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Flexible Work Arrangement Congruence and Psychological Need Satisfaction: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

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Abstract

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) are widely promoted as a way to enhance employee wellbeing; however, evidence suggests their benefits are not universal. Drawing on self-determination theory (SDT), this study explored whether congruence between employees' FWA preferences and actual use relates to the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence. Furthermore, age was examined as a potential moderator of these relationships.

A cross-sectional survey design was used, with data collected from a large range of New Zealand organisations. A sample of 355 employees completed an online survey assessing FWA preference and use, psychological need satisfaction at work and demographic variables. Spearman's correlation and moderation analyses were used to examine the associations between FWA congruence, need satisfaction and age.

Results indicated that FWA congruence was positively associated with autonomy and relatedness but negatively associated with competence. Age was weakly associated with most variables and did not significantly moderate the relationship between FWA congruence and psychological need satisfaction.

The findings suggest that FWA congruence plays a crucial role in shaping employees' workplace experiences. It highlights the importance of considering employees' preferences when designing workplace practices, while also underscoring the influence of New Zealand's culture on the measurement of psychological need satisfaction.

Keywords: Flexible work arrangements, Self-Determination theory, Psychological need satisfaction, Motivation, New Zealand

Preface and Acknowledgements

This thesis investigates whether congruence between employees' flexible work arrangement preferences and their actual use relates to psychological need satisfaction. The research is grounded in Self-Determination Theory and examines how this alignment or misalignment influences wellbeing and motivation in the workplace, and whether these relationships are moderated by age. This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and received approval from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. Generative artificial intelligence (ChatGPT) was used solely for language editing and clarity of expression. The research aims to provide insights into how New Zealand organisations can design flexible work arrangement incentives that support both organisational and employee needs.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1

2. Literature Review 3

2.1 Employee Motivation and Incentives 3

2.2 Flexible Work Arrangements 6

2.3 Self-Determination Theory 9

2.4 Preference-Experience Congruence 11

2.5 Flexible Work Arrangements and Self-Determination Theory 14

2.6 Age Differences 17

3. Research Question and Hypotheses 21

4. Method 23

4.1 Study Design 23

4.2 Participants and Sampling 23

4.3 Measures 24

4.4 Data collection Procedure and Analysis Plan 26

4.4.1 Data Analysis Plan 27

5. Results 29

5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability 29

5.2 Factor Analysis 30

5.3 Correlations 34

5.4 Hypothesis Testing 35

5.4.1 Main Effects....35

5.4.2 Moderation effect....36

6. Discussion....39

6.1 Key findings....39

6.2 Practical Implications....44

6.3 Theoretical Contributions....46

6.4 Limitations....47

6.5 Future Research....48

7. Conclusion....50

References....51

Appendix....67

List of Tables

Table 1 *Reliabilities of Scales* 24

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistics* 29

Table 3 *Participant Demographic Characteristics* 30

Table 4 *Exploratory Factor Analysis Loadings for the BPNSS Scale* 33

Table 5 *Spearmans Correlation Coefficients* 35

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in how organisations implement flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and how many employees use them, both in New Zealand and globally. According to proHR (2025), over 70% of New Zealand employers have implemented a form of flexible or remote work policies; notably, four in five businesses offer flexible start and finish times. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend by necessitating remote work for many employees, which in turn highlighted the potential benefits of flexible arrangements (Shifrin & Michel, 2022). The increase of organisations shifting from a traditional 9-5 work schedule to a more flexible one is a result of changes in both globalisation and technology (Iqbal et al., 2021).

FWAs have been associated with positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and improved physical health (Bjärntoft et al., 2021; Kröll & Nüesch, 2019). However, these benefits are not universal. When FWAs are poorly implemented or do not align with employee needs, they can lead to stress, isolation, and blurred work boundaries (Kröll & Nüesch, 2019; Stockkamp et al., 2023). This suggests that simply offering flexibility is insufficient; the type and extent of flexibility must match employee preferences and circumstances to support wellbeing. Organisations must therefore consider not only whether to offer FWAs, but also how to tailor them to diverse employee needs.

Self-determination theory (SDT) provides a useful framework for understanding how workplace practices influence employee motivation and wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This theory puts forward three basic psychological needs that influence both motivation and wellbeing when satisfied and frustrated. The three needs are autonomy, relatedness and

competence. When these needs are satisfied, individuals experience greater intrinsic motivation and wellbeing; when frustrated, motivation and wellbeing decline (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). FWAs have the potential to support these needs by providing employees with greater autonomy over where and when they work, opportunities to maintain social connections, and control over their work environment.

Most existing research examines whether employees use FWAs and how availability relates to outcomes, but few studies investigate whether the type and extent of flexibility employees receive match what they prefer (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; Van Zyl et al., 2023). This distinction is important because in the context of FWAs, an employee who prefers minimal flexibility but is required to work remotely may experience strain, just as an employee who desires flexibility but is denied it may feel constrained. Thus, preference-experience congruence, the degree of alignment between preferred and actual FWAs use may be a critical but under-examined factor in determining whether FWAs support psychological need satisfaction (Koreshi & Alpass, 2023). Additionally, there is limited research to understand whether age moderates the relationship between FWA congruence and psychological need satisfaction.

This thesis aims to address these gaps by examining the relationship between FWA congruence and psychological need satisfaction, as outlined in SDT. This study specifically investigated whether employees' preferences for FWAs and their use of FWAs were associated with the satisfaction of autonomy, relatedness and competence needs. Secondly, age was examined as a potential moderator of these relationships. This study contributes to the existing FWA research by providing a more nuanced understanding of when and how this type of non-financial incentive supports employee wellbeing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Motivation and Incentives

Motivation is generally defined as the psychological processes that "cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal oriented" (Mitchell, 1982, p.81). Within the workplace context, motivation can be understood as an individual's drive to utilise high levels of effort towards organisational goals, and it is influenced by how well employees perceive this effort to satisfy individual needs (Robbins, 1993). When an individual's needs are left unsatisfied, it may create internal tension, resulting in a drive to act in a way that satisfies the need and reduces tension. An individual who feels no drive to act is considered unmotivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As a whole, motivation requires a desire to act, an ability to act and the presence of goal-oriented direction (Ramlall, 2004). More recent organisational research continues to recognise motivation as arousal, direction and persistence, while also recognising that motivation differs in quality (Deci et al., 2017). Additionally, job satisfaction is an important component of employee motivation, as it affects the willingness to work and the quality of their performance (Aziri, 2019). To foster employee loyalty, organisations must actively support and sustain employee motivation (Iqbal et al., 2015).

Motivation is not a single concept; people differ in how much motivation they have and in the type of motivation they experience (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This type, or orientation, refers to the underlying reason for their motivation. In motivation theory, a common distinction is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity. It leads to a separable outcome, such as receiving an award or avoiding punishment, whereas intrinsic motivation involves doing something because it is inherently enjoyable or interesting (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This distinction between types of motivation influences the quality of engagement and overall wellbeing at work (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A meta-analysis spanning 40 years of research found that

intrinsic motivation is a strong predictor of performance quality; so tasks requiring deep engagement are best supported by rewards related to personal values (Cerasoli et al., 2014). Contrastingly, extrinsic rewards were more strongly associated with performance quantity, such as output and productivity. Cerasoli et al. (2014) emphasise that both types of motivation are not mutually exclusive; they should be used in conjunction to drive the best results.

In addition to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, Herzberg's Two Factor theory provides another lens for understanding employee motivation. Herzberg et al. (1959) discovered that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be influenced by two sets of factors, motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators such as achievement, recognition, responsibility and growth are inherently motivating and lead to job satisfaction (Ramlall, 2004). Hygiene factors such as salary, coworker relations and supervisory styles do not inherently motivate employees, but once removed can lead to job dissatisfaction (Steers & Porter, 1983). Herzberg argued that the presence of hygiene factors does not create satisfaction but simply prevents dissatisfaction, resulting in a neutral state. Satisfaction and motivation would occur only as a result of motivators (Herzberg et al., 1959). This theory suggests that hygiene factors can prevent dissatisfaction, but they do not enhance motivation unless they are paired with deeper motivators such as advancement, responsibility and stimulation (Steers & Porter, 1983). Motivators can often be seen as intrinsic rewards because they are related to the content of work, whereas hygiene factors can be seen as extrinsic rewards because they relate to the context of work.

Organisations have sought to improve employee motivation through a range of different strategies, including the use of incentives (Ali et al, 2016; Imran et al, 2015). Incentives are defined as rewards that motivate and encourage a person to take action (Faisal et al., 2015). There is a wide range of incentives that can be broadly categorised into financial

and non-financial incentives (Aziri, 2019). Financial incentives are monetary rewards or benefits given to employees to encourage specific behaviours or actions. Money is often considered a primary means of addressing both social and physiological needs, which is why it is commonly used as a tool to foster motivation (Aziri, 2019). Popular financial incentives include cash prizes calculated as percentages of sales and spot bonuses to encourage loyalty and commitment. Garbers & Konradt (2014) argue that prolonged use of individual financial rewards can negatively impact teamwork and cohesiveness, and such rewards are less effective when non-financial incentives are weak because individual-based incentives can result in competition, reduced trust among team members and shift the focus away from collaborative goals. This highlights the importance of not relying on a single type of incentive to support sustained motivation.

At the same time, literature shows a growing academic shift toward emphasising non-financial incentives (Manjenje & Muhanga, 2021). The systematic review on motivation strategies conducted by Lima et al. (2024) indicated that while both financial and non-financial incentives provide benefits in enhancing organisational motivation, success and productivity, "non-financial motivators like recognition, career development and a supportive work environment are essential for boosting employee satisfaction" (p. 441). Non-financial incentives are created to encourage positive behaviour change and satisfy employees' emotional and psychological needs rather than financial gain, and they are essential for improving employee satisfaction (Al-Nsour, 2012; Aziri, 2019; Manjenje & Muhanga, 2021). These incentives, including career development, training, participation and flexible work arrangements, are designed to increase organisational performance and motivation by offering benefits that are meaningful to employees, supporting their psychological needs and aligning with their personal goals (Aziri, 2019).

In line with intrinsic motivation and Herzberg's distinction between hygiene factors and motivators, non-financial incentives can primarily be seen as motivators, fostering satisfaction and long-term engagement by addressing employees' higher order needs (Herzberg et al., 1959; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Past studies highlight the positive impacts of non-financial incentives on productivity and job satisfaction, and there is some evidence of wellbeing benefits (Adil & Devesh, 2023). In previous research, wellbeing is not often treated as the primary construct, and research on non-financial incentives often prioritises performance outcomes while overlooking employee wellbeing (Manjenje & Muhanga, 2021). Thus, revealing a gap in the literature regarding the need for more explicit analyses of how non-financial incentives contribute to employee wellbeing, which is crucial in the workplace, as it is associated with improved employee retention, productivity and organisational culture, benefiting both the organisation and its employees through greater job satisfaction and reduced stress (Bhoir & Sinha, 2024). Organisations that implement non-financial incentives are therefore more likely to create a favourable workplace atmosphere and increase employee commitment (Gwassa, 2022).

2.2 Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) are a form of non-financial work incentives and have become a popular topic of discussion as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated a global shift in how, where, and when work is performed (Shifrin & Michel, 2022). FWAs can be broadly defined as work options that allow flexibility in various aspects of work, including where and when work is completed as well as how to perform the work (Allen et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2020). Over more recent years, the traditional 9-5 work model has transformed, as FWAs have become increasingly valued as a result of changes in globalisation and technology (Iqbal et al., 2021).

Although FWAs provide employees with greater autonomy and control, research has shown that flexibility is not universally beneficial simply because it is offered in the workplace (Bayazit & Bayazit, 2019; Deci et al., 2017). The effectiveness of FWAs depends on whether the type of flexibility aligns with what employees actually want and need. When employees experience a mismatch, the FWAs may not deliver the expected wellbeing and performance outcomes, and they may be more likely to leave (Dhaenens et al., 2025). This highlights the importance of taking employee preferences into consideration when designing FWAs in the workplace.

FWAs have existed for a long time prior to COVID-19; the pandemic highlighted their central role in employee wellbeing and organisational sustainability, leading to many organisations incorporating flexible practices into long-term processes rather than just short-term arrangements (Vohra et al., 2024). It is important to note that FWAs are not limited to remote work; they involve a wide range of practices such as compressed work weeks, flextime, job sharing and part-time work (Ugwuoke, 2024). Each type of FWA indicates different ways in which organisations can allow employees to have more control over their work life. FWAs can be best understood as non-financial incentives because they emphasise autonomy and flexibility rather than financial gain, thus fostering intrinsic motivation and enhancing employee wellbeing.

Previous research has reported mixed findings regarding the effects of FWAs on employees. Positive effects include increased job satisfaction, better physical health and increased organisational commitment, whereas other studies have shown negative effects on employees' mental health due to isolation, reduced social contact and increased workload (Bjärntoft et al., 2021; Kröll & Nüesch, 2019; Stockkamp et al., 2023). Vohra et al. (2024) ran a recent systematic review that provides insight into how flexible work has evolved since COVID-19, as well as the outcomes that are commonly observed. Drawing on 90 studies up

until 2023, the review identifies positive employee, socio-cultural and employer-oriented outcomes. The most common outcome of FWAs is increased job satisfaction alongside other positive health-related outcomes such as reduced stress and exhaustion, lower psychological distress and higher cognitive flexibility (Vohra et al., 2024). In collectivist countries, FWAs are less likely to be effective (Vohra et al., 2024). This is a result of FWAs enhancing privacy, individuality and autonomy among employees, which does not align with the values of collectivist cultures (Masuda et al., 2012). Researchers recognise that work and personal life are interconnected, finding a blend of the two will likely allow beneficial outcomes (Vohra et al., 2024). FWAs help employees manage their work-life balance, which ultimately improves family satisfaction and reduces work-life conflicts (Vohra et al., 2024). Additionally, there are many employer-oriented outcomes, some of which include increased work engagement, improved employee performance and organisational commitment (Vohra et al., 2024). There are mixed effects on turnover intention; many studies in individualistic cultures show employee retention increases, but the turnover intention is high in collectivist countries (Masuda et al., 2012).

Although FWAs offer numerous benefits, evidence suggests there can also be significant challenges when implementing them. Employee-oriented barriers include career advancement concerns, increased workload, and difficulty detaching from work, which can increase stress and work-family conflict (Kröll & Nüesch, 2019; Stockkamp et al., 2023). In a sociocultural sense, FWAs may lead to isolation, blurred boundaries between work and home, and stigma in organisations where visibility signals commitment, as a result of remote work reducing informal social contact and blurred role distinctions (Bayazit & Bayazit, 2019). Both women and men may face career penalties when using flexible practices in their work; however, these penalties can be more pronounced for men, as FWAs are often perceived as arrangements for women, particularly mothers with caregiving responsibilities

(Bayazit & Bayazit, 2019). Structural and organisational barriers can significantly reduce the effectiveness of FWAs because poorly designed workplace processes can create inefficiencies and limit access, especially in industries where physical presence is key (Kotey & Sharma, 2019). Furthermore, inadequate home-office setups may undermine FWAs, resulting in employees feeling more stress than relief (Kniffin et al., 2021). These challenges make it clear that although FWAs are a valuable incentive, implementing them in the workplace requires careful design to avoid strain on both employees and organisations.

2.3 Self-Determination Theory

To understand why some incentives are more effective than others, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a well-established framework explaining how different types of motivation influence employee wellbeing and performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This framework emphasises three core psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence, which are essential for optimal functioning, personal wellbeing and constructive social development (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A basic psychological need can be defined as a psychological nutrient needed for an individual's adjustment, integrity and growth (Ryan, 1995). The criterion of a basic psychological need is that it must be essential for an individual's wellbeing, and its frustration increases the risk for defensiveness and illbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy refers to the innate human need to feel self-endorsed and in control of one's actions, making decisions that are consistent with one's values and interests (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When satisfied, an individual may feel a sense of integrity; however, when frustrated, individuals may feel a sense of pressure (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). Relatedness is the need to feel connected to and cared for by others, including colleagues and supervisors. Fostering a sense of belonging in social and organisational contexts, when satisfied, alternatively, a sense of exclusion and loneliness may be apparent when frustrated (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). Competence is the need to feel

effective and capable in one's actions, to experience mastery and growth, and to believe one has the necessary skills to achieve goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When competence is frustrated, individuals may experience a sense of failure or helplessness (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

In the workplace, when employees' core psychological needs, autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied, they are likely to develop autonomous motivation, engaging in work with a sense of willingness and choice (Deci et al., 2017). Autonomy satisfaction allows employees to feel a sense of volition, relatedness satisfaction fosters a sense of belonging and connection in the workplace, and competence supports employees' feelings of mastery (Deci et al., 2017). Satisfaction of these three needs fosters better quality motivation, as employees engage in work because it is meaningful and aligned with their values, rather than an obligation.

When these needs are undermined by controlling management, poor social support, or limited skill development, employees may become disengaged, stressed, and experience reduced wellbeing. In contrast, autonomous motivation is theorised to produce more sustainable positive outcomes for both employee wellbeing and performance, as employees are more intrinsically engaged and resilient to work-related stress (Deci et al., 2017). Organisations can support autonomous motivation by implementing practices that support all three needs, such as allowing flexibility in task completion, providing constructive feedback, encouraging collaboration and social connection, and facilitating opportunities for learning and skill development (Deci et al., 2017). A large-scale meta-analysis by Van den Broeck et al. (2021) confirmed that autonomous motivation is consistently linked to higher wellbeing, job satisfaction and engagement, whereas controlled motivation is linked to stress, burnout and turnover intentions. Their findings reinforce SDT's claim that practices in the workplace

are most effective when they support employees' basic psychological needs (Van den Broeck., 2021).

2.4 Preference-Experience Congruence

SDT outlines why workplace practices that support psychological needs are effective. However, the additional benefit of aligning these practices with individual preferences remains an open question. This introduces the concept of preference-experience congruence, defined as the alignment between what a person prefers and what they actually experience or use (Van Zyl et al., 2023). In the context of flexible work arrangements, preference-experience congruence refers to the alignment between the type and amount of flexibility an employee desires (e.g. working remotely, flexible hours) and the flexibility they actually use or experience in their role.

Preference-experience congruence has been examined in a variety of different fields, often under the umbrella of Person-Environment (PE) Fit theory. PE fit argues that positive outcomes occur when congruence between an individual's characteristics aligns with the features and expectations of the work environment (Edwards & Shipp, 2007). Characteristics of an employee could be anything from personality, work preferences and values, and the characteristics of the work environment could include job attributes, task demands or organisational culture (Van Zyl et al., 2023). The alignment between the two dimensions accounts for significant interindividual differences in task performance (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). Cable & DeRue (2002) argue that PE theory has three different types of fit: Person-Organisation Fit, Need-Supply Fit and Demand-Ability Fit. Person-Organisation Fit is the fit between an employee's personal values and the organisation's culture (Van Zyl et al., 2023). Need-Supply Fit is the congruence between an individual's needs and the rewards received for their service, and lastly, a match between the skillset of an employee and the skills needed for the job is Demand-Ability Fit (Van Zyl et al., 2023). The alignment between

preferences for work structures, such as flexibility, and the rewards or incentives received and experienced can be conceptualised as a form of need-supply fit (Edwards & Shipp, 2007). When a high level of person-environment fit is achieved, employees are more likely to feel connected and committed to their organisation, ultimately leading to engagement and performance in their work tasks (Armitage & Amar, 2021). This congruence can also increase the likelihood of individuals joining or staying at an organisation. "Employees who experience that their needs, values and expectations are aligned with those of the organisation, will perceive a positive work environment that is conducive to performance" (Van Zyl et al., 2023, p. 23562). Alternatively, when person-environment fit is low, it can have significant negative implications on employee wellbeing; individuals are more likely to disengage, exhibit reduced performance levels, or ultimately leave the organisation (O'Reilly et al., 1991). This is a result of employees' negative feelings when their needs are not adequately supported by their work environment.

The link between PE fit theory and Self Determination Theory has been recognised in previous research (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). Both frameworks offer insight into how workplace environments influence employee wellbeing and motivation. PE fit emphasises the alignment between individual preferences or values, and the features of the work environment, whereas SDT focuses on the extent to which the work environment supports the three psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Edwards & Shipp, 2007). Previous studies found that different forms of fit, such as job-demands fit, align with distinct psychological needs (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). The satisfaction of these psychological needs both predicts specific employee outcomes and mediates the relationship between PE fit and those outcomes (Arthur et al., 2006; Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). Together, PE fit and SDT suggest that congruence matters not only for

alignment but also because it determines whether the work environment satisfies the psychological needs essential for wellbeing.

Building on this theoretical foundation, several studies have provided evidence to suggest the importance of preference-experience congruence across workplace practices. Edwards & Rothbard (1999) assessed fit regarding autonomy, relationships, and work and family. They examined that as experiences aligned more closely to employee values, wellbeing improved (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Additionally, they found that congruence between preferences for work-family support and the actual support given by organisations affected employees' wellbeing, stress and job satisfaction. Employees' desire for work-family balance was closely aligned with what the organisation provided; job satisfaction was higher, work-family conflict was reduced, and wellbeing improved (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Looking further, there is evidence that when experiences and values were both higher, wellbeing was higher, and when both preferences and values were low, wellbeing was also low (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Similarly, Liang et al. (2021) discovered that person-organisation value congruence mediated the relationship between job resources and collective psychological ownership. This underscores that the alignment between employees' preferences and organisational practices strengthens positive outcomes.

While workplace incentives such as FWAs are often assumed to enhance motivation and wellbeing, emerging research suggests these benefits cannot be taken for granted. Instead, their effectiveness depends on whether employees experience a match between what they prefer and what is provided. Preference-congruence is therefore a critical factor in determining whether FWAs fulfil or frustrate basic psychological needs. Despite evidence of the importance of preference-experience alignment, few studies have examined how congruence across different types of FWAs maps onto the three psychological needs outlined by SDT. Addressing this gap, the present study proposes that congruence between flexibility

preferences and experiences will predict higher levels of need satisfaction and employee wellbeing, while incongruence will be associated with need frustration and reduced wellbeing.

2.5 Flexible Work Arrangements and Self-Determination Theory

By framing workplace practices in terms of psychological need satisfaction, SDT provides a useful lens to understand how incentives such as FWAs may promote motivation and wellbeing across diverse employee populations. They have the potential to satisfy the three fundamental psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness; however, the extent to which flexible work arrangements support these needs depends on organisational implementation and individual preferences.

FWAs can support self-determination theory's need for autonomy, which reflects the extent employees experience independence and freedom in how, when and in what sequence they complete tasks (Stegmann et al., 2010). Processes such as remote work, flexible scheduling or compressed work weeks grant employees greater control of where and when they work, which ultimately allows them to align their tasks with personal preferences, energy levels and responsibilities throughout the day (Deci et al., 2017). These options foster a sense of ownership over one's work, which SDT identifies as central to developing autonomous motivation (Deci et al., 2017). Empirical research consistently discusses how autonomy is critical to employees' health and wellbeing, as it allows individuals to cope with stressful situations (Neidlinger et al., 2022). Employees with higher levels of autonomy are better able to cope with stressful situations, reduce uncertainty in decision making and maintain work-life balance (Neidlinger et al., 2022). Autonomy is also seen as an organisational resource within the Job Demands-Resource model (JD-R), which identifies job control as a critical resource that helps buffer stress and enhance motivation (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). SDT emphasises that it is not only the presence of autonomy that matters, but

whether autonomy is experienced and satisfies employees' psychological needs. In the context of FWAs, this suggests that employees only benefit when arrangements align with their individual preferences, allowing them to experience genuine control. In contrast, when flexibility is managed poorly, it can lead to blurred work-life boundaries, in turn undermining autonomy if employees feel as though they need to always be available (Chung & Van Der Horst, 2020). Taken together, these findings suggest that autonomy is a central mechanism through which FWAs can enhance motivation and wellbeing in the workplace.

At work, the need for competence refers to the feeling of being capable and effective in meeting one's responsibilities (Deci et al., 2017). FWAs can foster competence by providing employees with greater direction over how they manage their tasks to build new skills within a less rigid work structure. Recent research by Jiang et al. (2023) found that FWAs significantly activate innovative behaviour by allowing employees control, enabling them to expand their skills. These findings align with SDT ideas that competence supportive environments encourage creativity and engagement (Deci et al., 2017). These findings suggest that FWAs not only allow employees to advance existing competencies but also create conditions that allow ongoing growth, confidence and skill mastery. Contrastingly, if flexibility is introduced without sufficient support or resources, employees may feel overwhelmed or isolated, diminishing their sense of competence (Wang & Xie, 2023; Wong et al., 2022). Thus, effective organisation support, such as training and feedback, is important for ensuring FWAs satisfy competence rather than hinder it.

FWAs also relate to the need for relatedness or feeling connected to others at work. Traditional office structures naturally foster social interaction, whereas FWAs can reduce opportunities for informal contact and collaboration, as employees may be working remotely or have varying hours. Research has shown that employees who work from home full-time often report feelings of social isolation, which can in turn undermine wellbeing (Tavares,

2017). On the other hand, when FWAs are used in conjunction with strategies to maintain connection, such as virtual team meetings, they can reduce feelings of isolation and enhance relatedness (Urrila et al., 2025; Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022). Additionally, some researchers have suggested that work-family conflicts have been reduced as a result of FWAs, due to the increased work-life balance, indirectly supporting employees' relational wellbeing (Shockley & Allen, 2007). Koreshi & Alpass (2023) found that among older adults who combined paid work and caregiving, only certain forms of FWAs were associated with lower work interference with family. Their findings suggest that the effectiveness of FWAs may depend on the type of flexibility offered, highlighting the importance of considering individual factors when evaluating the impact of FWAs on outcomes (Koreshi & Alpass, 2023). Taken together, these studies illustrate that the relationship between FWAs and relatedness is multifaceted; flexibility can enhance or diminish social connection depending on the organisational context and the strategies used to foster communication.

In summary, flexible work arrangements have the potential to satisfy three psychological needs described by SDT, but outcomes are not guaranteed. The extent to which FWAs enhance motivation and wellbeing does not only depend on their availability, but also on preference-experience congruence, consistent with PE fit theory. Previous research highlights why FWAs are often associated with improved motivation, and also why their effectiveness may vary across different contexts and individuals. More broadly, SDT provides a valuable framework for understanding not just whether FWAs are effective, but how they shape motivational processes. Furthermore, most of the existing research has been conducted internationally. It is worth noting that New Zealand's cultural context is complex, reflecting both Western individualist values as well as Māori collectivist traditions. Workplace practices attempt to account for diverse cultural values, particularly given obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the growing recognition of Māori and Pacific

perspectives in organisational settings (Brougham et al., 2015; Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, 2021). This cultural diversity may influence how FWAs are experienced and valued across different employee groups. Therefore, examining these relationships in the New Zealand context is critical for understanding how psychological need satisfaction functions, rather than assuming the findings from overseas generalise. The present study seeks to address this gap.

2.6 Age Differences

Work values and motivational drivers may vary across different age groups, influencing how employees respond to workplace incentives and flexible work arrangements (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). Across the lifespan, individuals' psychological needs, work goals and values evolve in response to life circumstances and career stages (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). It has been previously discovered that younger employees (one standard deviation below the mean age) tend to focus on growth-oriented goals, such as skill development, career advancement and opportunities for autonomy, whereas older employees tend to prioritise stability, meaningful relationships and a manageable work-life balance (Kooij et al., 2013). These patterns align with the lifespan developmental theories that describe employees' priorities shifting as their resources and life responsibilities change. Consequently, age-related differences may influence how individuals value and respond to the workplace, as well as the extent to which the alignment between these incentives and personal needs affects wellbeing. Younger workers typically prioritise growth because they are in an earlier career stage with more opportunities to invest in career advancement, whereas older employees value stability and balance as they focus on maintaining wellbeing and managing multiple roles (Kooij et al., 2011). These differences suggest that age may play a role in how employees value and respond to workplace incentives such as FWAs, as well as how strongly congruence affects wellbeing.

Organisational psychology research suggests that psychological processes undergo change and evolve across the lifespan (Inceoglu et al., 2012). These changes are likely to also affect the extent to which individuals respond to and are motivated by job features. Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) emphasise that age alone does not determine work outcomes; age-related changes in work motivation can be explained by differences in performance and engagement across the lifespan. Inceoglu et al. (2012) ran a study on two samples to examine age-related differences in motivation, treating age as a continuous variable rather than generations. Their findings indicated that extrinsically rewarding motivators such as progression, status, and recognition were negatively associated with age, meaning younger employees place more emphasis on external rewards (Inceoglu et al., 2012). Contrastingly, intrinsically rewarding motivators such as flexibility, autonomy and interest were positively related to age, thus older employees place greater emphasis on intrinsic rewards. These findings support previous literature suggestions that changes in individuals' motives across the lifespan reflect a shift in motivational priorities, rather than a general decline with age. Kooij et al. (2013) also found that older workers were found to be less motivated by extrinsic rewards but more by intrinsically rewarding job features. These age-related motivational differences suggest that workplace incentives, including FWAs, may be interpreted and valued differently depending on one's life stage and career orientation.

Alongside motivational shifts, research suggests that work values and preferences also differ across life stages. Younger employees (employees under the age of 45 years) tend to prioritise flexibility in order to achieve work-life balance and pursue side interests, whereas older workers (employees over the age of 45 years) may value flexibility as a transition strategy to prepare for retirement (Ferdous & French, 2023; Rudolph & Baltes, 2017). Kooij et al. (2013) found that younger workers generally attach greater importance to growth and achievement values, while older workers place more emphasis on relational values such as

helping others and contributing meaningfully to the organisation. As a non-financial incentive, flexibility provides insights into how employees across different age groups respond to FWAs. Collectively, these findings suggest that perceived value and motivational impact of non-financial incentives such as FWAs may vary across age groups, potentially influencing the extent to which incentive congruence promotes need satisfaction and wellbeing.

Research directly examining the relationship between age and preference-experience congruence is limited; related work on preferences for consistency has shown positive relationships with age (Brown et al., 2005). Brown et al. (2005) discovered that older individuals have higher preferences for consistency as they are more motivated to avoid emotional disruption. As employees age, they may place more emphasis on established routines, thus shaping their preferences for certain flexible work arrangements. This research could suggest that preference-experience congruence is particularly important for older employees. Additionally, age has been proposed as a moderator in person-environment fit research (Rauvola et al., 2020). Zacher et al. (2014) suggested that, in the context of socioemotional selectivity theory, as goals change with age, the perceptions fit or misfit change in the workplace. Therefore, as individuals age, the changes in goals may have an effect on how the alignment between preferences and workplace conditions have on wellbeing. Although this research focuses on PE fit, it provides a rationale for examining age as a potential moderator of the relationship between FWA congruence and need satisfaction.

Empirical findings are mixed, and it remains unclear whether the relationship between incentive congruence and need satisfaction is stronger for certain groups. Understanding whether this relationship differs by age is important to recognise because if certain age groups benefit more from particular forms of incentive alignment, organisations are able to tailor their practices to better support employee wellbeing. From an employee perspective,

this means a higher likelihood of receiving incentives that meet their own needs, which ultimately allows organisations to improve engagement and workplace satisfaction. Given these potential benefits, the present study examines age as an exploratory moderator of the relationship between incentive congruence and need satisfaction.

3. Research Question and Hypotheses

Previous research examining FWAs has demonstrated a range of positive outcomes for employees, including high job satisfaction and increased wellbeing (Vohra et al., 2024). FWAs also benefit organisations through outcomes such as greater performance and commitment and lower turnover (Vohra et al., 2024). The literature discusses that benefits are not guaranteed; it may depend on barriers such as structural support and organisational culture (Deci et al., 2017 ; Dhaenens et al., 2025). This emphasises the need to critically examine FWAs to understand their broader role in supporting employee wellbeing and how they can be used successfully in the workplace.

Drawing on SDT, FWAs may contribute to the satisfaction of employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. When these needs are met, employees are likely to experience intrinsic motivation, engagement and overall wellbeing. Additionally, wellbeing has been shown to improve when Person-Environment congruence between employees' preferences and their actual work experiences is achieved (O'Reilly et al., 1991). This study proposes that FWA congruence supports the satisfaction of the three psychological needs. When these needs are met, employees are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation and wellbeing. In contrast, incongruence between employee FWA preferences and FWA use may negatively impact these needs and reduce overall wellbeing.

Furthermore, age-related motivational differences may influence how employees respond to FWA congruence. Research indicates that motivational priorities and work values shift across a lifespan. Younger employees tend to prioritise autonomy, career development and growth, whereas older employees often prioritise stability and work-life balance (Kooij et al., 2013). These differences suggest that age may moderate the strength of the relationship between FWA congruence and psychological need satisfaction.

Drawing from theory and the empirical evidence, the present study seeks to answer the question: Does congruence between employees' flexible work arrangement preferences and their use relate to higher psychological need satisfaction? The following hypotheses are derived from this research question:

H1. Congruence between employees' flexible work arrangement preferences and use will be positively linked to overall psychological need satisfaction.

H1a. Congruence between flexible work arrangement preferences and use will be positively associated with autonomy satisfaction.

H1b. Congruence between flexible work arrangement preferences and use will be positively associated with relatedness satisfaction.

H1c. Congruence between flexible work arrangement preferences and use will be positively associated with competence satisfaction.

H2. The relationship between flexible work arrangement congruence and overall psychological need satisfaction is moderated by age.

H2a. Age will moderate the relationship between flexible work arrangement congruence and autonomy satisfaction.

H2b. Age will moderate the relationship between flexible work arrangement congruence and relatedness satisfaction.

H2c. Age will moderate the relationship between flexible work arrangement congruence and competence satisfaction.

4. Method

4.1 Study Design

This study employed a correlational, cross-sectional survey design, with data collected at a single point in time, to examine the relationship between the congruence of employees' preferences towards flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and their actual experiences of using FWAs at work. Quantitative methodology methods were selected to allow for understanding the associations between variables in a statistical manner and to test the proposed hypotheses.

4.2 Participants and Sampling

A target sample size of 225 was assumed to be sufficient to receive significant results as discussed by Hair et al. (1998). A common rule for multivariant analysis is to have a minimum sample size of at least five times the number of observed variables. As this study includes 41 items across three factors, the minimum recommended sample size would be 205, and to allow for potential incomplete responses, the sample size for this study was increased by 20% (Hair et al., 1998).

The sample was obtained through convenience sampling within the author's immediate social and professional environment. The final sample consisted of 22 males (6.2%) and 333 females (93.8%). Most participants were aged 18-29 (N = 275, 77.5%), followed by the age group 30-39 (N = 52, 14.6%). There were 14 participants aged 40-49 (3.9%), 10 aged 50-59 (2.8%), 3 aged 60-69 (0.8%) and 1 participant aged 70+ (0.3%). The sample included participants from a range of industries, with the largest proportions working in Marketing, Media & Communications (14.7%), Education (9%) and Healthcare (8.8%). See Table 1 for the details.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Category	N	%
Age	18-29	275	77.5
	30-39	52	14.6
	40-49	14	3.9
	50-59	10	2.8
	60-69	3	0.8
	70+	1	0.3
Gender	Male	22	6.2
	Female	333	93.8

Note. $N = 355$. Percentages are based on valid responses.

4.3 Measures

The survey consisted of 41 items. The initial section of the survey collected demographic information from the participant, including age group, gender and industry, as these factors have been shown to influence employees' wellbeing and motivation (Johns, 2006; Kooij et al., 2011). It also contained the mandatory filter questions designed to ensure eligibility, which participants were required to answer before continuing. If the participants did not fit the criteria, they were presented with a thank you page; the rest of the participants were forwarded on to the next part of the survey. Secondly, participants were asked about their preferences for FWAs and then their use of FWAs at work. Lastly, participants were asked to fill out questions about their psychological need satisfaction.

The data for this study were collected via an online questionnaire consisting of three scales (see appendix): Preference for Flexibility, Use of Flexibility and the Basic Need Satisfaction at Work (BPNSS). The Preference for Flexibility and the Use of Flexibility are scales developed by Hyland (1999), following the approach of Higgins et al. (1992) to measure both time flexibility and location flexibility. The Preference for Flexibility scale measures the amount of flexibility that is preferred by an employee, and the Use of Flexibility

measures the amount of flexibility that is actually used by the employee (Hyland, 1999). The purpose of these scales is to measure the degree of flexibility to meet employees' needs. Hyland (1999) originally designed three scales, one to measure the amount of flexibility that is available to the employee. For the purpose of this study, only the preference and use scales were used because the primary focus of this study was on preference-experience congruence rather than availability of FWAs. The Preference for Flexibility scale consisted of eight item statements related to flexibility, for example, "…I work from an alternate location after working a long day or week" or "…I determine work schedule by projects" and began with the stem "Ideally, I would…". The original flexibility scale used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "four to five times a week" to 5 = "never." For the purpose of this study, the response format was modified to a scale ranging from 1 = "never," 5 = "always" to better reflect participants perceived consistency of flexible work practices rather than specific frequency counts. The Use of Flexibility scale used the same eight item statements as the preference scale (e.g "…..I work from an alternate location after working a long day or week" or "…. I determine work schedule by projects") but they began with the stem "In actuality...". Participants were asked to rate each item on the same five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "never," 5 = "always". These two measures created the congruence variable for this study, which would show if there was a match between what employees wanted and what they actually got. Congruence between employees' preferences and experiences of FWAs was calculated by computing the absolute difference between each participant's preference and use ratings across the same eight items. The resulting difference scores were reverse-coded so that higher values reflected greater alignment between desired and the use of flexibility. Using absolute values captures the degree of alignment between the two variables regardless of direction. This approach is consistent with prior research measuring the person-

environment fit or need-supply fit, where congruence is operationalised as the degree of similarity between two related constructs (Edwards, 1994).

The third scale in the questionnaire includes the psychological need satisfaction, which is measured using the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Scale – Work Domain (BPNSS). This is a validated SDT-based scale that was constructed to assess satisfaction of three needs, autonomy, relatedness and competence. It consists of 21 items relating to each of the three needs. For example, "I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my job gets done" assesses autonomy, "I do not feel very competent when I am at work", measures competence and "I really like the people I work with" assesses relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci et al., 2001; Ilardi et al., 1993; Kasser et al., 1992). In the original scale, the participants answered on a seven-point scale where 1 = "not at all true" and 7 = "very true". For the present scale, this was adapted to be a five-point scale to maintain consistency with the other measures and to simplify the response process for participants, where 1 = " not at all true" and 5 = "very true". Previous research suggests that reducing the number of response options within the four to seven range does not substantially affect reliability or validity (Lozano et al., 2008).

4.4 Data Collection Procedure and Analysis Plan

Prior to sending the questionnaire to potential participants, a small pilot test was conducted to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness. Five colleagues from the researcher's workplace were invited to review and complete the draft survey. They were asked to provide feedback on whether the writing and instructions were clear and whether any items could be interpreted as insensitive. Furthermore, the researcher sent the draft survey to a Māori advisor, and two of the five pilot reviewers identified as Māori, which provided additional perspectives on the cultural appropriateness of the study and helped ensure the questionnaire was respectful. Ethics approval was granted by the Massey

University Ethics Committee, case number 4000030874. Participation in the study was voluntary, and at the start of the questionnaire, all participants read the details of the study and provided consent to take part.

The questionnaire was constructed and administered using Qualtrics, an online software used for creating, distributing and analysing surveys. In the survey, a filter was set up so only participants who were employed, either full-time or part-time, and who worked in New Zealand were allowed to participate. The survey was distributed through the author's own Instagram account and via email to professional colleagues. All participants were asked to distribute the survey invitation among coworkers, family and friends.

The survey took place from 2nd July 2025 to 4th August 2025, and during this period, a total of 493 responses were recorded.

4.4.1 Data Analysis Plan

All responses were screened for incomplete or missing data. A total of 135 cases were excluded from the analysis because more than 20% of questionnaire items were unanswered (i.e. participants were required to have completed at least 80% of the items to be retained for analysis). Any responses below half of the median response time (144.2 seconds) were removed, as fast responses are likely to reflect participants who were inattentive (Oppenheimer et al., 2009). Three cases met this criterion and were excluded from the analysis. Z-scores for each response were calculated and investigated. All the outliers were explored and included as they seemed plausible. Duplicate entries were investigated, and no cases were affected. The final number of participant responses qualified for analysis was 355. Reverse-coded items from the BPNSS were recoded to ensure consistency in scoring direction. Lastly, the Cronbach's Alpha score for the FWA Preference scale ($\alpha = .85$), FWA Use scale ($\alpha = .88$), and BPNSS ($\alpha = .83$) were all good, therefore there was internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951).

To analyse the questionnaire data, a combination of descriptive, regression and correlation analyses was conducted using SPSS (Version 30.0) and PROCESS (Version 5.0). Descriptive statistics were used to both summarise the demographic characteristics of the sample and to describe the distribution of incentive preferences and their perceived availability in the workplace. Correlation analyses were then employed to examine the relationships among the two main variables of interest, incentive congruence and need satisfaction. Finally, multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the predictive relationships between these variables while controlling for relevant demographic factors.

5. Results

This chapter presents the results of the analyses conducted to test the study's hypotheses. Descriptive statistics and internal consistencies were computed, followed by factor analysis. Correlation analyses examined relationships among the study variables. Regression analyses were conducted to assess the predicted relationships between variables, and Hayes' PROCESS macro was used to test the moderation effect of age on the relationship between congruence and basic psychological need satisfaction.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

All three scales in this study showed good reliability with Cronbach's α scores of .80 or above; values above .70 are considered acceptable indicators of internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951). The exact Cronbach's α scores can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliabilities of Scales

Scale	Cronbach's α	No. of items
FWA Preferences	0.85	8
FWA Use	0.88	8
BPNSS	0.87	21

Note. $N = 355$

The descriptive statistics of all scales are displayed in Table 3. Overall, the participants reported moderate levels of FWA preferences ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.88$), while reports of FWA use were notably lower ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 0.83$). This suggests that on average, participants preferred more flexibility than what they were currently using at work. Psychological Need Satisfaction (BPNSS) was relatively high (M 3.77, $SD = 0.56$), indicating that employees generally reported positive levels of autonomy, relatedness and competence. The standard deviations of all measures suggest an adequate amount of variability.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

Scale	N	Min	Max	Mean	*SD*
FWA Preferences	355	1.13	5.0	3.09	0.88
FWA Use	355	1.0	5.0	2.11	0.83
BPNSS	355	1.9	4.9	3.77	0.56

5.2 Factor Analysis

A factor analysis was run on the three scales in this study because the original scoring method of the measure had been modified. Principal axis factoring (PAF) with oblique rotation was conducted on all scales. The Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure indicated good sampling adequacy for both FWA Preference (KMO = .838) and FWA Use (KMO = .829), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant for FWA Preference (χ^2 = 1095.99, *df* = 28, *p* < .001) and FWA Use (χ^2 = 1448.42, *df* = 28, *p* < .001), supporting the suitability of the data for factor analysis. For the FWA Preferences scale, the factor analysis produced a single factor with an eigenvalue of 3.94, accounting for 49.25% of the total variance. Similarly, the FWA Use scale produced a single factor with an eigenvalue of 4.38, explaining 54.74% of the total variance. Both single-factor solutions are consistent with the unidimensional structure of the scales.

For the BPNSS, KMO = .893 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (χ^2 =2765.84, *df* = 210, *p* < .001), indicating that factor analysis was appropriate. The scree plot and eigenvalues for BPNSS suggest a potential five-factor solution. The item "People at my work are pretty friendly towards me" was removed due to substantial cross-loading on multiple factors. A subsequent analysis was rerun, again revealing a five-factor solution and was retained for subsequent analyses. Consistent with best practices when applying validated scales to new populations, factor analysis was conducted to examine the factorial validity of

the BPNSS in the New Zealand workforce context. While the original BPNSS conceptualises three core needs, the factor analysis revealed a five-factor structure in this sample, suggesting potential contextual or cultural nuances in how psychological needs appear in New Zealand workplaces. Factor 1 comprised all items relating to the relatedness construct and was therefore labelled Relatedness. Factor 2 included all autonomy items and was named Autonomy. Both Factor 3 and 4 comprised competence related items, however the two items loading on Factor 3 (see Table 4) both reflected competence doubt and frustration with high factor loadings of .65 and .59, supporting their retention as a meaningful construct. As this factor consisted of only two items, it was treated as a variable rather than as a full factor (Crano et al., 2014). Given that both items reflected competence frustration, this variable was labelled Competence doubt. Factor 4 reflected the core concepts of competence satisfaction and was named Competence. Factor 5 comprised three items, two autonomy items ("My feelings are taken into consideration at work" and "I feel pressured at work") and one relatedness item ("People at work care about me"), with loadings ranging from .50 to .58 (see Table 4). This combination does not align with SDT's theoretical distinction between autonomy and relatedness as separate needs. Given the mixed item content, this factor was labelled Relational autonomy and was treated as exploratory.

Given the cross-sectional nature of this data, there is a potential risk of common method variance (CMV), which may weaken the validity of the results (Bozionoelos & Simmering, 2022). To understand whether CMV was present, Harman's single-factor test was conducted across all items (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was high (KMO = .870), exceeding the recommended 0.60 threshold (Kaiser, 1974). The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 6058.87$, $df = 666$, $p < .001$), indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. An unrotated principal axis factoring analysis revealed that the first factor accounted for 20% of the total variance, which

is below the 50% threshold. Thus, suggesting that common method variance is not a major concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Table 4

Exploratory Factor Analysis Loadings for the BPNSS Scale

Item	Relatedness	Autonomy	Competence doubt	Competence	Relational autonomy
I consider the people I work with to be my friends	.80				
I get along with people at my work	.69				
I really like the people I work with	.63				
I pretty much keep to myself at work	.57				
There are not many people at work that I am close to	.55				
I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my job gets done		.66			
When I am at work, I have to do what I am told		.63			
There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to go about my work		.60			
When I am working I often do not feel very capable			.65		
I do not feel very competent when I am at work			.59		
Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working				-.77	
I have been able to learn interesting new skills on my job				-.62	
On my job I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am				-.53	
My feelings are taken into consideration at work					-.58
I feel pressured at work					-.51
People at work care about me					-.50

Note. Factor loadings > .40 are reported. Items with no primary loadings and one item with cross-loadings were removed from the final solution.

5.3 Correlations

Spearman's correlations were computed to examine the relationships between FWA congruence, the BPNSS factors, and age. As shown in Table 5, FWA congruence was positively correlated with Relatedness ($r = .17$, $p < .01$) and Autonomy ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), indicating that higher congruence between employees' preferences and use of FWAs is associated with greater satisfaction of these needs. In contrast, there was no significant correlation with FWA congruence and Competence doubt ($r = -.07$, ns), and FWA congruence was negatively correlated with both Competence ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$) and Relational Autonomy ($r = -.14$, $p < .01$), suggesting that greater congruence is related to lower scores on these factors.

Among the BPNSS Factors, moderate negative correlations were observed, such as Relatedness with Competence ($r = -.54$, $p < .05$) and Relatedness with Relational Autonomy ($r = -.44$, $p < .05$), which highlights intercorrelations among the need satisfaction dimensions. Age was weakly correlated with most variables. Age showed a small to moderate positive correlation with Autonomy ($r = .24$, $p < .01$) and a small positive correlation with Relational autonomy ($r = .15$, $p < .01$). Correlations with Relatedness and FWA congruence were not statistically significant. The results suggest that older employees report slightly higher Autonomy and Relational autonomy scores.

Table 5

Spearman's Correlation Coefficients

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. FWA congruence	–						
2. Relatedness	.17**	–					
3. Autonomy	.32**	.25**	–				
4. Competence doubt	.07	.16**	.37**	–			
5. Competence	-.20**	-.54**	-.33**	-.24**	–		
6. Relational autonomy	-.14**	-.44**	-.33**	-.13*	.43**	–	
7. Age	.01	-.05	.24**	.24**	.13*	.15**	–

Note. Age was collected as a categorical variable and treated as ordinal for Spearmans correlations. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

5.4 Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses in this study were tested using a combination of regression and moderation. Prior to the hypothesis testing, linearity and normal distribution of residuals were checked by a graphical analysis of the residual plots. These assumptions could be confirmed and normal distribution for all scales was assumed.

5.4.1 Main Effects

The first set of hypotheses for the proposed main effects (H1abc) was tested using a linear regression model. Hypothesis 1a suggested that FWA congruence would be positively associated with autonomy satisfaction. The regression analysis showed that congruence between FWA Preferences and FWA Use significantly predicted autonomy (Factor 2) satisfaction, $R^2 = .111$, $F = 43.94$, $p < .001$. Higher congruence was associated with higher autonomy satisfaction ($B = .42$, $\beta = .33$), supporting H1a.

Hypothesis H1b suggested that FWA congruence would be positively associated with relatedness satisfaction. The results showed that FWA congruence significantly predicted relatedness (Factor 1), $R^2 = .05$, $F = 17.16$, $p < .001$. Higher congruence was associated with higher relatedness satisfaction ($B = .30$, $\beta = .22$), supporting H1b.

Hypothesis H1c suggested that FWA congruence would be positively associated with competence satisfaction. Two distinct competence constructs (variable 3 and factor 4) emerged from the factor analysis. The regression analysis for Competence doubt indicated there were no significant associations present, $R^2 = .01$, $F = 2.14$, $p = .144$. While it was hypothesised that FWA congruence would be positively associated with Competence satisfaction, the regression analysis revealed a significant negative relationship ($B = -.35$, $\beta = -.27$, $R^2 = .07$, $F = 28.28$, $p < .001$). This suggests that as FWA congruence increases, competence satisfaction tends to decrease, contrary to expectations.

Although it was not included in the original hypotheses, the results indicated a significant relationship between Relational autonomy and FWA congruence, $R^2 = .03$, $F = 11.71$, $p < .001$. Higher congruence levels were associated with lower levels of Relational autonomy ($B = -.23$, $\beta = -.18$).

5.4.2 Moderation effect

The second set of hypotheses proposed that the relationship between flexible work arrangement congruence and overall psychological need satisfaction is moderated by age.

H2a. A moderation analysis using PROCESS moderation model was conducted to test whether age moderated the relationship between FWA congruence and autonomy. The overall model was significant, explaining 20% of the variance in autonomy, $R^2 = .20$, $F(3, 351) = 28.39$, $p < .001$. The main effect of FWA congruence was significant, indicating that higher congruence was associated with greater autonomy ($B = .25$, $SE = .12$, $t = 3.72$, $p = .0002$). However, neither the main effect of age ($B = .41$, $SE = .30$, $t = 1.37$, $p = .17$), nor the interaction between age and FWA congruence ($B = -.03$, $SE = .08$, $t = -.33$, $p = .74$) were statistically significant. These results indicate that age does not significantly moderate the relationship between FWA congruence and autonomy.

H2b. A second moderation analysis was conducted using PROCESS to test whether age moderated the relationship between FWA congruence and relatedness. The overall model was significant, explaining 5.1% of the variance in relatedness, R^2 = .051, F(3, 351) = 6.27, p < .001. However, neither the main effect of congruence (B = .14, SE = .14, t = .95, p = .34), the main effect of age (B = -.44, SE = .35, t = -1.26, p = .21), nor the interaction term (B = .12, SE = .09, t = 1.29, p = .20) were statistically significant. These results indicate that age does not significantly moderate the relationship between FWA congruence and relatedness.

H2c. A final moderation analysis was conducted to test whether age moderated the relationship between FWA congruence and competence. For Competence doubt the overall model was statistically significant, explaining 2% of the variance, R^2 = .02, F(3, 351) = 2.90 , p < .035. However, neither the main effect of FWA congruence (B = .08, SE = .13, t = .59, p = .55), the main effect of age (B = .09, SE = .32, t = .29, p = .77), nor the interaction term (B = .01, SE = .08, t = .15, p = .88) were statistically significant.

For Competence, the overall model was statistically significant, explaining 8% of the variance in competence, R^2 = .08, F(3, 351) = 10.50, p < .001. While the main effect of FWA congruence was statistically significant (B = .34, SE = .13, t = 2.53, p = .01), neither the main effect of age (B = -.11, SE = .12, t = -.97, p = .33), nor the interaction term (B = .01, SE = .08, t = .13, p = .90) were statistically significant. These results indicate that age does not significantly moderate the relationship between FWA congruence and either dimension of competence.

Relational autonomy was not in the original hypotheses; however, due to its emergence as a distinct factor, an exploratory moderation analysis was undertaken. The overall model was statistically significant, explaining 4% of the variance, R^2 = .04, F(3, 351) = 4.98, p = .002. However, neither the main effect of FWA congruence (B = -.02, SE = .08, t = -.20, p = .84), the main effect of age (B = .01, SE = .04, t = .33, p = .74), nor the interaction

term (B = -.09, SE = .05, t = -1.72, p = .08) were statistically significant, indicating that age did not moderate the relationship between FWA congruence and Relational autonomy.

It is worth noting that the percentage variance differs significantly across the moderation models. The model predicting autonomy explained a larger percentage variance than both the competence and relatedness models. This suggests that FWA congruence is more strongly associated with autonomy than with relatedness or competence.

6. Discussion

This study investigated whether flexible work arrangements (FWAs) support employee wellbeing through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, specifically when employees' FWAs preferences align with their actual use (preference-experience congruence). Additionally, the study explored whether age moderates these relationships. Grounded in self-determination theory (SDT), this research revealed that FWA congruence was positively associated with autonomy and relatedness satisfaction, but showed a complex relationship with competence. Contrary to expectations, age did not significantly moderate these relationships. This discussion interprets these findings in light of SDT, considers their implications for New Zealand workplaces, and identifies directions for future research.

6.1 Key findings

Higher congruence was positively associated with autonomy and relatedness satisfaction (H1a & H1b). These findings indicate that preference-experience congruence plays an important role in further understanding basic psychological need satisfaction. The positive relationship with autonomy aligns closely with and supports Self-Determination Theory, which states that work environments supporting employees' volition and choice enhance wellbeing (Deci et al., 2017). When employees experience a match between preferred FWAs and actual FWAs they use, they may feel greater control over their work because it is self-chosen rather than imposed, therefore enhancing autonomy (Deci et al., 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000). In contrast, incongruence may undermine employees' autonomy satisfaction because they may feel pressured or constrained, shifting from autonomous motivation to controlled forms of regulation. These findings supported H1a, which predicted a positive relationship between FWA congruence and autonomy satisfaction.

Congruence was also positively associated with relatedness satisfaction, supporting H1b. Alignment between FWA preferences and use may satisfy relatedness for employees by

reducing strain and allowing for more social engagement, ultimately supporting connection in the workplace. Similarly, Coo et al. (2021) found that low perceptual congruence has been associated with increased strain and disengagement. Furthermore, FWAs that match employees' preferences may reduce work-family conflict and stress, freeing emotional and cognitive resources for social engagement and relationship building (Shockley & Allen, 2007).

In this study, a five-factor solution emerged for the BPNSS, differing from the original three-factor structure of autonomy, competence and relatedness. Variable 3 comprised negatively worded competence items (e.g. "When I am working I often do not feel very capable") and was labelled Competence doubt. Factor 4 captured items that reflected core elements of competence satisfaction, such as growth, mastery and accomplishment (e.g "I have been able to learn interesting new skills on my job") and was therefore labelled Competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The emergence of separate competence factors suggests that competence satisfaction and competence doubt may represent distinct experiences. Within the New Zealand workplace context, different aspects of competence may be differentially associated with FWA congruence.

Competence doubt (negatively-worded competence items) was not significantly associated with FWA congruence, suggesting that alignment between FWA preferences and use neither increases nor decreases feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt. Contrastingly, higher congruence was associated with lower competence satisfaction; therefore, H1c was not supported. This negative association observed suggests that flexible work arrangements may not uniformly support all of the psychological needs. One possible explanation is that FWAs alone may be insufficient to support competence if the organisations do not provide adequate support (Kotey & Sharma, 2019; Deci et al., 2017). Even though employees' preferences for flexibility are met, competence satisfaction may depend on regular feedback and performance

check-ins. These findings therefore suggest that flexibility may be most effective when supported by organisational systems, reflecting emerging flexible work research that emphasises the importance of synergy between individuals' needs and organisational support (Tewari et al., 2025). In flexible work environments, leadership and managerial guidance may play a crucial role in fostering competence through feedback and coaching.

The New Zealand working context may also help explain this negative association. In Aotearoa New Zealand, it appears that workplace culture and social connection play a large role in shaping employee wellbeing and performance (Mitchell, 2025). Research on remote work in this context discovered that although employees appreciate the benefits of flexibility, its impact on trust, communication and connection within teams, which are important for competence, varies widely (Bradley et al., 2023). Additionally, in New Zealand, younger workers tend to place a high value on factors linked to competence, such as professional development, mentoring and access to advancement (Payscale, 2024; Success Group, n.d). Given that the current study's sample is predominantly comprised of workers aged 18-29, this may help explain why even when FWA preferences are met, competence may not improve because it may depend on growth opportunities over flexibility alone.

Relational autonomy (Factor 5) was another notable factor that emerged from the BPNSS. This factor comprised both autonomy and relatedness items and was labelled Relational autonomy. Although autonomy and relatedness emerged as distinct constructs in the correlation analysis ($r = .25$, $p < .01$), the presence of a single factor combining both needs suggests that, for some employees, these factors may be interconnected instead of fully independent. As Chirkov et al. (2003) suggest, autonomy does not necessarily require independence; individuals in collectivist or bicultural contexts may experience autonomy through relational support or interdependence. Within the Aotearoa New Zealand context, this interpretation may be particularly relevant. New Zealand's bicultural foundation,

including Indigenous Māori concepts such as whanaungatanga and rangatiratanga (collective forms of autonomy), emphasises autonomy as embedded within relationships instead of separate from them (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, n.d.). The emergence of this factor may therefore reflect cultural experiences in which relatedness and autonomy are experienced as connected by some employees. As this factor was not part of the original hypotheses, these interpretations are exploratory and require further investigation in future research.

In the current study, a negative association between Relational autonomy and FWA congruence was found. Although congruence may support autonomy and relatedness, this finding suggests that higher levels of congruence may reduce levels of Relational autonomy. The correlation of this factor with both FWA congruence and age underscores that this factor may capture a unique aspect of need satisfaction that has not been accounted for in the original BPNSS. One possible explanation is that when work arrangements align closely with employee preferences, individuals may rely less on relational forms of autonomy, and instead potentially experience autonomy in a more individualised manner. These findings once again highlight that basic psychological needs can be satisfied in different ways within the New Zealand workplace (Brougham et al., 2015). Thus, it is important to understand the conceptual meaning of Relational autonomy as well as its organisational relevance in future research.

The moderation hypotheses explored whether preference experience congruence influenced differently depending on their age. Previous literature (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004) discussed age related differences in work values and motivation priorities, however the findings of this study indicate that age did not significantly impact the relationship between flexible work arrangement congruence and psychological need satisfaction, thus H2a-c were not supported. This suggests that the benefits of experiencing alignment between flexibility

preferences and actual work arrangement may be relatively consistent across age groups. Age showed weak correlations with autonomy (r = .24) and relational autonomy (r = .15), but these small effect sizes indicate that age explains minimal variance.

One possible explanation for these findings relates to methodological limitations. The sample was heavily skewed toward a younger age group, 18-29 years old, which limited the variability in age and reduced the ability to provide accurate results that represent the New Zealand workforce. This may have reduced statistical power to detect moderation effects.

Secondly, age may be too broad of a construct to capture meaningful variation in how employees respond to FWAs. Individuals in the same age group can differ largely in their attitudes towards job demands, flexibility, and career stage, meaning age as a variable may not capture individual differences in this study (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015).

Furthermore, another possible explanation for the unsupported moderation hypotheses is that, irrespective of age, individual preference satisfaction may be the primary factor that satisfies psychological needs and therefore increase wellbeing. The alignment between individual preferences and experiences appears to influence employee outcomes in a consistent manner, thus influencing all individuals similarly (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, the effects of experiencing alignment between what flexible work arrangements employees prefer and what they are using at work may similarly impact employees regardless of age, reducing the likelihood of age differences.

The absence of a moderation effect suggests that age may be less relevant than individual preferences in shaping the impact of congruence on basic psychological need satisfaction. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasises that psychological need satisfaction predicts wellbeing, independent from demographic characteristics (Deci et al., 2017). Thus, from this perspective, these results may be

theoretically meaningful as they highlight preference-experience congruence as a universal idea that can underpin the effective use of FWAs in the workplace.

6.2 Practical Implications

From an organisational point of view, the present findings can provide valuable insights for implementing non-financial incentives such as flexible work arrangements in the workplace. It is clear that congruence supports some aspects of employees' needs but fails to support others. These positive effects for both autonomy and relatedness suggest that employees experience stronger need satisfaction when the work environment aligns with their preferences (Arthur et al., 2006; Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). Therefore, it is important that organisations actively monitor employees' preferences towards workplace incentives. These preferences should inform the design of organisational practices and systems, as poorly designed workplace systems can reduce the effectiveness of FWAs (Kotey & Sharma, 2019). Thus, organisations need to ensure that employee preferences are both understood and integrated into systematic design.

Importantly, preference-experience alignment is necessary but not sufficient for need satisfaction and wellbeing. Organisations must distinguish between (1) what employees prefer, (2) what is feasible given their circumstances, and (3) what is beneficial given organisational support systems. An employee may prefer full-time remote work but lack an adequate home office set up, technology, or managerial support, resulting in preference-experience congruence that nonetheless undermines competence and productivity. Additionally, external factors such as caregiving responsibilities or noise may distract the employee. Organisations should understand the preferences of their staff, but should undergo a thorough investigation into what the right fit is for the individual. Human resource management should not assume that flexibility leads to increased wellbeing, instead a

comprehensive approach should be used when designing workplace incentives to ensure it is the right fit (Bai, 2025).

The results highlighted a negative relationship between competence and FWA congruence. Flexible work arrangements may reduce real-time interaction, informal learning and discipline, which are all useful for skill development and career advancement, directly supporting competence (Wang & Xie, 2023; Wong et al., 2022). Competence is a crucial aspect of wellbeing according to SDT; therefore, organisations should implement suitable structures to support this basic psychological need when implementing flexible work arrangements. Human resource management should allow for regular training, peer feedback and opportunities for regular in-person collaboration to ensure staff feel supported and can continue to grow their skills. Consistent with this, previous research discovered that both online and face-to-face training sessions designed to improve confidence and job related skills led to employees showing significantly greater perceived competence levels (Talati et al., 2018).

Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of considering both cultural and contextual factors when applying psychological need satisfaction measures within organisations. In this study, the three psychological needs were not experienced in an isolated manner; instead, additional dimensions of need satisfaction emerged that may be a reflection of the unique features of the workforce. In particular, the emergence of Relational autonomy has practical implications for workplace design. Initiatives aimed at increasing employee autonomy may be most effective when they also foster supportive relationships and a sense of connection among colleagues in New Zealand organisations. These findings suggest that a holistic approach should be taken when designing policies to support employee wellbeing, ensuring that they address both the individual and relational needs of New Zealand employees.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

The present study makes several theoretical contributions to the literature on Self-Determination Theory and workplace incentives. It extends existing research on FWAs in two important ways. First, while previous literature has documented challenges associated with FWAs, including increased workload, stress, and blurred boundaries (Kröll & Nüesch, 2019; Stockkamp et al., 2023), these studies have not examined whether such challenges persist when FWAs align with employee preferences. The present findings suggest that even when preference-experience congruence is achieved, competence satisfaction may still be undermined, indicating that alignment alone does not guarantee positive outcomes across all psychological needs.

Second, this study clarifies SDT by exploring how the effectiveness of FWAs is not only determined by their availability or use, but also by the degree to which the arrangements align with individual preferences. The preference-experience congruence matters for basic psychological need satisfaction, contributing to the existing literature. Furthermore, these findings contribute to SDT research by showing that FWAs' congruence is positively associated with both autonomy and relatedness, while also being negatively associated with competence. This highlights that organisational practices can differentially impact psychological needs, and that needs may not always be satisfied simultaneously. These findings may have particular relevance in the context of New Zealand, where organisational culture often emphasises collaboration, potentially shaping the ways in which competence satisfaction is associated with FWAs.

Lastly, the absence of age moderation effects further solidifies research that suggests generations and age alone may be insufficient for explaining motivational differences (Schröder, 2024). In the New Zealand context, motivation may be better explained by other factors, such as career stage and development opportunities, rather than age. However, these

findings should be interpreted cautiously, given the sample's demographic skew with 77.5% of participants aged 18-29 years, limiting variability across groups.

6.4 Limitations

The findings of this present study offer applicable insights for organisations. It is important to acknowledge, however, that this study has certain limitations, primarily due to the resource and scope constraints typical of graduate research. These limitations should inform the interpretation of all results presented.

Firstly, this is a cross-sectional study as data points are collected at a single point in time and the results are only based on regression and correlations, therefore it is unable to understand if congruence causes the basic psychological needs to be satisfied. Instead, only the associations can be understood. Additionally, the survey data were collected via self-report measures, and although the questionnaire was anonymous to hopefully reduce biases, these limitations cannot be fully eliminated. It is possible that responses may have been influenced by social desirability bias (Grimm, 2010).

The characteristics of this sample should be taken into account when deriving implications from this study. As a result of posting the survey advertisement on Instagram, a very large proportion of the final sample was in the age range 18-29. This represents a limitation because the findings mostly reflect a younger sample, and therefore may not be generalisable to the rest of the working population. Furthermore, the skewness towards younger employees could be a reason why the non-significant moderation effects for age were observed. The limited variability in age may also have reduced statistical power in order to detect the true moderation effects. Similarly, there was a larger proportion of females than males in the study which again may not be generalisable to the rest of the population because the sample is not a true representation. The age and gender distributions may therefore limit the external validity of the findings.

6.5 Future Research

The prevalence of flexible work arrangements has significantly increased over recent years, and thus, it is crucial to understand how to implement effective incentive arrangements that positively impact employees' wellbeing and motivation. This study has contributed to this goal by providing evidence to suggest it may be beneficial to understand employees' preferences when implementing FWAs.

For future research, several implications can be made to improve the shortcomings of this study and to further examine the present results to help understand whether organisations should satisfy employees' preferences. First, a longitudinal design could provide greater insight into causation rather than just correlation. For instance, a future study could assess employees' preferences and use of FWAs, as well as their basic psychological need satisfaction at an initial point in time. The organisation could then implement changes to better align the arrangements with employees' preferences to increase congruence. Need satisfaction could be measured again at a later date to determine whether increased congruence leads to improvements in competence, autonomy and relatedness satisfaction.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to have a greater understanding of why employees feel less competent with high congruence. This could be investigated by looking at the individual types of flexible work arrangements and how they differentially relate to competence. Some arrangements may ultimately limit opportunities for feedback, skill development, or performance recognition. Additionally, the emergence of Relational autonomy in the BPNSS should be examined in greater detail to clarify its meaning and to assess its relevance to psychological need satisfaction in the context of the New Zealand workforce.

As mentioned in the limitations, this study investigated age as a moderator; however, in future research, it would also be valuable to gain a more of a nuanced understanding of the

relationship between FWAs congruence and need satisfaction by studying career orientation and life stage. These factors have shown to influence individuals' preferences in previous research, and thus it could impact the moderation analyses significantly for the current study (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). Looking even further, exploring additional moderators beyond age, such as role or location, could provide further insight into factors influencing both FWA congruence and psychological need satisfaction.

Future studies should recruit a more demographically diverse sample, including a wider range of ages, genders and ethnicities, in order to explore whether the observed relationships between FWA congruence and the basic psychological needs are consistent across different groups of employees. This would help clarify whether certain demographics experience need satisfaction differently when responding to FWAs.

Lastly, this study measured employees preferences for and use of flexible work arrangements but it did not directly asses access to or the availability of these arrangements. Understanding the availability of FWAs within the participants organisations would provide useful information to understand if employees do not use an incentive because they choose not to, or they may not have access to it even if they want it as a result of policies or job roles. Future studies should investigate all three, preference, access and use, to fully capture how workplace incentives such as FWAs work in practice.

7. Conclusion

The present study set out to examine whether congruence between employees' flexible work arrangement preferences and their use relates to higher psychological need satisfaction, with a particular focus on the moderating role of age. Overall, the findings suggest that FWA congruence plays a crucial role in shaping employees' workplace experiences.

Specifically, higher levels of congruence were associated with greater autonomy and relatedness satisfaction. However, the negative associations between congruence and both competence factors and the additional relational autonomy factor, highlight that flexible arrangements may not be universally beneficial across all psychological needs.

In a practical sense, the results underscore the importance of designing flexible work practices for the workplace that not only align with employees' preferences but also support congruence through feedback, skill development and performance recognition. Thus, organisations should understand how FWAs are implemented instead of assuming their availability alone will satisfy employee needs and enhance wellbeing.

Although this study is limited by the cross-sectional design, self-report measures and sample characteristics, it provides a solid foundation for future research to further explore the relationships between FWA congruence and basic psychological need satisfaction. Future studies should investigate additional moderators such as career or life stage, access to incentives, specific types of flexible work arrangements and the unexpected fifth factor for the BPNSS.

In short, this study highlights the complex role of flexible work arrangements in shaping basic psychological need satisfaction. The findings underscore that alignment, implementation, and context are critical to understanding when and how non-financial incentives effectively support employee wellbeing.

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Appendix

Employee Incentive Congruence Questionnaire

Demographics

1. What is your Age?
    - 18-29
    - 30-39
    - 40-49
    - 50-59
    - 60-69
    - 70+
2. What is your gender?
    - Female
    - Male
    - Other
    - Prefer not to say
3. Are you currently employed in a full-time or part-time role?
    - Yes
    - No
4. Do you work in New Zealand?
    - Yes
    - No
5. What industry do you work in?
    - Accounting
    - Agriculture, fishing & forestry
    - Architecture

- Automotive
- Banking, finance and insurance
- Construction & roading
- Customer service
- Education
- Engineering
- Executive & general management
- Government & council
- Healthcare
- Hospitality & tourism
- HR & recruitment
- IT
- Legal
- Manufacturing & operations
- Marketing, media & communications
- Office & administration
- Property
- Retail
- Sales
- Science and technology
- Trades & services
- Transport & logistics
- Other, please specify

Preference for Flexibility:

This section will ask about your preferences towards Flexible Work Arrangements at work.

Please rate each item on a 5 point scale.

Rate each item on a 5 point scale.

1 = not at all preferred, 2 = slightly preferred, 3 = moderately preferred,4 = very much preferred, 5 = extremely preferred.

Ideally, I would….

1. Change times of workday due to personal preferences/needs
2. Change location of work due to preferences/needs
3. Shorten hours after working a long day or week
4. Work from an alternate location after working a long day or week
5. Vary work schedule
6. Vary location of where work is completed
7. Determine work schedule by projects
8. Determine work location by projects

Use of Flexibility:

This section will ask about your current use of Flexible Work Arrangements at work.

Please rate each item on a 5 point scale.

1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always

In actuality,

1. Change times of workday due to personal preferences/needs

2. Change location of work due to preferences/needs
3. Shorten hours after working a long day or week
4. Work from an alternate location after working a long day or week
5. Vary work schedule
6. Vary location of where work is completed
7. Determine work schedule by projects
8. Determine work location by projects

Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction – Work Domain

The following questions concern your feelings about your job during the last year. (If you have been on this job for less than a year, this concerns the entire time you have been at this job.) Please indicate how true each of the following statement is for you given your experiences on this job. Remember that your boss will never know how you responded to the questions.

1 = not at all true, 2 = slightly true, 3 = somewhat true, 4 = mostly true, 5 = very true

1. I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my job gets done.
2. I really like the people I work with.
3. I do not feel very competent when I am at work.
4. People at work tell me I am good at what I do.
5. I feel pressured at work.
6. I get along with people at work.
7. I pretty much keep to myself when I am at work.
8. I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job.
9. I consider the people I work with to be my friends.

10. I have been able to learn interesting new skills on my job.
11. When I am at work, I have to do what I am told.
12. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working.
13. My feelings are taken into consideration at work.
14. On my job I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am.
15. People at work care about me.
16. There are not many people at work that I am close to.
17. I feel like I can pretty much be myself at work.
18. The people I work with do not seem to like me much.
19. When I am working I often do not feel very capable.
20. There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to go about my work.
21. People at work are pretty friendly towards me.

Thank you for participating in this study.

If you would like to go in the draw to win one of ten $30 online Prezzy cards, or receive a summary of the study results, please enter your email using the link below.

Note: Your email will be stored separately from your survey responses to ensure anonymity.