

Perceived flexibility: The impact of flexible work and work-home interaction on life satisfaction

A quantitative study of the relationships between perceived flexibility, work-home interaction and life satisfaction

KNUT MORTEN HORNNES
HÅKON JARLAND

SUPERVISOR

Andreas Erich Wald

University of Agder, 2020

Faculty of Business and Law

Department of Economics and Finance

Preface

The master thesis was written for the program Master of Science in Business and Administration from the School of Business and Law at the University of Agder.

Writing the master thesis has been educational and intriguing, but also challenging and demanding. The study has allowed us to get a deeper understanding of the variables in focus; flexibility and work-home interaction. Furthermore, our understanding of how to analyze datasets and discuss the findings in an academic way has developed.

Our greatest gratitude goes to the people who helped us on our journey of writing our master thesis and completing the master's program at the University of Agder. First, we would like to thank our family and friends for being supportive, giving us feedback, and being there for us when needed.

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Hopefully, our study can contribute to further research, by providing information along with new data and analysis.

Kristiansand, 16.06.2020

Håkon Jarland

Håkon Jarland

Knut Morten Hornnes

Knut Morten Hornnes

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of perceived flexibility and work-home interaction on life satisfaction. The lack of previous research, on the direct connections between the variables, perceived flexibility, and life satisfaction, resulted in the purpose of this study. Work-home interaction has indications of connection to both perceived flexibility and life satisfaction (Hill et al., 2001; Clark, 2000; Vodanovich et al., 2006), and was of that reason presented as a possible mediator. Based on this, hypotheses regarding the relationship between the variables were created.

In order to test the seven hypotheses, the method of choice in this study was a quantitative approach using an online questionnaire. The online questionnaire was distributed through email, to potential respondents from organizations in Norway. A total of 810 of the respondents completed the questionnaire.

The main findings in this study suggest that perceived flexibility has a positive effect on life satisfaction. The findings also indicated that positive work-home interaction had a positive mediating effect on this relationship. A relationship between work-home interaction and life satisfaction was also identified, as positive work-home interaction had a positive effect on life satisfaction, while negative work-home interaction had a negative effect on life satisfaction. The results confirmed all of the hypotheses, except that there was no evidence to support the mediating effect of negative work-home interaction on the relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction.

According to the results in this research, higher perceived flexibility increases life satisfaction. In addition, to contribute with new findings, the results also provide findings that are supported by previous research. Considering the abnormal situation at the distribution time, the results could highlight some interesting perspectives regarding covid-19, in relation to flexible work and work-home balance. The results in this study, allows potential future research a starting point, to further investigate the impact and consequences of the abnormal situation in relation to an individual's perceived flexibility and life satisfaction.

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1. Introduction

In this chapter, the background and relevance of the thesis will be described. Furthermore, there will be a description of the research gap and research goal followed by the research question. The chapter also includes an outline that will summarize the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background and relevance

Technology changes the way our society functions. Workplaces, homes, and even the individual's interaction between work and home are all evolving due to new technology. Some people would probably argue that technology in general increases their well-being, while other people like things the way they have been. These days, many people only need a laptop and internet connection to do their job. Due to these simple criteria, increasingly more people can work from almost anywhere in the world remotely. This development leads to numerous questions on the effects of improved technology in people's work lives, e.g. workplaces usefulness. Flexible work is, due to the technology, introduced to an increasing number of individuals. Some people like being allowed to be flexible, while others find it frightening and would like to keep the work domain separate from the home domain.

More flexible work could influence different elements in each individual's life. One of those elements is the work-home interaction. When someone works more from home, they will be more likely to get in touch with the home domain during a workday, as opposed to if they only worked from an office with no connection to the home. This applies mostly to the type of work where there is flexibility in terms of physical presence. As the locations may not always be facilitated to keep the focus on the work domain, interference may occur (Clark, 2000). Flexibility in working hours may also affect work-home interaction, as it may be easier to balance the expectations of the home domain (Hill, Grzywacz, Allen, Blanchard, Matz-Costa, Shulkin & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2008). For some individuals, more flexibility can be a good thing, while for others it is not beneficial at all. According to a study from Hill, Hawkins Ferris and Weitzman (2001), perceived work flexibility has a positive influence on work-family balance. However, flexible work may lead to more permeable borders between the work domain and the home domain. Frequent permeation of these borders is often perceived as interruptions (Clark, 2000).

The availability of connecting the domains of work and home is increasing due to the technology that is continuously developed. One phone call from a family member can be enough for an individual to make a psychological transition to the home domain, even though the individual is at an office with a long physical distance from the home (Clark, 2000). These transitions are likely to increase with more use of flexible work, which can result in positive or negative effects on the individual (Hill et al., 2001; Tsaur, Liang & Hsu, 2012). Smartphones and other technological devices make the other domain more available than ever and some individuals might find it difficult to adapt this availability to their work-home interaction. A study on smartphone use on vacation showed that the majority of the work-related smartphone users, experienced negative impacts (Chen, Huang, Gao & Petrick, 2018). Other studies on work-related smartphone use and negative work-home interaction suggest that the option of always being available for work may result in negative factors like lack of recovery, burnout and work-family conflict (Derks & Bakker, 2014; Derks, van Duin, Tims & Bakker, 2015; Derks, Bakker, Peters & van Wingerden, 2016; Derks, ten Brummelhuis, Zecic & Bakker, 2014). The negative work-home interaction will result in a lower work-home balance (Clark, 2000). Smartphones and other connection opportunities result in individuals making more psychological transitions between the two domains (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) refers to the transitions as border-crossing and gives several propositions that will lead to better work-home balance. According to Clark (2000), good work-home balance is described as satisfaction, well-functioning in both domains, and role conflict at a minimum level. In other words, work-home interaction may affect general life satisfaction. As flexible work may lead to more transitions between the work domain and the home domain, one could also assume that flexible work may affect life satisfaction.

Based on the suggestions to Hill et al. (2001) of providing more research to the influence of flexible work on work-home interaction, and the indications above of connections between work-home interaction and life satisfaction, it would be interesting to understand the connections between the three variables. According to Clark (2000), people are able to shape the domain of work, the domain of the home, along with the borders between them. Therefore, to avoid conflict in the interaction between the domains, each individual has a personal responsibility to secure a well-functioning work-home balance. Even though people can impact and influence their work-home interaction, this is not the case in terms of work flexibility. Most individuals do not have the opportunity to decide how much flexibility their work will include. If flexible work positively affects work-home interaction and life

satisfaction, it suggests that more flexible work would be preferred in the future. This preference would only be optional if other work-related factors, e.g. work performance, also implied positive effects of flexible work. Work and home are some of the most important aspects of people's lives. A change in work, or a change in the dynamic relationship between work and home, can affect people's life massively. Understanding more about the relationship between these three factors will give an indication of the ideal future work environment.

1.2 Research gap and research goal

Hill et al. (2001) suggest that more research is needed on the influence of flexible work and work-family balance. Further, Hill et al. (2001) found that perceived work flexibility has a positive influence on work-family balance. However, the study had some limitations, as it was based on only one company in one country Hill et al. (2001). Based on these limitations Hill et al. (2001) suggest that it would be beneficial with more research that would expand to a variety of groups. It would be interesting to understand the outcomes of the positive influence of perceived flexibility on work-family balance. One potential outcome could be that an individual's general satisfaction also is positively influenced. To our knowledge, the relationship between flexible work and work-family balance has not been linked to life satisfaction in earlier research. Based on this, in our understanding, there is also little research that directly connects flexible work to life satisfaction. However, work-home interaction has connections to both variables (Hill et al., 2001; Clark, 2000; Chen et al., 2018).

Clark (2000) suggest that more research is needed in identifying ways to facilitate work-home balance, based on the findings and propositions in the *work/family border theory*. Understanding the role of flexible work in the work-home interaction is one way of facilitating work-home balance. Work-home balance is by Clark (2000) described as satisfaction, well-functioning in both domains, along with role conflict at a minimum level. This implies that flexible work may have connections with life satisfaction. However, to our knowledge, earlier research has not directly tested how flexible work affects life satisfaction, but instead phenomenon that are related to it.

The research question in this thesis would therefore be formulated as;

“How do perceived work flexibility and work-home interaction affect an individual’s life satisfaction?”

1.3 Outline

This thesis starts with a background and relevance section that introduces the research topic and ends with a research question being presented. From there the theoretical framework will be presented, in which flexible work, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction figures. The theoretical framework ends with a summary of the conceptual framework and hypotheses that were presented during the theoretical part of the thesis. Further, the methodology will be presented, including the data collection and the different variables. Then, the data will be analyzed, and the results presented. The thesis will finish off with a discussion section and a conclusion section. Ideas and inspiration to the structure and outline of this thesis are based on general recommendations and similar studies (Redbook, n.d.: Aabel & Aasland, 2019: Bråthen & Ommundsen, 2018: Andresen & Mohammad, 2019: Hodnefjell & Øverbekk, 2017: Skeibrok & Svensson, 2016).

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the aim is to present a theoretical framework for flexible work, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction. Further, there will be a section that presents the relationships between the different variables. To finalize the theoretical framework, there will be a research model and hypotheses, that is based on the aim of the master thesis, understanding the relationships between flexible work, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction.

2.1 Workplace flexibility

Hill et al. (2008) explain workplace flexibility as a term that is being used more as society is developing and defines the variable as “The ability of workers to make choices that influence when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks.” (Hill et al., 2008). To make the variable more accessible for research on a master thesis level, we have focused on a term within workplace flexibility, called *Perceived flexibility*.

2.1.1 Perceived flexibility

Hill et al. (2008) claim that perceived flexibility refers to how employees *perceive* their flexibility on both *when* they work, in addition to *where* they work. As opposed to actual flexibility, which is how much flexibility employees possess. Because there are many different flexible work solutions applied in all industries, Hill et al. (2008) claims that it is challenging to highlight, and accurately portray, the efficient solutions for e.g. productivity. Perceived flexibility can have an effect on employees that increases the benefit of work-family balance, in addition to the ability to work more hours before reporting work-family conflict, compared to workers who have less perceived flexibility (Hill et al., 2008). Hill et al. (2008) further explained in their study on perceived workplace flexibility, that males reported higher perceived flexibility overall. Higher perceived flexibility was also true for employees over the age of 40, in comparison with younger employees (Hill et al., 2008). Overall, the correlation between perceived flexibility and positive effects at home was high, as the employees with higher perceived flexibility had higher work-family fit, motivation, and general happiness in life (Hill et al., 2008).

2.1.2 Introduction to workplace flexibility

Hill et al. (2008) claim that flexibility is being used and allowed more as work life is evolving. There are multiple flexibility routines that companies can utilize in adopting flexibility for greater work proficiency. Hill et al. (2008) further explain that flexible routines can be different in every field of work. Because of this, the flexible work routines must be carefully applied, to secure positive results in related factors e.g. production efficiency, life satisfaction, and happiness. There are multiple flexible work-life solutions being applied to every industry and every solution will not work in every individual setting. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of a master thesis to list and analyze all these different solutions. An example of flexible work is that a lot of business use today is flextime, which is allowing the employees to come into work and leave after they have worked for a total of around 7.5 hours. If one can maximize the effectiveness of flexible work, it will help people who struggle with health-related issues, in addition to individuals that simply work better from home (Ballard & Seibold, 2004). However, the availability of flexibility increases the importance of worker's motivation and self-management. When a worker is being allowed more flexibility, it increases the chances of that flexibility being abused (Hemingway, 1990).

2.1.3 Benefits and challenges with flexible work

Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill and Brennan (2008) have found that workplace flexibility routines, when the routines are supportive in nature, will significantly affect employee engagement and retention in a positive direction. This is true, even after controlling for personal, family, and job characteristics (Richman et al., 2008). Richman et al. (2008) further found that both formal and occasional flexibility also will increase employee engagement, retention. The study further supplied proof that workplace flexibility may increase workplace engagement, which Richman et al. (2008) suggest can lead to longer job tenure.

Ahmad, Idris, and Hashim (2013) show that by allowing flexible working hours, the employees can focus on multiple roles. Ahmad et al. (2013) further mention that flexible working hours often are practiced, because of what it gives to work-life balance. The study by Ahmad et al. (2013) also showed, that allowing for flexible offers significantly affected the motivation of the employees positively. According to Gardiner and Tomlinson (2009), Shell international said that flexible working hours were the best-suited option, to be implemented into the company. Flexible working hours are increasing fast in the United Kingdom because

of the benefits it gives, and they further suggest that more companies should take advantage of the flexible options that are available for use (Gardiner & Tomlinson, 2009).

Being motivated is important in modern work life. If there is no motivation, productivity towards work, and happiness in life will be reduced (Vroom, 1964). Richman et al. (2008) also support that perceived workplace flexibility and ability to manage the balance between work and personal life will increase the employee's level of engagement and expected retention. This is further supported by another study, where the findings suggested that higher access to flexible work arrangements is better for resilience, productivity, effectiveness, mental health, job satisfaction, engagement, and lower turnover (Galinsky, Bond, & Hill, 2004).

Burud and Tumolo (2004) support that flexible work can be good for work-life. In their study, they concluded that flexible work practices can reduce absenteeism, turnover, and stress, in addition to increasing employee commitment, productivity, and satisfaction (Burud & Tumolo, 2004). The availability for workers, to have the option of being flexible, can empower them and increase productivity, as it gives them control over their work (Brannen, 2005). Brannen (2005) then explains that there are people with the belief that flexibility can hurt the organization if work schedules become unregulated, and the norms of how long, when, or where you work are not present anymore. This mindset is explained by Brannen (2005), that flexible work is working against the interests of labor parties worldwide, in terms of workers' rights. Even considering this, most studies indicate that flexible work agreements are meant to be mutually beneficial for both the employer and the employee (Sabelis, 2001). Some argue that flexible work agreements are beneficial on a national level as well because people can take care of their children or do other important family tasks. This could turn into a butterfly effect of positive events for the betterment of society (Brannen, 2005).

Brannen (2005) argues that even though it seems like flexible work agreements give more control to the employee it turns into a loss of control. This is explained by, that flexible work restructures the belief of how much time one should spend at work. In other terms, employees risk working more at home, compared to what they would have worked normally. If this process is taken to the extreme, Brannen (2005) claims that it can cause burnout and less overall productivity for the individual, and further the corporation (Brannen, 2005).

It can be challenging to measure the immediate benefits of implementing flexible work routines in a company. Because flexible work routines are not perfectly implementable in every field of work, it can also be difficult to use approved solutions from other industries as inspiration. A standard universal user guide is useless when implementing flexible work routines, as an individual's personality and motivation drivers may result in individual outcomes in terms of benefits and drawbacks. Another challenge with enabling flexible work routines is that the employer-employee relationship must be trustworthy, as some workplace-related supervision opportunities disappear (Brannen, 2005).

2.1.4 Technology and flexible work

Menon, Salvatori, and Zwysen (2018) explain that technology is increasing at record speed, and with that, new solutions are found regarding the digital modern society. Because of this, technological solutions can enable new flexible work possibilities. Menon et al. (2018) further explain that because work often is computer-related, increasingly more work can be carried out at home. Other technology advances to make work more flexible, is that computer solutions, e.g. artificial intelligence, can liberate employees from certain tasks. For example, an accountant can entrust the computer to do simple calculations, and instead focus on seemingly more “important” work (Hollander, Denna & Cherrington, 1999; Heskestad, 2017). Because of how the modern world operates, some work does not rely on instant actions. Therefore, some studies suggest that allowing individuals to work when they feel motivated, is overall more beneficial for the corporation (Salama, 2004). Another technological advance to note is that globalization makes it easier for different countries to share experiences and get inspiration on flexible work routines. It should also be noted that there can be a cultural bias regarding flexible work (Hill et al., 2008).

Management control, or solutions to control the employees of the company, has been a developing important topic in modern times, and one can implement aspects of management control in every field of work (Anthony & Govindarajan, 2007). Technology can make it easier for management, to control actual working hours, by using tracking software. Solutions of management control can therefore extend into the home of the employee, in real-time. Furthermore, technology can often display in real-time, how close the company is towards meeting its key performance index goals and can utilize management control force from real-time data (Anthony & Govindarajan, 2007; Canada, 2013). Liu, Pasma, Taal-Fokker, and Stappers (2014) claims that when younger generations are entering the workforce, they have

grown up with modern technology, and are usually more equipped to handle technology at work. The younger generations are also more productive in their work if they can be in a flexible environment (Liu et al., 2014). Since younger people usually have a better understanding of technology, they are more open to new solutions in how they are supposed to work, compared to older generations. Because of this, in industries with more technological advancement the need for younger workers is higher, for productivity and profitability to be increased (Buckingham & Willett, 2013).

2.2 Work-home interaction

During history, the domains of work and home have evolved tremendously. In simpler times, the two domains were mostly integrated into each other, as work often entailed bringing food or shelter to the family. After the industrial revolution, the two domains were separated for most individuals and were carried out in different places, at different times and with different people (Clark, 2000). The separation of the two domains became clear, as there were developed different cultures and expectations to the individuals in each domain (Clark, 2000). This reflects the work and home situation over the last few decades, where characteristics like *loving* and *caring* are important in the home domain, while *capable* and *responsible* is important in the work domain (Clark, 2000). These days, there has been another development of historical context in terms of the domains of work and home. Increasingly more people mix work and home, often due to new technology that enables individuals to work from home.

The available opportunities for flexible work are tempting for many employees. There is something fascinating about the opportunity to choose when and where one wants to work. Although flexibility in work hours and workplace may be beneficial for work-home interaction, it also holds some disadvantages. Working from home could save transportation time, but it may also result in more non-work interruptions. Flexible work hours could make kindergarten delivery less complicated, but it may also lead to uncertainty in the attendance of the morning meetings at work. Understanding these positives and negatives would give an indication of how flexible work should be balanced in everyone's life. To obtain a satisfying work-home balance, it is important that the interaction between work and home is mostly positive. An informative tool to understand work-home interaction is a theory by Clark (2000), named *work/family border theory*. The theory provides a deeper understanding of

work-home interaction, by including a theoretical framework of the interaction that describes why conflict occurs, in addition to providing propositions on how better work-home balance can be attained (Clark, 2000). As providing a deeper understanding of work-home interaction is the aim of this subchapter, the theory will figure as the mainstay in terms of sources. Hopefully, by fulfilling the aim of this subchapter, it will make it easier to understand the correlation with both flexible work and life satisfaction. The first part of the process is to elaborate on the work/family border theory.

2.2.1 Work/Family Border Theory

Work/family border theory provides a theoretical framework that was missing from earlier research on work-home balance (Clark, 2000). Due to its proposition for better work-home balance, the theory has been the inspiration to a lot of research on work/life balance and work-home interaction, e.g. the research of Chen et al. (2018). Although the theory is old, it is still being used as inspiration for recent research, in the field of study (Beckman & Stanko, 2020; Grandey, Gabriel & King, 2020; Falkenberg, Lindfors, Chandola & Head, 2020). This gives a clear indication that the theory is highly relevant and acknowledged to this day. The theory is informative in explaining the relationship between the work domain and the home domain of an individual. Based on the purpose and aim of this subchapter, to understand work-home interaction, the work/family balance theory by Clark (2000) is encompassing. Since the theory has such comprehensive coverage of the main points of work-home interaction, it has been the mainstay in terms of sources in this subchapter.

Clark (2000) addresses several elements in the work/family border theory that could influence the work-home interaction, e.g. border creation and border management. Furthermore, other elements in the theory that is explanatory in terms of work-home interaction, is domain integration and segmentation, border-crosser participation, as well as relationships between border-crossers and other individuals (Clark, 2000). In the theory, Clark (2000, p. 748) argues that “people are border-crossers and make daily transitions between two worlds - the world of work and the world of the family”. These worlds, or domains, are kept separate by borders. Some borders are bendable and flexible, while others are strong and immovable. The borders, in addition to border-crossers, border-keepers, and domain members, are all parts of the interaction between the two domains (Clark, 2000). To get concrete points of reference to the work/family border theory, a visual representation of the theory is presented in Figure 2.1 below.

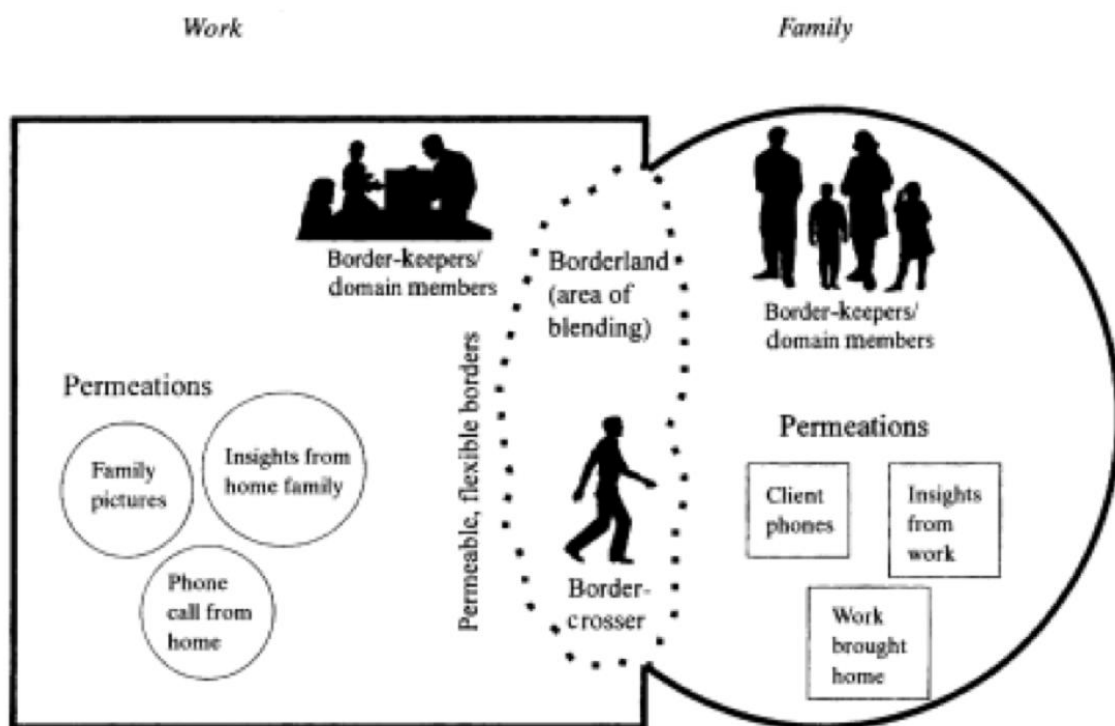


Figure 2.1. Visual representation of the work/family border theory (Clark, 2000, p. 754)

Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the work/family border theory. By breaking down and highlighting the role of each part of Figure 2.1, it will hopefully increase the general understanding of work-home interaction, which is the purpose of this subchapter. A central term within work-home interaction is the individual border-crosser. Clark (2000) suggests that individuals are daily border-crossing between the two domains. Figure 2.1 shows a separation between the domain of work and the domain of family. In this thesis, the domain of home and the domain of family refers to the same domain, mostly phrased as the domain of the home. In the home domain, common border-keepers are spouses (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) separates the border-keepers from other domain members, as other domain members do not have the same power over the border-crosser, even though they can influence both the domain and the border (Clark, 2000). Other domain members in the home domain, could commonly be family members and friends. In the work domain, common border-keepers are supervisors, and other domain members would commonly be colleges (Clark, 2000).

Border-keepers and other domain members are an important factor in the work-home interaction, as they influence the border-crossers' ability to manage the borders (Clark, 2000).

The pressure and expectations from domain members may lead to difficulties in the individual's border management. Disagreements on flexibility, permeability, and content of both the borders and domains are some of the main reasons that people experience work-home conflict (Clark, 2000). To avoid conflict, communication is one of the best tools available. Supplementary to communication, other-domain awareness, commitment, and central participation will reduce conflict (Clark, 2000). Domain member's tools for conflict reduction will be explained further in the sections about negative work-home interaction and positive work-home interaction. Although border-keepers and other domain members can help the border-crosser to improve the work-home interaction, the border-crosser is the one that can contribute the most to this improvement. The border-crosser is centralized in the work-home interaction and would hence have a substantial influence on all parts of the interaction. Clark (2000) points out that becoming a central participant in both domains would improve the work-home interaction, as one would have more control over the borders separating the domains. To be a central participant in a domain, one would need to have a clear identity, along with influence in the domains (Clark, 2000). The identity of the border-crossers needs to be closely tied with their membership in the domain, while the influence is created by the affiliation with both central members and the domain culture (Clark, 2000). Central participation, and how it affects the work-home interaction, will be further elaborated in the sections of negative work-home interaction and positive work-home interaction.

In addition to the interacting people, the work/family border theory also involves borders and domains, as shown in Figure 2.1. The composition of borders and domains may influence individuals and affect the work-home interaction. Figure 2.1 displays two domains: work and family. The family domain is referred to as the home domain in this text, as this coincides with recent research use of the term. The difference is mostly in the phrasing, but it is mentioned to avoid uncertainty. In the last decades, the domains of work and home have been quite separated for most people, but this has not always been the case. Before the industrial revolution, the two domains were treated as one domain, as the work was mostly activities on the family farm (Clark, 2000). Today, due to technology and flexible work, the two domains are increasingly more connected. Clark (2000) implies that the outcome of this connection is affected by the similarities in the domains, as she suggests that weak borders are recommended when domains are similar, while strong borders are recommended when domains are different. The two domains would naturally be distinctive from individual to individual and eminently affected by workplace culture and family culture (Clark, 2000).

From this, one could flippantly argue that a rock star with young children should keep the work domain and the home domain separate with strong borders and avoid flexibility in terms of e.g. working from home. As the differences in domains could be important when designing the borders between them, one could argue that borders hold a major role in achieving work-home balance.

Borders can be physical, temporal, and psychological, with the purpose of defining where domain-relevant behavior begins or ends (Clark, 2000). A physical border could be the door into an individual's office, a temporal border could be scheduled work hours, while a psychological border could include behaving professionally at work and relaxed at home (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) argues that the borders define *where* and *when* domain-relevant behavior transforms. Based on this, one can think that domains frequently are in great contrast to each other, and the borders make it easy to separate them. The borders are considerably more complex, due to permeability, flexibility, blending, and border strength (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) characterize permeable borders to the extent of how elements from one domain may enter the other. Being available at work for a phone call from your kids at home is an example of permeability in the border. Furthermore, flexibility is also a border attribute that increases the border's complexity. Clark (2000) argues that the flexibility of the border is depending on how bendable the borders are to demands from people in the two domains. If individuals can work from their own preference of location, the physical borders between work and home are very flexible (Clark, 2000). The temporal borders between work and home are very flexible if individuals can choose their preferred work hours (Clark, 2000). If individuals often allow themselves to think about home when at work, or the other way around, the psychological borders are very flexible (Clark, 2000).

In cases where there is a considerable occurrence of flexibility and permeability surrounding the border, blending may occur (Clark, 2000). As shown in Figure 2.1, the borders are the connection between the domain of work and the domain of the home. Enclosed by the borders in Figure 2.1, there is an area called borderland, which is not exclusive to one or the other domain, but blends both work and home (Clark, 2000). This borderland of blending can e.g. occur in family-run businesses, or while working and babysit at the same time (Clark, 2000). The positives and negatives of blending will be further elaborated in the section of negative work-home interaction and positive work-home interaction. The degree of blending, in addition to flexibility and permeability, is adding up to summarize the total border strength

(Clark, 2000). A border is strong if the amount of blending, flexibility, and permeability is low, while weak if there are a lot of the given border attributes. This is part of the reason why Clark (2000) suggests that weak borders are recommended when domains are similar, and strong borders are recommended when domains are different. To bring even more complexity to the situation, the borders may be strong from one side, but weak from the other side (Clark, 2000). When this is the case, it could be more difficult for some individuals to experience greater work-home balance, which will be explained in the next sections.

To summarize, the work/family border theory by Clark (2000) provides a framework with tools that encourage a better balance between work and home. To do this, Clark (2000) highlights some propositions that guide both individuals and organizations for them to secure better work-home balance (Clark, 2000). These propositions are a mixture of tools to increase the positive work-home interaction and decrease the negative work-home interaction. By elaborating on these positives and negatives, one would get a more detailed and exemplified understanding of work-home interaction. The elaboration will also make it easier to understand the correlation between flexible work and life satisfaction. Therefore, the next sections describe negative work-home interaction and positive work-home interaction.

2.2.2 Negative work-home interaction

An important aspect of attaining a work-home balance is to predict when the conflict will occur (Clark, 2000). Negative work-home interaction, e.g. conflict, is in the literature often referred to as work-home interference (Van Hooff, Geurts, Kompier & Taris, 2006), but to avoid confusion, it is phrased negative work-home interaction in this text. The unwanted interaction could occur in several different settings, so identifying these settings may be crucial to attaining balance. If the borders between the work domain and the home domain are permeable, it can be a problem in some cases. An example of a permeable work-home border is if an individual is available for job calls in the non-work scheduled weekends. Clark (2000) argues that such availability and permeability may be perceived as interruptions, especially if the unexpected border-crossing happens frequently. The work-home borders may also be psychological, as a spillover of negative emotions and stress can lead to unhealthy work-home interaction (Clark, 2000). Stress at work may e.g. lead to a bad mood at home. Berntsson, Lundberg, and Krantz (2006) found that there is a significant difference between the genders and that females report more stress from work-home interaction, compared to men. Mostert and Oldfield (2009) further suggest that the higher education individuals have, the less

negative work-home interaction will occur. Mostert and Oldfield (2009) also found that participants between the age of 50 and 69 years old, had higher positive work-home interaction while participants between the age of 22 to 39 years old, had the lowest (Mostert & Oldfield, 2009).

If there are too much permeability and flexibility in the work-home borders, blending occurs (Clark, 2000). Instead of a clear border, Clark (2000) argues that blended situations create a borderland that cannot be categorized as either work or home. By referring to Anzaldúa (1987), Clark (2000) highlights that borderlands can be dangerous, in terms of unfavorable work-home interaction if the domains are originally very different from each other. In cases like this, individuals may “slip into a sort of schizophrenia about their identity and purpose” (Clark, 2000, p. 757). Blending, exemplified by a person who often receives early work calls while driving the kids to school, should be avoided with highly contrasting domains (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) argues that strong borders, categorized by its impermeability, inflexibility, and low amount of blending, would facilitate better work-home balance in such cases. There are individual differences in border strength, and the same border could even be strong to protect one domain, but weak to protect the other domain (Clark, 2000). Consequently, negative work-home interaction may, according to Clark (2000), occur when individuals primarily identify themselves with the weakly bordered domain. An example of such situations is if an employee has two phones, one work-phone and one private phone. This employee always brings the private phone to work, but leaves the work-phone behind, when returning home. In other words, the employee is only available for permeation from one side of the border. This may result in substantially unwanted work-home interaction, if the employee primarily identifies with the work domain, by valuing his or her career considerably.

Individual border-crossers, that are aware of how the borders and domains affect the work-home interaction, can act hereafter. However, the interaction involves several actors, e.g. border-keepers and other domain members, which makes it too complex to fully influence and control. Domain members are a major part of the work-home interaction. By referring to Merton (1957), Clark (2000) argues that the lack of communication with domain members may lead to unrealistic or poorly timed demands. Unfavorable work-home interaction can occur if domain members only focus on their own needs, instead of understanding the duties of an individual in the other domain (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) suggests that to avoid

conflict it is important that especially border-keepers, but also other domain members, have other domain awareness and commitment to the border-crosser. By knowing what is happening in the other domain, in addition to caring more for the general well-being of the border-crosser than the fulfillment of personal needs, one could expect a higher work-home balance and fewer conflicts (Clark, 2000). In general, disagreements between individuals on how flexible and permeable borders should be, are according to Clark (2000), the primary source to work-home conflict. In other words, the importance of communication with domain members, cannot be highlighted enough. To prevent unfavorable work-home interaction, Clark (2000) suggests that individuals should communicate with family about work, or with colleges about home. Good communication may not only be conflict reducing, but it may also highly contribute to an increase in positive work-home interaction in an individual's life.

2.2.3 Positive work-home interaction

The section above may indicate that the cross-domain interaction is full of potential conflict situations, thereby the best alternative is to avoid all kinds of mixture between work and home. Positive work-home interaction occurs surprisingly frequently. Beneficial work-home interaction is e.g. bringing communication techniques learned at work, into family discussions (Clark, 2000). To secure a well-functioning work-home balance, most of the interaction should be positive. However, the complexity of the interaction, where the individuals and the environment shape each other, complicates the path to an optimized balance (Clark, 2000). By detailing and exemplifying elements of the complex interaction, one could highlight beneficial situations as inspiration. An example of positive work-home interaction, in terms of permeability of the borders, could be a picture of the family at the office-desk. Supplementary, regarding the psychological permeability of the borders, positive work-home interaction could be sharing experiences between the domains. Stress management techniques are an example of knowledge learned on the job, that could prove to be useful also in the home domain.

In general, the permeability and flexibility of borders are more often positively perceived if the two domains are similar. The same criteria apply for blending, which occurs when there is a lot of permeability and flexibility around the border. Clark (2000) argues that blending may lead to integration and a sense of wholeness for individuals with similar domains. Blending, in combination with permeability and flexibility, determine the strength of the work-home border (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) suggests that if the border is strong from one domain to the

other, and bendable from the opposite side, individuals will experience more positive work-home interaction if they primarily identify with the strongly bordered domain.

Clark (2000) argues that domains and borders are partially a product of self-creation, nevertheless they also include uncontrollable variables such as e.g. border-keepers and domain members. To optimize work-home balance, it is important that the border-crosser involves domain members in his or her role in both domains. By being a central participant in both domains, including having influence and a clear identity, the border-crosser will experience more beneficial work-home interaction, according to Clark (2000). In addition, being a central participant involves affiliation with central members of the domains, along with the culture and values within each domain (Clark, 2000). If domain members are familiar with the general role of the border-crosser, in terms of tasks and responsibilities in both domains, it is often easier for domain members to understand the prioritizing and choices made by the border-crosser. Clark (2000) argues that other-domain awareness and commitment to the border-crosser, are key attributes of domain members, to increase the positive work-home interaction. In addition to the personal attributes of domain members, it is also important that each domain has characteristics that facilitate positive work-home interaction (Clark, 2000).

Communication is essential, to facilitate beneficial work-home interaction. Clark (2000) argues that when two domains are similar, communication is expected to be easier. Similar domains, along with frequent supportive communication about other-domain activities, will moderate ill-effects of situations that would otherwise lead to imbalance (Clark, 2000). By avoiding imbalance, one could withhold the beneficial work-home interaction. Reasoned in the comprehensiveness and complexity of the interaction, it would always be impossible to facilitate beneficial situations. On the other hand, small changes based on the guidelines presented above may lead to work-home balance, and maybe also satisfying life.

2.3 Life satisfaction

In this thesis, the life satisfaction variable is built on the research of Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985), which ended in a scale measuring global life satisfaction. Satisfaction with life scale is based on individuals reporting their subjective life satisfaction, which means that

the individuals are free to weight their satisfaction on various domains (Diener et al., 1985). In other words, some people can get satisfaction from money, while others may get satisfaction from other factors, e.g. good health. Happiness and well-being are similar factors that may contribute to better life satisfaction. De Ree and Alessie (2011) explain that life satisfaction will behave in a U-shape, where the early and later ages of an individual's life, will be the ones with most life satisfaction. Life satisfaction will also increase with higher education (Meléndez, Tomás, Oliver & Navarro, 2009). There are also no differences between the genders when it comes to life satisfaction (Fugl-Meyer, Melin & Fugl-Meyer, 2002). The reason that life satisfaction is prominent in this thesis is due to indicated connections with perceived flexible work and work-home interaction. The next subchapter below will provide further connections between life satisfaction in context with both flexible work and work-home interaction.

2.4 Relationship between the variables

In this subchapter, the aim is to provide an understanding of the connections between the variables that are presented in the earlier part of the theoretical framework. Understanding the relations between the variables will figure as a base, that further enables the development of the hypotheses. The hypotheses are showcased at the end of each section, along with being summarized in the next subchapter.

2.4.1 Perceived work flexibility and Work-home interaction

Hill et al. (2001) argue that perceived work flexibility has a positive influence on the work-home balance. The argumentation is based on a study with some limitations, e.g. participants from one single company, in one single country (Hill et al., 2001). Due to the limitations, Hill et al. (2001) suggest that more research is needed on the connections between perceived work flexibility and work-home balance. The study of Hill et al. (2001) is based on general work-home balance, as opposed to this thesis focus of work-home interaction. Based on this, it is fair to state that the relationship between perceived work flexibility and work-home interaction is uncertain. To our knowledge, the direct relationship between perceived work flexibility, based on measurements from Hill et al. (2008), and work-home interaction, based on measurements from Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dikkers, Van Hooff and Kinnunen (2005), has not been clearly elaborated in earlier research.

Despite this, there are indications that the two variables are connected. Individuals that pursue a lifestyle where flexible work is preferred, will seemingly cross the borders between the work domain and the home domain more often than others (Clark, 2000). The work-home borders, of an individual that utilizes flexible work, maybe more permeable and flexible, e.g. the physical borders, due to frequent change of office location. This enables interference, as the locations may not always be facilitated to keep the focus on the work domain. One example of this is having an office at home, where family members may be interrupting the focus on work now and then, by entering the space of the home office (Clark, 2000). Clark (2000) argues that frequent permeations, often are perceived as interruptions. The temporal borders would also be more flexible and permeable if one does not have a fixed work schedule. The same goes for the psychological borders, as ideas, insights, and emotions may flow between the domains more easily (Clark, 2000).

As blending occurs with high flexibility and permeability of borders (Clark, 2000), flexible workers may have a higher degree of blending, along with a larger borderland between the work domain and the home domain. Moreover, as flexible workers seemingly are frequent border-crossers, the number of times they interact with a bit of both domains, probably also are higher. To summarize, based on the work/family border theory by Clark (2000), it could indicate that flexible workers are more exposed to work-home interaction than others. The propositions in the theory, may of that reason, apply more to people with high perceived work flexibility. Similar domains, other-domain awareness, central participation, along with communication are examples of such propositions (Clark, 2000). As the connection between perceived work flexibility and work-home interaction is partly built on indications, it would be interesting to clarify the relationship. In this thesis, perceived flexibility is measured based on the research of Hill et al. (2008), and work-home interaction is measured based on the research of Geurts et al. (2005).

Based on this, we have developed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *Perceived flexibility has a positive effect on positive work-home interaction*

Hypothesis 2: *Perceived flexibility has a negative effect on negative work-home interaction*

2.4.2 Work-home interaction and Life satisfaction

The connection from work-home interaction to life satisfaction is conspicuous, as more negative work-home interaction may result in conflicts, lack of recovery, burnout, work stress, work overload, along with other effects that impact an employee negatively (Clark, 2000; Chen et al., 2018; Derks & Bakker, 2014). These negative impacts could be seen in context with lesser life satisfaction. Clark (2000) argues that more positive work-home interaction implies a better work-home balance, which may suggest higher satisfaction. Clark (2000) describes work-home balance as satisfaction, well-functioned in both domains, along with a minimum of role conflict. From this, one could assume that there is a connection between this section's two highlighted variables. Parts of this connection was tested by Vodanovich, Lambert, Kass, and Piotrowski (2006), and the results supported the indications from Clark (2000). Vodanovich et al. (2006) found that work-home conflict negatively affected life satisfaction. Further, central participation and supportive communication, which enable more positive work-home interaction (Clark, 2000), increased life satisfaction (Vodanovich et al., 2006) Reasoned by this literature, it will be interesting to understand if the indications could be further supported by analytical research. In this thesis, work-home interaction is measured by the research of Geurts et al. (2005), and life satisfaction is measured by the research of Diener et al. (1985).

Based on this we have developed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: *Positive work-home interaction has a positive effect on life satisfaction*

Hypothesis 4: *Negative work-home interaction has a negative effect on life satisfaction*

2.4.3 Flexible work and Life satisfaction

To our knowledge, the direct connections between perceived flexibility, based on measurements from Hill et al. (2008), and life satisfaction, based on measurements from Diener et al. (1985), has not been clearly elaborated in earlier research. Despite this, some research connects flexible work to variables similar to life satisfaction. Ahmad et al. (2013) claim that flexible work will increase work-life balance, along with increasing employee's motivation for further work. Richman et al. (2008) also brings up that being allowed flexible

work, will increase employee retention and engagement. Galinsky et al. (2004) further suggest that access to flexible work can enhance resilience, productivity, effectiveness, mental health, job satisfaction, engagement, and lower turnover. Burud and Tumolo (2004) further suggest, that flexible work practices can reduce absenteeism, turnover, and stress, while also increasing employee commitment, productivity, and satisfaction.

The research above provides indications that there may be a connection between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction, even though direct connections between the specific variables are missing in earlier research. In this thesis, to test the indicated connections, flexible work is measured by the research of Hill et al. (2008), and life satisfaction is measured by the research of Diener et al. (1985). In addition to this, there are indications that work-home interaction has connections to both variables. To understand these connections, along with the general role of work-home interaction, in the relationship between the two other variables, work-home interaction is presented as a potential mediating variable. In this thesis, work-home interaction is measured by the research of Geurts et al. (2005).

Based on this we have developed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5: *Perceived flexibility has a positive effect on life satisfaction*

Hypothesis 6: *Positive work-home interaction has a positive mediating effect on perceived flexibility to life satisfaction*

Hypothesis 7: *Negative work-home interaction has a negative mediating effect on perceived flexibility to life satisfaction*

2.5 Research model and hypotheses

The aim of this master thesis is to understand the relationships between perceived work flexibility, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction. Reasoned in the aim of the master thesis, hypotheses that will contribute to the understanding of relationships, have been presented in the subchapter above. To better measure and analyze work-home interaction, the variable is separated into two sub-variables; positive work-home interaction and negative work-home interaction. Positive work-home interaction is assumed to have a positive

mediating effect on the relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction. On the opposite side, negative work-home interaction is assumed to have a negative mediating effect on the relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction.

Based on the theoretical framework, a research model is presented below in Figure 2.2.

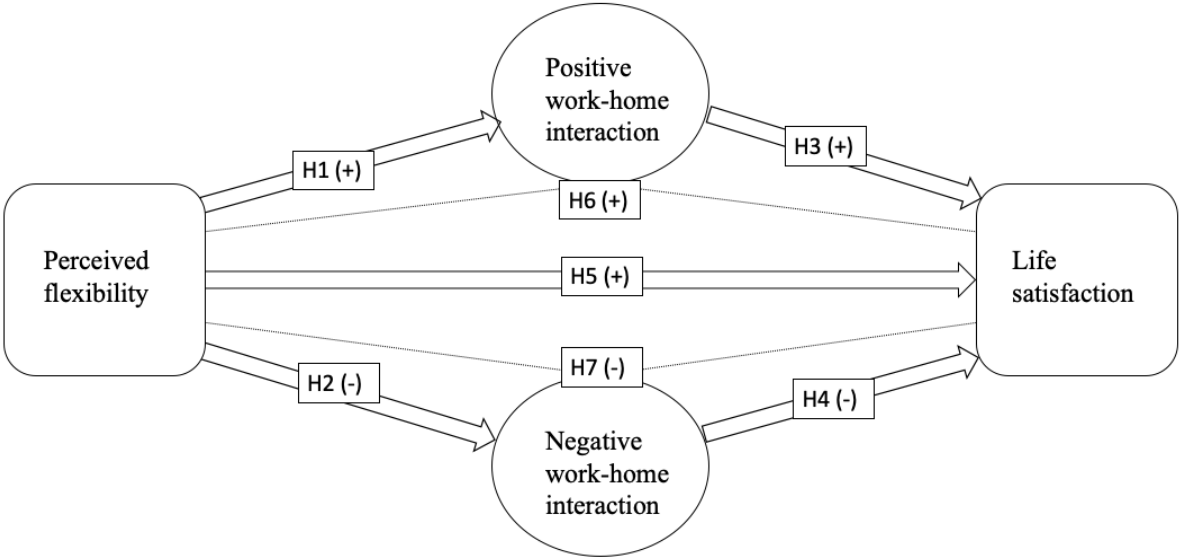


Figure 2.2. Research model

Based on the theoretical framework, a summary of the hypotheses is presented in Table 2.1 below.

Hypotheses
H1: Perceived flexibility has a positive effect on positive work-home interaction
H2: Perceived flexibility has a negative effect on negative work-home interaction
H3: Positive work-home interaction has a positive effect on life satisfaction
H4: Negative work-home interaction has a negative effect on life satisfaction
H5: Perceived flexibility has a positive effect on life satisfaction
H6: Positive work-home interaction has a positive mediating effect on perceived flexibility to life satisfaction
H7: Negative work-home interaction has a negative mediating effect on perceived flexibility to life satisfaction

Table 2.1. Hypotheses

3. Methodology

In this chapter of the thesis, the elements of data collection, measurement of variables, and data analysis will be highlighted. In addition, the data material will be presented and tested for reliability and validity. Ultimately, the hypothesized model will be exhibited.

3.1 Data collection

To obtain the necessary amount of data, the best option was to perform a quantitative approach for this research. This reasoning is based on the advantages and capabilities of quantitative data collection. Quantitative data collection methods, e.g. surveys, are designed to collect a large amount of data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The purpose of the data collection was to obtain data that would be necessary to analyze and understand the relationship between perceived flexibility, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction. To fulfill this purpose, one would need to gather a small amount of information from many people. Online questionnaires are beneficial in that matter, as they involve lower costs and lesser time consuming, compared to a physical survey. Having the survey online also opens up for the possibility of being able to retrieve more data painlessly, from an increased number of respondents (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Based on this, the best option for data collection in this thesis was using the quantitative method of an online questionnaire.

3.1.1 Online questionnaire

To collect the data necessary, to understand the relationship between flexible work, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction, we used the online questionnaire program SurveyXact.

The distribution of online questionnaires is conducted effortlessly, with only a few actions required, if the questionnaire is created and the receiver's email-addresses are collected and sorted. Due to better technology over the last decades, the development of online survey services and statistical software makes online survey research less complicated and more accessible, than ever before (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Another major upside is the wide geographical area that can be covered in an online questionnaire (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In this data collection, this was especially useful as our potential respondents are spread all

over Norway. By handing out the questionnaire physically, it would be considerably challenging to reach the same number of different respondents, in an equal amount of time. In addition to this, online questionnaires allow the respondents to answer in their homes, at their own pace, which can reduce measurement error from the respondent (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This was crucial for the study, as the questionnaire was distributed at a time where a substantial amount of people was adapting to a home-based workstyle, due to the covid-19 outbreak in the world. The fact that the respondents did not have to complete the survey at the exact time they got the email, probably increased the response rate drastically.

However, the use of an online questionnaire also has downsides. Researchers often experience problems with sampling, when distributing online questionnaires (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). There could be difficulties in terms of establishing the representatives of the sample, and to generalize findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A way of partly avoiding this is by asking questions about e.g. profession, that separates the target group from others. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that people are being honest, when answering online questionnaires. Therefore, it is better to specify the use of email-addresses, to only the people that belong in the target population, instead of posting on social media. In general, the response rates in online questionnaires tend to be low (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). To improve response rates, proven effective techniques is sending follow-up emails and keep the questionnaire as brief as possible (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). To keep the response rates at a sufficient level, the questionnaire was developed to be as short and concise as possible. Further, people might find emails with an online questionnaire attached as an invasion of privacy, which may also affect the response rates negatively (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). To avoid this, we tried to be as polite as possible in our approach. One could assume, that many emails got deleted anyway. Lastly, a disadvantage with an online questionnaire is that the respondent's doubts or uncertainty cannot be clarified straight away (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In case of doubts or uncertainty regarding the questionnaire, the contact information of the research team was presented on the first page of the survey.

To secure that a language barrier would not be an issue, we distributed the questionnaire in both English and Norwegian. Most of the respondents preferred the translated Norwegian version, which gives us an indication that the response rates would be lower if we only had distributed the questionnaire in English. A copy of the English version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

3.1.2 Sampling frame and distribution

For researchers to generalize the population of interest, one could draw conclusions from the findings of a sample, which is defined as a subset of the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A population is described as the entire group of people, that the researcher would like to study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In our case, the population is people that have or are currently working in Norway. As this population includes millions of people, one would have to use a smaller sample that could reflect the general opinion of the population. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the sample size of our chosen population should be at least 384 respondents. The minimum number of 384 respondents, is retrieved from the table in Appendix E, of the recommended sample size for a given population size (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A concern regarding the sample size was that if the sample was too small, it is impossible to generalize the findings to the chosen population. Due to this concern, we tried to collect as many responses as feasible.

To get responses from people within our selected population, we gathered contact information of possible respondents from the site Proff Forvalt (n.d.). Proff Forvalt (n.d.) is a database containing personal and economic information from hundreds of thousands of companies in Norway. After filtering out some of them, we ended up with approximately 20 000 possible respondents. From the top of this list of possible respondents, we started to distribute the questionnaire via email. After a few days, we discovered that we would exceed the minimum required sample size of 384 by a good margin and stopped the distribution to new respondents shortly after. The questionnaire was handed out on the 19th of March and closed on the 9th of April, which gave the respondents a three-week period of answering the questionnaire. Shortly after distributing the survey, we figured out that firm size would be useful as a control variable. As 145 respondents already had finished the questionnaire, those had to be rejected when examining the results of that control variable. Because we already had received a good amount of responses, we decided that it was not necessary to increase response rates by sending a follow-up email, as suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2016).

The questionnaire was handed out in a period of instability and uncertainty in many workplaces, due to the covid-19 outbreak in the world. Therefore, we tried to approach organizations as gently as possible, and not take up more of their time than needed. Online questionnaires may be heavily affected by self-selection bias, as some types of people tend to

be more willing to respond to online questionnaires than others (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This tendency may lead to systematic bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In our case, the likelihood of respondents may have been affected by other factors than their motivation to respond to the topic. Due to the extraordinary situation in different workplaces at the distribution dates, time concerns and other priorities may have prevented many from completing the survey. We got feedback from some that they would like to contribute to research, but at the time, they had to mainly focus on saving their jobs and businesses. Because of this prioritization of the respondents, it may have contributed to a self-selecting bias, as people with more job security e.g. teachers, were more likely to complete the questionnaire. Sampling issues like these may contribute negatively to the ability to generalize findings to the entire population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

As we encouraged the organizations, that had some available time to share the questionnaire with colleagues, we would not know the exact number of individuals that received a link to the questionnaire. Based on this, and due to the general approach and limitations of the study, calculating the response rate would not be accurate, as we do not know the total number of possible respondents that had access to the questionnaire. However, in SurveyXact the questionnaire is marked as distributed, whenever a person clicks on the link and opens the questionnaire. According to SurveyXact, the questionnaire was distributed to 1750 respondents, where a total of 810 finished the survey.

3.1.3 Ethical considerations

The data collected in the questionnaire is anonymous. The University of Agder uses Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (NSD), as data protection officials for research. If the research conducted process or collect personal information, the researchers are obligated to notify NSD. Due to the option of an anonymous questionnaire in SurveyXact, in addition to the fact that our research did not collect or process any form of personal data, we were not obligated to notify NSD. To ensure this, we took the NSD notification test, as shown in Appendix B. The results from the test showed that our research was not subject to further involvement with NSD. The respondents of the questionnaire were informed that their answers were anonymous and confidential, both on the survey and during the distribution.

3.2 Measurement of variables

The questionnaire design and the measurements of the different variables are explained in this section. A complete overview of the different variables and their respective items can be found in Appendix C.

As it was important for us to ensure that this study was reliable, we decided to use scales and items that already had been validated in previous research. Although all variables had validated scales and items from earlier research, none of them were translated to Norwegian. Therefore, the scales and items were translated to Norwegian and slightly modified, to avoid uncertainty from language barriers. All items, except control variable items, were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

3.2.1 Independent variable

In this study, the independent variable is perceived flexibility. The independent variable's role in a study is to contribute to the investigation of the effect on the dependent variable. If this effect is present, it could be either positive or negative. In other words, changes in the independent variable may, if the variables are connected, change the value of the dependent variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The measurement of the independent variable, perceived flexibility, is based on the research of Hill et al. (2008). The research from Hill et al. (2008) measures perceived flexibility with two simple questions; "I have the control of scheduling *when* I work" and "I have control of scheduling *where* I work". The Cronbach's alpha in the research of Hill et al. (2008) was estimated to the value of 0.91. The study of Hill et al. (2008) originally used a four-point Likert scale, but to better fit this study, this was modified to a five-point Likert scale.

3.2.2 Dependent variable

The measurement of the dependent variable, life satisfaction, is based on the research of Diener et al. (1985). The research by Diener et al. (1985) examines people's well-being and general life satisfaction. Based on numerous studies, the researchers have created *Satisfaction with life scale* (Diener et al., 1985). To find out how people's life satisfaction is affected by their perceived work flexibility and work-home interaction, Satisfaction with life scale is the

most suitable option of measurement. Satisfaction with life scale is, by some researchers, considered as the most used measure of life satisfaction worldwide (Clench-Aas, Nes, Dalgard & Aarø, 2011). The coefficient alpha of 0.87 contributes to the general impression of a high-quality scale (Diener et al., 1985). The scale is made for the global population, which means that there may be national differences in culture, wording, along with the definition of a good life (Clench-Aas et al., 2011). A study of the measurement invariance to the scale in Norway had a Cronbach's alpha estimated to 0.91, which indicates that the scale is very usable, also in Norway (Clench-Aas et al., 2011). The Satisfaction with life scale originally used a seven-point Likert scale, but to better fit this study, this was modified to a five-point Likert scale.

3.2.3 Mediating variable

The measurement of the mediating variable, work-home interaction, is based on the research of Geurts et al. (2005). Based on research, they developed a new questionnaire called *Survey Work-home Interaction – NijmeGen*, or shortly phrased as SWING (Geurts et al., 2005). The original survey contains four subscales; positive work-home interaction, negative work-home interaction, positive home-work interaction, and negative home-work interaction (Geurts et al., 2005). Due to the limitations of this study, we were only able to test the work-home interaction subscales. The original version of the positive work-home interaction subscale is based on six items, while the original version of the negative work-home interaction subscale is based on nine items (Geurts et al., 2005). One item on each work-home interaction subscale has by Geurts et al. (2005) been omitted due to high overlap with other items, but as the factor loadings on those items were high, we included them in our questionnaire.

If the home-work interaction items also had been included, the questionnaire would have been too long, which probably would have resulted in a drastic decrease in the response and completion rates (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The items from the positive and negative work-home interaction subscales, measure how the work domain affects the home domain (Geurts et al., 2005). The Cronbach's alpha on the items of negative work-home interaction was estimated to 0.84, while the Cronbach's alpha on the items of positive work-home interaction was estimated to 0.75. A four-response format was used in the original SWING, but to better fit this study, this was modified to a five-point Likert scale. In order to uncomplicate the measurement of the mediating variable, work-home interaction, it has been separated into two

sub-variables; positive work-home interaction and negative work-home interaction. When phrased *work-home interaction*, both sub-variables are referred to.

3.2.4 Control variables

This study included 12 control variables: gender, age, marital status, parental status, education level, work experience, full-time/part-time, work arrangements, contract type, job position, firm size, organization type. Most of the variables were listed with all possible answers available in a category scale. For some variables, the option “other” was added, to avoid misplacing because of uncertainty. These answers were rearranged to the correct category after the survey closed. Other variables, e.g. firm size, required the respondents to type in their numerical answers. The control variables were selected based on previous research, and guidance from the research coordinator. Previous studies on flexible work, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction have included gender, age, marital status, parental status, and education (Hill et al., 2008; Meléndez et al., 2008; Mostert & Oldfield, 2009). As flexible work routines can be different in every field of work (Hill et al., 2008), organization type was included. These six control variables would be the highlighted ones, in terms of the analysis and results, as they are comparable to earlier research in the field of study.

3.3 Data analysis

The data collected from the survey was analyzed for further research in SmartPLS 3, by employing PLS-SEM; Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. SmartPLS is a program suggested by Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2017) for analyzing the integrity of datasets in research. In most of this data analysis subchapter, the guidelines from Hair et al. (2017) will figure as the main source, supplemented by other authors. SmartPLS has the option of gathering statistics needed for analysis, e.g. R-values, skewness, kurtosis, path coefficients, along with other statistics regarding the validity and reliability of datasets (Hair et al., 2017). Most of the values in this thesis are calculated using SEM; Structural Equation Modeling (Hair et al., 2017). Supplementary, the use of other features in SmartPLS will be explained further into the analysis when utilized for research. Another benefit of using PLS-SEM is its objectivity and being well-functioning with small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2017).

3.3.1 Preparation of data material and scale

To use survey-data in analytical programs, e.g. SmartPLS, SPSS, and Excel, the data must be coded and rearranged (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In this subchapter, the process of this coding and rearrangement will be described. To secure continuity in the questionnaire, along with an uncomplicated analysis process, most of the answers in the survey was intentionally on a five-point Likert scale. As this was not the case for all answers, some of the remaining answers had to be re-coded and rearranged. This was only one part of preparing the data material. The guidelines from Hair et al. (2017) has been used to prepare the data for analytical capability.

After closing the survey for respondents, there were a total of 1750 respondents. 449 (26%) only opened the survey, 491 (28%) answered some questions, and 810 (46%) finished the survey. Some respondents provided feedback that they were unable to progress the survey, due to technological issues. Based on the feedback, one could assume that only a few respondents were affected, as the vast majority did not report any issues. However, it should be noted that the completion rate could be impacted by this. Despite this, the sample size should be sufficient for further analysis, according to both Sekaran and Bougie (2016), and Hair et al. (2017).

Hair et al. (2017) claim that there are two ways of dealing with the respondents that did not complete the survey. One could either delete the incomplete data or use an average mean on items with missing data. The first option was selected, as the sample size would remain well above the recommended minimum sample sizes of 130 and 384 (Hair et al., 2017; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In addition, the only data that could have been extracted was data regarding the control variables. As this data is useless without connections to the other variables, the best option was to delete the incomplete data. An interesting find is that most respondents, who did not finish the survey, ended on the question regarding educational level. As 1199 respondents answered the previous question regarding parental status, and only 974 respondents answered the question regarding the educational level, there was a remarkable loss of 164 respondents on that question. We further checked for illogical, inconsistent, or extreme values in the dataset. An example of illogical answers could answer stating more years of work experience, than years being alive (Hair et al., 2017). There were no values that had to be excluded based on either illogical, inconsistent, or extreme values. Proceeding with 810 complete responses is more than enough to get significant results on the hypotheses (Hair et al., 2017).

Even though the responses were complete, some answers had to be recategorized. Regarding control variables, there are some questions in which the respondents had the option of typing in their answers, e.g. organization type. Some respondents answered the option “other”, then manually wrote another option that was already included in the question. For example, regarding organization type, some respondents selected “other”, to manually type in “hospital”, instead of choosing the option including “Health Care”. Uncertainty could be the reason why several respondents selected the “other” option. All the manually typed answers were put into their correct category. Even though this took a while, it probably secured that there were fewer errors from respondent uncertainty.

As the entire survey, except control variables, was set up with a five-point Likert scale, the quality of the data should not require too much modifying. A five-point Likert scale was selected to secure continuity in the questionnaire, along with an uncomplicated analysis process. When creating a survey, it is important to reduce the questionnaire “noise”, as much as possible (Hair et al., 2017). Buttle (1996) claims that a five-point Likert scale can decrease respondent frustration, while also increasing the response and completion rate. This predicates the choice of a five-point Likert scale. To further enhance the questionnaire, it is necessary to have equidistance, which is true for a five-point Likert scale. Equidistance is referring to the required distance between each option, so every participant can more accurately define their own answers, with the options available (Hair et al., 2017). A challenge with questionnaires is that social desirability can make the results false, as respondents might try to answer, “politically correct”, instead of the truth (Hair et al., 2017). In an anonymous questionnaire, aside from illogical, extreme, or inconsistent answers, it is next to impossible to check if respondents have answered truthfully (Phillips & Clancy, 1972).

3.3.2 Common method bias

Schaller, Patil, and Malhotra (2015) claim that common method bias is an anomaly that can arise when studies are conducted with single-source, self-report, and cross-sectional design, which is often how anonymous online surveys are conducted. Common method bias is more expected to occur when measuring multiple constructs because method-specific variance can impact the bias of observed relationships (Schaller et al., 2015).

Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff (2003) further claim that one can reduce common method bias by increasing the motivation of the respondent, so they answer meaningfully on

the survey. Reducing the noise on the questionnaire will also reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). A way of achieving this is to separate the constructs, so each construct has its own section in the survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Adhering to these claims, the constructs in the survey were spread out, so each indicator was asked together within their group of indicators. In addition, the respondents were anonymous, which reduces the likelihood of false and incorrect responses (Podsakoff et al., 2003). By only using validated scales and items from earlier research, along with including few questions, the general noise in the questionnaire was reduced (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

When testing for common method bias one of the most common tools is Herman's single factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). After conducting the test in SPSS, the results are that the general factor inherited within our dataset was 28.126%, which is below the general level of 50% (Tyssen, Wald & Heidenreich, 2014). Because the value variance explained is under the set level of 50%, Herman's single factor test suggests that there is not a problem of common method variance within the dataset (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

To further investigate if there is a common method bias in the dataset, the Lindell-Whitney marker variable test was applied. This test will implement an unrelated marker variable in the hypothesized model, and if there is common method bias in the model, the correlation of the marker variable and the constructs, would be high (Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Tyssen et al., 2014). We conducted the test twice, the first time using higher education as the marker variable, and the second time using industry as the marker variable. The highest correlation found, by running these tests, was 0.069 on higher education and 0.130 on the industry. This meant a maximum shared variance of 0.784% on higher education, along with 2.169% on the industry. These findings suggest that there is no issue of common method bias within the dataset.

The last test to inquire for common method bias in SmartPLS is to evaluate the VIF-values on the factors, using a PLS-SEM test with factor weighing. Kock (2015) claims that VIF-values higher than 3.3 can be an indication of pathological collinearity and that the data is contaminated by common method bias. Because of this, the value of all factor-level VIFs from a collinearity test should be equal or lower than 3.3, to be no common method bias. The PLS-SEM consistent was conducted, with factor weighing as instructed by Gaskin (n.d.). The VIF-values on every construct in SmartPLS were reviewed, with no evidence of common

method bias, as all our constructs were around the value of 1 to 1.5 (Gaskin, n.d.). The values were, in other words, below the acceptable value of 3.3 (Kock, 2015).

3.3.3 Estimation of the hypothesized model

SmartPLS makes it possible to draw a model, based on the data gathered in the survey. The program further allows the making of a path model, that shows the relationships between the variables, including the data on these relationships. By using SmartPLS, it is easy to graphically display constructs, relationships, and hypotheses in a clean and effective overview. These relationships will be further examined at a later stage of the thesis.

Depicted in figure 3.1, below the paragraph, the outer model is made from indicators. Indicators are the questions that are measured together, to create a latent variable. These relationships are defined by arrows, that are telling the directional relationship (Hair et al., 2017). The inner model is then constructed out of these latent variables. The inner model is supposed to answer our hypothesized model. The variables are visualized as circles, while the indicators are visualized as squares. The relationships between the latent variables can be explained as the structural model, while the relationship with the indicators and variables can be called the measurement model (Kock, 2015). Structural equation modeling is then combining these two terms and visualizing how the latent variables connect with each other (Kock, 2015). To give a better indication of the hypothesized model, the establishment of the model will be specified. All the scales used in the model are reflective, which means that the items are expected to correlate. Reflective items are different from formative scales, in which the scales are not expected to correlate since the items are not causally related (Hair et al., 2017).

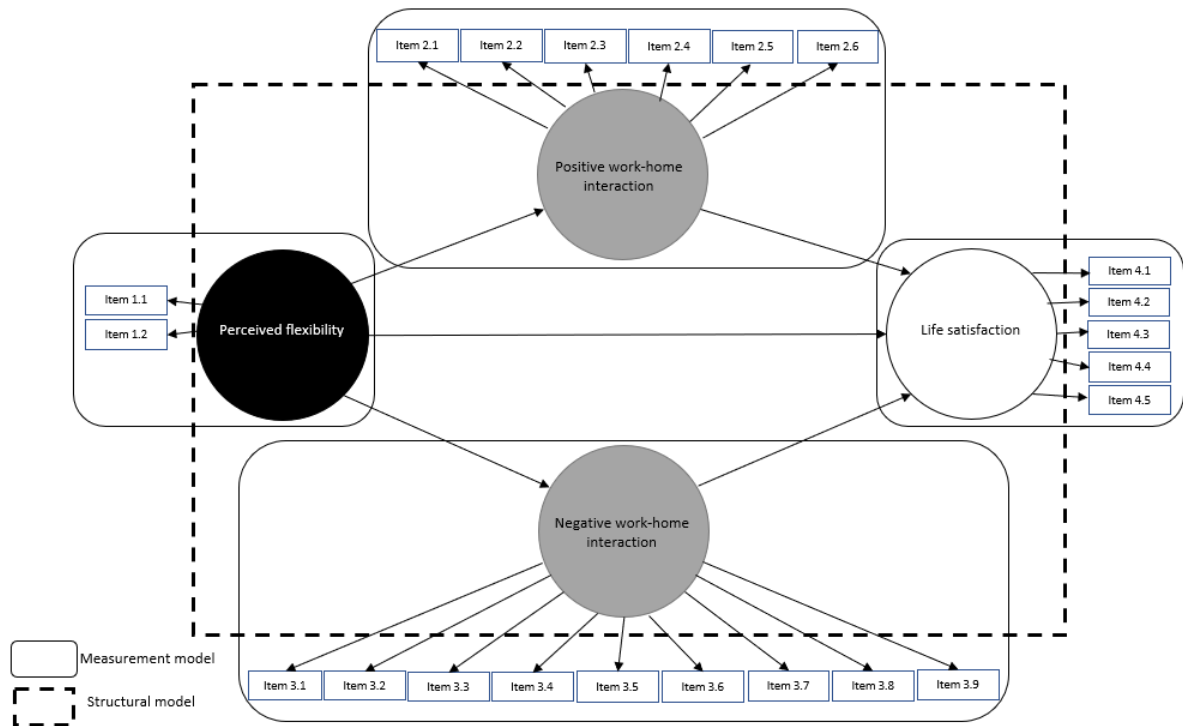


Figure 3.1. Hypothesized model

3.3.4 Distribution of the data

Abnormal data can be problematic, as it can create more standard errors. This could be avoided by a test to confirm if the dataset is reliable. If the data is not normal, there will be problems with the parameters between the variables. To probe for abnormal data, one can look at the values of kurtosis and skewness. These values are explained and discussed below. Another test, that could be conducted for abnormal data, is to cross-check our results with the results from previous research, with e.g. a T-test. However, due to a lack of access to the previous datasets, this was not possible (Hair et al., 2017).

Skewness is a value that will tell if the variables are distributed symmetrical, while kurtosis measures if the distribution is too peaked, and not spaced out satisfactory. Preferred values on kurtosis and skewness are closer to zero. A value between -1 and 1 is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017). All the items in the constructs are examined for skewness and kurtosis, and the most noteworthy findings will be highlighted here. The full table of skewness and kurtosis is displayed in Appendix D.

The item with the highest score regarding kurtosis was item 4.3 with a value of 2.279. In addition to this, item 2.2 and item 3.2 revealed non-acceptable values, with 1.731 and -1.098 respectively. All the other items are within the acceptable values, -1 and 1, regarding kurtosis. In terms of skewness, items 1.1, 1.2, 2.2 and 4.3 revealed non-acceptable values, with -1.124, -1.079, -1.047 and -1.098 respectively. The rest of the items are within the acceptable values, -1 and 1. In general, most the items are within the acceptable values, according to Hair et al. (2017), and will most likely not lead to any complications.

3.3.5 Consistency and reliability in the measurement models

To check for consistency and reliability, in both the outer and inner models, a PLS-SEM is highly useful. We used the PLS-SEM feature in SmartPLS, with 300 interactions and path weighting, which is the default and recommended option. The results showcased the next sections are running PLS-SEM on this hypothesized model, as pictured by Figure 3.2 (Hair et al. 2017).

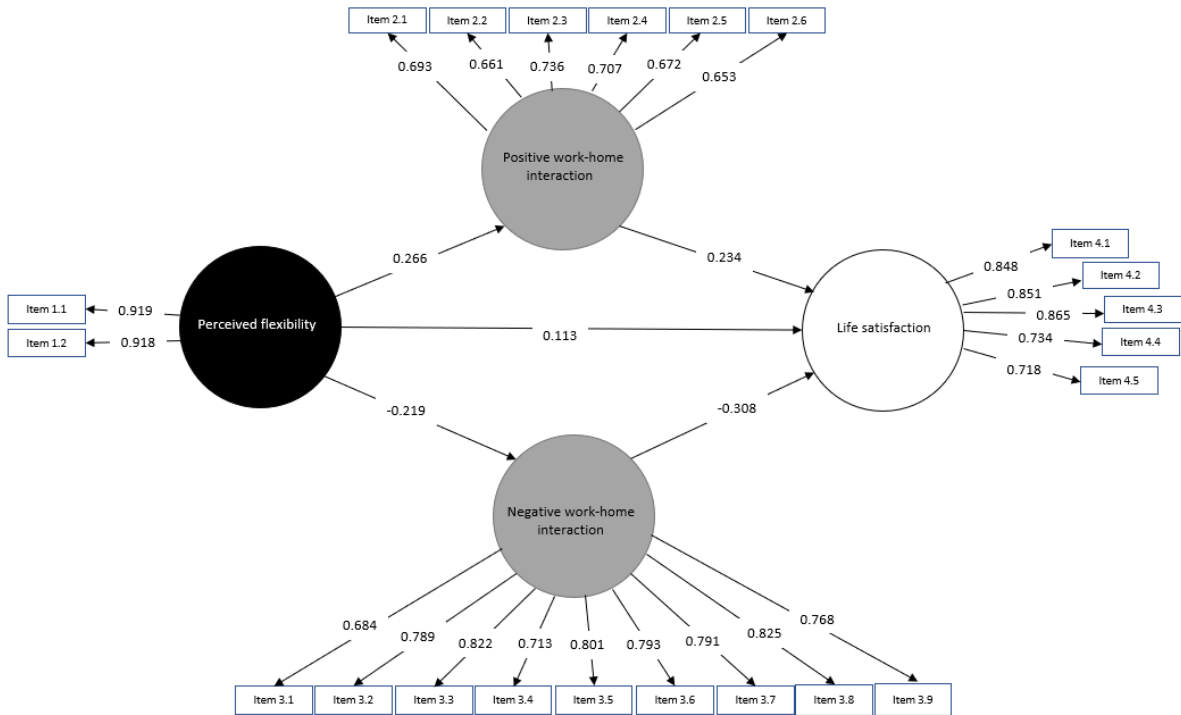


Figure 3.2. PLS-SEM

The first value examined for consistency in the dataset was Cronbach’s Alpha. This value is measuring the reliability of the internal consistency in a construct. The Cronbach's alpha value will be between 0 and 1. In general, a value above 0.7 is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017). Below, in Table 3.1, the values of Cronbach’s Alphas within our constructs are presented, all of which are above the acceptable value of 0.7. These values are suggesting that the internal consistency in our construct is satisfactory and viable for further research.

Construct	Cronbach’s alpha
Life satisfaction	0.865
Perceived flexibility	0.815
Negative work-home interaction	0.918
Positive work-home interaction	0.783

Table 3.1. Cronbach’s alpha

Composite reliability is another measure that checks for internal consistency, like Cronbach’s Alpha. The difference between Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability is that the composite reliability will use the outer loadings of the variables in the calculation, while Cronbach’s alpha will not. Similar to Cronbach’s alpha, the composite reliability will have a value between 0 to 1, where a value above 0.7 is considered acceptable. Values below the value of 0.4 should be considered removed, while values above 0.9, might suggest that the items in the constructs are measuring the exact same phenomenon (Hair et al., 2017). As displayed below in Table 3.2, the constructs life satisfaction, perceived flexibility, and negative work-home interaction are all above the value of 0.9. However, Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019) claims that values above 0.95 could be problematic, due to items being redundant. None of the constructs are above the value of 0.95 and would therefore be considered acceptable. It should also be noted that all the constructs are above the acceptable value of 0.7.

Construct	Composite Reliability
Life satisfaction	0.932
Perceived flexibility	0.915
Negative work-home interaction	0.902
Positive work-home interaction	0.843

Table 3.2. Composite Reliability

Convergent validity refers to how the scales of each variable is related to the other measures of the variable. The construct should preferably correlate with the corresponding measures, that are measuring the same latent construct, but also not correlate with the ones that are measuring the opposite end; discriminant validity (Milich & Kramer, 1984). There are two steps of checking for convergent validity; average variance extracted and outer loadings of the variables.

The average variance extracted is the value of the squared loadings of the items of the construct. The test will show the variance of the construct versus the measurement error, where values above 0.5 are considered viable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown below in Table 3.3, every construct, except positive work-home interaction, has a value above 0.5 and should be considered viable for our research. Positive work-home interaction has a score of 0.472 which is considered not good. However, the goal of a score of 0.5 is not a definitive hard-set goal (Pervan, Curak & Pavic Kramaric, 2018), and Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that values under 0.5 can also be acceptable.

Construct	Average Variance Extracted
Life satisfaction	0.605
Perceived flexibility	0.844
Negative work-home interaction	0.649
Positive work-home interaction	0.472

Table 3.3. Average Variance Extracted

The next step was to test the outer loadings of the constructs to get an understanding of the indicator reliability. Indicator reliability will give an explanation if the indicators are measuring the construct they are supposed to measure. A visual representation of this is given in Table 3.4. Measuring indicator reliability will also measure convergent validity (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A value of below 0.4 on the factor loadings should be strongly considered deleted, while a value between 0.4 and 0.7 should be considered deleted. However, it also must be considered what would happen if they were deleted (Hair et al., 2017). As presented in Table 3.4 below, most of our factor loadings are of a higher value than the acceptable value of 0.7. Positive work-home interaction has the lowest values, but is still within adequate values, as they are above the value of 0.4. After considering the effect of removing indications, we decided to keep all questions in the constructs. This was due to no positive changes when repeating the test after exclusion. The values in Table 3.4 suggest that the convergent validity of our constructs is satisfactory.

	Life satisfaction	Perceived flexibility	Negative work-home interaction	Positive work-home interaction
Question 17		0.919		
Question 18		0.918		
Question 19				0.693
Question 20				0.661
Question 21				0.736
Question 22				0.707
Question 23				0.672
Question 24				0.653
Question 25			0.684	
Question 26			0.789	
Question 27			0.822	
Question 28			0.713	
Question 29			0.801	
Question 30			0.793	
Question 31			0.791	
Question 32			0.825	
Question 33			0.768	
Question 34	0.848			
Question 35	0.851			
Question 36	0.865			
Question 37	0.734			
Question 38	0.718			

Table 3.4. Outer loadings

Convergent validity and discriminant validity are the two parts that inhibit construct validity. Discriminant validity is used to check if the indicators are correlating the highest, with their given construct, and less with other constructs. In SmartPLS, one can use a simple table, to check for discriminant validity, where the cross-loadings of all the indicators are compared to the constructs. In the cross-loading table, the indicators should have the highest loading with the construct they are supposed to measure (Hair et al., 2017). As presented in Table 3.5 below, all the items had the highest loading on the construct it was supposed to measure. This is suggesting that the discriminant validity is at a satisfactory level.

	Life satisfaction	Perceived flexibility	Negative work-home interaction	Positive work-home interaction
Question 17	0.228	0.919	-0.215	0.230
Question 18	0.217	0.918	-0.186	0.258
Question 19	0.321	0.211	-0.255	0.693
Question 20	0.291	0.147	-0.141	0.661
Question 21	0.198	0.179	-0.11	0.736
Question 22	0.169	0.208	-0.132	0.707
Question 23	0.136	0.222	-0.113	0.672
Question 24	0.168	0.111	-0.055	0.653
Question 25	-0.278	-0.155	0.684	-0.181
Question 26	-0.300	-0.150	0.789	-0.130
Question 27	-0.288	-0.152	0.822	-0.162
Question 28	-0.202	-0.129	0.713	-0.025
Question 29	-0.290	-0.192	0.801	-0.192
Question 30	-0.375	-0.233	0.793	-0.252
Question 31	-0.285	-0.138	0.791	-0.129
Question 32	-0.321	-0.149	0.825	-0.168
Question 33	-0.287	-0.201	0.768	-0.181
Question 34	0.848	0.196	-0.351	0.309
Question 35	0.851	0.234	-0.356	0.258
Question 36	0.865	0.241	-0.344	0.306
Question 37	0.734	0.149	-0.207	0.200
Question 38	0.718	0.129	-0.239	0.231

Table 3.5. Cross Loadings

3.3.6 Evaluation of the structural model

Hair et al. (2017) suggest that the next step is checking for the issues in the structural model, of the hypothesized model. To proceed with our inner model, we must check for collinearity issues, which means that the path coefficients are not biased. One way of checking for collinearity issues is to check the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the inner model (Hair et al., 2017).

Presented below in Table 3.6, are the inner VIF values for the research data of the dependent variable. The desired value is below 5.0 for a good chance that there are no collinearity issues. As displayed, all the values in Table 3.6 are under the required value. Due to this, there are no

collinearity issues in the dataset. Values are also preferred if they are below 3.0, which all the values are (Hair et al., 2017).

Construct	Life satisfaction	Perceived flexibility	Negative work-home interaction	Positive work-home interaction
Life satisfaction				
Perceived flexibility	1.109		1.000	1.000
Negative work-home interaction	1.079			
Positive work-home interaction	1.106			

Table 3.6. Inner VIF values

There will be further analysis in the next chapter, results, that will analyze the relationships within the structural model. Evaluation of those relationships will therefore also measure the integrity of the structural model.

4. Results

The aim of this thesis is to understand the relationships between perceived flexibility, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction. In this chapter, the results from the analysis of these relationships will be showcased. Lastly, the results of the hypothesized model will be presented.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

This subchapter starts with an explanation of the demographic analyses, based on suggestions from Sherehiy and Karwowski (2014). Sherehiy and Karwowski (2014) explain that the presentation of the descriptive statistics should often be presented first in the results. The descriptive data are displayed in Table 4.1.

There was a total of 1750 participants, where 810 (46%) respondents fully completed the survey. The completion rate of 46% can be considered satisfactory (Hair et al., 2017). As we encouraged the organizations to share the questionnaire with colleagues, we would not know the exact number of individuals that received a link to the questionnaire. Of that reason, the calculation of the response rate would not be accurate. Despite the challenges in calculating the response rate, it is most likely below the acceptable rate of 30% (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), considering that the survey was sent to over 5834. The value of 5834 would have been the maximum number of total emails distributed, to meet the acceptable rate of 30%. However, since most surveys distributed by email are often ignored (Daly, Jones, Gereau & Levy, 2011), the number of participants (1750) can be understood as satisfactory. Especially, considering that the recommended minimum sample sizes of 130 and 384, was fulfilled by 810 completed surveys (Hair et al., 2017; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Further, a selection of the demographic data is displayed in Table 4.1 below.

Variable	n	%	Variable	n	%
Gender			Organization type		
Male	348	42.96	Manufacturing	66	8.15
Female	465	57.04	Construction	32	3.95
Other	0	0	Oil and gas/Energy/Mining	22	2.72
			Retail/Transport/Warehousing/Hospitality/Tourism	133	16.42
			Banking/Financial Services and Insurance	71	8.77
Age			Information and Communication	21	2.59
Under 25	17	2.10	Other Professional Services/Consultancy Company	66	8.15
25-44	323	39.88	Fishery/Forestry/Agriculture	14	1.73
45-59	380	46.91	Public Sectors/Education/Health Care	361	44.57
60 or above	90	11.11	Non-Governmental Sector (NGO)/Non-Profit	24	2.96
Marital status			Work experience		
Married	673	83.09	5 years or less	216	26.67
Not married	137	16.91	6 to 10 years	149	18.40
			11 to 20 years	181	22.35
Educational level			Over 20 years	264	32.59
Middle school or lower	8	0.99			
High school	173	21.36			
Bachelor's degree	344	42.47			
Master's degree	268	33.09			
Ph.D. or higher	17	2.10			

Table 4.1. Demographic data

Showcased in Table 4.1, there were more “female” participants (57%) compared to “male” participants (43%). None of our respondents choose the option “other”. The largest age group in our study was “45-59” (47%), followed by “25-44” (40%). The participant’s age ranged from “60 or above” (11%), to “25 and below” (2%). Most (83%) of the respondents were “married”, while the remaining (17%) respondents were “not married”. In terms of educational level, the respondents with a “bachelor's degree” was the majority (42%), followed by “master’s degree” (33%), and then “high school” education (21%). Further, only a few respondents had “Ph.D. or higher” (2%), and the vast minority had “middle school or lower” education (0.99%).

Regarding organization type, most of the respondents selected the item “Public Sector/Education/Health Care” (44%), followed by “Retail/Transport/Warehousing/Hospitality/Tourism” (16%). The other items included less than 10% of the respondents. In general, every option was selected by participants, resulting in a broad variety of organization

types. As displayed in Figure 4.1, most of the respondents had “over 20 years” of experience in their current position (33%), most likely because the largest age group was between “45-59”. Secondly, in this category, the group with “5 years or less” work experience (27%) is represented. Further, the third largest group was “11 to 20 years” (33%), then lastly “6 to 10 years” (18%) of current work experience.

4.2 The control variables in relation to the dependent variable

In this subchapter, the focus will be to showcase the relationship between the control variables and the dependent variable, life satisfaction. To display the findings, the mean of life satisfaction was measured as the value for the different groups. The respondent’s subjective life satisfaction was measured on a five-point Likert scale. A score of 1 is considered the lowest possible life satisfaction, while a score of 5 is considered the highest possible life satisfaction. The higher score of life satisfaction on the Likert scale, the more life satisfaction the respondent inherits.

Considering organization type, most of the categories are measured to a score between 3 and 4. The organization type with the lowest score was “Oil and Gas/Energy/Mining” at 3.32, while the highest measured score was “Manufacturing” at 3.82.

Regarding age, Figure 4.1 below showcases the reported life satisfaction across the different categories. The category “under 25” reported most life satisfaction with 3.73, followed by the category “60 and over” with 3.68. The differences between the different categories is quite small.

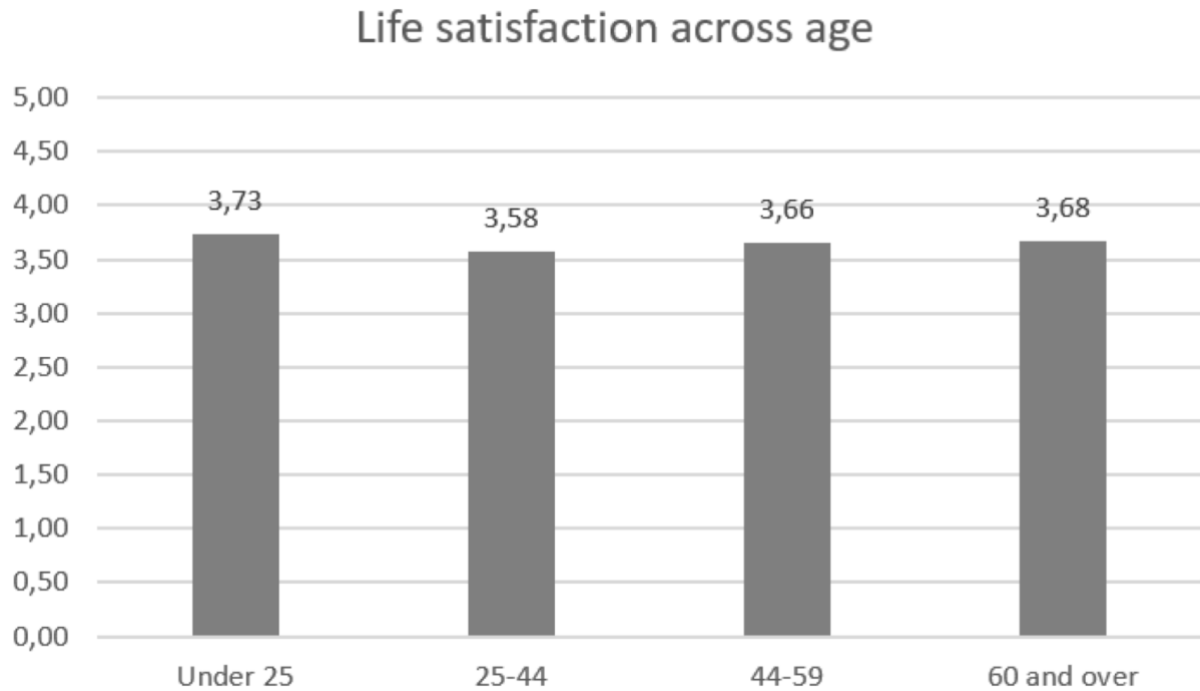


Figure 4.1. Life satisfaction across age

As displayed in Figure 4.2 below, most of the educational levels have similar values, in terms of life satisfaction scores. The highest scoring educational level was “bachelor's degree” at 3.80, while the lowest was “high school” at 3.60. The largest difference between the educational level was therefore 0.2, which is a small difference, at around 5,3%. Based on the small difference, the coherence in the relationship between educational level and life satisfaction is rather low.

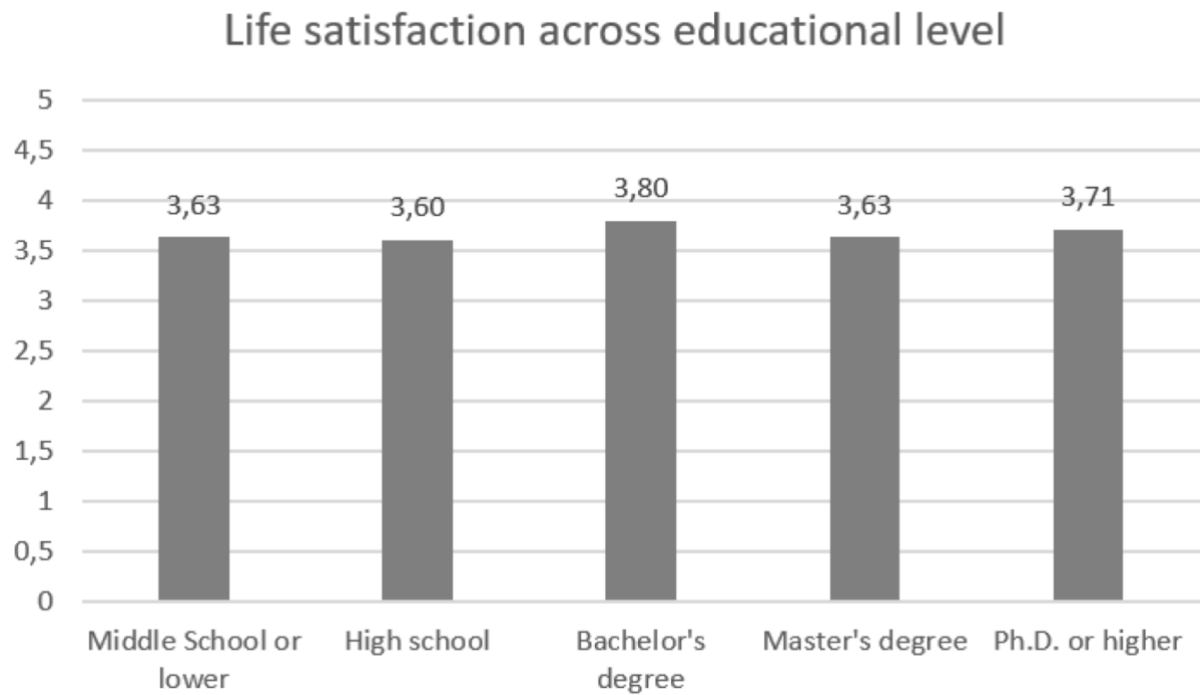


Figure 4.2. Life satisfaction across educational level

Regarding the gender variable, “males” (3.64) scored a higher value compared to “females” (3.62). This difference was rather small, at only 0.02. Further, as displayed below in Figure 4.3, the respondents that reported the highest life satisfaction, are those with “no children” in parental status, with a mean score of 3.80. The lowest scoring group is participants with “children up to 16 years old”, at 2.69. In contradiction to the other mentioned control variables, the difference between the highest and lowest group is more prominent in this control variable.

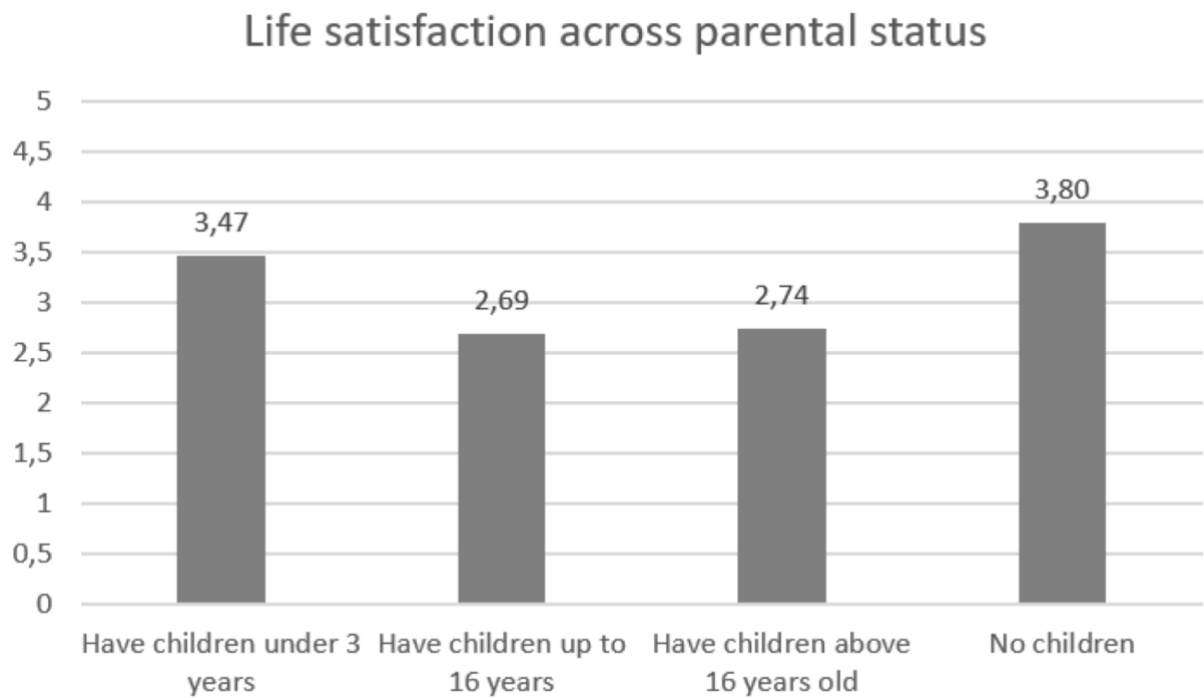


Figure 4.3. Life satisfaction across parental status

As shown in Figure 4.4 below, “married” people (3.71) are scoring 0.51 higher value, compared to “not married” respondents (3.20). Based on this, “married” participants reports higher life satisfaction, than “not married” participants. It should be noted that the study does not differentiate between participants who live together, are single or widowed, which can impact these results.



Figure 4.4. Life satisfaction on marital status

4.3 The control variables in relation to the independent variable and mediating variable

In this subchapter, the focus will be to showcase the relationship between the control variables and the independent variable, in addition to the mediating variable. In order to uncomplicate the measurement of the mediating variable, work-home interaction, it has been separated into two sub-variables; positive work-home interaction and negative work-home interaction. When phrased *work-home interaction*, both sub-variables are referred to. Positive work-home interaction, negative work-home interaction, and perceived flexibility are all measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Considering organization type, the lowest mean score of perceived flexibility was the organization type “Non-Governmental Sector/Non-Profit” at 3.71, while the highest mean score was “Construction” at 4.39. In terms of positive work-home interaction, the highest mean score was “Other Professional Services/Consultancy Company” at 3.61, while the lowest mean score was “Non-Governmental Sector/Non-Profit” at 3.22. Lastly, negative work-home interaction had the lowest mean score of 2.48 in “Banking/Financial

Services/Insurance”, while “Oil and Gas/Energy/Mining” had the highest mean score at 2.82. In general, the differences between the organization types are quite small. This implies that the organization type does not massively affect perceived flexibility and work-home interaction.

Regarding age, the small sample category “under 25” stood out from the general tendency considering perceived flexibility, positive work-home interaction, and negative work-home interaction. Showcased in Figure 4.5, the general tendency is that perceived flexibility and positive work-home interaction increases along with the increase in age of the participants, while negative work-home interaction decreases along with higher age. The small sample of “under 25” reports highest on perceived flexibility with 4.21, along with reporting the highest on positive work-home interaction with 3.83. In perceived flexibility and positive work-home interaction, the category “25-44” reported lowest with 3.79 and 3.37 respectively. The category “25-44” reported highest on negative work-home interaction with 2.74, while “under 25” reported the lowest with 2.28, as presented in Figure 4.5 below.

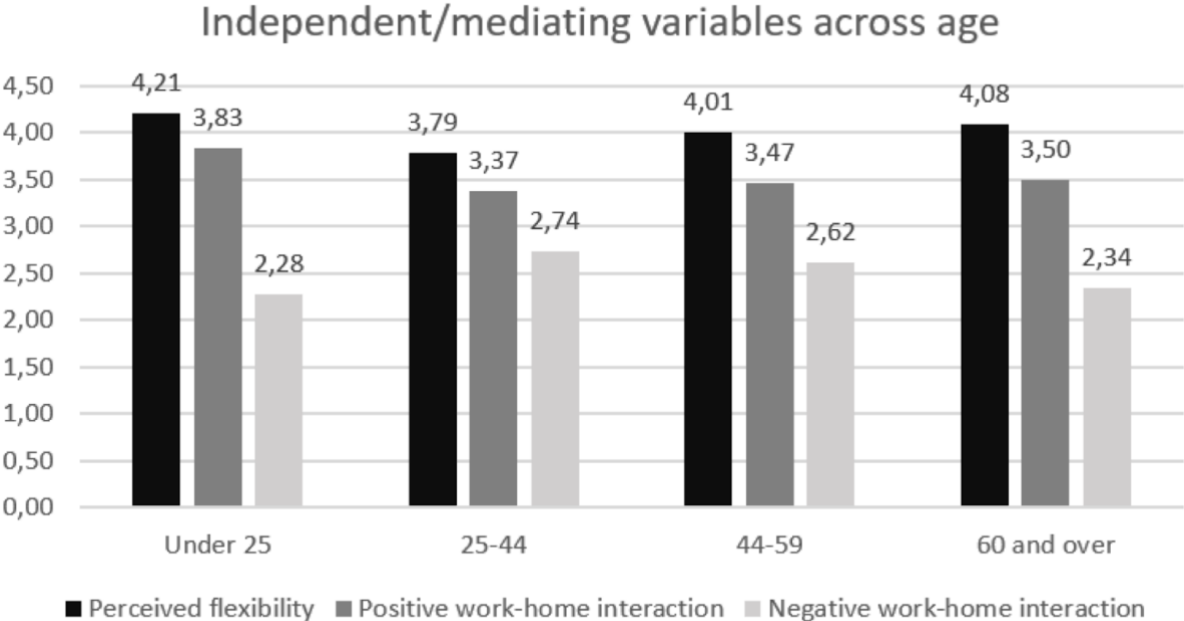


Figure 4.5. Independent/mediating variables across age

Presented in Figure 4.6, the highest mean score of perceived flexibility was participants with “middle school or lower” as educational level, while “Ph.D. or higher” reported lowest mean score. Based on this, one could flippantly argue that higher education, results in lower

perceived flexibility. In terms of positive work-home interaction, “middle school or lower” scored the highest with 3.79, and “Ph.D. or higher” scored lowest with 3.25. When it comes to negative work-home interaction, participants with a “Ph.D. or higher” scored the highest mean score with 2.90, while participants with “high school” education reported the lowest mean score at 2.53. In general, these findings can be perceived as interesting, because it indicates that higher educated individuals are likely to experience more negative work-home interaction and less positive work-home interaction. According to Clark (2000), this would result in a lower work-home balance.

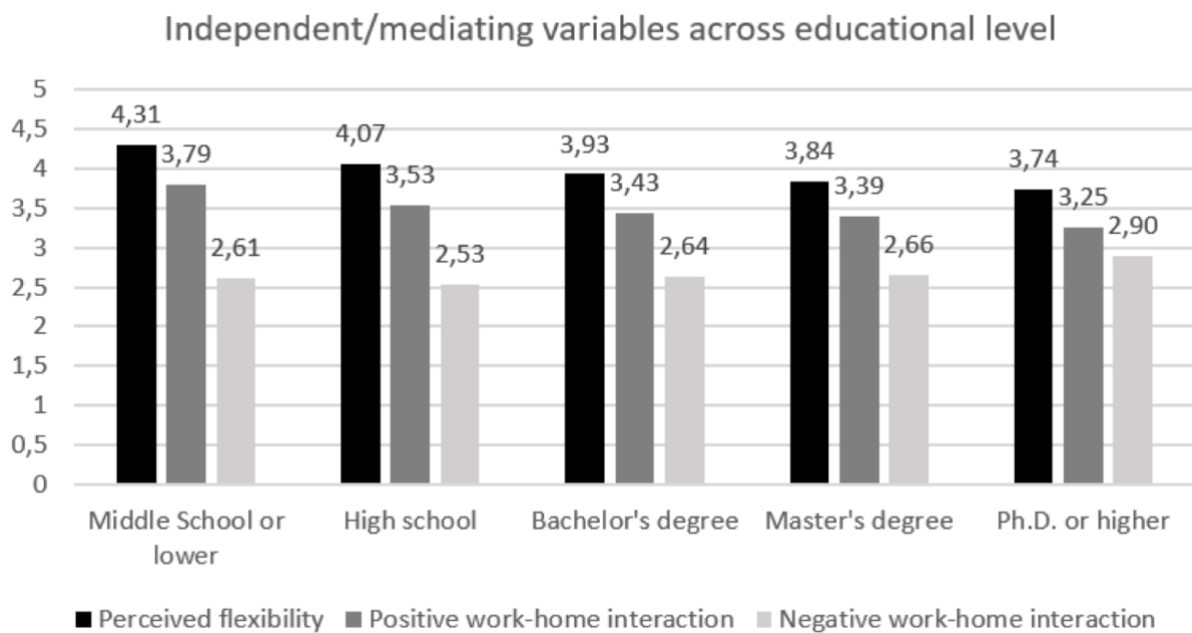


Figure 4.6. Independent variables across educational level

Gender as a control variable, in relation to perceived flexibility, shows a difference between “males” (4.00) and “females” (3.88). The difference, in this case, was at a value of 0.12. On both work-home interaction constructs, both genders had the exact same score. Both genders scored 3.44 on positive work-home interaction, and 2.63 on negative work-home interaction. The striking similarities between the genders are interesting, as both genders have the exact same score on a hundredth decimal value.

Presented in Figure 4.7, parents with “children up to 16 years old” had the highest mean score of 4.02 on perceived flexibility, while participants with “no children” had the lowest mean score. In terms of positive work-home interaction, parents with “children up to 16 years old”

reported the highest mean score, while participants with “no children” reported the lowest mean score. Regarding negative work-home interaction, parents with “children above 16 years old” had the highest mean score, while parents with “children up to 16 years old” had the lowest mean score.

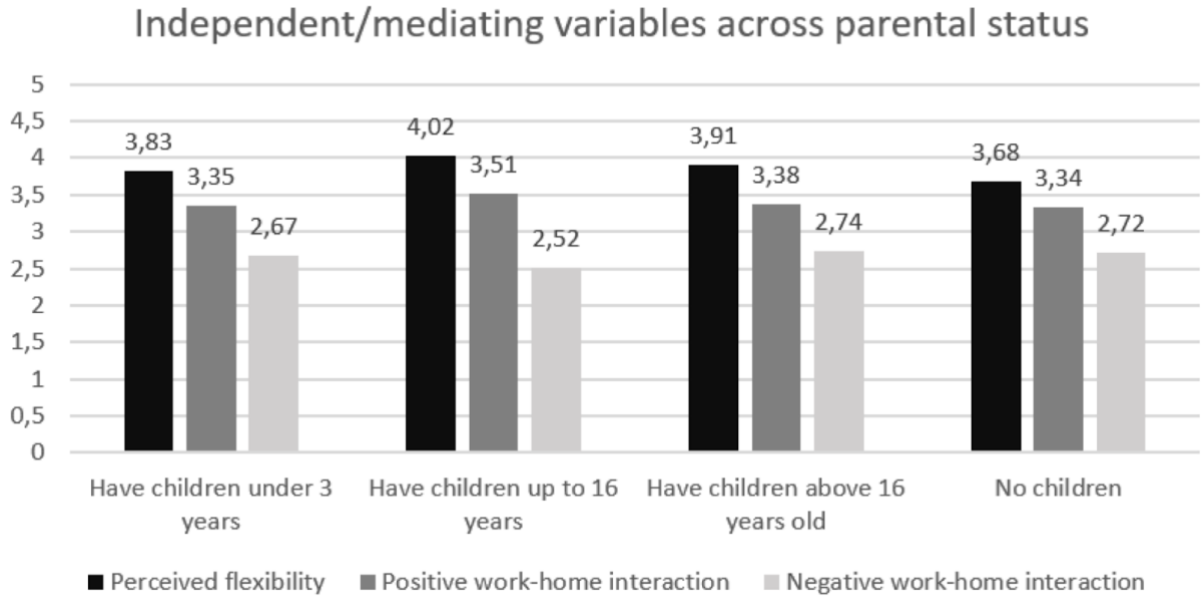


Figure 4.7. Independent/mediating variables across amount of children

Figure 4.8 below showcases that “married” participants score higher than “not married” on perceived flexibility (3.95>3.80), positive work-home interaction (3.44>3.40), but also negative work-home interaction at (2.63>2.60). From this data, marital status does not contribute heavily to either perceived flexibility or work-home interaction.

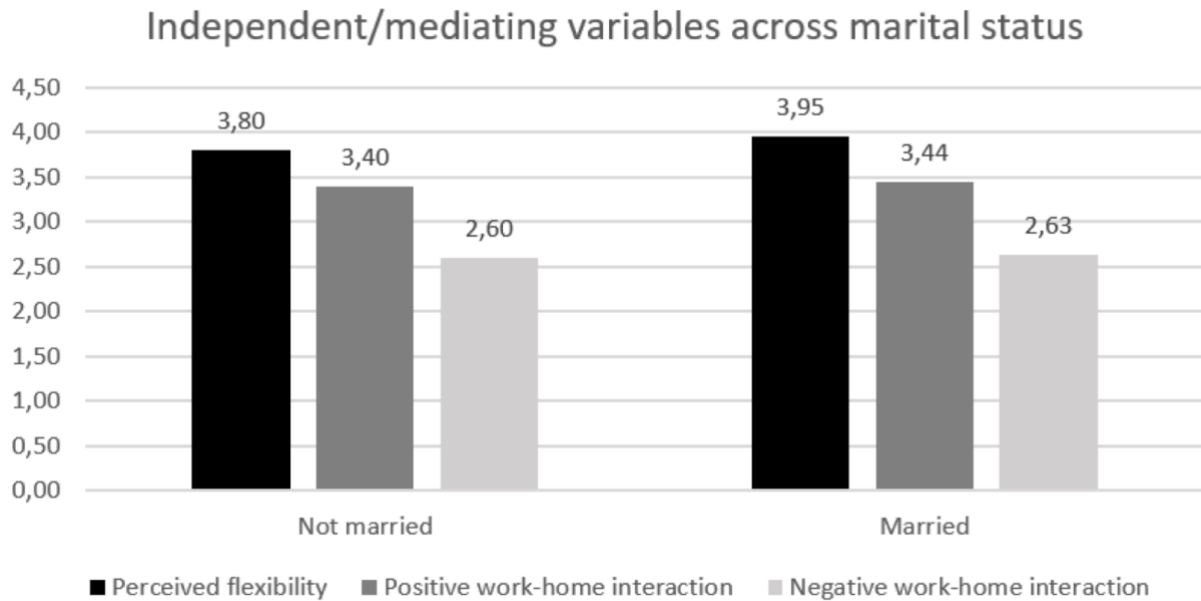


Figure 4.8. Independent/mediating variables across marital status

4.4 Multi-Group Analysis

In this stage of the results, there will be a review of the hypothesized model, by using a Multi-Group Analysis (MGA), conducted in SmartPLS. By conducting a multigroup analysis one can test for significant differences, in parameters like outer weights or outer loadings, that are group specific. A multi-group analysis was conducted on all the control variables from the questionnaire, without any noteworthy findings. Based on the relevance from previous research, three of the control variables will be highlighted. To conduct this test, gender, educational level, along with age will be highlighted. Doing an MGA will make it possible to check for heterogeneity, in the data. Heterogeneity can affect the validity of the PLS-SEM results, and incorrect results can materialize if there is heterogeneity within the data. The test will also be able to find if there are significant differences in the path coefficients from the control variables in the hypothesized model (Hair et al., 2017).

The first MGA test was “male” and “female”, where both the genders were set as a group in SmartPLS. No respondents picked the option of “other”, in terms of gender. The test was conducted using a significant level of 0.05 and 500 subsamples. As noted from Table 4.2, there is no significant difference between the two genders, when it comes to any of the path coefficients with a 5% significance level (Hair et al., 2017).

	Path Coefficients-diff (Male-Female)	T-value (Male- Female)	P-value (Male- Female)
Perceived flexibility → Life satisfaction	0.021	0.291	0.385
Perceived flexibility → Negative work-home interaction	0.057	0.798	0.213
Perceived flexibility → Positive work-home interaction	-0.055	0.740	0.230
Negative work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	0.100	1.442	0.075
Positive work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	0.038	0.496	0.310

Table 4.2. Multi-group analysis of gender

To check the next control variables, the educational level was separated into two groups, where the first group consisted of a “bachelor's degree” and “Ph.D. or higher”, phrased bachelor's degree and above. This group was matched against a group called high school or lower, including “high school” and “middle school or lower”. As displayed in Table 4.3, there is no significant difference in any of the path coefficients on any variable, from the two groups.

	Path Coefficients-diff (Bachelor's degree and above – High school and lower)	T-value (Bachelor's degree and above – High school and lower)	P-value (Bachelor's degree and above – High school and lower)
Perceived flexibility → Life satisfaction	-0.030	0.335	0.369
Perceived flexibility → Negative work-home interaction	-0.087	1.011	0.156
Perceived flexibility → Positive work-home interaction	-0.001	0.009	0.487
Negative work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	0.052	0.679	0.249
Positive work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	-0.056	0.629	0.265

Table 4.3. Multi-group analysis of the educational level

The last MGA tested was the age group of the respondents. The first group, including “under 25” and “25-44” was phrased as under 45. The other group, including “45-59” and “60 or above” was phrased as over 44. As displayed below in Table 4.4, there are no significant differences between the two groups.

	Path Coefficients-diff (Under 45-Over 44)	T-value (Under 45-Over 44)	P-value (Under 45- Over 44)
Perceived flexibility → Life satisfaction	-0.073	1.009	0.157
Perceived flexibility → Negative work-home interaction	-0.095	1.365	0.086
Perceived flexibility → Positive work-home interaction	-0.019	0.253	0.400
Negative work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	-0.008	0.118	0.453
Positive work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	0.025	0.336	0.368

Table 4.4. Multi-group analysis of age

4.5 Testing the hypothesized model

In this subchapter, an exhibition of the relationship between the independent, dependent, but also the mediating variable will be presented. There will be a review of the hypothesized relationships between the constructs, which are based on the path coefficients. To check for the predictive accuracy of the model, the coefficient of determination R^2 will be showcased. The effect size that is measured by f^2 , the blindfolding and predictive relevance Q^2 , and the effect size of q^2 will be presented. The first step is to present the results from the analysis of the direct effect of the hypothesized model, meaning that the effect from the mediation of work-home interaction will be excluded (Hair et al., 2017). Following that, the mediating effect of work-home interaction will be tested.

4.5.1 Testing the direct effects of the hypothesized model

In this section, the direct effect of the independent variables, when excluding the other variable, will be presented (Hair et al., 2017). Based on the theoretical framework explained in chapter 2.4.2, the effect of positive work-home interaction and negative work-home interaction on life satisfaction is also interesting.

The directional relationship between variables is called indicated in the hypothesized model as path coefficients (Hair et al., 2017). Path coefficients have standardized values between -1 and +1. Values close to +1 indicates a strong positive relationship between the variables, whereas values close to -1 indicates the opposite, meaning strong negative relationship. Low values closer to 0 indicate a weaker relationship between the variables. In general, a positive or negative value of 0.25 is considered weak, 0.5 moderate, and 0.75 or higher is considered substantial (Hair et al., 2017). In our case, the path coefficient is measuring the one-

directional relationship between the variables, where the small arrow is indicating the direction of the relationship.

The relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction has a path coefficient of 0.245, which means that the relationship is positive, however, it is considered weak. The R^2 is 0.06, which is considered very weak. The relationship is shown in Figure 4.9 below. As indicated in the theoretical framework, this relationship was positive.

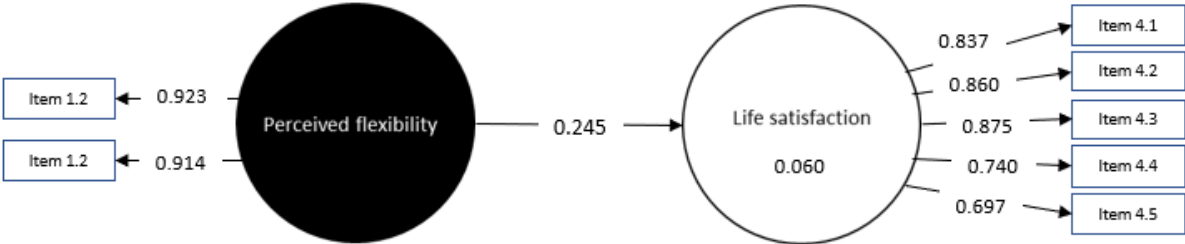


Figure 4.9. Perceived flexibility to life satisfaction

The relationship between negative work-home interaction and life satisfaction was negative, as indicated by the theoretical framework. The path coefficient of this negative relationship is -0.383, which is considered weak to moderate. The R^2 at 0.147 is also considered weak. The relationship is displayed in Figure 4.10.

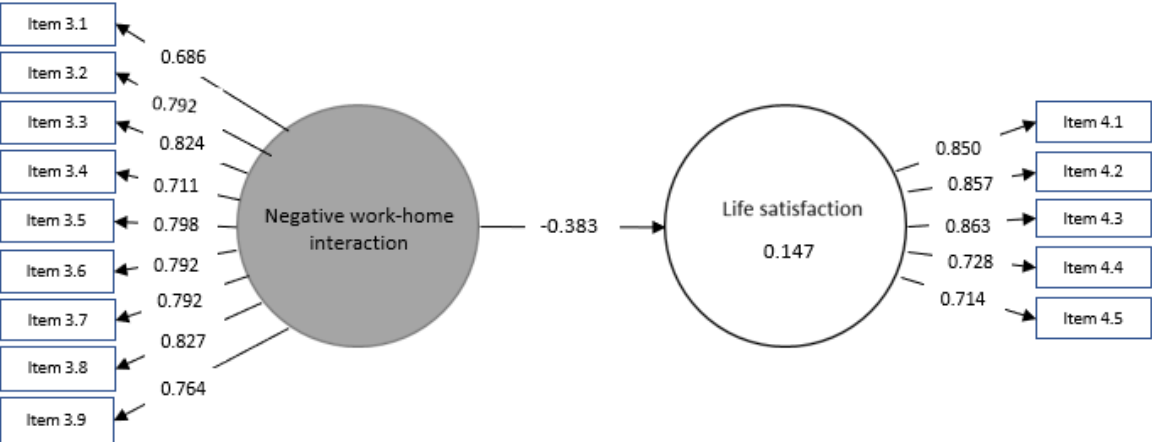


Figure 4.10. Negative work-home interaction to life satisfaction

The relationship between positive work-home interaction and life satisfaction was also in coherence with the indications from the theoretical framework, positive. Figure 4.11 showcase a path coefficient of 0.341, which is considered weak or moderate. The R^2 is also a weak value of 0.116. The relationship is shown in Figure 4.11 below.

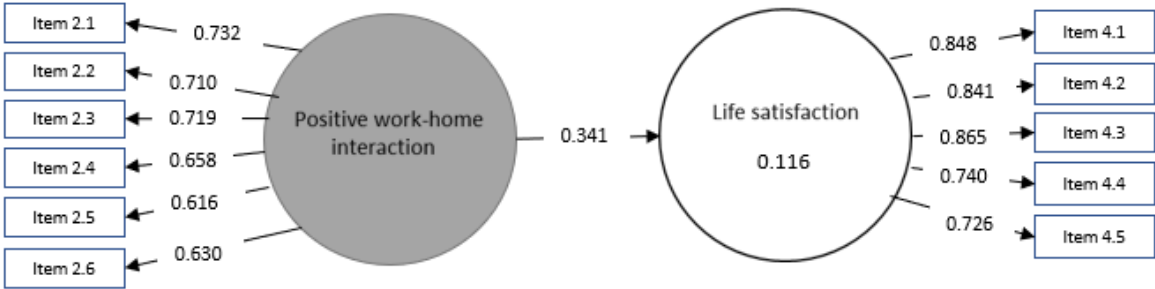


Figure 4.11. Positive work-home interaction to life satisfaction

Every direct effect from the other variables, to the dependent variable, has been presented above. As shown, the directional relationships are either positive or negative, as indicated in the theoretical framework. Because of this, these findings strengthen the indications from previous research. The R^2 in our findings, is relatively low, which could be because life satisfaction is most likely explained by more constructs, than the *Satisfaction with life scale* alone.

The theoretical framework in chapter 2.4.1 suggested that there existed a relationship between perceived flexibility and work-home interaction. Figure 4.12 presents the path coefficient, which is considered weak at -0.223. The R^2 is also rather weak, at 0.05. With that in mind, the increase in perceived flexibility will reduce the amount of negative work-home interaction individuals will experience.

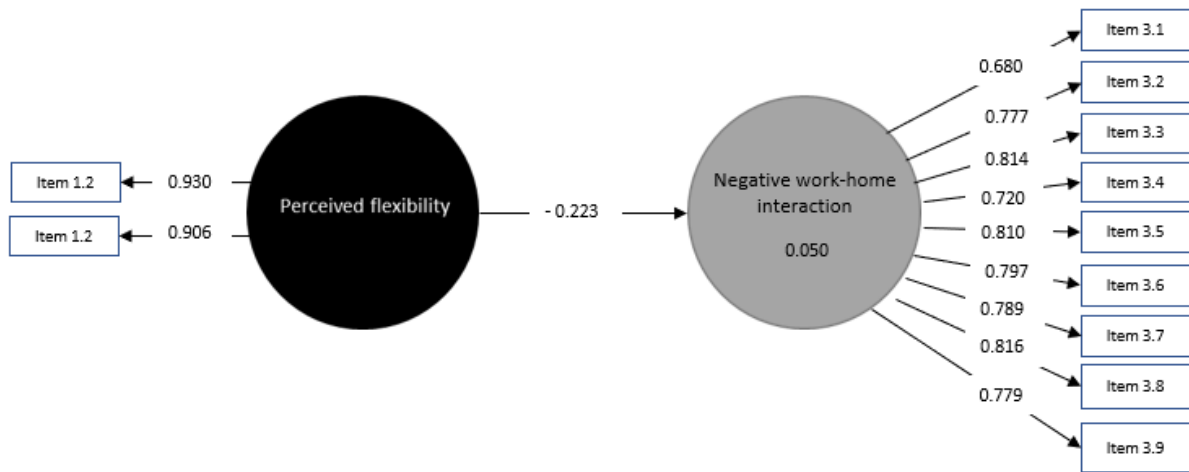


Figure 4.12. Perceived flexibility on negative work-home interaction

Presented in Figure 4.13, the path coefficient between perceived flexibility and positive work-home interaction is 0.271, which is considered weak. The R^2 has a value of 0.074, which is also considered weak. In other words, increased perceived flexibility will increase the amount of positive work-home interaction individuals will experience.



Figure 4.13. Perceived flexibility on positive work-home interaction

4.5.2 Results of the hypothesized model

In this section, the results from the hypothesized model will be presented. Indifferent from the previous subchapter, positive and negative work-home interaction are now perceived as mediators between the independent variable perceived flexibility, and the dependent variable life satisfaction. The hypothesized model is presented in Figure 4.14. Work-home interaction is now yellow to indicate the mediating effect. The model also shows the path coefficients,

and R^2 for every relationship. The following paragraphs present the findings. The model was made using the PLS-SEM test, with the program SmartPLS.

From the findings in Figure 4.14, the total R^2 in life satisfaction is 0.222, while the R^2 for positive and negative work-home interaction was 0.071 and 0.048, respectively. All the R^2 values are considered weak, which suggests there are more variables that can explain the phenomenon (Miles, 2014). Furthermore, the path coefficient from perceived flexibility to positive work-home interaction is 0.266. The direction of this relationship is positive, as indicated in the theoretical framework. The effect of the relationship at 0.266, is between weak and moderate.

The path coefficient from positive work-home interaction to life satisfaction is the value of 0.234. Even though the relationship is positive, as suggested in chapter 2.4.2, it is weak. From perceived flexibility to life satisfaction the strength of the relationship is 0.133, which is one of the weakest relationships in the hypothesized model. From perceived flexibility to negative work-home interaction, the value is negative at -0.219, which is weak. One of the more alluring finds is that the path coefficient from negative work-home interaction to life satisfaction is the strongest, at -0.308.

The path coefficients have also been diminished on some of the relationships, compared to if positive and negative work-home interaction were used as independent variables, outside the model. The path coefficient between perceived flexibility and positive work-home interaction has been reduced, from 0.271 to 0.266. The path coefficient between perceived flexibility and negative work-home interaction got an increase, from -0.223 to -0.219. The negative relationship between negative work-home interaction and life satisfaction changed, from -0.383 to -0.308, while positive work-home interaction changed from 0.304 to 0.234. Based on these findings, all the relationships between the variables are reduced, when put into the hypothesized model, compared to their effect when excluding other variables. Hair et al. (2017) claim that the path coefficient is sometimes explicated relative to each other, which means that the path coefficient with the highest value, is impacting the dependent variable the most (Hair et al., 2017). The variable with the highest path coefficient in our hypothesized model is negative work-home interaction to life satisfaction, at a value of -0.308. Based on the suggestions from Hair et al. (2017), it seems that negative work-home interaction has the most prominent effect on life satisfaction.

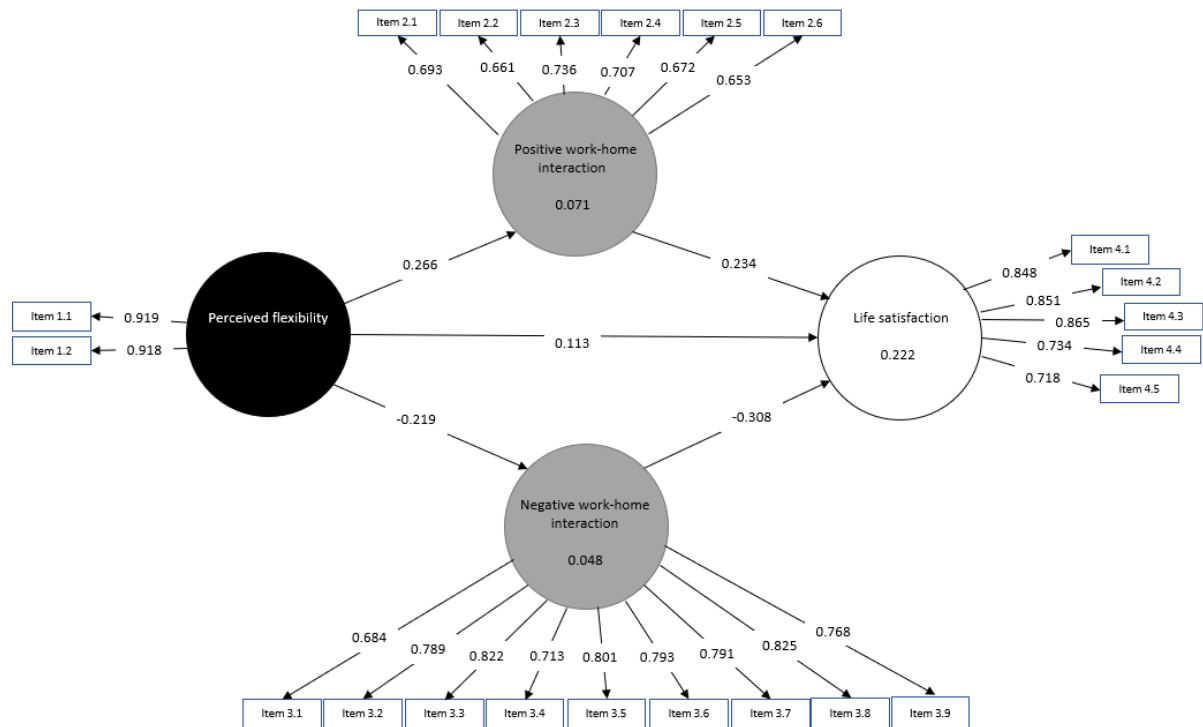


Figure 4.14. The hypothesized model

The next step, for the analysis model, was to investigate if the relationships between the variables were significant. To do this, the bootstrapping feature in SmartPLS was used. When doing the bootstrapping, a significance level of 5% was used, along with the one-tailed tests, because the hypotheses are one-directional (Hair et al., 2017). Using a significance level of 5% means that there is a 5% rejecting H0 when it is supposed to be accepted; type 1 error. A type 2 error can also occur if H0 is supported when it is supposed to be rejected. Displayed in Table 4.5 below, the path coefficients and their significance levels are ostentated by the T-values and P-values. All our path coefficients are significant at a 5% significance level, as presented below in Table 4.5.

	Original Sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T Statistics	P-values
Perceived flexibility → Life satisfaction	0.113	0.112	0.036	3.174	0.001
Perceived flexibility → Negative work-home interaction	-0.219	-0.219	0.036	6.099	0.000
Perceived flexibility → Positive work-home interaction	0.266	0.270	0.035	7.654	0.000
Negative work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	-0.308	-0.308	0.034	9.086	0.000
Positive work-home interaction → Life satisfaction	0.234	0.238	0.037	6.260	0.000

Table 4.5. Significance levels of the hypothesized model

In addition to evaluating the R^2 value, one should assess the f^2 effect size, and the Q^2 value. The f^2 , effect size is measured as the change in the R^2 value when one specific variable is removed from the model. When assessing the f^2 , effect size, one can use the following numerical guidelines. The values 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicates a small, medium, or large effect of the independent variable. Effect size that is less than 0.02 indicates that there is no effect (Hair et al., 2017).

In Table 4.6, the f^2 values for the variables in the hypothesized model is presented. The value of 0.015 represents perceived flexibility, 0.113 represents negative work-home interaction, and 0.063 represents positive work-home interaction. In other words, if perceived flexibility is excluded from the model, the effect on life satisfaction is only reduced by 0.015. However, the effect on the work-home interaction variables is at higher values of 0.113 and 0.063. From this, it seems that having perceived flexibility in the model is strengthening the impact that work-home interaction will have on the model. However, the impact on life satisfaction is weak.

	Life satisfaction	Perceived flexibility	Negative work-home interaction	Positive work-home interaction
Life satisfaction				
Perceived flexibility	0.015		0.050	0.076
Negative work-home interaction	0.113			
Positive work-home interaction	0.063			

Table 4.6. f^2 values

Hair et al. (2017) suggest to also determine the Stone-Geiser's Q^2 value, not only R^2 and f^2 , for finding the predictive accuracy of the model. This value will explain the structural model's out-of-sample predictive power, comparing the predicted values with the original ones. This value is found using the blindfolding feature on SmartPLS. Q^2 values above 0 suggest that the model has a predictive relevance for the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2017). The Q^2 value calculated for the hypothesized model is 0.138, which suggests that the hypothesized model has predictive relevance. The q^2 effect size could be found using multiple dependent variables (Hair et al., 2017), but this is not relevant for this thesis, with life satisfaction as the only dependent variable.

In general, most of the numbers presented suggest predictive accuracy, based on the theoretical framework. However, perceived flexibility does have a low value on f^2 , which can suggest that the construct is not the perfect fit for the hypothesized model.

4.5.3 Mediating variable

To evaluate the impact of the sub-mediating variables, positive and negative work-home interaction, one would have to consider the Multiple Specific Indirect Effects, that can be collected in SmartPLS. The reason why it is phrased *multiple* specific indirect effects is that the test checks for both the mediator effects at the same time. Doing the analysis in SmartPLS makes it possible to examine the effect of both mediators, and their statistical significance (Gaskin, n.d.). After doing a Consistent PLS-SEM, an output will show the Specific Indirect effects. Based on the hypothesized model, it showed a value of 0.092 on the mediating effect from perceived flexibility to positive work-home interaction to life satisfaction. Furthermore, a value of 0.082 was found on the mediating effect from perceived flexibility to negative work-home interaction to life satisfaction. The indirect effects are also significant, with a P-value of <0.000 and a T-value of 4.732 and 4.779 respectively on positive and negative work-home interaction. It does seem illogical that negative work-home interaction is having a positive mediating effect. However, both effects are significant.

4.6 Results on hypotheses

Based on the tests and analyses, that have been conducted in this chapter, it is possible to examine if the hypotheses are supported or rejected. To do this, we have checked for path coefficients, predictive accuracy, relevance, and the significance levels of variables. Showcased in Table 4.7, the results on the hypotheses are presented. All hypotheses except H7 were supported. The reason why H7 was rejected, was that the mediating effect in question was positive. Even though this effect was significant, it was in the opposite direction of what the hypothesis suggested.

Hypotheses	Supported or rejected
H1: Perceived flexibility has a positive effect on positive work-home interaction	Supported
H2: Perceived flexibility has a negative effect on negative work-home interaction	Supported
H3: Positive work-home interaction has a positive effect on life satisfaction	Supported
H4: Negative work-home interaction has a negative effect on life satisfaction	Supported
H5: Perceived flexibility has a positive effect on life satisfaction	Supported
H6: Positive work-home interaction has a positive mediating effect on perceived flexibility to life satisfaction	Supported
H7: Negative work-home interaction has a negative mediating effect on perceived flexibility to life satisfaction	Rejected

Table 4.7. Hypotheses results

5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of perceived flexibility and work-home interaction on life satisfaction. Based on this, the research question was developed; *“How do perceived work flexibility and work-home interaction affect an individual’s life satisfaction?”*. To answer the research question, the method of choice was a quantitative approach using an online questionnaire. The research conducted has found some interesting findings. The main findings suggest that perceived flexibility has a positive effect on life satisfaction. The findings also indicated that positive work-home interaction had a positive mediating effect on this relationship. A relationship between work-home interaction and life satisfaction was also identified, as positive work-home interaction had a positive effect on life satisfaction, while negative work-home interaction had a negative effect on life satisfaction. In general, all the hypotheses presented, except the mediating effect of negative work-home interaction, were supported.

Further, the results in this study will be discussed and compared to previous literature. The hypotheses will then be thoroughly explained and discussed whether they are supported or rejected.

5.1 Discussion of the results

In this subchapter, there will be a discussion of the demographic data in relation to the dependent, mediating, and independent variables. First, there will be a general summary of selected demographic statistics, gender, age, marital status, educational level, organization type and work experience. These demographic statistics were highlighted based on connections to earlier research as presented in the theoretical framework.

In general, the participants in the study represented a broad variety along with all the categories from the control variables. There were participants representing all categories, except the category “other” in the control variable gender. This increases the possibility to generalize the findings for the whole population studied. In terms of organization types represented in the survey, nearly half of the respondents were from “Public Sectors/Education/Health Care”. This specific category could be highly represented, due to the extraordinary situation at the time. When the questionnaire was distributed, the covid-19

outbreak probably resulted in an overrepresentation of participants in the public sector, as organizations in this category were not as affected from e.g. layoffs. It is not farfetched to assume that this resulted in biases, as employees in larger and more safe organizations were more likely to respond to the questionnaire. In the other control variables, the categories were more evenly represented, based on the number of participants.

The control variables were tested in relation to the dependent variable, life satisfaction. Fugl-Meyer et al. (2002) found no difference regarding gender and life satisfaction, which is supported by this study, as the participants reported similar values. An interesting find is that the participants with a university degree reported higher life satisfaction than the participants without a university degree. However, the difference in life satisfaction between the two groups is relatively small. Even though the difference is quite small, it supports the research of Meléndez et al., 2008, who also reported that life satisfaction will increase with higher education. In terms of parental status, the differences were more prominent. The participants in the category “no children” had considerably higher life satisfaction, than the participants in the categories “have children up to 16 years” and “have children above 16 years old”. The large difference might be correlated to age, as De Ree and Alessie (2011) explain that life satisfaction will also behave in a U-shape, where the early and later ages of an individual's life, will be the ones with most life satisfaction. The youngest participants in our study also reported the highest life satisfaction, followed by the oldest participants with the second highest reported life satisfaction. Therefore, the U-shape for life satisfaction was present in our results as well, but the differences were small. Further, it is notable that “married” participants reported higher life satisfaction than “not married”. From this, one could assume that the participants have spouses with high other domain awareness (Clark, 2000), as the indications of a relationship between work-home interaction and life satisfaction also were present in this study.

The control variables were also tested in relation to the independent variable of perceived flexibility and the mediating variable of work-home interaction. In general, the differences between the organization types are quite small. This implies that the organization type does not massively affect perceived flexibility and work-home interaction, although Hill et al. (2008) suggested that there could be differences in every field of works, in terms of flexible work. An interesting find is that there seems to be an indication of a pattern in the category of educational level. Based on these findings, one could flippantly argue that a higher level of education results in lower perceived flexibility. In addition, higher educated individuals are

likely to experience more negative work-home interaction and less positive work-home interaction. According to Clark (2000), this would result in a lower work-home balance. These findings were in contradiction to the findings from Mostert and Oldfield (2009), as they found less negative work-home interaction on higher educated participants. The results in our study can be explained by the suggestion that higher educated participants are knowledge-intensive employees who can work continuously, also from home (Cross & Cummings, 2004).

In terms of gender, previous research has shown support of the notion that perceived flexibility was reported higher for men, compared to women (Hill et al., 2008). The participants in this study, reports similar results as the study conducted by Hill et al. (2008), as men report higher perceived flexibility compared to women. Berntsson et al. (2006) claim that there is a discrepancy between the genders in terms of work-home interaction, in that females report more stress from negative work-home interaction. In our study, both genders reported the exact same values of both negative work-home interaction and positive work-home interaction. Concerning the parental status, the category “No children” reported the least amount of perceived flexibility, in contradiction to the participants with children. Considering work-home interaction, the different groups on the control variable reported similar values.

In terms of age and perceived flexibility, Hill et al. (2008) found that employees over the age of 40 years reported higher perceived flexibility, in comparison to younger employees. In our study, there was a small increase in perceived flexibility along with the increasing age of the participants. However, the small sample of participants “under 25” reported the highest perceived flexibility. Considering work-home interaction, Mostert and Oldfield (2009) found that participants between the age of 50 and 69 years had high positive work-home interaction. This was also true in our study, but the differences were not particularly large. However, an exception in our study was to the small sample of “under 25”, who reported the highest positive work-home interaction. In the study by Mostert and Oldfield (2009), participants between the age of 22 and 39 years had the lowest positive work-home interaction. In our study, the category “25-44” reported the lowest positive work-home interaction. To summarize, our study shows similar results as the findings from Mostert and Oldfield (2009) in general, apart from the small sample in category “under 25”.

Next, based on the findings, it would be interesting to investigate if there were any differences between the categories within the control variables for the hypothesized model. We did test all the control variables with a multi-group analysis, however, only the most noteworthy based on previous literature will be discussed as there was no interesting finds that are not included in this discussion. In terms of gender, a multi-group analysis found no evidence of any major variation between “males” and “females”, as Fugl-Meyer et al. (2002) also reported on the life satisfaction variable alone. This, despite indicated gender differences in perceived flexibility and work-home interaction (Hill et al., 2008; Berntsson et al., 2006). Regarding educational level, a multi-group analysis found no evidence of any major variations between participants with a university degree, in contradiction to participants without a university degree. The multi-group analysis was conducted, based on suggestions of variance in work-home interaction and life satisfaction, in terms of educational level (Mostert & Oldfield, 2009; Meléndez et al., 2008). Despite this, there was no evidence of variance in our study, when separating those with a university degree, from others. Lastly, a multi-group analysis found no evidence of any major variations between participants “under 46” and “over 45”, regarding age. This, despite indicated differences in all perceived flexibility, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction (Hill et al., 2008; Mostert & Oldfield, 2009; De Ree & Alessie, 2011).

5.2 Discussion of the hypotheses

The aim of this master thesis was to understand the relationship of perceived flexibility, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction. In this subchapter, the relationship will be discussed based on the results from the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were supported, except the negative mediating effect of negative work-home interaction on the relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction.

The first hypothesis suggested that perceived flexibility has a positive effect on positive work-home interaction. The hypothesis suggests that the amount of work-home interaction a person inherits is impacted by can be influenced by the amount of flexibility the person is given. Hill et al. (2001) found that flexible work positively influenced work-home balance, which indicates that perceived flexibility probably should positively influence positive work-home interaction as well. These findings in this study partly support the research of Hill et al.

(2001), as the first hypothesis was supported. Hill et al. (2008) claim that flexibility in working may enable an easier balance of the expectations at home, which is in the lines of the results from this study. In addition to this, the indication made, based on the work/family border theory by Clark (2000), that work-home interaction would increase with higher perceived flexibility, also was supported. The participants with more perceived flexibility in this study reported more positive work-home interaction.

The second hypothesis suggested that perceived flexibility has a negative effect on work-home interaction. This hypothesis was also supported. The hypothesis was based on similar research as the first hypothesis (Hill et al., 2001; Hill et al., 2008; Clark, 2000). The results in our study show that higher perceived flexibility increases the negative effect of negative work-home interaction. Work-home balance includes positive work-home interaction and negative work-home interaction (Clark, 2000). As the participants in this study reported higher positive work-home interaction, but higher negative work-home interaction, one could only partly conclude that the research of Hill et al. (2001) was supported. The results of this hypothesis reported a contradiction to the increased work-home balance of higher perceived flexibility. However, the results support the indications from the work/family border theory by Clark (2000), that higher perceived flexibility, would lead to higher work-home interaction in general.

The third hypothesis, stating that positive work-home interaction is positively affecting life satisfaction, was supported. Based on the work/family border theory by Clark (2000), it is suggested that an increase in positive work-home interaction leads to better work-home balance. Clark (2000) describes work-home balance as satisfaction, well-functioning in both domains, along with role conflict at a minimum level. The outcome of this hypothesis underpins the suggestions from Clark (2000). Furthermore, it supports the general importance of a healthy work-home relationship. According to Clark (2000), work and family are two of the most important aspects of people's lives. This hypothesis, built on indications in the work/family border theory, supports that positive work-home interaction brings harmony to people's lives (Clark, 2000). The results from this hypothesis are in correlation to the results from the research to Vodanovich et al. (2006). Vodanovich et al. (2006) reported higher life satisfaction in relation to central participation and supportive communication, which is related to positive work-home interaction, as presented in the work/family border theory by (Clark, 2000)

The fourth hypothesis, regarding the effect on life satisfaction from negative work-home interaction, was also supported. As the fourth hypothesis also was based on several indications from the work/family border theory by Clark (2000), it was no revelation that this hypothesis had the same outcome as the third hypothesis; supported. At the same time, the connections to life satisfaction were uncertain, including unclarity in the differences between the influence of negative work-home interaction and positive work-home interaction. However, the fact that both hypotheses resulted in the same outcome, underpins the general impression of the connection between work-home interaction and life satisfaction, which was also indicated by Vodanovich et al. (2006). The supportiveness of this hypothesis is understandable, as earlier research has connected negative work-home interaction with negative factors like lack of recovery, burnout and work-home conflict (Derks & Bakker, 2014; Derks et al., 2015; Derks et al., 2016; Derks et al., 2014). Lack of recovery and burnout could be seen in context with less life satisfaction.

The fifth hypothesis suggested that perceived flexibility has a positive effect on life satisfaction. The hypothesis was supported. Earlier research suggested that there may be a relationship between similar variables, but there were no results on the direct connection between the variables, in our understanding. Positive effects of flexible work and perceived flexibility were reported by several researchers, and one could assume that these positivities may result in higher life satisfaction. Hill et al. (2008) found that employees with higher perceived flexibility also reported higher work-family fit, motivation, and happiness. Ahmad et al. (2013) reported that allowing for flexible offers, positively affected the employee's motivation, which increases productivity and happiness (Vroom, 1964). Galinsky et al. (2004) claim that a flexible work arrangement is better for effectiveness, mental health, and job satisfaction. Burud and Tumolo (2004) reported that flexible work practices could increase employee's satisfaction. The supported result of this hypothesis in our study is further supporting the statements from earlier research. In our study, the participants with higher perceived flexibility also reported higher life satisfaction.

The sixth hypothesis suggested that positive work-home interaction would have a positive mediating effect on the relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction. There was no previous research on the mediating effect of work-home interaction between the two variables. Positive work-home interaction has been linked to both perceived flexibility (Hill et al., 2008; Hill et al., 2001) and life satisfaction (Vodanovich et al., 2006). However, the mediating effect has not been tested. In the work/family border theory by Clark (2000), there

are also indications that work-home balance could be connected to both variables. As the sixth hypothesis was supported, one could state that the earlier research regarding positive work-home interaction was partly supported.

The seventh and last hypothesis assumed that negative work-home interaction would have a negative mediating effect on the relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction. The research regarding this hypothesis is based on the same indications as to the sixth hypothesis (Hill et al., 2008: Hill et al., 2001: Vodanovich et al., 2006: Clark, 2000). The seventh hypothesis was rejected. The mediating effect of negative work-home interaction was positive in our results when it was supposed to be negative. This, despite negative connections between perceived flexibility and negative work-home interaction, along with connections between negative work-home interaction and life satisfaction. This result might occur as there is uncertainty around negative work-home interaction and flexible work. Previous studies of Hill et al. (2001) and Hill et al. (2008), is referring to positive work-home interaction when arguing that perceived flexibility has connections to work-home interaction. Of that reason, it is difficult to understand this surprisingly result by previous research, but the rejection of this hypothesis partly supports the claims of Hill et al. (2008), in that perceived flexibility has a positive influence on the work-home balance. The work-home balance increases with less negative work-home interaction (Clark, 2000). This could be an explanation of the surprising result on this hypothesis, even though it contradicts with the result of the second hypothesis.

6. Conclusion

Within this chapter, the conclusion will be presented. Our contribution to research, within the limitations of the thesis, will also be discussed. Lastly, some suggestions for further research will be highlighted.

6.1 Contribution

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of perceived flexibility and work-home interaction on life satisfaction. Based on the lack of research on the direct connection between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction, this study contributes to an understanding of this relationship. According to the results in this research, higher perceived flexibility increases life satisfaction. In addition to providing new findings, the results also provide findings that are supported by previous research. Earlier research indicated connections between perceived flexibility and work-home interaction (Hill et al., 2001; Hill et al., 2008; Clark, 2000), which the results in our study also indicates. The indicated connection between work-home interaction and life satisfaction from previous research (Vodanovich et al., 2006; Clark, 2000), was strengthened by the results in this study. The importance of the work/family border theory by Clark (2000) is highly understandable, based on the results in this study. By following the propositions from Clark (2000), in the work/family border theory, one could flippantly argue that it will result in higher life satisfaction, in addition to better work-home balance. In general, this study has strengthened the indicated relationships to all of our hypotheses, except the mediating effect of negative work-home interaction. However, it should be noted that this study provides information on positive work-home interaction as a positive mediator in the relationship between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction. Earlier research has not tested this mediating effect.

Due to the covid-19 outbreak in the world, the topic of interest has received increasingly more focus in the last few months. As the questionnaire was handed out in a period of instability, one week before the Norwegian citizens were recommended to stay home, this study may contribute to findings related to this. By doing a new test at a later stage, one could compare the results, and provide findings of the impact from the extraordinary situation. This could be interesting as all the variables can be impacted by the crisis. The research in this study may be

interesting for companies, in that regard. The results of this study can strengthen the possibilities for companies to make more informed and educated decisions regarding flexible work. Based on increased productivity and employee's increased satisfaction from flexible work that was found during the quarantine, Telenor will let the individual employee decide if they would work at home or from the office if their position allows for it (Stoltz & Tollersrud, 2020).

6.2 Limitations

Because of the scope of a master thesis, it can be difficult to have the necessary tools to measure everything as precisely as one would prefer. While a questionnaire is useful for gathering data it is also self-reported, which can lead to biased or incorrect results (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). The answers can be biased due to lack of interest, time issues, current mood, or that participants report desired values instead of the actual values (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). As this study was handed out in a period of instability, one could assume that there was a bias based on timely issues and a lack of interest. The number of participants from large companies in the public sector supports this. Potential participants provided feedback that they would like to contribute to research, but they could be busy adapting to the extraordinary situation at the time of the distribution. Further, the questionnaire could have a cultural bias (Demo & Paschoal, 2016), as it was only handed out to Norwegian organizations. Another limitation of the questionnaire was the number of questions. In order to get more respondents, the questionnaire was as short and concise as possible. Ideally, it would be interesting to test even more variables, e.g. perceived productivity, motivation, burnout, and home-work interaction. Other, or more detailed control variables could also be interesting to test, e.g. more categories on marital status or a control variable for income. In terms of the covid-19 outbreak, it would be interesting to test if there were any changes related to answers in the first week of the questionnaire distribution, in contradiction to answers in the last week of the questionnaire distribution. Despite the limitations, one can argue that the way the study was conducted, provides results that are generalizable and reliable, based on compared findings from previous research.

6.3 Future research

In terms of future research, it would be interesting to investigate if the covid-19 outbreak in the world has an impact on the current results of this study. By doing a new test at a later stage, one could compare the results, and provide findings of impact from the extraordinary situation. It would also be interesting to research how the special situation impacted individuals in terms of thoughts on flexible work, and thoughts on personal work situation regarding e.g. productivity.

In addition to this, future research could investigate if there are any cultural biases, by testing the variables in other countries. Further, testing how the results from the variables alter along with different flexible work routines, would be engaging. For example, if individuals with a home office report major variances from individuals with a work office, or if flexi-time employees report variance from others. By doing this one can investigate which flexible routines are beneficial, and contributing to increased life satisfaction across different control variables. In terms of flexible work, including more dependent variables would provide a broader view of the effects of e.g. perceived flexibility. Our R^2 is rather weak, which can hopefully be increased by inserting more “correct” variables into the hypothesized model. Additionally, as the participants in this study report that higher perceived flexibility increases life satisfaction, it would be beneficial to understand factors that contribute to higher perceived flexibility.

7. References

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8. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Questionnaire



Survey: Flexible Work Routines and Work-Home Interaction

About the survey

This survey is part of a master thesis where the aim is to get a better understanding of how flexible work routines affects work-home interaction.

The survey contains five parts; Personal information, work-related information, perceived flexibility, work-home interaction and life satisfaction. Each part contains a few questions. The questions are answered by "clicking" on the most suitable option. Few questions require typing (for example, the average of your working hours per week). If you are unsure what to answer on a question, please give us your best estimate.

Confidentiality

We treat all personal and company data as private and strictly confidential. The data will only be used for scientific purposes. Your answers will not be linked to you, nor will it be possible to identify which company you work for. The collected data are not accessible for anyone outside the research team.

Language (Språk)

The survey is available both in [Norwegian](#) and [English](#). Click on the button below the survey to select the preferred language.

Spørreundersøkelsen er tilgjengelig både på [norsk](#) og [engelsk](#). Trykk på knappen under spørreundersøkelsen for å velge foretrukket språk.

Duration

The survey will take a total of approx. 5-10 minutes.

Contact

Please contact us if you have any questions related to the survey. Questions in Norwegian can be forwarded to Håkon and Morten.

Personal information

Below you will find questions regarding personal information. All answers are confidential, anonymous, and impossible to connect to each personal respondent. If you are unsure what to answer, please give us your best estimate.

What gender are you?

- (1) Male
- (2) Female
- (3) Other

Age (in years)

- (1) Under 25
- (2) 26-44
- (3) 45-59
- (4) 60 or over

Marital status

- (1) Married or has a partner
- (2) No partner

Parental status

- (1) Have children under 3 years old
- (2) Have children up to 16 years old
- (3) Have children over 16 years old
- (4) No children

Work-related information

Below you will find questions regarding work-related information. All answers are confidential, anonymous, and impossible to connect to each personal respondent. If you are unsure what to answer, please give us your best estimate.

What is your education level?

- (1) Middle School or lower
- (2) High School
- (3) Bachelor's degree
- (4) Master's degree
- (5) Ph.D. or higher

Work experience (in years) in your current position?

- (1) 5 years or less
- (2) 6 to 10 years
- (3) 11 to 20 years
- (4) Over 20 years

Do you work fulltime?

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Indicate the proportion of an average workweek you spend working from office (%)

Indicate the proportion of an average workday you spend working from office (%)

Indicate the proportion of an average workweek you spend working from home (%)

Contract type?

- (1) Temporary
- (2) Permanent

What is your job position?

- (1) Organization director
- (2) Department manager
- (3) Technical leader
- (4) Project manager
- (5) Subordinate (e.g., project team member)
- (6) Other: _____

How many people are employed by your firm?

(Please, specify to the best of your knowledge the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) if possible)

Organization type?

- (1) Manufacturing
- (2) Construction
- (3) Oil and Gas, Energy, Mining
- (4) Retail, Transport, Warehousing, Hospitality, Tourism
- (5) Banking, Financial Services and Insurance
- (6) Information and Communication
- (7) Other Professional Services/Consultancy company
- (8) Fishery, Forestry, Agriculture
- (9) Public Sectors/Education/Health Care
- (10) Non-Governmental Sector (NGO)/Non-Profit
- (11) Other, please, specify: _____

Perceived Flexibility

Below you will find questions regarding perceived flexibility. All answers are confidential, anonymous, and impossible to connect to each personal respondent. If you are unsure what to answer, please give us your best estimate.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
In the past 6 months:

I have the control of scheduling WHEN I work

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

I have control of scheduling WHERE I work

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

Work-Home Interaction

Below you will find questions regarding work-home interaction. All answers are confidential, anonymous, and impossible to connect to each personal respondent. If you are unsure what to answer, please give us your best estimate.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
In the past 6 months:

You come home cheerfully after a successful day at work, positively affecting the atmosphere at home?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

After a pleasant working day/working week, you feel more in the mood to engage in activities with your spouse/family/friends?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You fulfil your domestic obligations better because of the things you have learned on your job?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You are better able to keep appointments at home because your job requires this as well?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You manage your time at home more efficiently as a result of the way you do your job?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You are better able to interact with your spouse/family/friends as a result of the things you have learned at work?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You are irritable at home because your work is demanding?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You do not fully enjoy the company of your spouse/family/friends because you worry about your work?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You find it difficult to fulfil your domestic obligations because you are constantly thinking about your work?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You have to cancel appointments with your spouse/family/friends due to work-related commitments?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

Your work schedule makes it difficult for you to fulfil your domestic obligations?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You do not have the energy to engage in leisure activities with your spouse/family/friends because of your job?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You have to work so hard that you do not have time for any of your hobbies?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

Your work obligations make it difficult for you to feel relaxed at home?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

Your work takes up time that you would have liked to spend with your spouse/family/friends?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

Satisfaction with life

Below you will find questions regarding satisfaction with life. All answers are confidential, anonymous, and impossible to connect to each personal respondent. If you are unsure what to answer, please give us your best estimate.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

In the past 6 months:

In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

The conditions of my life are excellent.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

I am satisfied with my life.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

You have completed the survey. Thank you for participating.

Please click "Finish"

PREVIOUS

FINISH



Appendix B: NSD notification test



Result of Notification Test: Not Subject to Notification

You have indicated that neither directly or indirectly identifiable personal data will be registered in the project.

If no personal data is to be registered, the project will not be subject to notification, and you will not have to submit a notification form.

Please note that this is a guidance based on information that you have given in the notification test and not a formal confirmation.

For your information: *In order for a project not to be subject to notification, we presuppose that all information processed using electronic equipment in the project remains anonymous.*

Anonymous information is defined as information that cannot identify individuals in the data set in any of the following ways:

- *directly, through uniquely identifiable characteristic (such as name, social security number, email address, etc.)*
- *indirectly, through a combination of background variables (such as residence/institution, gender, age, etc.)*
- *through a list of names referring to an encryption formula or code, or*
- *through recognizable faces on photographs or video recordings.*

Furthermore, we presuppose that names/consent forms are not linked to sensitive personal data.

Kind regards,
NSD Data Protection

Appendix C: Constructs and their respective items

Construct	Indicator	Items
Perceived flexibility	1.1	I have control of scheduling WHEN I work
	1.2	I have control of scheduling WHERE I work
Positive work-home interaction	2.1	You come home cheerfully after a successful day at work, positively effecting the atmosphere at home?
	2.2	After a pleasant working day/working week, you feel more in the mood to engage in activities with your spouse/family/friends?
	2.3	You fulfill your domestic obligations better because of the things you have learned on your job?
	2.4	You are better able to keep appointments at home because your job requires this as well?
	2.5	You manage your time at home more efficiently as a result of the way you do your job?
	2.6	You are better able to interact with your spouse/family/friends as a result of the things you have learned at work?
Negative work-home interaction	3.1	You are irritable at home because your work is demanding?
	3.2	You do not fully enjoy the company of your spouse/family/friends because you worry about your work?
	3.3	You find it difficult to fulfil your domestic obligations because you are constantly thinking about your work?
	3.4	You have to cancel appointments with your spouse/family/friends due to work-related commitments?
	3.5	Your work schedule makes it difficult for you to fulfil your domestic obligations?
	3.6	You do not have the energy to engage in leisure activities with your spouse/family/friends because of your job?
	3.7	You have to work so hard that you do not have time for any of your hobbies?
	3.8	Your work obligations make it difficult for you to feel relaxed at home?
	3.9	Your work takes up time that you would have liked to spend with your spouse/family/friends?
Life satisfaction	4.1	In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
	4.2	The conditions of my life are excellent.
	4.3	I am satisfied with my life.
	4.4	So far I have gotten the most important things I want in life.
	4.5	If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Appendix D: Kurtosis and skewness

	Kurtosis	Skewness
Item 1.1	0.528	-1.124*
Item 1.2	0.388	-1.079*
Item 2.1	0.662	-0.792
Item 2.2	1.731*	-1.047*
Item 2.3	-0.286	-0.204
Item 2.4	-0.191	-0.159
Item 2.5	-0.290	-0.255
Item 2.6	0.014	-0.311
Item 3.1	-0.947	-0.184
Item 3.2	-1.098*	-0.077
Item 3.3	-0.996	0.227
Item 3.4	-0.906	0.316
Item 3.5	-0.491	0.543
Item 3.6	-0.641	0.458
Item 3.7	-0.554	0.527
Item 3.8	0.590	0.489
Item 3.9	-0.906	0.134
Item 4.1	-0.139	-0.525
Item 4.2	0.283	-0.667
Item 4.3	2.279*	-1.098*
Item 4.4	0.990	-0.886
Item 4.5	-0.869	-0.184

Note. * non-acceptable values

Appendix E: Sample size for a given population size

TABLE 13.3

Sample size for a given population size

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	180	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346

N	S	N	S	N	S
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

(Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 264)

Appendix F: Reflection note - Håkon Jarland

To fulfill this master thesis in Business and Administration from the School of Business and Law at the University of Agder, as required by University of Agder we must provide a reflection note with our master thesis. This reflection note will provide an overview of our accumulated knowledge from the entire master program and a discussion about how our thesis relates to the terms international, innovation, and responsibility. Developing the master thesis has been both exciting and difficult. The semester has however been very fulfilling and interesting. As the world got hit by the Coronavirus in the middle of writing our thesis it has been a very surreal time for all society, but keeping our head towards the goal of finishing the study has made it possible to complete the thesis in an orderly manner.

Our master thesis was a quantitative study about the relationships of perceived flexibility, work-home interaction, and life satisfaction. Based on previous literature it was suggested that there was a relationship between some of the variables, however, we did not manage to find any study that combined all of these variables in one study, which we then set out to do. We based some of our research on Clark (2000) that described how work-home interaction can impact the private life of an employee when home from work.

Flexibility and work-home interaction have been an increasingly relevant topic as the world is becoming more digital and work can be conducted more from home. The international trend is therefore here since the entire world is becoming more digital and technological. Our thesis is also relevant when the entire world saw how the impact of being allowed to work from home when the coronavirus outbreak happened and lots of employees could work from home. This would of course bring some challenged with negative work-home interaction, but also positive effects from positive work-home interaction. From his model we developed the variables work home interaction positive and negative, this was because the variable was able to be split into two variables in an easy way based on the questions. We further made variables from flexible work which we called perceived flexibility; a term coined by Hill et al (2008). Perceived flexibility explains how much the individual is perceiving how much flexibility they have when it comes to work, not the actual flexibility they have.

Our study was mostly based on data gathered from a web-based questionnaire that was able to get a total of 810 finished responses. We distributed the survey to an unknown number of persons as we sent the survey in an email to many companies. We further analyzed the data in a program called SmartPLS, where one can examine if the data is viable for conducting research, but also do an actual test for an analytical purpose like PLS-SEM. Our findings suggested that there was a significant effect on all the relationships in our model except for one. As most of the relationships were based on previous research this came as no surprise. However, we did contribute to research in that we strengthened past research while also contributing to the evidence that supports the notion that positive work-home interaction can be a positive mediating factor between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction.

Because the world is becoming more technological and with that opening new solutions to flexible work it opens new positive solutions but also negative tendencies that can happen. This further the question about how an employer should face how he should delegate allowing for flexible work in his culture. Because this is a worldwide problem, it is relevant for international trends in that most of the modern world is enabling solutions for flexible work to be viable. With access to the internet, many jobs can also be conducted remotely, some jobs are even 100% remote. Our study can, therefore, be interesting for the entire world and not only accessible and relevant to Norwegian companies. We also analyzed everything from companies to individual persons, so this study can be interesting for all.

Our thesis is also relevant to innovation in that flexible work is an innovative solution that came with technology. With innovative solutions, there can be more innovative flexible work. For example, some companies can use new innovative technology to measure how much the employee is working or checking if they are even working at all. Our research can, therefore, put a light on how important it is for companies to insert flexible solutions for their employees and to make sure they do not make it so there will be less productivity overall.

The topic can also be linked to responsibility. Employers have a responsibility when it comes to governing the flexible routines, they are allowing their employees to have. The responsibility can also be linked to the individual employees in that they have a responsibility to not abuse the flexibility is given or misuse it and overwork and get negative fallout from negative work-home interaction. It is connected to responsibility in that the government should strive for the best possible working environments and flexible solutions can make for better working environments if used correctly.

As discussed, this master thesis can be linked broadly to the topics of international, innovation, and responsibility. With the increased evolvement of the work-life with regards to technology, the topic of flexible work is continuously becoming larger and more impactful. Flexible work can lead to work-home interaction in both positive and negative ways and it further impact the life satisfaction of people. It is because of this important to do as much research as possible to further the progress on research for flexible work. This has been an interesting master thesis and interesting master program where I have gathered a lot of knowledge that I will take with me for the rest of my life.

References used in the reflection note:

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Hill, E. J., Grzywacz, J. G., Allen, S., Blanchard, V. L., Matz-Costa, C., Shulkin, S., et al. (2008). Defining and conceptualizing workplace flexibility. *Community, Work, & Family*, 11, 149–163.

Appendix G: Reflection note - Knut Morten Hornnes

As a part of the master thesis, the School of Business and Law at the University of Agder requires all students to write a reflection note. This reflection note is an opportunity for us students to contribute to the continuous improvement of the Master's programme in Business Administration, by sharing insight on e.g. our own achievement of the learning outcomes. Based on this, the aim of this reflection note is to give insight in the knowledge and experiences I have acquired while being in the Master's programme in Business Administration to the School of Business and Law at the University of Agder.

The reflection note will be written with a certain structure. First, I will include a summary of our thesis. Further, I will describe relations to the key concepts in the School of Business and Law's mission statement and strategy; international, innovative and responsible. To round off, I will summarize my reflection and conclude my discussion.

The aim of our master thesis was to understand the relationships between perceived work flexibility, work-home interaction and life satisfaction. To do this, we conducted a quantitative study with perceived work flexibility as the independent variable, work-home interaction as the mediating variable and life satisfaction as the dependent variable. An interest in the topics of technology and work life balance, was the beginning of a journey that ended in this study. Due to the continuous development in technology, people are more available than ever. This availability leads to more flexible work, as increasingly more individuals only needs a computer setup and internet connection to do most of their work. As the future workplace may involve more flexibility, we found it interesting to study the effect of perceived flexibility on life satisfaction, by using work-home interaction as a mediating variable.

Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman (2001) found that perceived flexibility has a positive influence on work-family balance, which somewhat connects the variables perceived flexibility and work-home interaction. Further, Clark (2000) highlights, in the work/family border theory, that individuals are border-crosser that makes frequent transitions between the domain of work and the domain of family. Based on this, one could indicate that flexible workers experience more work-home interaction than others. Clark (2000) indicates a connection between work-home interaction and life satisfaction, by arguing that positive

work-home interaction increases work-home balance, which is described as e.g. satisfying and well-functioning in both domains. Partly based on this, the research question of our thesis was presented as; *How do perceived flexibility and work-home interaction affect individual's life satisfaction?*

Our findings in this thesis suggests that there is a correlation between perceived work flexibility and life satisfaction. More perceived flexible work increases individual's subjective life satisfaction. Further, we noticed a positive correlation between perceived work flexibility and positive work-home interaction, along with a negative correlation between perceived work flexibility and negative work-home interaction. In addition to this, our findings suggest a positive correlation between positive work-home interaction and life satisfaction, along with a negative correlation between negative work-home interaction and life satisfaction. The findings in general somewhat supported that flexible work may be the future, in terms of tools, to improve workplaces.

In terms of international trends and forces, our thesis is somewhat relevant. Flexible work, work-home interaction and life satisfaction is highly relevant variables, partly due to the covid-19 outbreak worldwide this year. One could expect that more research would be conducted including at least one of these variables, in the nearest future. The covid-19 outbreak has resulted in a new working life for many individuals. A substantial number of individual workers has been forced to work from the location of their homes. Workplaces have been closed, and most of the work conversations have been based on online communication tools. This is also the case for our unit of analysis; workers in Norway.

The covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a trend of research regarding its influence on work-life balance. Technology, and the changing nature of work, has been increasingly more in focus, the last months (O'Leary, 2020). O'Leary (2020) argues that the pandemic has resulted in many questions regarding the work in order to accommodate differences in e.g. workplace location. The next few years will probably also discover an increase in articles regarding the relationship between work and home. O'Leary (2020) suggests that, based on the covid-19 pandemic, there are several potential emerging research issues like e.g. changing and evolving work, along with e.g. separation of work and private life. In general, the workplaces and organizations will probably be more alert to unimaginable work-situations, and of that reason be more prepared of such situations. International organizations would probably secure

communication tools, that could enable employees to work from their homes, with better knowledge and experience, in terms of avoiding negative work-home interaction.

As technology is partly the reason of interest to the topic in this master thesis, along with an intention to understand possible scenarios of future workplaces, one could argue that the master thesis somewhat links to innovation. Assumptions of how future work places would look like, was based on assumptions that flexible work would be more popular in the years to come. After the covid-19 pandemic, flexible work is increasingly more relevant. As the findings in our master thesis suggested that there is a positive correlation between perceived flexibility and life satisfaction, it would be reasonable to think that flexible work might be related to future workplaces and the future work situation. Innovative organizations could have an advantage, in terms of employee's happiness, as they are more likely to test different solutions of flexible work. As the findings in our master thesis would need to be practically tested, and further researched, one cannot be too conclusive when suggesting that flexible work is better than ordinary work. However, the findings in our thesis somewhat suggest that there is a potential for innovative organizations to experience positives from utilizing flexible work in a higher degree, than the current use of flexible work.

In terms of responsibility, our master thesis is also somewhat relevant. One could argue that organizations are somewhat responsible for the well-being of their employees, when it comes to the work situation. In order to have a well-functioning work-home interaction, it is important that both the work domain and the home domain have participants with high *other domain awareness* (Clark, 2000). As the covid-19 pandemic forced most workers to be located at home, some employees probably struggled with the work-home interaction. In such cases, it is important that organizations are aware of the situation at home, and do not make things more difficult than they need to be, by expecting the same productivity from the home office. Our findings suggest that there is a correlation between work-home interaction and life satisfaction, which further increases the importance of other domain awareness.

To summarize, I would like to state that writing this master thesis has been an interesting learning journey. The interest in the topic of work-life balance has only grown throughout the work on the master thesis. As work and home are some of the most important aspects of people's lives, it is important to balance these successfully. Due to the pandemic this year, other people have probably also experienced an increasing interest in the balance between the

two domains. It will be exiting to find out how the future workplaces would look like. No matter if the future workplaces involves flexible work or not, I will use the knowledge I have learnt from writing the master thesis, to facilitate work-home balance as often as possible.

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