. However, this study revealed that having flexible work arrangements or access to them has no impact on the organisational commitment of childfree employees. Commitment reflects an individual's dedication or bond towards a particular target. Childfree employees seem to experience this without making use of flexible work arrangements.

A work-life culture that values and supports the non-work responsibilities of employees is a symbol that the organisation cares and enables to assist in helping to achieve those demands. It can be assumed that the childfree participants in this study feel content in their work because of their high levels of organisational commitments and the perceived organisational support. However, the population was relatively young, which may indicate that the reason for their high levels of organisational commitment is that they are career-driven and motivated.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions for Childfree Respondents

Perceived Organisational Support

Eisenberger, R., Armeli, S., Rexwinkel, B., Lynch, P. D., & Rhoades, L. (2001). Reciprocation of Perceived Organizational Support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 42-51.

Items

1. This organisation takes pride in my accomplishments
 2. This organisation really cares about my well-being
 3. This organisation strongly considers my goals and values*
 4. This organisation values my contribution to its well-being*
 5. This organisation shows concern for me*
-

Childfree-Friendly Culture

Casper, W. J., Weltman, D., & Kwesiga, E. (2007). Beyond family-friendly: The construct and measurement of singles-friendly work culture. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 70, 478–501.

Items:

Social inclusion

1. My supervisor plans social events for our work group that are appropriate for both single employees and those with families.
2. My supervisor believes that work-related social gatherings should be appealing to both single and married employees.
3. My supervisor supports hosting work-related social events that include employees both with and without children.
4. My organisation considers the preferences of both single and married employees when planning social events.

Equal work opportunities

5. I don't feel that my supervisor uses family status when making promotion decisions.
6. Family status does not determine what work opportunities are offered to an employee in my organisation.
7. My organisation provides equal work opportunities for single and married employees.
8. In my organisation, there are equal opportunities available for employee advancement, irrespective of employee family status.

Equal access to benefits

- 9. My organisation provides benefits that are relevant for single and non-single employees.
- 10. Single employees and employees with families have equal access to employee benefits in this organisation.
- 11. The benefits provided by my organisation are desirable to both single employees and those with children.
- 12. The benefits that are offered by my organisation are equally useful to a married employee with children and a single employee.

Respect for non-work roles

- 13. My supervisor treats all employees' requests for the time of the same, regardless of why the employee wants the time off.
- 14. My organisation's policies treat all requests for time off the same, regardless of why the employee requests time off **(adapted)**.
- 15. Workers in my organisation are equally understanding when single employees are away from work for personal reasons as when employees with families are away for family reasons.

Equal work expectations

- 16. My supervisor makes work assignments without considering an employee's family situation.
- 17. My supervisor makes decisions about who will travel for business without considering employee family status.
- 18. In my organisation, work assignments are made without considering family status
- 19. Work assignments in my organisation are made without considering employees' family situations.

Formal flex policies – availability and use

	Available in organisation	Use currently
	Answer 1 (1)	
Flex-Time (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flex-Place (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Organisational Commitment

Klein, H. J., Cooper, J. T., Molloy, J. C., & Swanson, J. A. (2014). The assessment of commitment: Advantages of a unidimensional, target-free approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(2), 222-238.

Items:

- 1. How committed are you to your organisation?
- 2. To what extent do you care about your organisation?
- 3. How dedicated are you to your organisation?
- 4. To what extent have you chosen to be committed to your organisation?