ABSTRACT

MCDONALD, MELISSA WILKERSON. An Exploratory Study of Employee Perception of Flexible Work Options in an Award-Winning Organization: Understanding What 21st Century Employees Expect. (Under the direction of Dr. Julia Storberg-Walker).

This exploratory multiple case study examined employee perception of flexible work place options in an award winning organization. Organizations that have legitimate concerns about their employees’ ability to balance their work and personal lives can gain much insight into how to arrive at mutually beneficial goals via this study, which seeks to explain aspects of the relationship between employees and such an organization (Leary-Joyce, 2010).

For many people, their livelihood (work, career) is a primary factor in determining the overall quality of life. To contribute to explaining this important quality-of-life issue, this study gains a better understanding of employee and organizational views towards employees’ balance between work and life. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine employee perceptions of flexible workplace options. For this study, “perceptions” include understanding what employees think as well as understanding how they go about deciding which flexible options are best for their careers.

The study utilized the Career Active System Triad (CAST) model (Baruch, 2006) to understand how values, attitudes and behaviors combined to shape employee perceptions of organizational practices. The model was also used to analyze organizational documents to understand organizational-level perspectives. The findings suggest that the perceptions of the participants from this award-winning organization were aligned with or similar to the organizational philosophies in three ways: both the participants and the organization valued family; both enacted gratitude (in approach and policies); and both worked to accomplish balance (through behaviors and practices). These findings illustrate the impact of deep
connections between organizational philosophies and employee values, and provide ways for other organizations to begin to develop an organizational culture supportive of flexible work options.
An Exploratory Study of Employee Perception of Flexible Work Options in an Award-Winning Organization: Understanding What 21st Century Employees Expect

by
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BIOGRAPHY

Melissa McDonald is a native of Oxford, North Carolina, and resides in Raleigh with her daughter, Brelyn, and husband, John. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Organizational Management from Saint Augustine’s College. Over the years, she worked in various governmental and law agencies before she began her employment with her current employer 19 years ago. Four years ago, with the encouragement of her employer, she decided to pursue her interest in adult education and training and began taking courses to obtain a Graduate Certificate in Training and Development. August 2009 marked a major milestone in Melissa’s life as this was the time she embarked on her journey of Graduate School following the completion of treatment of breast cancer. She was thankful for the T&D Program and HRD, as they have provided a beneficial distraction from the situation and proved that life moves on.

After receiving her T&D Graduate Certificate in May 2011, Melissa decided to continue her education interest in HR and applied for the MS–HRD Program. Upon completion of the Masters Degree, the author intends to pursue career advancement opportunities with current employer in organizational development and human resources and possibly facilitate adult education courses through the local community college.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the help, support, patience, and guidance from my professors and family, this study would not have been a possibility. I would like to acknowledge my family who has been my support system over the past four years. A special thank you goes to my husband for his willingness to listen and encourage me through the rough times and to my daughter for allowing mommy to do homework when we could have been doing fun stuff. Their support and encouragement have helped me succeed.

I acknowledge my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Julia Storberg-Walker for helping me through the graduate process and her valuable guidance. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Diane Chapman and Dr. Michelle Bartlett for participating as my committee members. I have admired all three of my committee members throughout my education experience at NC State.

Lastly, I acknowledge my fellow classmates, group project members, and all the friends that I have made while in the MS-HRD Program. The friendship and support over the years have meant a lot and I will cherish the memorable moments as great life experience.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

While work continues to play a key role in people’s lives (Leary-Joyce, 2010), the 21st century has seen changes in both the expectations of workers and the management of employees within organizations (Baruch, 2006). Today, three out of four young people entering the workforce expect to balance career with a family (Breslin, 2013). Additionally, a changing workforce that has an increased proportion of working women, dual-earner couples, households headed by an employed single parent, and employees responsible for the care of an elder family members have expectations of having work-life balance. Such changes in family structures and age affect the workforce, with overwhelmed employees seeking employment with companies that allow for work-life balance (Galinsky, Sakai & Wigton, 2011). These expectations matter, because a company’s not meeting them can have large impacts for both workers and employers—when fit between a job and life outside of work is poor, work-family conflict can arise and result in reduced life and job satisfaction, increased burnout, higher turnover intentions, lower commitment, and higher absenteeism (Damaske, 2011).

Given these changing worker expectations and the negative consequences of not meeting them, organizations who want to attract and retain the best talent must pay attention and adapt. The twenty-first century presents continuous change in organizational environments, but the span and pace of environmental and organizational transformation have been taken to extreme levels in the recent years (Cascio & Aguinis, 2008). Such
changes induce innovation and progress, which can cause havoc to the workplace. The “best” organizations have been more able to adapt by offering new and innovative solutions to meet employee expectations, while others have not been as successful (Wang & Verma, 2012).

For organizations seeking to hire workers, the traditional focus on fitting jobs to individual skills is not sufficient. Instead, jobs may need to fit not only with skills, but also with demands outside of work. Employers in today’s economy need to think more holistically when creating and developing job descriptions and integrate non-work elements (for example, new types of flexible work options or new types of career paths, like lattice organizational structuring). As worker expectations for balancing work and life continue to change, employers must continue to adapt and offer innovative solutions, such as varied work schedules, telecommuting, and lattice structuring career advancement rather than career ladders. These alternate structured options meet the new worker expectations, can attract talent, and provide a benefit to employees to meet their lifestyles and contribute to work-life balance (Benko & Anderson, 2010).

Based on these factors, the challenge for many organizations is to identify the optimal employment options to attract high-performing employees. As the traditional employment and career systems becomes less attractive for the majority, nontraditional employment systems have become more appealing. In order to attract and retain talent, corporate leaders are rethinking and retooling how their organizations offer choices. The goal for the leaders is to foster competitive advantage by providing choices and employment options that are
rewarding to the most talented men and women of the current generation and also inviting to future generations (Gaffney, 2008).

As organizations continue to refigure flexible workplace options to attract new talent, a focus on policies, programs, practices and career options for employees remains a concern for organizations and the employees. A focus on employee and organizational restructuring and workplace options can mediate new career boundaries, and change management affects and worker’s responses to their work life (Currie, Tempest & Starkey, 2006). The concept of job, employment or occupation offers a vantage point from which to understand the evolution of relationships between organizational structure and strategy, therefore providing insight into the individual employee’s behaviors and actions. Flexible workplace options and development of employee programs have become significant components that have direct impact on the labor market (Valcour, Ollier-Malaterre, Matz-Cost, Pitt-Catsouphes & Brown, 2011). Organizations that have legitimate concerns about their employees’ ability to balance their work and personal lives can gain much insight into how to arrive at mutually beneficial goals via this study, which seeks to explain aspects of the relationship between employees and such an organization. (Longenecker & Fink, 2013)

Types of flexible working practices are numerous: part-time work, job sharing, flextime, working from home, time off in lieu, teleworking, term-time working, staggered, annualized or compressed hours, shift swapping, self-rostering, breaks from work, and flexible and cafeteria benefits are all flexible work options which may support work-life
balance. “Finding the right [work-life] balance is important to all workers,” women and men alike as Maxwell, Rankine, Bell and MacVicar (2007, p. 142) explain.

Work-life balance policies include any organizational programs or officially-sanctioned practices designed to assist employees with the integration of paid work with other important life roles such as family, education, or leisure. Examples of work-life programs include flexibility in the timing, location, or amount of work (e.g., flextime, job sharing, part-time work, telework, leaves of absence); direct provision of caregiving and health benefits (e.g., child or elder care, domestic partner); and monetary and informational support for non-work roles (e.g., vouchers, referral services) (Ryan and Kossek, 2008).

Work-life balance does not mean an equal balance (Sandhya, Choudary, Kumar & Reddy, 2011); instead, it is a concept that supports the efforts of employees to split their time and energy between work and the other important aspects of their lives. Work-life balance is a daily effort by employees to make time for family, friends, community participation, spirituality, personal growth, self-care, and other personal activities in addition to the demands of the workplace. Work-life balance is assisted by employers who institute policies, procedures, actions, and expectations that enable employees to easily pursue more balanced lives. Research has shown that employees who believe they do not have time for the personal life feel drained and distracted while they are at work (Benko, 2010; Galinsky, et al., 2011; Sandhya, et al., 2011). Research shows that employees who have trouble balancing work and personal life perform less effectively. Conflicts and tensions between the demands at work and tasks at home have a disheartening effect on employees.
A 2012 study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that the number of employees who consider work-life balance very important to their overall job satisfaction continues to increase. Some innovative companies have embraced the balance idea and are empowering energized, inspired workers with enough options to live full lives as they see fit. The companies are providing flexible options that include working nights and weekends, or spending time on intensive projects periodically, but the employee has control of their own time as long as the job gets done (Sandhya, et al., 2011).

Although plenty is still being theorized about work-life balance, the conversation is beginning to shift toward concepts such as energy management, resiliency and flexibility (Sandhya, et al., 2011). Many of the noted forward-thinking organizations indicate that work-life balance is still the ultimate goal to offer their employees. Those who are able to manage their work-life activities (from work, to family, to personal well-being) have something greater than balance. They have fulfillment. Their life fits. The pursuit of work-life balance reduces the stress employees’ experience. When employees spend the majority of their days on work-related activities and feel as if they are neglecting the other important components of their lives, stress and unhappiness result. Work-life balance enables employees to feel as if they are paying attention to all the important aspects of their lives (Wang & Verma, 2012).

Because many employees experience a personal, professional, and monetary need to achieve success at work and in life, obtaining work-life balance can be challenging. Employers can assist employees to meet the work-life balance challenge by offering
opportunities as flexible workplace options. The organization’s managers are important to
employees seeking work-life balance. The managers who pursue work-life balance in their
own lives model appropriate behavior and support employees in their own pursuits of work-
life balance. These managers and supervisors can create a work environment in which work-
life balance is expected, enabled, and supported. As a result, these managers and supervisors
can retain more high-performing employees to whom work-life balance is important.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is twenty-first century employees expect different flexible workplace
options from their employer than previous generations, yet organizations continue to struggle
with how to meet the new expectations (Wang & Verma, 2012). While some organizations
offer flexible work options, others do not. Even among those organizations that adopt
flexible work options, there is a great deal of variation as to the type of options and programs
offered (Wang & Verma, 2012). Such variance creates challenges for organizations and their
human resource departments that are typically responsible for initiating flexible workplace
option programs within organizations.

As competition for attracting and retaining valued employees increases, the ability of
an organization to address personal and family needs becomes more critical. Also, as the
demand for skilled and talented workers exceeds the supply, organizations that are not
prepared to compete and offer attractive working conditions suffer (Benko, 2010).
Organizations that offer generous work and personal life benefits and that have a culture
which supports those who choose to take advantage of flexible work options have an edge in
recruiting and retaining desirable employees (Wang & Verma, 2012). Unfortunately, not all organizations have realized the importance of work-life balance options and are not meeting the competitive challenge of their competitors. Companies such as St. Paul, Co., a sportsman developer in Minnesota, which is not a high-salary employer, attribute lower turnover rates at 3% to a very flexible set of alternative work arrangements (Glassdoor.com, 2013).

Employees expect flexibility and adaptability from their workplaces so they may achieve balance in their lives (Sandhya et al., 2011). Although some organizations have been recognized for their innovative flexible workplace options, have received awards for their innovations, and have succeeded at attracting and retaining human capital, the problem is that more organizations need to understand employee perceptions of and expectations for work-life balance.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to understand employees’ perceptions of flexible workplace options at an organization recognized as “best in class” for offering flexible workplace options in order to offer guidance to other organizations struggling with attracting and retaining human capital. Being able to build competitive advantages through designing and deploying innovative new work/life options provides valuable information for hiring organizations and employees.

For many people, work is a primary factor in determining the overall quality of life (Leary-Joyce, 2010). To contribute to this important quality of life issue, this study may offer a better understanding of employee perceptions about their organization’s flexible work
and career options. For this study, “perceptions” include understanding what employees think about the flexible options, additional options they think would be helpful, and the impact the options have on their employment satisfaction.

**Research Questions**

There are two research questions guiding this study:

- How do employees at a recognized” best in class” organization perceive the flexible work options offered by the organization?
- What types of flex options do these employees say they want?

**Award Winning Organizations**

Award-winning organizations are recognized as “best in class” for offering exemplary work options to their employees. The organization chosen for this study has been named the best place to work for work/life balance, according to survey entities and evaluators, and some of the top awarding agencies. According to the glassdoor.com website (2013), "The very best companies for work-life balance recognize that while work is an important part of our lives, it isn't everything." It is important for employers to recognize that fostering a healthy sense of work-life balance within employees can have both short- and long-term benefits. In the short term, employees are likely to feel more satisfied, and in the long term, they are likely to be loyal and stay with the company longer.

One of this award-winning organization’s goals marketed to prospective employees is to offer meaningful work for their employees, an empowering management philosophy and a world-class work environment that includes services and benefits to make employees' lives
easier at work and in their personal lives. By allowing employees to be motivated, creative, and innovative in their work engagement, companies attract great talent, which is critical for success. The organization’s philosophy has earned ranking on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work for list in 2013. The organization attracts the best talent in the industry by offering the thrill of challenging work with employee-friendly benefits. In addition to the many flexible workplace options, the organization provides employees with many on-site amenities such as health care, recreational facilities, childcare, and work-life resources. This organization believes that happy, healthy employees are productive employees and offers a wide range of programs that reduce stress and distractions so employees can focus on their work. The organization strives to nurture creativity and innovation, encouraging employees to take risks and exceed expectations while helping them with work-life balance. A non-contractual agreement that the organization enters into with the its employees is employees bring their “whole selves” to work; in turn, the organization commits to reducing stress and distraction so they can do their best. The organization’s culture is anchored by meaningful work, excellent leadership and a world-class work environment which is reflected in customer engagement and underpins the organization’s continuous revenue growth. This award-winning organization is a source of inspiration and a great model for other organizations.

**Contemporary Workforce Factors**

The tumultuous changes that have taken place within organizations—for example, through technological and global forces—have been amplified by the changing perception of
many workers regarding how and why they want to work. Forecasts of these changes were voiced decades ago; Louis (1980) explained that worker’s expectations of remaining with one organization for life had already given way to a pattern of periodic job changing and a trend toward serial professions since the 1930s. Around 1990, in response to increased competitive pressure in most Western nations, many organizations started restructuring and de-layering, which resulted in no longer promising lifetime employment, but promoting individual employability (Baruch, 2006). Illustrated in Figure 1.1 are several factors that have contributed to the changes in organizational structuring in the 21st century.

Figure 1.1 Contributing Factors to Workforce
Accelerating retirement of baby boomers, lower birth rates, increased competition for skilled workers worldwide, stagnant college graduation rates, and declining competency in basic skills such as writing and math by high school students and even college graduates are all contributing to the impending talent shortage in the knowledge economy (Benko, 2007). Key characteristics of today’s workforce, its composition, attitudes and family structures have changed significantly over the past several decades (Benko, 2007).

The relationship between work and family for employees in the global economy has evolved considerably in recent years due to increased proportions of working women, dual-earner couples, households headed by an employed single parent, and employees responsible for the care of an elder family member. The results of the changes in family structures are men spending more time with family, and more women entering workforce, which leads to both male and female employees feeling overwhelmed with family and work (Galinsky, 2011).

Changing family structures are altering employment outlook. Today, only 17% of U.S. households have a husband who works outside of the home and a wife who does not, down from 63% a few generations ago (Cherlin, 2006). Other changes, such as the decreased rate of marriage, reduced or delayed childbirth among married couples, and increases in single-parent families as well as dual-career families, all represent a break in traditional norms of family structures. As a result, fewer workers have the support system at home upon which the corporate ladder model and traditional work schedule depends (Benko & Anderson, 2010; Cherlin, 2006).
Part of the changing family structure cited so far is that women are entering the workforce with more education than ever before (McDonagh & Paris, 2012), thus making them better-prepared to contribute to organizations. More than 60% of all college graduates today are women, and they achieve a higher grade point average and more honors than men (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). Half of all law students are women, as are nearly half of all medical students and more than 40 percent of MBAs. More than half of all management jobs today are held by women. The ranks of married women in the workforce have doubled since 1970, yet, most women do not work continuously full-time throughout their careers, and therefore do not fit well in the corporate ladder model, nor do they desire to work traditional 9-5 work schedule (Benko & Weisberg, 2007; McDonagh & Paris, 2012).

Figure 1.2 illustrates that in 1970, 22.1% of women in the civilian labor force had either attended some college or graduated with a degree. By 2010, that figure had increased over three-fold to 66.7% of women in the labor force. The percentage of women in the civilian labor force that had less than a high school diploma decreased from 33.5% in 1970 to 6.8% in 2010 (U.S Bureau of Labor, 2012).
Another aspect of the changing family structure is men spending more time with their children than in past decades. Many have reached a point where preserving or increasing their personal time is more appealing than bigger jobs and more money (Gargiulo, 2011). Control over their work schedule is a high priority. The search for more family and personal time among employees is much larger than any time before in employment history (Benko & Anderson, 2010).

Gillespie (2011) explains that the millennial generation will alter the linear career trajectory leaving traditional employers in the background. Millennials are the generational title of the new generation of young people entering the workforce. The millennials are different from previous generations because of their access to increased technology. The new generation of employees entering workforce is known for seeking greater workplace
flexibility; also, they do not view their careers as linear but rather more lattice-like as they move from one employer to the next (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). According to projections (Benko, et al. 2010), voluntary turnover increased in 2011 and will continue to climb across industries. The turnovers translate into money with separation processing, replacement hiring, training new-hires and lost productivity or business. The cost of replacing a person making $50,000/year can easily reach $75,000, according to Gillespie (2011).

Organizations that tend to be more successful are those that focus on what it means to acquire and assimilate new talent into their workplace (Gillespie, 2011). A concern for organizations is what options and programs are optimal for today’s employee as well as what the impact of flexibility is on the organization. Employers are realizing the need to plan and offer options to meet the needs of 21st Century exemplary employees.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it offers an innovative strategy to understand worker perceptions of flexible work/life options. The study utilized the Career Active System Triad (CAST) model (described below), which postulates a fit between the individual and the organization in terms of values, approaches and behaviors. Further, from the employee point of view, the study contributes to our understanding of the needs, values, and expectations of 21st century knowledge workers. Therefore, to provide the discipline of HRD with research-based evidence for helping employees thrive at work, it is important to continually examine the ever-changing landscape of employees and their careers. For this study, employee perceptions are the focus; perceptions include understanding what employees think of
flexible workplace options as well as understanding what additional options employees perceive would be beneficial in their quest for work-life balance. Much of the recent literature on employment and careers has focused on changes in the business environment system (Baruch, 2006). This study is different because it focuses on the direct relationship between the organization’s flexible work options and employees’ perceptions of those options using the (CAST) model.

This study contributes to filling a gap in the literature, as few studies focus directly on the employee’s perceptions of the flexible workplace options. This study also helps scholars and employers to better understand how employees’ aspirations, attitudes and actions influence and affect the organization’s philosophy, policies and strategies. Additionally, this study helps contribute to an understanding of what additional options employees perceive will be beneficial to them and the behaviors of the employees experiencing the flexible options in an award-winning organization. This study is different because it focuses on the direct relationship between the organization’s flexible work options and employee perceptions. Further, no studies have been conducted exploring employee perceptions of flexible workplace options using the Career Active System Triad (CAST) Model.

**Theoretical Background and Conceptual Foundation**

As will be described more in chapter two, alternative theoretical models were reviewed for potential utilization within this research study. Ultimately, the CAST Model was selected because it provided the best tool to analyze employee perceptions of flexible work options and how the options mapped to organizational practices. The CAST model is
not focused on structures; instead, the CAST model contains three levels to understand components of career success: values, approaches and behaviors as illustrated in Figure 1.3.

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<td>Approaches</td>
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<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>Actions</td>
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Figure 1.3 The CAST Model

Clegg and Cooper (2009) describe the CAST Model as a multilevel conceptual framework developed to help understand the human side of career management. The CAST model has two levels of empirical analysis: organization and individual, and three conceptual levels: values, approaches, and behaviors. Baruch (2006) describes the CAST Model levels and how they are related as follows:

First, the model contains a foundational level which is the basic underlying level of values: the principles, morals, culture–forms the roots from which the other levels emerge. The second level–approaches and assumptions–translates those values into the third level, that of action: behavior and practice. The values convey the aspiration (for individuals) and strategy (for organizations) into the attitudes (for individuals) and policies (for organizations). The final outcome is action, behavior for people, and managerial practices for organizations. This is an active system, always in a perpetual
motion, since it needs to respond to both external pressures from the environment and internal requirements of the organization and its people. (p. 130)

The CAST Model’s multilevel conceptual framework was developed to help understand the human side of career management. CAST’s conceptual and empirical analysis of the individual and organization was the foundation from which the research questions for the study were comprised. The CAST Model is proposed as an active model always in perpetual motion responding both to external (environment, labor markets) and internal (both the organization and the people) dynamics. The research questions for this study seek to understand the employee’s perception of the flexible options offered by their organization. Additionally, the research questions seek to find out what additional options employees desire. The CAST Model assists in answering the research questions as it is a tool for person-organization fit.

Methods Overview

The exploratory multiple case study research design was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of employees’ perceptions of the flexible workplace options. Case study research has a long, distinguished history across many disciplines. Data from semi-structured interviews was collected from employees from an organization recognized by awards and press coverage for its cutting-edge flexible work and career options. In an exploratory multiple case study, the researcher selects one issue or concern, but selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue (Creswell, 2011). For this study, the issue was employee perception of work-life balance options, and each study participant was considered
a case. Creswell (2007) explains that the inquirer purposefully selects multiple cases to allow for different perspectives on the issue. Further justification of the multiple case study design is discussed in chapter two.

In addition to interviews for data collection, the researcher conducted a document analysis of organization documents (for example, Corporate Sustainability Report, Website material, brochures) provided by employee staff along with a review of the organization’s website as a means of triangulation for this study.

**Researcher Statement**

The qualitative research paradigm posits that the researcher is an important part of the process and therefore cannot separate himself or herself from the topic or people being studied. In qualitative research the researcher becomes part of the study and it becomes important to have an understanding of this individual because essentially they become an instrument within the study. As a result of this interaction between the researcher and researched, the knowledge is created. Therefore, the researcher’s bias enters into the process even if the researcher tries to stay out of it (Ganga & Scott, 2006). I, the researcher of this study, have made every effort to avoid bias. Steps take to avoid bias was triangulation of data and a subjectivity statement below.

The author of this study is a master’s student majoring in human resource development. The focus of this study was on employees’ perceptions. This area of research is of specific interest me as I work in a Human Resources capacity and have a strong interest in employee behaviors and performance. Additionally, my career goals are to seek further
advancement in organizational development with an emphasis on employee training and development.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Corporate Lattice Structure:** allows multiple work and career pathways and lacks the traditional top-down hierarchy.

**Flexible Work Options:** a variation from the standard full-time core job functions and hours. Options can include working remotely from home and working varied work hours.

**Millennial:** generation born from 1980 onward; brought up using digital technology and mass media; the children of baby boomers also called “Generation Y.”

**Organizational career:** a career conceived to unfold in a single employment setting.

**Telecommuting:** also called Telework can be defined as the ability to do work at a location other than an “official duty station”, was virtually nonexistent prior to 1990 (Bayrak, 2012).
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

As described in chapter one, this study focused on employee perceptions of flexible workplace options. This study was designed to understand how employees in an award-winning organization perceive the flexible workplace options within their organization. The research questions for this study were: How do employees at a recognized “best in class” organization perceive the flexible work options offered by the organization? And, what types of flex options do these employees say they want? The study utilized the CAST model to analyze worker perceptions.

The literature presented in this review was drawn from electronic database searches from the following: Google and Google Scholar; and the following EBSCO databases: Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, MasterFILE Premier, MasterFILE Select, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycARTICLES, and PsycINFO. Additionally, the following journals were reviewed: Human Resource Management, Journal of Career Development, Journal of Management, Strategic HR Review and Journal of Vocational Behavior.

The first section of the literature review describes the theoretical CAST Model. Included in this review, I summarize scholarly articles and that provides an in-depth review of the CAST Model. Additionally, I provide details of other models and frameworks reviewed for this study. This chapter concludes with an overview of contextual factors for this study which include a review of organizations that provide flexible workplace options and alternate or lattice structuring.
Theoretical Foundation: CAST Model

Discussed in chapter one, this study adopted the CAST model to frame the study. Yehunda Baruch introduced the Career Active System Triad in 2004 as a multi-level conceptual framework to help understand the human side of career management in relation to the organization (Clegg & Cooper, 2009). What is proposed is an active system, always in perpetual motion, responding to both external and internal dynamics. The CAST framework examines both the individual and the organization. At the core of the relationship between the two is the process of matching the need of one side and the ability of the other side to provide for those needs. The outcomes of this relationship are the behaviors of the individuals and the practices of the organizations. Baruch and Hind (1999) define this employee and organization relationship as the unspoken promise of what the employer gives, and what employees give in return.

Baruch (2006) explains in detail the CAST Model viewing each side of the model as an entity contrasting individual approaches versus organizational reactions. The author asks that you look at each side as separate entities responding and reacting to the other. The CAST framework encompasses three levels of analysis for the understandings of the relationship of employee and organization. The framework covers both individual and organizational perspectives, and associates them based on the psychological contract between the two. At the core of the contract is the process of matching the needs of one side with the ability of the other side and the ability of the other side to provide for the needs as well as what is given in return. In viewing the model, imagine a pendulum that swings from one side
to another. One side of the pendulum is the organization as the entity in charge of the relationship in terms of control and command. The organization develops and follows a strategy, forms policies, and applies a wide range of career practices. For the other side of the pendulum, imagine that the power is with the employee. The employee’s actions and behaviors toward the organization drive the policies and strategies. It is becoming evident as explained in chapter on that the twenty-first century trends are toward individualistic employment and career management. Nevertheless, even in this individualistic environment, the organization holds a major and significant role in job and careers. However, employees are more in a position to take control of what they would like the policies and procedures of an organization to offer such as flexible work options.

Baruch (2004) describes the career active system triad (CAST), a conceptual framework for understanding the intersection between individual and organizational career systems. The CAST framework puts into operation three organizational factors and three individual factors. On the individual side, CAST recognizes that individuals have career aspirations that are influenced in part by attitudes, both of which drive people to action to pursue career activities. Baruch (2004) describes the organizational side as combining organizational philosophy, policy and practices related to career practices to develop their human resource function.

The CAST model may be served as a framework for a discussion and for providing the balanced viewpoint for the employee and employer interaction. At the organizational level, the values of the organization may indicate whether the firm takes a traditional or
contemporary approach to establishing employee policies. There is a need to find a match between the requirements of both organizations and individuals. As presented in Chapter four findings, applying the CAST Model can serve as a beneficial tool for organizations striving to offer competitive workplace options to attract exemplary employees.

Applying the CAST Model as a tool to assist in organization employee relationship can provide valuable information before design and implementation of workplace programs. A review of the literature revealed several existing studies and articles utilizing the CAST Model illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1  Applying the CAST Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; Date</th>
<th>Applying the CAST Model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yehunda Baruch (2006)</td>
<td>The CAST model may be served as the framework for the discussion and for providing the balanced viewpoint. At the organizational level, the values of the organization may indicate whether the firm takes a traditional or contemporary approach to careers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Li &amp; Roland Yeo (2011)</td>
<td>Applying the model, 4 major themes emerged as domains of tensions within which employees operated to construct meanings around their work life. These include: internal and external tension, private and public tension, self and otherness tension, and present and future tension. Career development support, flexibility and autonomy in job design as well as flexibility in career development planning emerged as positive career development strategies that would affect employees' perceptions of quality of work life.</td>
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Table 2.1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ronald J. Burke and Cary L. Cooper (2009)</td>
<td>Applying the model when contemplating peak performance organization’s initial focus should be on the organizational members, teams, and the organization as a whole. Secondly need to do in order to enhance the capacity to achieve collective performance potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart Clegg and Cary Cooper (2008)</td>
<td>The key question to career organization relationships is how to develop a match following the person – organization fit concept and which mechanisms to apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cary L. Cooper, James Campbell Quick, Marc J. Schabracq (2009)</td>
<td>CAST assist the challenges of the organization to maintain a fit between the individual needs, competences and career aims and the organizational operational and future goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Backus &amp; Surinder Tikoo (2004)</td>
<td>CAST becomes an exercise in promoting the importance of individual career development within the organization. Without career advancement, individuals lose their competitive edge, and so does the organization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously discussed in chapter one, a part of the preparation for this research was to review of several frameworks, theories and models for consideration. A review of those models and the rationale for non-selection of those models are provided as follows.

**ASA Framework**

The ASA framework was proposed over two decades ago and is aimed at organizational effectiveness (Schneider, 1987). The framework proposed that organizations with certain structural properties or conditions attract and/or select employees through their organizational properties or conditions, and that potential employees’ personal and background attributes factor in to the “match” between employer and employee. That is,
different types of employees are attracted to or selected by organizations that have different structural properties.

Kohn (1971) provides a detailed test conducted over forty years ago of the ASA framework. The test found significant associations between employee intellectual flexibility, openness to change, and choice of leisure activities. The personal attributes of individuals are viewed in this framework as mediating the relationship between organizational structure and employee reactions. The attraction process concerns the fact that people's preferences for particular organizations are based upon an understood estimate of the similarity of their own personal characteristics and the attributes of potential work organizations. That is, people find organizations differentially attractive as a function of their judgments of the similarities between those organizations' goals (and structures, processes, and culture as manifestations of those goals) and their own personalities (Schneider & Goldstein, 1995). Further detailed in the ASA Framework are the formal and informal selection procedures used by organizations in the recruitment and hiring of people with the attributes the organization desires. Lastly, the attrition process refers to the idea that people will leave an organization they do not fit (Schneider & Goldstein, 1995).

ASA framework is a person-based framework for understanding organizational behavior. In ASA, the organization (its structure, process, and culture) is hypothesized to be a function of the personalities of the people there; the organization is the outcome of the founders and top management of organizations and the people subsequently attracted to, selected by, and retained there (Schneider & Goldstein, 1995). The ASA model outlines a
framework for understanding organizational behavior that integrates both individual and organizational theories. The framework proposes that the outcome of three interrelated dynamic processes—attraction, selection, and attrition—determine the kinds of people in an organization, which consequently defines the nature of the organization, its structures, processes, and culture (Schneider, 1987). The people are functions of an Attraction-Selection-Attrition cycle. The ASA framework specifies that properties of organizational structure are related to employee reactions indirectly through the attributes of the employees. Or, alternatively stated, the personal attributes of individuals are viewed in this framework as mediating the relationship between organizational structure and employee reactions.

ASA Framework suggests that three processes—attraction, selection, and attrition—result in organizations containing people with distinct personalities, and it is these distinct personalities that are responsible for the unique structures, processes, and cultures that characterize organizations (Schneider, 1995). While these processes are indeed important to understanding employee decisions about accepting employment offers, they represent the organizational side of the employment relationship; not the employee side. Because this study is focused on employees’ perceptions, the ASA Framework was not a model that could be utilized. Additionally, this model does not provide the analytical tools to help understand employee perceptions.

**Five-Factor Model**

One of the more prominent models in contemporary psychology is what is known as the five-factor model of personality (Digman, 1990). This theory incorporates five different
variables into a conceptual model for describing personality. The five-factor theory is among the newest models developed for the description of personality, and this model shows promise to be among the most practical and applicable models available in the field of personality psychology (Digman, 1990). Thorough attention is given to the proposal that the five-factor model is, in fact, a great theory. Although the five-factor model can assist in determining personality traits for career success, personality is one factor of employee behaviors and does not provide an analysis for the organization. The five-factor model in the workplace shows a correlation between elements of the five-factor model and job performance, but it does not clearly link what types of jobs show increased performance or which types have little to no correlation. Therefore, the five-factor model does not meet the criteria for this study as it researches the employee’s perception of the flexible options offered by the organization.

**Equity Theory**

The Equity theory proposes that individuals who perceive themselves as either under-rewarded or over-rewarded will experience distress, and that this distress leads to efforts to restore equity within the relationship. According to the theory, the distribution of rewards and resources in social systems such as organizations and the manner in which the system deals with the issues have great impact on its effectiveness and the satisfaction of its members.

The problems with the equity theory are it employs a one-dimensional rather than multi-dimensional conception of fairness. The theory conceptualizes perceived justice solely
in terms of a merit principle. Additionally, the second problem is that equity theory considers only the final distribution of the reward. The procedures that generate that distribution are not examined. The focus is on fair distribution, and problems of fair procedure are ignored. Because the equity theory focuses solely on the reward aspect of the employee organization relationship, this theory is not conducive for this research study.

To summarize the presented models and frameworks, the Five-Factor Model in the Workplace provides a correlation between elements of five different factors and job performance, but it does not clearly provide the types of jobs that show increased performance or the types have little or no correlation. The Equity theory conceptualizes and perceives equity only in terms of merit. And, the Attraction Selection Attrition Framework (ASA) focuses on the organizational side of the employee organization relationship. Therefore, the CAST Model, as presented, provides the tool that allows for the best analysis of both the employee and the organization for research.

**Contextual Factors**

**Alternate Organization Structuring**

A work tradition that has been changing over the years is the assumption that employees have to work their way to the top and then quit. The concept that once an employee reaches the top of the corporate ladder, they have no other option, is being altered by the options of working to better fit their family life and cutting back working hours. Today’s workplaces are starting to see more networks of individuals contributing to a common goal, and people coming in to the workplace for projects and moving on to other
things in life. Madsen (2011) indicates that allowing people the freedom to work with flexibility means building a sustainable career with varied skill sets, more future career options, and an ability to balance work and life.

In contrast to the hierarchical organization chart of the twentieth-century organization, the twenty-first-century organization is appearing more like a web: a flat, intricately-woven form that links partners, employees, external contractors, suppliers, and customers in various collaborations. The players are growing more and more interdependent, and managing this intricate network will be as important as managing internal operations for all. As the interdependence grows and the organizational structure changes, the options of where and how to conduct work have altered and allowed for telecommuting.

**Telecommuting**

An option to workplace flexibility is telecommuting. The world's workforce is undergoing a revolution which will change the way we think about employment, office spaces and hierarchy (Madsen, 2011). As workers gain more freedom over when and where they work, the line between self-employed and employed will become increasingly blurred. Madsen (2011) explains that “office spaces will become more like meeting places where mobile workers occasionally gather. This, in turn, will eliminate some of the traditional hierarchies and create a flatter corporate power structure” (p. 152). Benko and Anderson (2010) explain that full-time work will be chopped into more easily-digestible chunks and sandwiched around other priorities in employees’ lives, such as their children: "It will be life first and work second, as opposed to the other way around" (Madsen, 2011, p. 153).
World at Work (2009) reported that the number of U.S. employees who worked remotely at least one day per month increased 39% in two years from approximately 12.4 million in 2006 to 17.2 million in 2008. It is evident that flexible work arrangements are a key component of offering employees more control and freedom in their work patterns and lives.

In today's competitive job market, management continues to look for ways to improve both recruitment and retention of employees (Benko & Anderson, 2010). Telecommuting and other family-friendly programs are valuable tools in recruiting new employees. Madsen (2011) reports the offer to telecommute by manufacturing firms attracted individuals who are characteristically less likely to participate in teleworking. With the option of teleworking, individuals who may not have considered such jobs in the past such as parents of young children or the disabled are now possible candidates for job openings. With regard to retention, workplaces are reporting increased employee retention rates by offering telecommuting as a benefit (Bayrak, 2012; Benko & Anderson, 2010).

Another benefit claim is that teleworking can save an organization money. AT&T, IBM and other companies have reported huge savings in real estate expenses as a result of telecommuting (Madsen, 2011). Various organizations have reported that teleworking employees can save their employers $10,006 each in job retention costs and reduced absenteeism. Most research on financial aspects of teleworking support the reduce costs for both the employer and the employee (Bayrak, 2012).
Career Customization and Lattice Structure

Organizations are finding that a way to alleviate employee stress is to offer flexibility in the workplace using career customization. Benko and Anderson (2010) define career customization as a process in which employees and employers share the responsibility and the opportunity of openly discussing choices and trade-offs for the individual and the firm. Further described, career customization done well gives organizations powerful collateral to retain employees and attract new ones, as the company becomes known as a place where a high performance culture and a sustainable career-life fit are linked. Rather than climb straight up a traditional corporate ladder, employees can make strategic lateral moves that are advantageous for the employee and the organization. Career customization may be one viable solution to help fill the gap between the growing talent shortage and the need to build sustainable, adaptive careers (Benko & Anderson, 2010; Benko & Weisberg, 2007).

The career customization approach is not just good for the individual. Companies gain a more versatile, collaborative and engaged talent base by moving employees up, down and across the business in strategic ways (Benko & Anderson, 2010; Benko & Weisberg, 2007). It also affects financial performance since holding onto experienced employees drives corporate talent acqurement costs down, positively impacting the bottom line. Career customization is about enabling workers, not simply entitling them. Employees and employers share the responsibility and the opportunity of openly discussing choices and trade-offs for the individual and the firm (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). Implemented well,
career customization gives organizations powerful collateral to retain employees, and attract new ones (Benko & Weisberg, 2007; Benko & Anderson, 2010).

**Corporate lattice model.** Models that have been developed utilizing the career customization approach are the Corporate Lattice Model (Benko & Weisberg, 2007; Benko & Anderson, 2010). A lattice organization uses a lattice model that consists of three lattice ways: careers that can be organized to suit the needs of individual workers; flexible work scheduling that allows workers to achieve a work-life balance by taking on more or less responsibility; and full participation providing ways for workers to contribute ideas and suggestions in every area of the organization (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). A corporate lattice system encourages a continuous collaboration between employer and employee to design customized career paths, taking into account both the changing needs of the business and employees’ changing lives. The result is an adaptive model of career progression that offers employees career-long options for keeping their work and personal lives in sync and employers the long-term loyalty of their best and brightest (Benko & Anderson, 2010; Benko & Weisberg, 2007). Summarized in Figure 2.1 are the benefits of career customization.
**Corporate lattice structuring.** A lattice organization defined, allows multiple work and career pathways and lacks the traditional top-down hierarchy (Benko & Anderson, 2010). For example, such companies allow all workers to participate in and contribute to development of new projects; they also allow workers to work remotely or on flexible schedules. Lattice organizations also allow employees to move laterally through the organization, changing positions so that they can gain knowledge about all aspects of operations (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). A lattice organization uses a lattice model that consists of three lattice ways: careers that can be organized to suit the needs of individual
workers; flexible work scheduling that allows workers to achieve a work-life balance by taking on more or less responsibility; and full participation, all providing ways for workers to contribute ideas and suggestions in every area of the company (Benko & Anderson, 2010).

A lattice organizational structure allows corporations to become more flexible and to adapt more quickly to changing market conditions. Lattice organizations are also able to take better advantage of their talent pool; by giving workers more responsibility and the opportunity to change their work patterns to balance their work and home life, lattice companies have better worker retention and greater productivity (Benko & Anderson, 2010).

The idea of a lattice organization was first put into practice in 2005 at Deloitte, where management pioneered the idea of mass career customization to replace flexible working arrangements (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). This program allows workers at Deloitte to organize their level of responsibility at work to match their personal needs – employees who need to "dial down" can move to positions with less responsibility, then "dial up" again when they wish. The company found this approach so successful that they began to recommend it to their clients.

Lattice companies have paths that move up, down, diagonally, and across, developing more versatile leaders and providing higher engagement through continual challenge and learning at a sustainable career-life fit (Benko & Anderson, 2010; Benko & Weisberg, 2007). The lattice makes possible more collaborative and customized ways to structure work, build careers and foster participation. Organizations adopting a lattice mindset realize that providing more options for when, where and even how work gets done is smart and
encourages greater productivity and engagement. Benko and Weisberg (2007) reported the telecommunications provider Frontier Communications now has 30% of their call center agents working remotely from home. This shift in operation results in a 25% production increase and they double the retention rate of agents who work in traditional call centers (Benko & Weisberg, 2007).

Lattice organizations allow employees to customize their careers as they need. Lattice ways to build careers offer multiple paths for learning and growth. Not only can lattice structures contribute significantly to the bottom line by increasing productivity while reducing real estate costs and turnover, for example, they also can improve engagement by providing more options for fitting life into work and work into life (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). Ladder careers have one direction for growth, development and status. The lattice career allows the employee to pursue continued growth, development and organizational influence by creating and valuing career paths that move laterally, diagonally and down, as well as up illustrated in Figure 2.2.
Flexible Organizations

Structuring to accommodate employees has been utilized by several reputable organizations. The benefits have been shown to establish increased productivity of employee performance. Organizations that tend to be more successful are those that focus on what it means to acquire and assimilate new talent into their workplace (Galinsky, et al., 2011).


Figure 2.2. Ladder vs. Lattice Corporate Structure
**Google.** Another organization that offers alternate organization structuring is Google. The internet company is fourth on the U.S. Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For list (Garguilo, 2011). Google offers employees freedom and flexibility in their jobs and reports that it pays off spectacularly as the performance of the company is consistently outperforming other companies. According to Garguilo (2011), “You don't need a lot of money to do what Google has done. If you give people freedom, they will amaze you” (p. 2). Google has indicated the payoff shows up in increased innovation and productivity, low turnover, low sickness rates, and high employee satisfaction. “In the constant search for increasingly sparse talent, a strong employer offering flexibility to employees can attract and attain some amazing people. People who are exceptional and motivated, and who are driven beyond a good job and a paycheck,” says Laszlo Bock, senior vice president of people operations at Google (Garguilo, 2011, p. 2).

**SAS.** Fortune 500 company SAS has been a leading organization in exploring alternative organization structuring for employees. The CEO and founder of SAS, James Goodnight, says, “Over the years, I’ve learned how employee loyalty leads to customer loyalty, increased innovation, and higher-quality software. Employees matter. You are not going to succeed unless you have a stable workforce” (Goodnight, 2006, p. 1). SAS, a private software company with nearly $2 billion in annual revenue, has an employee turnover rate averaging just three percent in an industry where turnover typically is above 20 percent. A Stanford Graduate School of Business study estimated that SAS saves $60 million to $80 million a year because of its low employee turnover. SAS also is very efficient in retaining
customers, averaging 98 percent. SAS has estimated a company savings of hundreds of millions due to low percentage of company turnover (Gargiulo, 2011).

SAS earns a spot on FORTUNE magazine's list of 100 Best Companies to Work For in the US, marking its 10th time in the top 10. Additionally, SAS ranks No. 2 this year, 2013, for its challenging work, empowering leadership and great workplace environment. SAS has made the list every year since its 1998 inception (SAS, 2013). SAS boasts on their company website that they believe that happy, healthy employees drive the innovation that supports SAS leadership in business analytics. SAS CEO Jim Goodnight states on the company website, "Our ability to attract and keep creative employees directly contributes to SAS' consistent revenue growth, profitability and industry-leading products and solutions" (SAS, 2013). SAS explains that the heart of their business model is a simple idea: satisfied employees create satisfied customers. Jenn Mann, SAS Vice President of Human Resources, said, "SAS on-site health care, fitness center, subsidized child care, and numerous wellness programs reduce distractions. Employees are not only happier, but they also feel valued, which makes them more productive" (SAS, 2013).

SAS's corporate philosophy is based on the commitment between Human Resources (HR) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). That means attention to organizational well-being as well as the health and safety of all employees in the workplace. Sustainably managing human resources is essential for competitiveness (SAS, 2013). Also important are flexible benefits for employees and their families. SAS employee turnover rate remains extraordinarily low: 3.3 percent versus an industry norm of 22 percent. By reducing turnover,
SAS reduces recruitment costs, retains knowledge and builds deeper, longer-term customer relationships. SAS sees a strong connection between employee loyalty and business success.

**Rho.** Rho, a contract research organization, came together in January 2010 with a leadership team to brainstorm ways to advance employees’ careers, not just vertically, but laterally (Galinsky, et. al, 2011). Each employee was given a personalized career map and a coach who talks with him/her about goals, providing a neutral support system. The goal of this program was to provide a mechanism for changing the upward-steps model because they were moving more linear. Rho does not have the multiple layers of management that are common in other companies. Rho's turnover rate for 2010 was 9%, while the average in their industry for 2010 was 15.4% (Galinsky, et. al, 2011).

**Deloitte.** At Deloitte, each employee's lattice is incorporated into a twice-a-year evaluation focused not just on career targets but also on larger life goals (Benko and Anderson, 2010). An employee can request to do more or less travel or client service, say, or to move laterally into a new role—changes that may or may not come with a pay cut. Benko and Anderson (2010) report:

Deloitte's data from 2008 suggest that about 10% of employees choose to "dial up" or "dial down" at any given time. Deloitte's Mass Career Customization (MCC) program began as a way to keep talented women in the workforce, but it has quickly become clear that women are not the only ones seeking flexibility. Responding to millennials demanding better work-life balance, young parents needing time to share child-care duties and boomers
looking to ease gradually toward retirement, Deloitte rolled out career customization to all 42,000 U.S. employees in May 2010. Deloitte executives are in talks with more than 80 companies working on similar programs. (p. 123)

**Twenty-First Century Business Needs**

There have been shifts in what employees, customers and stakeholders want from businesses in recent years. The companies and leaders that have recognized these shifts and responded to them are already reaping the benefits of being in touch with these changing trends and global issues (Gargiulo, 2011). The organizations that have adapted to the new complexities of the 21st century are best positioned to create invigorating cultures that attract and motivate the best talent and allow them to connect with their customers and external stakeholders in an authentic and positive way (Kosteas, 2011).

Composition of work and family life spheres has significantly changed over a period of time. Today’s working male and female face a broad set of daily challenges which many times create imbalance between their working life and personal/family life (Encombe, 2008). Lack of work-life balance influences working individuals’ performance at the workplace as well as in their personal life. In the current economic scenario, organizations are hard-pressed for higher productivity and can face the recessionary challenges better if their employees are more engaged with work and workplace (Encombe, 2008; Naithani, 2010). More than ever, organizations need employees with improved work-life balance. An employee with better
work-life balance will contribute more meaningfully towards the organizational growth and success (Naithani, 2010).

Organizations that will be successful in the 21st century are those that can inspire and motivate their people and create meaningful organizations. This is because people want to work in and with organizations that are successful and want to feel as individuals. And, employees want to feel that they are engaged in something worthwhile (Encombe, 2008). It is the role of 21st century leaders in the organizations to create a high-performing and engaging environment by ensuring that the key workplace options are understood and present within the organization. Peiperl and Baruch's (1997) twenty-first century literature regarding the anticipation of the direction of career process was quite accurate. New ways and options emerge, and there is a change in the role of both organizations and employees. Peiperl and Baruch’s predictions reinforce the fact that people need to abandon the nostalgia for traditional and conventional systems and become accustomed to new, varied employment options.

Organizational structures are in an influx of change as the traditional climb of the ladder of success is adjusting to the changes of the 21st century. Work in corporate America of the 21st century is radically different than any time in the past (Benko, 2010). The nine-to-five, traditional model developed in the industrial age has been challenged and overhauled for a new landscape (Kosteas, 2011). The hierarchical structures and organizational processes that were used for decades to run and improve organizations are no longer the
preferred form of operation in this faster-moving world. Illustrated in Figure 2.3 is the projected job growth and needs in the next decade that organizations will be faced with.

Figure 2.3. 21st Century Projected Job Growth and Need 2010-2020

In concert with the organization structures, employment demographics are transitioning as well. The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that job openings stem from both employment growth and replacement needs as demonstrated in Figure 2.4. Replacement needs arise as workers leave occupations, with some workers transferring to
other occupations while others retire, return to school, or leave the labor force to assume household responsibilities. Replacement needs are projected to account for 63% of the approximately 54.8 million job openings between 2010 and 2020. Even occupations that are projected to experience slower-than-average growth or to decline in employment will still have openings that are due to replacement needs (US Labor Statistics, 2012).

Technological advances and economic trends mean that work is increasingly virtual and globally dispersed. As a result, productivity and performance increasingly depend on a workforce that is more diverse than ever before, from gender and generation to culture, background and experience (Benko & Weisberg, 2007). The traditional career paths of the past defined a point-to-point progression that targeted a select few. Traditional employment and career-guiding programs generally worked because the environment was more stagnant, jobs were more stable, and employees were loyal and more connected to their organization (Benko & Anderson, 2010). These conditions do not describe today's world of work. Job jumping, career changing, volatile industries, and shifting work environments are now the ways of organizational life. Also, the contracts between employer and employee have significantly changed (Gaffney, 2008). As a result of the changes and employees’ needs combined with an effort to attract and maintain exemplary employees, organizations are beginning to rethink the traditional organization structure and are becoming more flexible.

**Summary of Literature Review**

A review of the literature reveals an increasingly diverse and changing workforce. Job flexibility to meet work life balance is and will be valued by the workforce. The
traditional needs of employees are no longer the norm. The contracts between employer and employee have significantly changed (Gaffney, 2008). As a result of the changes and needs of employees and an effort to attract and maintain exemplary employees, organizations are beginning to rethink the traditional organization structure and offer flexible workplace options. There is a need to find a match between the requirements of both organizations and individuals. The CAST model provides a theoretical tool to assist this study in exploring the intricate connection between the individual and the organization. This connection is important in this exploratory research study of employees’ perceptions of flexible workplace options (policies/procedures) within an award-winning organization.

Employment has changed dramatically in the 21st century, so it is difficult to utilize traditional or conventional career models. For example, organizations have gotten flatter than they were, so there is much less chance now of employees climbing hierarchical ladders. The nature of traditional employment was based on hierarchical, highly structured, and rigid structures. Past career models had a clear structured direction of prescribed advancement. The organizational hierarchy was the ladder to climb on. In contrast, by the 21st century, the nature of employment had been altered significantly. Jobs are becoming more transitional, flexible, and the dynamics of the re-structuring has blurred the former routes forcing a new perspective of what is success to those employees. The new models of employment comprise of a variety of options, many possible directions for employee satisfaction and/or development. People experience different ways of defining career success: it can be a sideways move or a change of direction, of organization, of aspiration. There are now
multiple options and criteria for assessing success in employment. These can be inner satisfaction, life balance, autonomy and freedom, and other measures of self-perceived benefits. All these have entered the formula for the 21st century job, alongside the traditional external measures of income, rank and status.

The literature suggests that there is a major shift away from the traditional employment (life-long employment with a single employer or two) to multiple careers, with shorter times spent in each career (Leary-Joyce, 2010). In addition, the traditional 9-5 work schedule is no longer standard. With today’s family, work, traffic and live demands, flexibility is in demand for today’s employee.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, an overview of the qualitative approach used for this study will be explained. This chapter also discusses the organization and participant selection process that took place for this study. Additionally, this chapter discusses the methods utilized for data collection, human protection procedures and data analysis. All of the aforementioned information is vital in research design of a qualitative study. This qualitative research study sought out to understand employees’ perceptions of flexible workplace options.

Design and Justification of Methods

Sound research requires a systematic and rigorous approach to the design and implementation of the study, the collection and analysis of data, and the interpretation and reporting of findings (Fossey, et al., 2002). Case study research studies an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (Creswell et al., 2007). Case study research has a long, distinguished history across many disciplines. In a collective or multiple-case study, the researcher selects one issue or concern, but selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue. Creswell (2007) explains that he inquirer purposefully selects multiple cases to show different perspectives on the issue. The case study approach provides in-depth descriptions and has been utilized in psychology, medicine and law among other professions for many years (Creswell, 2013).

Multiple case study design was chosen for this study as it allowed the ability to investigate thoroughly and understand the phenomenon of interest. Stake (2000), indicates that selection of multiple case studies typically necessitate researchers to choose their cases
such as purposeful sampling. In fact, in multiple case studies, “nothing is more important than making a proper selection of cases” (Stake, 2000, p. 446).

Qualitative research is a method for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human question or problems. The focus of qualitative research is on understanding individual meaning and recognizing the complexity of a matter (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research can provide complex descriptions of how people experience an issue as well as provide information about an issue including behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2011).

Qualitative research, broadly defined, means any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990); instead, it is the kind of research that produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally (Patton, 2001, p. 39). This qualitative research case examined employees’ perceptions of flexible work place options; specifically, this study explored employees’ perceptions of flexible work options employed in an award-winning organization. The study addressed the following questions:

- How do employees at a recognized “best in class” organization perceive the flexible work options offered by the organization?
- What types of flex options do these employees say they want?

This case-study research involved the study of an issue explored in multiple cases, bound by a similar occurrence, using in-depth data collection with multiple sources of
information. Therefore, an exploratory collective case study strategy was chosen for this study in order to examine in-depth and in a holistic manner the situation under investigation. A qualitative case study is particularistic in that it focuses on a particular situation, event or phenomenon. It is descriptive and provides insight into the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2009). Case studies focus on insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing, numerical data, and statistics. Case studies also provide contextual analysis of a limited number of events and their relationships.

A paradigm or worldview is a basic set of beliefs that guide action (Creswell, 2009). It is important to note that I approached this study through the lens of social constructivism. Creswell (2007) describes the social constructivist paradigm as a worldview in which individuals seek in an effort to understand the world in which they live and work: “They develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. The goal of the research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participant’s views of the situation” (Creswell, 2007, p.20). This study utilized the constructivist paradigm as the research relied as much as possible on the participants’ views of the study matter as they are the experts. The data collection process for the study was semi-structured interviews to obtain the understanding of the participants’ perceptions of the work environment. The interview questions were qualitative, open-ended questions. Creswell (2009) states the social constructivist research design is constructed so that the more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life settings. Additionally, the research questions for this study were designed using
a social constructivist framework, as they sought to understand the participants’ perception of their work life environment, specifically their flexible workplace options.

**Methods**

Method refers to the tools, techniques, or procedures used to generate data (Kaplan, 1964). This section discusses the human subjects protection; the organization and participant selection processes, including criteria for selecting the participants; a detailed description of the data collection and analyses processes; and steps taken to ensure reliability, validity, and trustworthiness.

**Human Subjects Protection**

Prior to any research being conducted, the research plan was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at NC State University and approved (see Appendix A). The IRB is federally-regulated and provides protection against human rights violations. In order to respect the participants and the organization for this study, ethical issues were considered. Once each participant interview was scheduled and confirmed at a location and time convenient to each participant, upon arriving to each interview site, an informed consent was provided for their signature (Appendix B). After the consent form was signed, a copy was provided to the participant while the other copy was kept by the researcher. Once the process of informed consent was complete, the interview proceeded to take place.

Each interview was recorded via a high-quality recording device and the voice document was exported immediately following the interview to a password-protected Dropbox storage account. The researcher made handwritten notes in addition to audio
taping. The information in the study records were kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data was stored securely in the researcher’s personal, password-protected computer.

Participants were asked not to write their name on any study materials so that no one could match their identity to the answers that they provided. A number was assigned to the interview and was used in all written notes, transcriptions, and data regarding participants. Documents were saved indicating the assigned interview number. A code book was then used to record the name of the consenting participants with the corresponding number. This number was used instead of the subject’s name on all field notes. All of the subjects’ information was kept confidential and secure by locking field notes and consent forms in a file box. The list of code numbers with the subjects’ names were kept in a separate lock box. All data entered into computers was password-protected. Once the study was concluded, all documents were destroyed.

**Organization Selection and Rationale**

The award-winning organization selected for the study is located in the United States and offers flexible work options to their employees. The selected organization was identified through the literature review and talking with fellow human resource personnel who identified the organization as a pioneer and forward-thinking place of employment that has implemented flexible workplace programs. The organization has received commendable awards and recognition for providing a work environment that is designed to nurture and encourage creativity, innovation and quality work for its employees. The organization’s website proclaims the organization is a challenging, employee-friendly and fun place to
work, receiving recognitions and awards from respectable entities. Documented on the website and in company printed literature, the organization indicates investment into their employees because “it is the right thing to do and it makes great business sense.”

Additionally, this organization was named one of the best places for work/life balance by Glassdoor.com, a social job and career community website where people share information and opinions about the places they work. Glassdoor.com states, “The very best companies for work-life balance recognize that while work is an important part of our lives, it isn’t everything.”

The organization’s philosophy has earned it a ranking on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For list in 2013. The organization attracts the best talent in the industry by offering the thrill of challenging work with employee-friendly benefits. In addition to the many flexible workplace options, the organization provides employees with many on-site amenities such as health care, recreational facilities, childcare and work-life resources. This organization believes that happy, healthy employees are productive employees and offers a wide range of programs that reduce stress and distraction so employees can focus on their work. The organization strives to nurture creativity and innovation, encouraging employees to take risks and exceed expectations while helping them balance their work and life. The organization’s culture is anchored by meaningful work, excellent leadership and a world-class work environment which is reflected in customer engagement and underpins the organization’s continuous revenue growth. This award-winning organization is a source and a great model for other organizations.
This organization was also chosen because it was conveniently located for the researcher’s access to participants for face-to-face interviewing. The initial contact for the organization selection was through an e-mail request to an HR acquaintance. The e-mail requested permission for participation in the study along with assistance in recruiting employees for participation (see Appendix D).

**Participant Selection and Rationale**

In order to address the research questions, participants for the study were purposefully selected. Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research to select individuals for the study that can inform an understanding of the research questions or problem for the study (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, it was imperative for this study that I obtain participants that experience flexible workplace options to obtain their perceptions. Additionally, this purposeful sample was convenient as the location of the employees were local and easy access for face-to-face interviews.

The initial process for participant selection was contacting the award-winning organization’s human resources department for this study. Once confirmation from the organization was obtained, a list of potential participants was provided; the list of potential participants included employees that expressed an interest in possible participation in the study following an informal survey of employees given to them after an internal training development class for employees. Those that responded favorably were given my name as the researcher who would be making contact for the study. I contacted possible participants via e-mail. The number of contacts the organization provided was ten. All of the listed
individuals were contacted regarding participation in the study (Appendix C). Six individuals expressed a willingness to participate following the initial contact; they all met the criteria for the study and were scheduled a time for conducting the face-to-face interviews. Due to outside commitments and family emergencies, one of the participants had to withdraw and cancel the appointment. Therefore, a total of five participants ultimately participated in this study. Participant criterion was the following:

- employed with the selected organization for a minimum of year;
- presently participating in the organization’s flexible workplace options program
- willingness to meet for a minimum 30 minute semi-structured interview.

Participants

Each of the five participants for this research study is an employee at a local award-winning organization. A purposeful sampling strategy was employed for selecting the participants in order to ensure that they would be able to provide information directly related to the research questions. The participants met the eligibility requirements for the study as they experience flexible work options in the award-winning organization. Table 3.1 provides participant demographic information that includes participant’s age, gender, years of service with the organization, length of time in current position and the department of the current position. Each participant participated in a 25-30 minute interview.

Of the five participants, one was male and the remaining participants were female. Additionally, all of the participants had longevity with the organization, except one who had
been employed only two years. Because participants of the organization volunteered for the study, the study was limited in obtaining variation for representation or equality amongst participant’s demographics.

Table 3.1  Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years in current position</th>
<th>Position/Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>21 ½</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Procedures

For this study, a semi-structured interview technique was chosen as it allowed for follow-up on specific ideas or issues. In general, interviewing is a set of techniques for generating data from individuals and/or groups utilizing structured, semi-structured, or unstructured questioning formats (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007). Semi-structured interviews are used to facilitate a more focused exploration of a specific topic and were selected for this study because of the flexibility the format offered during the data collection process. Further, in this study, interview guides were used. Interview guides usually contain a list of questions and prompts designed to guide the interview in a focused yet flexible and conversational manner (Fossey et al., 2002). This approach to data collection is
advantageous in ensuring sensitivity to participants’ language and privileging their knowledge.

The interview guide for this study was developed based on the CAST Model (Appendix E). The interview guide incorporated the three levels of conceptual analysis of the CAST Model, approaches, values and behaviors. Additionally, interview questions were created to uncover employees’ perception of flexible workplace options and what additional options employees desire.

Once each interview was scheduled and confirmed at a location and time convenient to each participant, upon arriving to each interview site, an informed consent was provided for their signature (Appendix B). Informed consent is critical in the research process. The aim of informed consent is to disclose what the study is about, provide any known risks in participating, and to let participants know their participation is voluntary and that the interview would be recorded. After the consent form was signed, one copy was delivered to the participant while the other was kept by the researcher. Once the process of informed consent was complete, the interview proceeded.

Each interview was recorded via a high-quality recording device and the voice document was exported following the interview to a password protected Dropbox storage account. The researcher took handwritten notes in addition to audio taping. Creswell (2009) recommends that researchers take notes in the event that recording equipment fails. The information in the study records were and are kept confidential. Data was stored securely in the researcher’s personal password protected computer. Also, participants were asked not to
write their name on any study materials so that no one could match their identity to the answers that they provide. A number was assigned to the interview and was used for all written notes, transcriptions, and data regarding participants. Documents were saved indicating the assigned interview number. A code list was then used to record the name of the consenting participants with the corresponding number. This number was used instead of the subject’s name on all field notes. All of the subjects’ information was kept confidential and secure by locking field notes and consent forms in a file box. The list of code numbers with the subject names are kept in a separate lock box in a different location. All data entered into computers was password-protected. Once the study was concluded, all documents were destroyed. At the conclusion of each interview, participants were provided with a final thank-you statement to acknowledge the time the interviewee spent during the interview as suggested by Creswell (2009).

In addition to interviews, I was provided organizational documents and marketing items regarding the offered flexible workplace options. Documentation analysis is another prominent form of data collection used in case study research (Creswell, 2013). Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to add meaning regarding the study topic. In addition to collecting documents, I analyzed documents coding content into themes similar to the process of how the interview transcripts were analyzed. Information regarding the organization is well-documented on their website and provides a great resource for additional information regarding the organization’s practices, policies and awards.
**Document Analysis**

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Documents that may be used for systematic evaluation as part of a study take a variety of forms. They include advertisements; agendas, attendance registers and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; event programs, and more if available. The analytic procedure for documents entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents. Document analysis yields data—excerpts, quotations, or entire passages—that are then organized into major themes, categories, and case examples through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2003).

For this study, the researcher used document analysis in combination with participant interviews as a means of triangulation. According to Denzin (1970), qualitative research methods often use document analysis in combination with other methods to draw upon multiple sources of evidence to seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods. I reviewed organizational documents that included press releases, brochures, employee benefit materials, articles and company website.
Data Analysis Procedures

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text. To further explain, Creswell (2009) describes data analysis as “moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (some qualitative researchers like to think of this as peeling back the layers of an onion), representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data” (p. 183).

The strategy utilized for the data analysis of this study was Creswell’s strategy steps for qualitative research as follows:

Step 1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis. The interviews for this study are the main source of data for the study. Each interview was transcribed word-for-word. The data analysis began by organizing the recorded interviews and documents into a password-protected Dropbox storage account as mentioned previously. Each interview was then transcribed word-for-word into a coding scheme template. Words and phrases from the interviews were indexed or coded to create patterns. These patterns led to overarching themes.

Step 2. Read through all data. Following transcription of each interview a re-read of the information was conducted to reflect on its overall meaning. At this time, I began to write notes and document general thoughts about the data in this initial stage.

Step 3. Begin detailed analysis with a coding process. Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to the information. The initial coding process for this study consisted of organizing the
transcription into segments of text clustered by topics. A highlighter was used to mark key repetitive language in each study. Following the coding of the individual cases, a cross-case comparative analysis was employed. A cross-case search for patterns examines the subtle similarities and differences between each case.

Step 4. Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. Following coding for categories and topics, I then coded to generate codes for description and to acknowledge themes. Themes are important to the coding process as the researcher can use themes to interconnect into a story line or develop them into a theoretical model (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the a-priori codes were developed from the CAST model and represent the three conceptual and two empirical levels.

Creswell (2012) states when conducting a case study with multiple cases, it is important to first do a “within-case analysis, followed by a thematic analysis across cases, called a cross-case analysis, as well as assertions or an interpretation of the meaning of the case” (p. 101). The researcher employed all of the aforementioned analysis and strategies suggested by Creswell for data analysis of the study.

To summarize, a priori codes developed from the CAST Model were generated. Additionally, themes, meanings, and ideas were generated from the data itself. Open coding is interpretive and is a type of narrative analysis. During this analysis, I read through the transcripts and data, allowing themes to emerge, making interpretations and not forming preexisting ideas; I made notes in the margins (Creswell, 2013). Following this step, I
reviewed the notes, searching for themes to build the coding scheme and develop brief descriptions. Together, the a-priori and open coding analysis process produced robust findings about how employees perceive the flexible work options in an award winning organization.

**Categorization and Themes**

Initially, categories were generated from the preset analysis-level codes of the CAST Model. Step two of categorizing involved identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link participants and settings together. Patterns were identified from the interviews and led to the initial themes. The patterns were viewed specific to participatory relationship descriptions and perceptions of the flexible workplace options. The patterns and themes were combined using a repetitive word table.

Interpretation begins during research design and continues when the data is collected, analyzed, and written (Stake, 1995). Stake argues that interpretation is necessary in all research methodology; however, in qualitative research, there is vigorous interpretation that begins during data collection and continues through the entire process. Interpretation is not restricted to final analysis portion of this research. As described in Stake (1995), interpretation took place throughout the data collection process. This ongoing analysis informed the research process and highlighted repetitive and significant portions of the research.
Validity & Reliability

To ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial: “Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). Seale (1999) explains that while establishing good quality studies through reliability and validity in qualitative research, “trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability” (p. 266). Creswell (2009) states, “qualitative research in a good study is ethical. This involves more than simply the researcher seeking and obtaining the permission of institutional review committees or boards. It means that the researcher is aware of and addressing in the study all the ethical issues” (p. 47).

According to Creswell (2003), three elements need to be considered in a study design in order to improve its rigor: its knowledge claims, its strategy of inquiry, and its methods of data collections and analysis. This study has attempted to generate meaningful and trustworthy findings by addressing considerations for both validity and reliability. Approaches to address concerns about validity and reliability are carefully made, especially about the manners by which the data was handled.

Conducting recorded interviews requires ethical considerations. Informed consent was a process used to communicate explicit details to the participants and allow them to withdraw from participation. The researcher was aware participants may have concerns
about comments that may appear to be critical about their organizations. Therefore, steps to maintain confidentiality and data protection were detailed and shared with each participant and the organization.

After each participant interview was transcribed for this study, each participant was allowed to review the transcription to verify accuracy and ensure validity. Additionally, participants were provided the opportunity to make changes to the transcription if clarification was needed. The initial codes were verified by the researcher independently and then reviewed with a fellow researcher together to validate findings. Information from the study was kept confidential and securely stored in computer files that were password protected. Results from interviews and documentation analysis were not connected to the participant or the participant’s organization. Real names of participants or the names of the organization were not used. No references in oral or written report were linked to participants of the study.

Limitations

The qualitative method used was an exploratory multiple case study design, which is descriptive and does not seek to provide a cause-and-effect relationship between attitudes and behaviors. As with all studies, limitations are present and must be disclosed to provide transparency to other researchers and readers. The study involved a small number of participants at a non-traditionally structured organization and does not represent all organizations. While the participant selection was purposeful to fit within the research focus, the sample size was reasonably small. The participants list that was provided through
initial contact with the organization included volunteers who were willing to participate in an educational study. These volunteers could present as a population that has a perception that may not reflect that of the overall employee consensus at the organization.

To develop this study further, additional interviews could be conducted with additional employees to see if findings still prove to be trustworthy. Additionally, a study of employees at organization that does not provide flexible work options for employees would provide a comparison study and in-depth look at employees’ perceptions. In an exploratory multiple case study, the researcher interprets and makes judgments about the data which may mean that research results are not completely objective. Every effort has been made to ensure trustworthiness of the analysis process and to present the data to support the findings.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This exploratory multiple case study examined employees’ perceptions of flexible workplace options in an award-winning organization. Specifically, the study investigated what employee’s value about the flexible workplace options offered and what additional options do they say they desire. Additionally, the study utilizes Baruch’s (2004) CAST Model to focus on the direct relationship between employee and organization. The research was collected utilizing in-depth semi-structured interviews with five employees that have experience with flexible workplace options in an award winning organization. Further, the research included an analysis of organization documents pertaining to the policies and procedures offered to the employees for work/life balance.

The first part of analysis for the study was a-priori coding using the CAST model on interview transcripts and organizational documents. The purpose of this coding strategy was to map each interviewee’s transcription, and each document, to the individual portion of the CAST model. The a-priori codes were developed from the CAST model and represent the three conceptual and two empirical levels of the model. The interviewees were asked questions that were created to understand the three individual or conceptual portions of the CAST model, namely aspirations, attitudes and actions. The purpose of the questions was to get data from the interviews that illuminate employee aspirations, attitudes, and actions regarding flexible work, and then to examine how aligned the responses were to the organization’s philosophy, policies and practices.
Documents were likewise analyzed using the CAST model. Document analysis was conducted in combination with employee interviews as a means of triangulation. By examining data collected through different methods, as the researcher wanted to corroborate findings across data sets and reduce the impact of potential biases that may exist. According to Patton (1990), triangulation helps the researcher guard against the accusation that a study’s findings are simply an artifact of a single source or a single investigator’s bias.

The second part of the analysis for this study was open-coding, which was a strategy to identify emergent themes, ideas, or categories that the CAST model does not address.

This chapter will describe the key findings from the a-priori coding process, as well as describe the meaning gleaned from the open coding process. The chapter is organized into two sections. First, a-priori findings from the CAST Model are presented. Second, open coding findings are presented to illustrate findings not captured from the CAST Model.

**A-Priori Findings**

There were three key findings from this study based on the CAST Model Framework. First the study found that the participant’s importance of family also was the strategy and philosophy of the organization. The importance of family was voiced as the most important aspect of the individual’s aspirations. In relation, the organization voiced the importance of family in their marketing materials and in the benefit packages it offers the employees.

The second finding revealed the participant’s attitudes and approaches were reflected in the organizational policies. Participants described an attitude of gratitude for the flexible
options offered to them. In relation to this gratitude, the organization presents policies established that reveal appreciation of their employee’s loyalty. Additionally, the organization at provides a Corporate Sustainability Report yearly that provides accountability to the employees.

And, the third finding of this study found the employee’s actions and behaviors of balance were reflected in the managerial practices of the organization. The organization has put into practice many practices and policies that provide employees with assistance to maintain work-life balance.

**CAST Model: A Priori Coding**

The conceptual framework for this study was an in-depth look at the case studies findings using the CAST Model. The interview questions were developed and mapped to the CAST model’s individual level of analysis to understand the employee’s values, attitudes and behaviors. The purpose of the questions were to collect data from the interviews that illuminate employee aspirations, attitudes, and actions regarding flexible work, and see how aligned they are to the organizational portion of the CAST model.

After categorizing the data from the participant interviews, it was very apparent that the employee values, aspirations and behaviors were directly linked to the practice and policy of the organization. This section serves to illustrate the data analysis procedures conducted at the individual level, followed by the procedures for the organizational level. Following the cross-case analysis of the five employees interviewed and the organization documents, evidence and understanding of the direct relationship between organization and employee fit
was evident. The results of the a priori coding findings from the analysis are illustrated in Figure 4.1.

The analysis of data was grounded within the three conceptual levels of the CAST Model Framework: values, approaches and behaviors. For each of these categories, the analysis followed the procedures described in Table 4.4 for the individual level of analysis and Table 4.5 for the organizational analysis.

Table 4.4 Parallels in data analysis and procedures – CAST Model Individual level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Analysis Procedures</th>
<th>Sample Codes</th>
<th>Sample Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspirations</td>
<td>Interview transcripts and for the personal experiences of the participant that relate to their current and future goals &amp; researcher notes</td>
<td>Family, Friends</td>
<td>“Being the best mother and wife for my family is my mission in life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Interview transcripts, researcher notes</td>
<td>Gratitude, appreciation/thankful</td>
<td>“I am grateful that I have a job that cares about its employees”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Interview transcripts, researcher notes</td>
<td>Balance multitask</td>
<td>“The options allow me to take care of my family and be able to work.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5 Parallels in data analysis and procedures – CAST Model Organization level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Analysis Procedures</th>
<th>Individual Finding codes</th>
<th>Sample Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Philosophy (strategy) | Organization website | Family, health, Time Employee engagement | “… committed to helping employees, their families and retirees achieve balance in their lives by providing problem-solving, coaching, resources and referrals, and educational programs …..”
“We value the employee-friendly culture that we have created over the years, and believe that we have some of the best employees in America” |
| Policies           | Company brochure, website | Gratitude                | “Our employees are among our greatest assets” …we offer a full range of benefits to help families and retirees maintain balance |
| Practice           | CSR Report, employee benefit website | Balance                  | “Having a balanced life means that you spend some time away from work. That’s why we give our employees the time they need to lead a well-balanced life. Whether through our paid time-off plans, or our flexibility in scheduling, we strive to meet the needs of our employees.” |

The process of creating codes can be both pre-set or “a priori codes” and open. A hybrid, using both of these types of coding was conducted with the transcription. The CAST
Model analysis levels of individual and organizational conceptual framework were used as a “start list” of pre-set codes.

A-priori coding is considered a type of descriptive coding and it refers to the analysis of content from each participant. In descriptive coding the researcher uses the participant quotes to illustrate and substantiate the findings. The participants were asked questions developed in relation to the CAST Model’s three levels of analysis: values, attitudes, and behaviors. Baruch (2004) explains the CAST Model analysis levels as follows:

The basic level of values reflects a person’s principles, morals and culture. The second level is transformation; approaches and assumptions that translate those values into the third level that of actions, behavior and practice. At that outcome level, people will act and apply actual behaviors whereas organizations will utilize managerial practices. The CAST is an active system, always in a state of motion.

The following sections from each of the pre-set codes based on the CAST Conceptual Framework are presented with the findings. The Findings includes representative quotes from selected participant’s transcripts, followed by the connecting organizational philosophy, practice or procedure. Figure 4.1 illustrates the a priori coding and the results.

**Values/Aspirations (Philosophy).** Aspirations help define career goals, but are not the exact same things (Valcour et al., 2012). What do you need from your job? The answer you give to that question is an essential part of defining your aspirations. The answer to that
question for a lot of people is a balance with their work and their personal lives. This basic need helps define your career goals (Valcour et al., 2012).

The following findings are to illustrate how participants in the study described their values and aspirations based on interview questions crafted from the CAST Model framework followed by the organization’s philosophy on the individual findings.

Family was the overwhelming response to questions regarding participant’s values and aspirations followed by good health and education.

The Importance of Family. Family happiness and in good health is an important factor in each of the participant’s lives. Participants shared the significance and importance their family has in their values and aspirations. When asked questions from the interview regarding the best part of their job, four out of five of the participants expressed the ability to spend time and handle family business was one of the best part of their employment with this organization. Family was the first identified value of the interviewed participants. Each participant expressed the importance of family as their core goals in life, whether it was the importance of having a family, protecting their family or providing for the family.

Participant one shared how family inspires her career and life. She said:

“Initially in life I wanted to be a physical therapist and other things, but as I got older and especially after I had kids, I wanted to provide the best way possible for my family. I wanted to provide my kids with all they needed and be there for them whenever they needed them.”
When participant three described current career goals and balancing career and life she described the following:

“Family comes first and this job allows for that. I am able to take off when needed to attend my kid’s school functions. Although I work full time, this job allows for me to meet my family needs. My husband and I decided when I returned to work that I would work as long as work did not take me away from the kids. I have to focus on them since he is a pilot and gone a lot.”

Participant two explained that although he does not have a lot of flexibility because of his position with the organization, he finds that employees he supervises are grateful for the opportunities they are offered and how they are allowed flexible work options to manage family life. Participant #2 gave an example of one of his employees who suffered a family health crisis:

“As a supervisor, I was able to allow an employee that I supervise to enter into a job share situation because of one of her kid’s health crisis. This employee was one of my top event planners on campus which required long hours and being on campus a lot. She was allowed to partner with a part time administrative staff person to handle onsite responsibilities when she was away from the office. Because she needed to be away each day for portion for her kids dialysis, she was able to maintain work and life and it is still going on now after several months and seems to be working out for everyone. This organization is big on family. How can you not be everyone has
family. If your employees have happy family life that normally results in good work life.”

Findings from the document analysis of organizational documents presented the organization’s philosophy of family was comparable to those of the employee. Organizational documents reviewed presented in Table 4.4, provided the following regarding family:

Website – “Committed to helping employees, their families and retirees achieve balance in their lives by providing problem-solving, coaching, resources and referrals, and educational programs.”

Benefits Brochure – “…we understand the importance of leading a well-balanced life and meeting family needs and obligations. That's why we offer a full range of benefits to help families and retirees maintain this balance.”

Evident in the research findings is the importance of family for both employees and the organization. As illustrated above, family and the organization have made priority to balance work and family. An important factor to consider from this finding is individuals are motivated by different outcomes in their careers as opportunities to make important things happen. Once an individual’s career aspirations have been accomplished, the individual focuses on further development and in refining his or her knowledge and skills within these career aspirations (Karaevli & Hall, 2008).

Approaches/Attitudes (Policies). The second level of analysis based on the CAST Model is employee attitudes and organizational policies. This section reveals the findings
from the interviews related to individual attitudes and then analysis of organizational policies related to those attitudes. The way one’s career is perceived and evaluated by the individual defines an individual's attitudes related to career are organizational identification and commitment (Karaevli and Hall, 2008). The attitudes of employees in the workplace can have a significant effect on the business as a whole (Anderson, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2007). Attitude is one of the hidden, hard-to-measure factors that end up being crucial to the success of a company. Whether for better or for worse, employee attitudes tend to have a drastic impact on the productivity of a business, both directly and through the effect on other job-related factors. Workplace attitudes, both positive and negative, are infectious and can easily spread to co-workers. Workplace attitude refers to recognition of those organizational characteristics that enhance employee work experiences and assist employees in balancing their jobs and personal lives (Anderson et al., 2007).

The research findings from the study reflect an attitude of gratitude and appreciation from the participants in the study.

*Attitudes of Gratitude.* McCullough (2002) defined gratitude as “a cognitive-affective response to the recognition that one has been the beneficiary (or, in some cases, only the intended beneficiary) of someone else's good will” (p. 303). Gratitude is felt when a positive outcome is attributed to the contributions of other. Gratitude is typically classified as a moral affect, because feelings of typically result from and stimulate prosocial behaviors (Anderson, et al., 2007). Prosocial behaviors are defined as “relating to or denoting behavior that is positive, helpful and intent to promote social acceptance and friendship”
Gratitude has been shown to be related to prosocial behavior. McCullough et al. (2004) found that grateful people were reported to perform more prosocial behaviors and to possess more prosocial traits than less grateful people. They also observed that grateful people are motivated to respond prosocially—not only toward their benefactors but also toward others not involved in the gratitude-soliciting act.

Participant three described her experience with the flexible workplace options as very helpful in her life.

“I have the ability to flex my hours to accommodate my schedule and my kids school schedule. Then when I get here, everything I have is here. I can get a hot, healthy breakfast when I get here. I am fairly new only being here for a couple of years, and I have never had such employee benefits from and organization. We have dry cleaning services onsite if I need to get dry cleaning done. We have workout facilities. So, not only does flexing my time help but the other amenities offered her make this place outstanding for my work and home life.”

Other participants expressed the same when it came to the flexible workplace options offered by the employer. When asked whether additional options were desirable that are not currently offered by their employer, participants for the study gave considerable thought before answering this question. Most of participants struggled to think of possible options. The responses to that question are illustrated in Table 4.2.

The participants appeared to have a genuine appreciation and felt gratitude when discussing the flexible options offered by their organization. Repetitive words that were
coded in the transcription regarding participant’s attitude toward the flexible options offered were: thankful, grateful, appreciative, helpful, accommodating, life-saving, beneficial and pleased.

A review of the organization’s policies related to the employee’s attitudes presented several policies that have been established by the organization for the employees that result in the feeling of gratitude from the employees. Document analysis revealed a strong commitment to the employees of the organization and providing mechanisms for employees to balance work and personal life. The organization posts the following slogan on their website regarding their employees:

“If you treat employees as if they make a difference, they will make a difference.”

The organization posted the following philosophy regarding their employees:

“…. That has been the employee-focused philosophy behind the corporate culture since our founding in 1976. At the heart of this unique business model is a simple idea: Satisfied employees create satisfied customers. We've worked hard to create a corporate culture that is based on trust between our employees and the company. A culture that rewards innovation encourages employees to try new things and yet doesn't penalize them for taking chances, and a culture that cares about employees' personal and professional growth. We have created an environment that fosters and encourages the integration of the company's business objectives with employees' personal needs. With tremendously low employee turnover that has been consistently well below the industry average, we – and our customers – reap the rewards of
employee loyalty. Our work-life programs and unique culture continue to receive wide news coverage and accolades. For 14 consecutive years, the company has been listed on the FORTUNE "100 Best Companies to Work For" list in the US, including being ranked No. 1 in 2010 and 2011, and was inducted into the list's "Hall of Fame" in 2005.”

These findings are consistent with the CAST Model conceptual framework in which the organization’s policies are reflective of the employee’s attitude. Employees are grateful for the organization’s policy and the organization is grateful for the employee’s gratitude. Gratitude motivates prosocial behavior and corporate social responsibility (Anderson, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2007). This award winning organization provides a Corporate Sustainability Report yearly that provides an entire section to their employees and provides accountability to the employees.

Park, Peterson, Seligman (2004) explains, a culture in which employees believe that they are genuinely valued and appreciated for the work they do bolsters morale, enthusiasm, and productivity. Further, such a culture fuels a positive cycle that builds and sustains long-term success within departments and throughout an organization. “Gratitude is an amazing motivator, it strengthens employee and customer loyalty, and it really can allow you to see a positive change in your company’s bottom line” (Lanham, 2012, p. 341).

**Behaviors/Actions (Practices).** The third level of analysis for research was employee behaviors/actions and organizational policies. This third level of the CAST Model
is described as the outcome level. Specifically employees will act and apply actual behaviors whereas organizations will utilize managerial practices.

This final section of analysis presents the findings of the employee’s behaviors and the actions when questioned regarding their experience with flexible workplace options. The results were participants expressed an action and an ability of balance.

**Balance.** Of the five participants that participated, all explained the workplace options afforded them the opportunity to balance work, life, multitask and prioritize. The participants were asked a question in which they provided they provided the concluding statement. The question was the flexible workplace options offered by my organization have afforded me the opportunity to (complete the sentence). As discussed in Chapter Two, the definition of work-life balance is a lack of conflict or interference between work and family roles.

Participant four explained balance as:

“The flexible workplace options offered by my organization have afforded me the opportunity to keep my sanity and balance my family while working.”

When asked to elaborate more on this subject and possibly provide an example of an incident in which the flexibility of the organization impacted her, she provided the following:

“The incident that pops up for me, is …. I had problems with one of my sons in school a few years ago and I had to…, needed to, be away from work several days. I was allowed to leave work and not be penalized each and every time the school called me. My supervisor never gave me grief about it and I did not have the added pressure
of worrying about my job while having to deal with the family crisis. I was provided the opportunity to adjust my hours to get my work completed and attend therapy sessions for my son”.

In an attempt to further explore how the flexibility of the organization affected Participant Four’s behavior, I asked her to explain how the flexibility of the organization affected her work and she gave me the following response:

“I was grateful, thankful. I was able to prioritize my family and concentrated on resolving my family crisis. I am very appreciative of all the employee assistance programs offered here. I think that is why so many people want to work here. It is a great organization and they care about their employees. I gained more respect for the organization and as far as how it affected my work ….. I guess I work harder cause I want and need to keep my job and I think this is the best place to work.”

According to the CAST Model, in direct relation to the employee’s behaviors are the organization’s managerial practices. Interviewing Participant #2 who is in a supervisory position within the organization provided some insight into the managerial practices of the organization. Participant #2 revealed how managers and supervisors within the organization work with employees to offer and approve flexible options within each department which are feasible to the individual, department and the good of the organization. Participant #2 shared the following regarding employee’s behaviors and the organization’s managerial practices:

“The organization allows many flexible options for employees supervisors to select from. Although the company provides plentiful options, not all options can be
afforded to all employees. Some positions require travel, some require being on campus daily, some allow to telecommute and work from home. Naturally, an administrative support position can not telecommute, they need to be on campus to get the day to day job done. Engineering providers are able to remote in and work from home. So, managers and employees work together to select which options fit their positions.”

An article written about the organization’s managerial practices revealed the following practices and philosophy that result from the employee’s attitudes and actions:

The management team operates with uncommon philosophies, methods, and intentions. They’ve discovered that feelings and emotions are the true drivers of employee loyalty, innovation, and productivity, and purposely have made workforce happiness one of their primary missions. I spent the day with employees, senior managers, and the founder and CEO. What I learned in my visit should prove invaluable to any CEO, senior leader, or workplace manager seeking to sustainably reinspire its people. More than anything, the organization has found that by being an especially benevolent and respectful organization, they consistently produce the most optimal workplace performance. Their highly nontraditional insight is that workers instinctively and positively respond to an organization that routinely demonstrates that they matter and are individually valued. Here are four of the unique leadership values that have made an especially great and productive place to work--across the
globe: value people above all else; to give is to get; trust above all things; ensure employees understand the significance of their work (Crowley, 2013).
**Document Analysis Findings**

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents. As a research method, document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies—intensive studies producing rich descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organization, or program (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). For this study, document analysis was used in combination with interviews as a means of triangulation. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The document data for this study was coded and analyzed utilizing the a priori findings of the CAST Model. Organizational documents that were analyzed were the organization’s brochure, Corporate Sustainability Report, articles on organization awards, press releases and organization website. Documents selected and the data analyzed are given in Table 4.3.
### Table 4.3 Documents and Data Analyzed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents Selected</th>
<th>Data Analyzed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Brochure</strong></td>
<td>List of Employee Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website</strong></td>
<td>“Corporate Responsibility: guiding principles is the commitment to sustainably”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Sustainability Report 2012</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|  | • Employees maintain 650 active internal blogs, the intranet ran 1,228 stories, and the Family website had 141,708 hits in 2012. Local location held three employee morale programs.  
  | • employees volunteered 22,100 hours through the Employee Volunteer Fund (EVF), resulting in $74,000 paid to schools across North Carolina. In 2012, the total value of cash and non-cash contributions  
  | • training is required of all employees in the following: Code of Business Ethics; Information Security; Export Controls Awareness; Business Ethics in Selling, Buying and Competing; Respect in the Workplace; and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. |
| **Articles: Organization Award** |  |
|  | • named number 19 among the 100 best companies to work in 2012. And because this was the eighth consecutive time it has made the list, the company was also inducted into the Best Places to Work Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame designation highlights continuing commitment to employees and innovative culture. |
| **Press Releases** |  |
|  | • August 2013 Inspiring student with disabilities to succeed in science, technology and math July 2013  
  | • named best place to work for work/life balance by Glassdoor July 24, 2013  
  | • ranked top in data quality by industry analysts July 22, 2013  
  | • American Red Cross names blood drive sponsor of the year July 09, 2013  
  | • No. 4 among Best Workplaces in Europe July 08, 2013  
  | • India featured in the Best Places to Work Rankings July 03, 2013  
  | • Australia climbs in rankings on BRW's Best Places to Work 2013 list June 27, 2013  
  | • leads the charge for pharmaceutical data transparency June 27, 2013  
  | • Analytics helps U. of Oregon optimize financial aid to attract top students June 25, 2013  
  | • New Decision Manager transforms big data into smarter decisions June 11, 2013  
  | • Energy Forecasting increases return on smart grid investment June 11, 2013  
| **Newsletter** |  |
|  | • on-site workshops are open to employees, employee spouses and domestic partners, retirees and other immediate family members. Many Work/Life offerings also are available via web conference, allowing retirees and family members to listen remotely from a home computer. Topics: divorce, parenting, working mother support groups |
A systematic review of documentation provided background information that helped the researcher understand the environment and context in which the employees worked and the organization’s policies and procedures for their employees. Apart from providing contextual richness in the research, documents were useful in fact checking specifics of organization’s flexible work options.

The analysis of documents was instrumental in refining ideas, identifying conceptual boundaries, and pinpointing the fit and relevance of categories. Only when all the evidence from the documents and interviews were completed, a consistent picture of the way in which this award winning organization’s employee behaviors and organization philosophy fit.

This section illustrated the documents analyzed for this study. Documents analyzed revealed an organization that has implemented a well evaluated and implemented flexible workplace option programs. Documents revealed numerous awards given to this organization for providing work life balance for their employees. Evident in the analysis is the organization’s commitment to their employees.

**Open Coding**

In addition to the a-priori coding process, open coding was used to explore possible new themes that were not captured from the CAST Model. The open coding addressed the two research questions for this study. This section elaborates on the findings for the research questions.

**Research Question One:** How do employees at a recognized ‘best in class’ organization perceive the flexible work options offered by the organization?
Participants responded that flexible work options are very valuable in balancing work and family life. Overwhelming the responses was praise and appreciation of the options offered. All of the participants gave specific examples to indicate the value of flexible options in their quest to have work life balance.

Values were a fundamental part of this research, as values are the foundational level of the individual in the CAST Conceptual Framework. The CAST model advocates that values convey individual aspirations and organization philosophy into individual attitudes and organization policies respectively, to arrive at the final outcome of employee behaviors and organization practices (Baruch, 2004).

During the transcription phase of the interviews and the open coding, it was observed the participants articulated similar descriptive words to describe their experience with flexible workplace options and the option’s value. Ryan (2003) explains that word repetitions draw on a simple observation and help you understand what people are talking about. He further explains words that occur a lot are often seen as being salient in the minds of respondents. Word repetitions can be analyzed formally and informally. In the informal mode, researchers simply read the text and note words or synonyms that people use a lot. A more formal analysis of word frequencies can be done by generating a list of all the unique words in a text and counting the number of times each occurs.

Table 4.1. illustrates each participant’s usage of the repetitive words. Open coding that was performed following the a priori coding revealed the descriptive words from each participant regarding their experiences with flexible workplace options. Overwhelmingly,
each participant used the word appreciate in their description of the flexible workplace options. Participants 1, 3 & 5 all expressed repeated appreciation that their organization provided numerous options for the employees and described the theory that the organization thrives because of the way they treat their employees. Strong conviction and a sense of loyalty were described throughout the interviews. As a result of the repetitive usage of positive descriptive words in table 4.1, the researcher concluded employee’s perceptions of flexible workplace options in this award winning organization are valuable.

Table 4.1  Repetitive descriptive wording for Value of Flexible Workplace Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Appreciate</th>
<th>Thankful</th>
<th>Benefited</th>
<th>Respect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question Two**: What types of flex options do employees say they want? This question examined responses directly from participants of the study. Specifically the researcher inquired to examine if there was the possibility of desired workplace options that are not currently offered by organizations. The participants described their current flexible options as sufficient and desired very little as far as additional options. All participants voiced the ability to flex their work schedule daily was very helpful especially due to the
uncertainty of traffic and family daily routines. All participants appeared to struggle with thinking of additional options they would like other than those offered at their workplace. The researcher can assume this is because their current organization offers multiple options and focus on employee satisfaction. Detailed earlier in this chapter are detailed descriptions of the organization’s policies for employee engagement and satisfaction.

Participant’s responses regarding additional desired options along with a sample quote regarding desired options is demonstrated in Table 4.2. The one additional option participants expressed would be desirable is the ability to work a shorter work week. Several participants discussed four day work weeks, which some of the participants discussed the four day work week are optional in other departments. Two participants described an ideal option of working a schedule that would consist of the ability to work on the weekend to fulfill working hour obligations.

Table 4.2: Desired Flexible Workplace Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Desired Flexible Options</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>“I have no additional request. I am able to work and any time I need to handle family business or any other matters, I am awarded that opportunity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total flexibility for working hours and days.</td>
<td>“In a magical world, the flex option I would desire is the ability to come and go as I please. Work when is the best for me.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 (continued)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shorter work weeks</td>
<td>“My current position I am to flex my hours but I am required to be on campus everyday. I would like the ability to work 4 day work week”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Total flexibility 7 day work schedule</td>
<td>“A flexible work week with a seven day option; mean as long as I get my 40 hours, it does not matter what days or hours I work. I could get a lot done on the weekends”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shorter work week</td>
<td>“Ability to work 4 ten hour days. This would allow more days off and less drive time since I commute”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, this section provided open coding findings extracted from participant interviews. These findings were apart from the findings of the a-priori coding. Participants elaborated on the value of flexible workplace options. Participants frequently voiced similar descriptive wording regarding the flexible workplace options. The repetitive wording presented descriptions that participants were thankful and appreciated the flexible work options they have been afforded. In addition when asked, participants had little desire for additional flexible options. The findings presented in this section provide evidence that participants of this award winning organization value the flexible workplace options and are satisfied with the flexible programs as offered, with little desire for additional options.
Summary

This exploratory multiple case study sought out to explore employees’ perceptions of flexible workplace options utilizing the CAST Model Framework to determine connections between employee’s aspirations, attitudes and action in relation and connection to the organization’s philosophy, policies, and practices. The research questions that guided this study were:

- How do employees at a recognized ‘best in class’ organization perceive the flexible work options offered by the organization?
- What types of flex options do these employees say they want?

After categorizing the data from the interviews, it was apparent that the CAST Model’s individual conceptual level is directly in relation to the organizational empirical levels. The participant interviews revealed the following a priori findings:

- Employee aspirations and values of family inspire organization philosophy.
- Employee attitude and approach of gratitude is reflected in the organizational policies and procedures.
- Employee actions and behaviors of balance are demonstrated in the organization’s practice.

The participant interviews provided insight into employee perceptions of flexible workplace options. The CAST Model is an adaptable model that proved to be applicable to the importance of the individual to the organization. The model’s individual level could be directly related to the organizational empirical level.
Open coding findings presented participant value of the flexible workplace options by illustrating repetitive word usage. Additionally, open coding revealed participants of this study were satisfied with the options offered and additional options desired were listed in table 4.2.

In summary, the findings revealed that participants of the study appreciate and value the flexible workplace options that they experience. Documents analyzed for the study provides evidence of a well implemented flexible work option program offered to the employees of this award winning organization. The findings indicate a well established flexible workplace program results in loyal appreciative engaged employees. These findings can be beneficial to organizations looking to implement similar programs. The next chapter will discuss the implications for HRD practice and provide conclusions for the study.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This chapter presents an overview of the research followed by the implications for practice that focus on the potential impact the findings have for HRD professionals, organizations and the employees. The final section of this chapter includes future research followed by the conclusion.

Overview

The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to explore employee perceptions of flexible workplace options in an award winning organization. The research questions that guided this study was: How do employees at a recognized ‘best in class’ organization perceive the flexible work options offered by the organization? And, what types of flex options do these employees say they want? The CAST Model Framework was utilized and applied to semi-structured interviews with five individuals employed at an award winning organization that offers flexible workplace options. Through an analysis of data collected via the participant interviews and organization documents, an understanding of employee perceptions of flexible workplace options was obtained.

There were three key findings from this study based on the CAST Model. First the study found that the participant’s importance of family also was the strategy and philosophy of the organization. The importance of family was voiced as the most important aspect of the individual’s aspirations. In relation, the organization voiced the importance of family in their marketing materials and in the benefit packages it offers the employees.
The second finding revealed the participant’s attitudes and approaches were reflected in the organizational policies. Participants described an attitude of gratitude for the flexible options offered to them. In relation to this gratitude, the organization presents policies established that reveal appreciation of their employee’s loyalty. Additionally, the organization provides a Corporate Sustainability Report yearly that provides accountability to the employees.

The third finding of this study found the employee’s actions and behaviors of balance were reflected in the managerial practices of the organization. The organization has put into practice many practices and policies that provide employees with assistance to maintain work life balance.

In addition to the findings from the CAST Model, the study found that participants perceive the flexible workplace options valuable and are appreciative with little desire for additional options aside from condensed work week. The findings for this study confirm the usage of the CAST Model as a valid tool that can assist organizations with the employee organization relationship fit.

**Implications**

The purpose of this chapter is not just to restate the findings of this study, but rather to discuss what the findings mean for HRD and other organizations that may not have been as successful at attracting and retaining high talent. Although this study was small in number of participants and had limitations, it found the CAST model is a valid tool for understanding the relationship between employees and organization flexible workplace options. The study
adds to the literature on flexible workplace options and provides research to organizations who want to implement flexible work programs in their organization.

The CAST Model provided a reasonable understanding of the relationship between employee and the organization. Each level of analysis generated findings that were in direct relationship between the employee and the organization. The individuals studied are employees of an organization that is established as ‘best in class” at providing work life balance for their employees. According to the findings produced in conjunction with the CAST Model, this organization has established their philosophy, practice, and policies in alignment with the employee’s aspirations, attitudes and actions. Based on the findings and the clear and obvious connections between the conceptual and empirical levels of the CAST Model, it confirms for HRD professionals and organizations that the use of the CAST Model as tool can provide viable information when considering implementation of flexible workplace options within their organizations. The CAST Model can be the tool to understand how to fit the person to the organization and how to provide organizational support for the fit.

While much of the existing literature has examined the variations of organizational flexible workplace policies, little has been reviewed regarding employee’s perceptions of the flexible workplace options offered. The findings of the study presented add to HRD literature regarding the perceptions of the employee in relation to flexible work programs. The findings presented employee’s perceptions of the flexible work program at an award winning organization as, grateful, appreciative and loyal employees. It is reasonable from
these findings to conclude a well implemented program like that of the award winning organization produces a well balanced employee for engagement at work. This study provides HRD with evidence based research on the usefulness of the CAST Model for analysis of organization and employee fit.

To build upon this research study, future studies regarding employee’s perception of flexible workplace options in organizations that are not identified as award winning or that have been unsuccessful in the implementation of flexible programs could produce information to identify aspects of flexible workplace options that could be unfavorable to the organization and the employee. Additionally, research to further explore the needs of the 21st Century employee could provide a reference from which organizations could examine further programs to provide for employee work life balance and will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Implications for HRD and Practice

Work–family balance is at the core of issues central to human resource development (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Balanced employees have been associated with greater employee commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior (Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, Kutcher, Indovino, & Rosner, 2005). The absence of balance has been linked to an increase in turnover and sickness absence (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). The employee work life balance issue indicates this major HRD issue results in a powerful leverage point for promoting individual and organizational effectiveness for flexible work programs.
If HRD embraces work–family balance as a leverage point for practice, professionals will need to make informed decisions about how they will monitor work–family balance in their organizations (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Simply establishing and implementing flexible workplace options is not the solution. Monitoring the programs for effectiveness will need to be a requirement, as employee needs for certain options may by cyclical and need revising. A possible solution in the monitoring of the workplace programs could be the CAST Model. CAST could be a tool to continuously review the employee and organization relationship to provide evidence for continuing certain options or discontinuing others.

HRD has an important role in assisting organizations, attract, manage and retain valued workers. Designing and implementing flexible work option programs is perhaps a valuable way HRD professionals prove their organizational necessity (Eversole, Venneberg & Crowder, 2012). By showing organizations the importance of providing flexible work option programs to their employees, and providing the training and organizational redesign to make the flexible programs a reality for employees, HRD personnel could make a real difference for an organization (Eversole et al., 2012).

The study findings presented organizational results that could be transferrable and helpful to HRD professionals and organizations looking to implement flexible workplace options programs. The findings indicate that flexible workplace options are valued by employees. Munn (2013) explains that today workers want much more from their job than simply the exchange of labor for a paycheck. When an organization clearly understands
present and future needs, it can develop and implement strategies and responses to attract and maintain exemplary employees (Wang & Verma, 2012).

Organizations considering implementation of flexible workplace option programs can refer to this study for evidence that indicates program options should not be applied in a vacuum, as individual, stand-alone activities, but rather a research based inquiry with multiple facets that address differing needs. Stebbins (2001) explains that flexible work programs cannot be effective unless employers conceptualize them strategically. This study indicates an adequate approach to implementation should reflect an organization employee model like the CAST Model, which examines the needs of the employee to adequately address the desired flexible workplace options. When the organization clearly understands present and future needs, it can develop and implement strategies and responses to attract and maintain employees (Wang & Verma, 2012). Organizational success depends on identifying and developing the best people for key organizational roles, therefore having programs to attract these people can be beneficial to the organization and HRD professionals (Benko, 2010). Although there are different models for workforce planning, the CAST Model provides three simple levels of analysis for organizations to assist in workforce planning. The Model assists the organization in developing philosophies, policies and strategies for today’s 21st Century employee.

For the 21st Century employee, the results of this study provide a favorable outlook for employment in organizations that provide flexible workplace options. The interviews for this research revealed participants of the study value and appreciate flexible workplace
options. Participants explained an ability to balance work and life with the options offered by their award winning organization. Additionally, participants expressed loyalty and respect for their organization offering flexible work programs. Indicated in the literature, organizations will continue to look for competitive strategies to attract employees (Wang & Verma, 2012). This means that as more organizations look to compete with award winning organizations like the organization in this study, more flexibility workplace programs will be implemented. Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) discussed organizations need to look at providing flexibility as an investment that brings returns. Perhaps as time progresses, flexibility in the workplace will become more of the norm and overshadow traditional work structuring and scheduling. While “a one-size-fits-all” approach for implementation of flexible work programs is unlikely, there is value in the collaborative efforts of individuals and organizations in promoting flexible work program development, implementation, and evaluation for the betterment of society as a whole (Munn, 2013). The development of flexible work programs has the potential to promote positive outcomes for both the employee and the organization (Munn, 2013).

**Future Research**

Although this research has highlighted employee’s perception of flexible workplace programs in an award winning organization. Further research to address employee’s perception of flexible options outside this organization could provide a helpful contrast for the research. In addition, future research could also benefit from exploring employee’s differences and perceptions of flexible programs based on employee demographic position.
Research indicates that variance and acceptance may occur based on nationality, culture, race, age gender, family structure/stage, personality type, gender-role perception, and employment structure (Munn, 2013). Researching employee perceptions of flexible workplace options focusing on the employees demographic features may help to explain any variances in the options or determine if certain demographic factors are not a component that warrants consideration for implementation.

**Summary and Conclusion**

This study provided employee perception regarding flexible workplace options and added to the literature on work life balance and flexibility in the workplace. The detailed interviews through a qualitative approach provided real life experiences with the subject matter. This study has also shown that when well implemented as in the award winning organization, flexibility options is a strategic imperative that enhances organizational competitive advantage and employee effectiveness. Flexible workplace options are a key element of a multifaceted “strategy to enhance organizational agility and performance in the global marketplace.” And it is “a tool to unleash employee innovation and creativity” (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2006)

Overall, this research has presented further insight into the importance of flexible workplace options and the employee’s perception of those options. Offering employees options to better improve work life balance, provides organization and employee an improved career relationship. To compete successfully and hire, motivate and retain top
talent, organizations should consider new ways of operating. For organizations and employees, flexibility is imperative to maintain work life balance and effectiveness. Literature and research reviewed indicate organizations who offer flexible work options are in high demand by some of the most talented employees across the country. Being designated as a Flexible Workplace Employer makes it easier to distinguish your organization as a desirable place to work, and as a cutting edge employer who understands what it takes to stay ahead of the competition in today's competitive markets. A recent report by a consortium of Fortune 100 companies concluded that organizational strategies that help employees better balance their work and family lives are simply good business (Eby, 2006).

Flexible work place options create opportunities for both employees and employers. Employers appreciate the boost in productivity and morale while employees reap the benefits of structuring work around their lives instead of the other way around (Wang & Verma, 2012). This study has extended research on flexible workplace options and the perceptions of the employees experiencing those programs. Additional research in employee needs and work life balance could help establish a greater understanding of employees, flexible option programs and organization’s involvement in providing that balance. Further research will help to better understand the current needs of the 21st century employee and determine how to develop meaningful flexible workplace programs. As findings presented in this study, employees value and appreciate flexible workplace options. In addition research findings from this study presented employee perceptions of organizational efforts to support work/life balance positively influence employees’ commitment to their jobs, satisfaction with their work, and ability to handle their responsibilities at work and at home.
REFERENCES


family conflict, work-family culture, and organizational citizenship behavior among teachers. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 20, 303-324.


Lanham, M. R. (2012). How gratitude relates to burnout and job satisfaction in mental


APPENDICES
Appendix A: IRB Approval

From: Jennifer Ofstein, IRB Coordinator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: May 8, 2013

Title: Employee Perceptions of Flexible Work Options in an Awarding Winning Organization

IRB#: 3274

Dear Melissa,

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101, b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:
1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the research must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days.

Please forward a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor, if applicable.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jennifer Ofstein
NC State IRB
Appendix B: IRB Consent Form

North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board For The Use of Human Subjects in Research
GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM
PLEASE READ ALL OF THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY
PRIOR TO COMPLETING THE CONSENT FORM

An Informed Consent Statement has two purposes: (1) to provide adequate information to potential research subjects to make an informed choice as to their participation in a study, and (2) to document their decision to participate. In order to make an informed choice, potential subjects must understand the study, how they are involved in the study, what sort of risks it poses to them and who they can contact if a problem arises (see informed consent checklist for a full listing of required elements of consent). Please note that the language used to describe these factors must be understandable to all potential subjects, which typically means an eighth grade reading level. The informed consent form is to be read and signed by each subject who participates in the study before they begin participation in the study. A duplicate copy is to be provided to each subject.

If subjects are minors (i.e. any subject under the age of 18) use the following guidelines for obtaining consent:

- **0-5 years old** – requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative
- **6 – 10 years old** - requires signature of parent(s)/guardian/legal representative and verbal assent from the minor. In this case a minor assent script should be prepared and submitted along with a parental consent form.
- **11 - 17 years old** - requires signature of both minor and parent/guardian/legal representative

If the subject or legal representative is unable to read and/or understand the written consent form, it must be verbally presented in an understandable manner and witnessed (with signature of witness). If there is a good chance that your intended subjects will not be able to read and/or understand a written consent form, please contact the IRB office 919-515-4514 for further instructions.

*For your convenience, attached find a sample consent form template that contains necessary information. In generating a form for a specific project, the principal investigator should complete the underlined areas of the form and replicate all of the text that is not underlined, except for the compensation section where you should select the appropriate text to be used out of several different scenarios.

*This consent form template can also be adapted and used as an information sheet for subjects when signed informed consent is waived by the IRB. An information sheet is usually required even when signed informed consent is waived. The information sheet should typically include all of the elements included below minus the subject signature line; however it may be modified in consultation with the IRB.
Title of Study
An Exploratory Study of Employee Perception of Flexible Work Options in an Award-Winning Organization: Understanding What 21st Century Employees Expect
Principal Investigator: Melissa McDonald
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Julia Storberg-Walker

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?
A career represents a person’s entire life in the workplace. In addition, for many people, work is a primary factor in determining the overall quality of life. To contribute to this important quality of life issue, the purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of employee perceptions about their organization’s flexible work and career options. For this study, ‘perceptions’ includes understanding what they think as well as understand how they go about deciding which flexible options are ‘best’ for their careers. Much of recent writing on careers focused on changes in the business environment and the changes that the career system experienced. This study is different because it focuses on the direct relationship between the organization’s flexible work options and employee perceptions.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a consent form. Secondly, you will be asked to participate in an interview that asks several questions, which will be audio recorded. This may take approximately 30-45 minutes. The research will take place in an environment, which is comfortable and convenient for you. You will be asked to participate in an interview that asks several questions about the flexible workplace options at your organization and your perception of those work options. This interview will be audio recorded, with your permission. Please do not use full names of others during the interview. The interview will take place in an environment of your choice which is comfortable for you to speak without being overheard by others. You are free to skip any question you do not want to answer during our interview. Within 30 days after the interview, you will be asked to participate in a member checking procedure. This means I will produce a transcript of your responses and ask you to review to make sure that I have transcribed your responses accurately. I will not use names in the transcripts as this protects you against any potential confidentiality breach. You will need to provide a safe email address for me to send the transcript to.

Risks
There are no foreseeable risks to you in participating in this study.
Benefits
The benefits of this research include adding to the Human Resource Development field of study. Additionally, this research builds upon the research on flexible workplace options and the employee’s perception of those options offered. There is no direct benefit to you, but knowledge may be gained through the reflection process of participating in the interview.

Confidentiality
The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely in the researcher’s personal password protected computer. Once interviews are transcribed and analysis is complete, the researcher will destroy/delete the data collected. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study. You will NOT be asked to write your name on any study materials so that no one can match your identity to the answers that you provide. A number will be assigned to the interview and will be used in any written notes, transcriptions, and data regarding you as the participant. Documents will be saved indicating the assigned interview number. A code book will be used to record your name with the corresponding number. This number will then be used instead of your name on all field notes. All collected information will be kept confidential and secure by locking field notes, and consent forms in a file box. The list of code numbers with the participant names will be kept in a separate lockbox in a different location. All data entered into researcher’s computer will be password protected. Once interviews are transcribed and analysis/study is complete, the researcher will destroy/delete the data collected. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study. You will NOT be asked to write your name on any study materials so that no one can match your identity to the answers that you provide.

Compensation
You will not receive anything for participating.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Melissa McDonald, mwmcdona@ncsu.edu or contact faculty sponsor, Julia Storberg-Walker, Julia_swalker@ncsu.edu.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

Consent To Participate
“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject's signature_______________________________________ Date _________________
Investigator's signature____________________________ Date _________________
Appendix C: E-mail and/or Phone Script to Potential Participants

Hello [participant name],

My name is [researcher name] and I received your name and information from [Contact HR Name]. I am a student at NC State University and obtaining a Masters In HRD. [Contact HR Name] suggested I contact you for insight into the organization’s flexible workplace options. My thesis study is designed to explore employee perceptions of flexible workplace options in an award winning organization. Would you like to participate in an interview answering a few questions regarding this topic? Would a date between [date 2013] and [date 2013] work for you?

The anticipated duration of the interview is 30-45 minutes and all interviews will be recorded with a digital audio recorder. While your responses will be recorded, they will be confidential as personal identifiers such as name, job title, organization of employment, and any other information which would personally identify you will not be shared in any way. The recordings will be saved on a password protected computer which I, the researcher, will only have access to. Once the research has been gathered and the data has been analyzed, all interview recordings will be transcribed and sent to you for accuracy, then will be deleted. In order to ensure confidentiality and participation, a consent form will be presented to you, which requires a signature. A copy of this form will be provided for your records as well.

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation. Can you confirm the best email address to reach you at? I will follow-up via email to confirm our meeting date, time and place.

Thank you again for your time. I look forward to speaking with you soon. Have a great day!

Best Regards
Melissa McDonald
MS-HRD candidate
Appendix D: Template Request to Organization

Dear [HR Colleague],

The purpose of this letter is to request your organization’s assistance with my research study. As you know, I am a student at NC State University and obtaining a Masters In HRD. I am conducting a study as part of the requirements of my degree and I would greatly appreciate your organization’s participation as it is

I am studying collect information about employee perceptions of flexible workplace options and lattice structuring. [Organization Name] is well known as an award winning company that has been listed on several Fortune 500 list for its innovation and engagement practices with their employees. I am aware that [organization name] offers flexible work options to their employees. Because of these reasons, I am requesting assistance in two ways. One, permission from [name of organization] for employee participation in this study and two, assistance in contacting possible participants within the organization that may be interested in participation.

The study involves semi-structured interviews with employees that should take around 40 minutes to complete. No association between the participation responses or [name of organization] will be identified. All identifying information regarding the participation and the organization will be confidential. The interviews will be recorded with a digital audio recorder. While responses will be recorded, they will be confidential as personal identifiers such as name, job title, organization of employment, and any other information which would personally identify participant will not be shared in any way. The recordings will be saved on a password protected computer which I, the researcher, will only have access to. Once the research has been gathered and the data has been analyzed, all interview recordings will be transcribed and then will be deleted. In order to ensure confidentiality and participation, a consent form will be presented to participants, which requires a signature. A copy of this form will be provided for them.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter and look forward to your response. If you would like to participate or have further questions regarding the research study, please email me (mwmcdona@ncsu.edu).

Best Regards
Melissa McDonald
MS-HRD candidate
Appendix E: Interview Guide For Research

Title of Study: An Exploratory Study of Employee Perception of Flexible Work Options in an Award-Winning Organization: Understanding What 21st Century Employees Expect (Under the direction of Dr. Julia Storberg-Walker).

Principal Investigator: Melissa McDonald

Research Questions:
- How do employees at a recognized ‘best in class’ organization perceive the flexible work options offered by the organization?
- What types of flex options do these employees say they want?

The following qualitative questions were designed based on the Career Active System Triad (CAST) Model.

The career active system triad - levels presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspirations Philosophy (strategy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes Policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions Practices</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEMOGRAPHICS</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOB POSITION:</td>
<td>• What is your position with this organization or which department currently work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE ON CURRENT JOB</td>
<td>• How many years in your current position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEARS OF SERVICE:</td>
<td>• How many years of service with this organization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKING HOURS:</td>
<td>• What are your working hours?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-MAIL ID:</td>
<td>• Can you please provide me with a confidential e-mail address?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Lead Questions: | 1. Tell me about your career with this organization. |
|                | 2. What do you like best about your employment with this organization? And what do you least like about your employment here? |
| VALUES | 1. Please tell me how you balance your career and your life.  
**Probing follow up questions:**  
Please tell me more about why you __________ or Why is ________________ important to you? |
|---|---|
| 2. What were your goals in life growing up?  
3. Describe your current goals?  
4. Describe what you would like to obtain career wise? (i.e., what you want to fulfill and wish to achieve, in particular your working life?) | |

| APPROACHES | 1. Describe the flexible workplace options that you participate in with this organization?  
2. Have you experienced barriers with the workplace options or policies? If so, please describe.  
3. Do you think your employer’s flexible work options are sufficient? Why or why not?  
**Probing questions:**  
1. Do you see connections between your career and your ability to take advantage of flex options? If so, what are the connections?  
2. If you could wave a magic wand, what types of flex options would you create and use? |
|---|---|

| BEHAVIORS | 1. Please tell me about how your employer’s flex options have impacted your work and home life.  
2. Can you finish the following statement in your own words? The flexible workplace options offered by my organization have afforded me the opportunity to ……………. |