Optimizing Workforce Management: Analyzing Generational Preferences for Flexible Work Arrangements in a Manufacturing Setting

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Abstract

This study examines different flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and their impacts, with a particular focus on how generational differences influence employee satisfaction and productivity in the manufacturing industry. With demographic shifts, like an aging workforce and the entry of younger generations, in combination with fast technological advancements, the workforce is becoming more diverse and dynamic, this requires organizations to adapt their management strategies to meet evolving employee needs and operational demands. For these optimal workforce management strategies, understanding the generational preferences and barriers has become very important. The research looks at the following generations: Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. In this research, their view on FWAs such as Flexible Hours, Compressed Workweeks, and Phased Retirement will be examined. It uses a quantitative approach supplemented by open-ended question used to study the intersections of generational differences, FWAs usage, and employment foundation outcomes such as satisfaction and productivity. The findings reveal nuanced generational preferences, highlighting the complexity of implementing FWAs in a manufacturing setting. Rather than focusing primarily on generational differences, the results emphasize the need for a broader, more flexible approach. Although the results of looking for generational differences were not statistically significant, the data provided valuable insights into the use and interest in FWA policies across generations. There were interesting patterns in the interest expressed in certain FWAs, for example that younger employees showed a bigger interest in flexible hours compared to older employees. These results may not strongly predict FWA usage, but it could still improve employee satisfaction and productivity by fitting policies to individual and role-specific needs. Since this study shows the interesting insights on how different generations react and utilize FWAs, it can contribute to the existing body of literature around this topic, showing real world results on how flexible arrangements have an impact on a multigenerational workforce in the manufacturing setting.

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Keywords: Flexible work arrangements (FWAs), generational differences, employee productivity, job satisfaction, workforce diversity, manufacturing industry

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Transformations in Workforce Dynamics and Manufacturing Technology

In this today's changing work environment, many companies are starting to recognize flexible working arrangements (FWAs) because they can increase employee satisfaction and well-being (Hidayah et al., 2021). This is also to be seen in the manufacturing industry where businesses have to ensure that their workforce is multi-generational while still maintaining operational efficiency.
Demographic changes and technological developments are leading to major transformations in the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing companies are experiencing shifts in demographics, such as an increase in elderly workers and a rise in generational differences (Thun et al., 2007). The diversity of generations introduces different ways of working, expectations, and technological competencies, this requires companies to adapt their management strategies in a manner that will best support all groups of employees within the company (Özgener, 2007). In terms of modern manufacturing processes, technology has had a great impact particularly on advanced manufacturing technologies (Sangster et al., 2015). Many companies still rely on outdated production systems that are unconnected or closed, limiting their full potential (Rüßmann et al., 2015). There is increased flexibility and productivity in manufacturing systems due to the incorporation of Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) and Industry 4.0 principles, these technologies are reshaping production processes, leading to greater automation, flexibility, and productivity (Fantini et al., 2016). The adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies is crucial for improving efficiency, consistency, and quality in production processes, and also for aligning these technologies with the needs and competences of a diverse workforce (Sangster et al., 2015).

Looking at the manufacturing sector, the strategic technology management efforts are driving the manufacturing industry to shift from traditional production modes to smart interconnected systems. These strategies are enhancing productivity and operational efficiency in firms that prioritize technological advancements (Sikander, 2018). For successful implementation of these technologies, companies depend heavily on workforce acceptance. The level of use of advanced manufacturing technology is influenced by factors such as quality of work life, congruency, concurrence, and flexibility, this shows that there is a need for socio-technical systems approach in organizational contexts, in which there is a focus on a social and technical analysis of manufacturing technology (Zhao et al.). Congruence of personal and organizational values leads to a more favorable climate in the organization, minimized interpersonal friction, employee focus on the personal activities, which will help create a supportive environment for adopting new technologies. (Vveinhardt & Gulbovaitė, 2013). This alignment helps to create an environment within the organization which is very crucial for the acceptance and adoption of the new manufacturing technologies. The alignment of both organizational and personal values allows employees to feel that their effort is productive and encourages them to be proactive towards new ways of working and consequently minimizes the possibility of wastage in time and resources during technology implementation (Middleton, 2004). The use of these technological advancements in the manufacturing industry shows how they also reduce labor costs (Levi & Zhang, 1992). These days it is very important for manufacturers, especially SMEs, to employ advanced technologies if they want to compete effectively on the global market. However for SME's it is found more hard to adopt advanced technologies unlike bigger ones (Rhaiem, 2015). Understanding and managing the interaction between evolving workforce dynamics and technological advancements is very important. To ensure long-term performance in uncertain markets, advanced sustainable manufacturing methods must be integrated with other operational strategies (Shankar et al., 2016).

1.2 Historical Development of FWAs

Technological developments and changes in society have had a big impact on the growth of flexible work arrangements. During the industrial era, work schedules were initially strict and did not allow for much flexibility. In order to improve worker wellbeing, the traditional 40-hour workweek consisting of

five days became standard in the early 1900s (Owen, 1976). Later in the 20th century there was a big technological progress that enabled the development of FWAs (Pyöriä, 2011). It was through the use of personal computers, internet and mobile phones that employees started remote work that led to telecommuting (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Telecommuting became more widespread in the 1990s and early 2000s as these technologies evolved enabling workers greater flexibility and autonomy (Golden, 2009). Additionally there were other types of FWAs including flextime and compressed workweeks which facilitated further flexible scheduling in organizations (Baltes et al., 1999). FWAs also were more introduced because of a change in culture. The increasing number women joining the workforce together with changing family structures as well as increased interest in balancing between work life has received the attention for more flexible working environments (Kossek & Distelberg, 2009). The increasing number of women seeking to manage their personal and professional responsibilities made flexible work arrangements necessary (Nora, 2022). As time goes on, the use of FWAs has been increasing due to two clear factors; new technology developments and shifting employee demands (Hajal, 2022). The increased availability of information and communication technology (ICT) tools has enabled professionals to work from anywhere and communicate effectively without having to be in an office. This breakthrough allowed for greater flexibility in terms of where and when people worked. This created the foundation for telecommuting or remote work, giving employees more control over their location and working hours (Alexander et al., 2010). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote work, demonstrating the possibility and benefits of flexible work arrangements for employees (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). This period showed how important FWAs are in enabling businesses deal with unexpected interruptions and still run efficiently (Yeves et al., 2022). Increased attention on employee wellbeing and work-life balance shows one of the major impacts that COVID-19 had on FWAs (Sulyani et al., 2024). The shift to remote working made organizations rethink about mental health support systems for their employees (Yeves et al., 2022). A good number of workers will demand for flexible working hours after the lockdown thus indicating change in what people value most now when it comes to work arrangements (Sulyani et al., 2024). Digitizing work processes and optimizing work structures for adaptability are supposed to influence the prospects of flexible work arrangements. During the period of the pandemic people have realized how valuable it is to use technology for remote working and other forms of flexibility, so emphasizing on digital tools for virtual collaboration in communication within different job settings. What should be expected from companies is their continuous investment into these types of platforms which will not only improve efficiency among employees who operate remotely but also help easier cooperation among widely spread teams through smooth operation across organizations (Paulišić et al., 2024).

1.3 Complication

For manufacturing companies, the presence of multi-generational employees in the workforce poses unique challenges and opportunities. It can be noted that Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z are working together in different capacities creating a diverse pool of knowledge, skills and perspectives for driving innovation and creativity within an organization (Joy & Haynes, 2011). Managing generational differences and working conditions are important, understanding these generational traits is essential for managers to mitigate potential conflicts and enhance team dynamics. Failure to address these differences can lead to misunderstandings and increased turnover rates, as employees may feel disengaged or undervalued (Paska, 2023). Managing different generational cohorts properly can influence employee feelings and retention considerably. Research shows that companies that accept and make changes according to the needs of different generations are able to foster a better and more productive workplace (Bencsik et al., 2016). Every generation has its own set of values, work styles and communication preferences which if effectively used can help problem-solving processes and decision-making (Haynes, 2011). However, knowledge transfer problems, communication barriers to overcome and also different work expectations are among the several obstacles faced by managers managing multi-generational workforce. Companies must design knowledge transfer strategies that fit to multi-generational workforce dynamics keeping in mind the generational diversity that exists in the workplace (Stevens, 2010). It is important to understand and respond to generational differences in work choices and motivation in order to create an inviting working environment that promotes employee engagement and productivity (Haynes, 2011). The presence of multi-generational employees requires

manufacturing companies to adopt flexible workforce management strategies that accommodate the varying needs and expectations of different age groups. Changes in the workforce configuration become important for the resilience and adaptability of manufacturing systems that allow firms to quickly respond to changes in demand and product mix (Hashemi-Petroodi et al., 2020). The manufacturing industry fairly uses the traditional employment systems where workers follow strict schedules and work within fixed hours of between seven and eight hours a day for five days in a week (Berkery et al., 2017). These traditional ways may not be consistent with the continuously changing requirements and preferences shown by employees who come from different generations (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2018). On the contrast there are flexible work arrangements, these include a range of possibilities such part-time work, flexi-time, teleworking, and compressed workweeks (Berkery et al., 2017). Workplace flexibility benefits both companies and employees, which helps to explain the positive correlation between flexible work arrangements and work-life balance (Yusaini et al., 2023). While previous studies highlight the significance of generational diversity and the advantages of flexible work arrangements, there are still gaps in understanding how generational diversity and FWAs work together in the context of the manufacturing sector. Some research has investigated generational differences in work values, preferences, communication patterns and styles of various generations in the workplace (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011), and the positive aspects of flexible work arrangements, especially regarding employee satisfaction and productivity (Twenge, 2010). The existing literature tends to emphasize either generational differences in work values or the general advantages or characteristics of FWAs themselves, whereas the combination of these factors regarding the manufacturing setting has not been addressed. This gap highlights how much more research is needed to understand how FWAs can meet the varying needs and achieve the work-life balance requirements for Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z in mass manufacturing. Addressing this gap is very important because it can help organizations design tailored workforce strategies that enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and boost productivity, all while maintaining operational efficiency. It can help organizations improving their workforce management and sustain long-term organizational performance in this dynamic sector.

1.4 Concern

The problems that can come up from generational differences in the workforce needs attention by companies. For instance, a significant challenge can occur by different communication styles among generations. Older employees may favor traditional face-to-face or phone call communications where younger people prefer digital channels such as email and instant messaging (Haynes, 2011). These communication problems can result in team misunderstandings, inefficiencies and reduced collaborations. Work-life balance expectations can also differ between older and younger employees. Younger workers could rank work-life balance higher preferring flexible schedules to meet personal responsibilities and interests. On the other hand, older generations could have different views about work-life balance which complicates matters about employee conflict or dissatisfaction. Finding a balance between these is very important for maintaining a positive working environment that enhances employee satisfaction and productivity.

Multi-generational employees can have a big impact on operational efficiency, employee satisfaction, and turnover rates within an organization. Research has shown that different generations of employees may have different levels of organizational loyalty and turnover intentions (Fang et al., 2020). Studies have found that job satisfaction and organizational commitment play a major role in influencing turnover intentions among employees (Lu et al., 2016).

1.5 Course of Action

The primary goal of this thesis is to evaluate how flexible work arrangements differ among different generations and see how these preferences influence other job-related factors. Specifically, the study will look into how different types of flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting, flextime and compressed working weeks impacts on job satisfaction, productivity and other job-related aspects

associated to FWAs in different generations divided in categories like Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

This research aims at identifying which forms of flexible work are most advantageous and favored by each age group and how these can be applied in order to achieve higher employee commitment levels and improve overall company performance. The goal of the research is to determine which flexible work arrangements are the best for the different generational groups. It will look at how these processes might be changed to improve employee satisfaction and increase productivity inside the company. The ultimate objective is to offer companies evidence-based suggestions to improve their workforce management plans, making sure they successfully meet the different needs and preferences of a multigenerational workforce.

This thesis will study on how to make workforce management optimized in companies through evaluating the effect of flexible work arrangements on various generations. The focus of this thesis is based on the following research question:
How do different generations experience and prefer flexible work arrangements, and how does the alignment between these preferences and the available arrangements influence their job satisfaction and productivity?

1.6 Contribution

There have been research studying on the topic of flexible work arrangements, generational differences and workforce managing in the manufacturing sector, but no study has combined these topics together. There is a gap in the literature on existing management practices regarding flexibility and adaptation to multi-generational needs in the manufacturing sector. This paper fills that gap by combining these topics in a case study and come to a great conclusion on what arrangements work the best for different generations (Choo et al., 2016; Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2018; Marumpe et al., 2023). This study covers an important and significant gap in previous research on flexible work arrangements by exploring different attitudes toward these arrangements across various groups. Previous research on FWAs has been broad, however the majority of the literature currently available overgeneralizes these advantages across all groups in society without considering what FWAs can provide to different generations. This study aims to deal with this issue by providing evidence on the varied perspectives held by Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z toward FWAs, in order to oppose the existing approach in literature and in reality.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) have been increasing in recognition, particularly in context of the changing workforce and business environment. FWAs are defined as practices such as telecommuting, flextime, compressed workweeks, and job sharing that give employees control over when, where, and how their jobs are done. These arrangements have been increasingly popular, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, when remote working was required rather than optional (Vyas, 2022). FWAs are important for more than just providing an optimal work environment for employees. According to studies, these arrangements are associated with other crucial factors such as job satisfaction and productivity. Research indicates that flexible work arrangements improve job satisfaction by allowing employees to balance work and their personal life, resulting in lower turnover rates and greater organizational commitment (Gašić & Berber, 2023). FWAs have been shown to boost productivity due to the favorable environment that encourages employee engagement and innovation (Jiang et al., 2023). But the majority viewpoint on the positive effects of FWAs may be incorrect. Other studies have identified disadvantages such as increased social isolation and a lower degree of knowledge transfer among remote workers (Cheng et al., 2023). The conflicting results on the effectiveness of FWAs suggest that a variety of factors, including type of job, degree of task interdependence, and employee characteristics, may come into play. The goal of this literature review is to identify FWAs and how they have evolved over time, as well as how different FWA arrangements are bringing in new generations of workers. It will assess the benefits and drawbacks of multigenerational employment, as well as the impact of FWA on job satisfaction and productivity. This review will gather and put together the current knowledge on FWAs and use this as a foundation for the empirical research.

2.1 The Concept of Flexible Work Arrangements

Types of FWAs

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) refer to employment practices that give employees the freedom to operate where, when and how much time they can do their job (Shockley & Allen, 2012). These are meant to help employees achieve better integration of their professional and personal life and also leading to job satisfaction and productivity (Allen et al., 2013). There are different kinds of flexible work arrangement which can be useful for different needs and job functions.

Flextime

This arrangement allows workers to select starting and ending times within a given range of working hours and giving them with an opportunity to deal with personal responsibilities although still being able to accomplish full-time work schedule (Baltes et al., 1999). According to Hill et al. (2010), organizations that provide flextime options are showing their commitment towards work-life balance and recognizing the different needs of workers. In addition, this can be seen as a way in which work is done where and when, which may help reduce any conflicts between personal life and professional life thereby making it easy for employees to enjoy their jobs more. Studies have shown that employees who have access to flextime programs report lower levels of work-life conflict and are able to work longer hours when needed (Stout et al., 2013). The advantages associated with this flextime go beyond individual satisfaction, they also contribute heavily to organizational profitability and attractiveness. Higher job satisfaction, decreased absenteeism together with increased productivity leading to higher profits and bettering business performance are some of the outcomes realized when employers implement this (Lee & DeVoe, 2012). The ability to offer flexible working hours can build reputation for an organization and act as a magnet attracting top talent from various fields who also want more flexibility (Nadler et al., 2010).

Telecommuting

Remote working is also known as telecommuting. It enables employees in organizations to perform their tasks away from offices or the company at home or anywhere they can operate their job (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). It is a more common practice nowadays especially when aided by technologies that

allow working from a distance. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly increased the rate at which people adopted telecommuting and this in turn brought about unprecedented changes in how individuals moved around globally (Victoriano-Habit & El-Geneidy, 2023). Telecommuting can remove the use of technology to replace the need for physical commuting to a work location (Park et al., 2023). It allows workers choose where they want to work from and when thereby making it easier for them not only manage but also balance their work-life schedules better (Budnitz et al., 2020). Work-family conflict reduction together with increased productivity are some of benefits linked to telecommuting. High intensity telecommuting which involves doing so more than two and half days per week has been found out to increase positive impacts on work-family conflicts but can harm relationships between colleagues (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). The interest in telecommuting comes from its potential benefits in travel reduction, cost saving for office spaces, increased productivity, and better home-work balance (Jin & Wu, 2011).

Compressed Workweeks

This means that the regular number of working hours does not change but they are spread over a few days, like four days a week each containing ten hours instead of five days with eight hours (Baltes et al., 1999). Compressed workweeks have been associated with positive effects on organizational performance, as seen in studies where they were found to have a significant and positive correlation with performance outcomes (Auka & Nyangau, 2020). Introducing compressed workweeks has been found to reduce work-family conflict and also lowering employees' intentions to leave an organization (Hyland et al., 2005). Compressed workweeks can enable people to manage their work and personal responsibilities better. When hours are compressed into fewer days, employees might have more time for themselves, which means having greater job satisfaction and overall well-being (Hyatt & Coslor, 2018).

Job Sharing

One position shared between two or more workers so that each individual takes up only a portion of it while the company still gets the needed work in from the employees (Crampton et al., 2003). Job sharing is done to make sure that a full-time job is effectively managed for one person while at the same time giving employees flexibility (Williamson et al., 2015). This arrangement allows individuals to balance their work and personal lives, making it particularly attractive to those seeking part-time employment without compromising on career progression or job security (Freeman & Coll, 2009). It can also be used as an organization's strategy for keeping experienced employees who might want to cut down on hours due to personal commitments or any other reason (Tiney, 2004).

Part-Time Work

The time at work for part-time workers is less than full-timers by going on part-time basis. This will help them manage other things in life such as family obligations effectively (Garnero et al., 2014). Part-time careers' quality has produced controversies, thinking if it is necessary to provide equal opportunities with full-time jobs (Nicolaisen, 2011). Part-time work has also been explored in the context of combining employment with full-time education, this gives opportunities for individuals to interact with potential employers and possibly go into full-time roles (Micklewright et al., 1994). People do part-time job for different purposes including childcare, other family or household responsibilities, school attendance, health problems etc. (McDonnall et al., 2022). "In terms of income and wealth, part-time work may be a less than perfect choice, but if welfare is more broadly defined, and part-time work is a voluntary and transitional choice, allowing changing working hours and schedules during different stages in one's life-course, it may generate higher welfare" (Visser, 2002). Countries like the Netherlands have experienced a shift towards greater acceptance of part-time work, indicating a changing perception of such roles within the job structure (Wielers & Raven, 2011).

Phased Retirement

Allows older workers to move gradually from full-time employment to full retirement by reducing their hours and responsibilities. One reason for this is that it helps companies keep invaluable experience and skills (Johnson, 2011). The main aim of this strategy is to help older workers transit smoothly from their main career into full retirement. When organizations offer programs for phased retirement, they can still keep the services of knowledgeable and experienced senior staff members while also allowing them to

enjoy gradual withdrawal from work towards resting at home (Allen et al., 2005). Phased retirement opportunities align with the changing dynamics of work in modern society, where individuals want a balance between work and personal demands (Guzman et al., 2008). The transition of going into retirement is often see in distinct phases, it starts with the preparation phase while the person is still working, and then going to the phase of the actual transition from worker to retiree, and lastly the phase of accepting retirement as a new life stage (Durrant et al., 2017).

Building on the increasing amount of research on the benefits of flexible work arrangements, it remains unclear how such preferences and practices are necessary or wanted for each generation. The younger generations, specifically Gen Z and Millennials, tend to prefer job flexibility due to their attachment to technology and emphasis on work-life issues (Twenge, 2010). Still, there have been very few research that analyze the generational comparison to FWAs, leaving a big knowledge gap about the practical understanding of such preferences in the context of companies. The term 'practical understanding' as applied here means knowing how different generations' preferences for FWAs impact the satisfaction, productivity, and retention of employees in the workplace. Existing studies seem to address the issue of FWAs but overlook how differing age groups impact their effectiveness and use (Lambert et al., 2008). Most of the studies have focused on particular sectors such as academia or technology and have not addressed the comparison of different generations, especially in the manufacturing sector with its prescribed work schedules and traditional work models (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2017). Organizations with a multigenerational workforce must understand the demands of different generations when it comes to FWAs. For example, if younger generations, such as Gen Z and Millennials, prefer and use FWAs, firms may need to reconsider their talent management strategies. A lack of a FWA policy could limit the capacity of companies to appeal to the younger workforce, which has a negative impact on the organization's long-term success (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012). On the other hand, if older employees, such as Gen X and Baby Boomers, don't seem to be ready to accept FWAs from their employers, this raises important questions about how companies can better assist these employees, either by assisting them in adjusting to flexible working conditions or by providing other options that meet their needs and preferences. By investigating these generational differences, this research contributes to a better understanding of workforce management and help organizations design work policies that are more responsive to the diverse needs of their employees. Therefore, there is the following hypothesis:

H1: Gen Z and Millennials (ages 15-44) are more likely to use flexible work arrangements compared to Gen X and Baby Boomers (ages 45+).

2.2 Generational Diversity in the Workplace

Demographic Overview

In this research we divide the workforce in four categories: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. They have their own characteristics, values, and expectations based on their different socio-economic and technological conditions.

Baby Boomers (65 – 75 years)

The working group of Baby Boomers is declining as they retire, they only make up for a small proportion of the workforce. According to data from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), Baby Boomers represent approximately 20% of the existing workers in their age group[1]. They are often described as having high expectations and a desire to stay involved with working life (Alidoust & Bosman, 2016). Baby Boomer employees value job security and a stable work environment (Lub et al., 2012).

Generation X (45-64 years)

This generation accounts for around 80% of people working at this age[2]. Gen X are adaptable and independent in nature. They are more likely to leave a job in search of a more challenging work

[1] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/dashboard-arbeidsmarkt/werkenden/arbeidsparticipatie-naar-leeftijd-en-geslacht

[2] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/dashboard-arbeidsmarkt/werkenden/arbeidsparticipatie-naar-leeftijd-en-geslacht

environment or higher pay. Generation X, while grounded in present realities, faced a work environment that did not readily accommodate their aspirations for flexibility and adaptability (Dries et al., 2008). People in this generation are considered to have a less respect for authority. They are often reported to have difficulty dealing with disappearing boundaries between work and private life, wanting to find a good work-life balance (Lub et al., 2012).

Millennials (25-44 years)
As it stands now, millennials are the largest group in labor participation in the Netherlands with a percentage of 87% in 2024[3]. This group is characterized by a strong compatibility with technology, a preference for a collaborative working environment, and also a preference for a great work-life balance expecting their employers to give fluidity between work and play (Ng et al., 2010)

Generation Z (<25years old)
The youngest generations entering the job market starting this year contain around 75 percent of the labor participation in the Netherlands[4]. Generation Z employees are more digital who demand job security, career advancement, and flexible work arrangements. (Schroth, 2019).

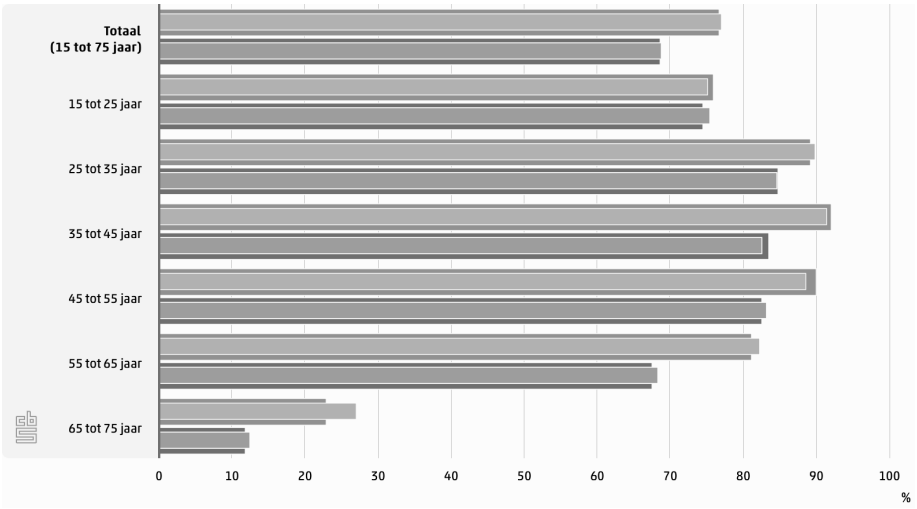

Figure 1: Work participation in the Netherlands per age group

Characteristics of Each Generation

Baby Boomers have distinctive values, work preferences and behavioral patterns. This generation tends to appreciate public recognition and professional development opportunities given by corporations (Wilson et al., 2008). In the workplace, Baby Boomers are often seen as confident people who engage in team work, collaborate with others in decision making and avoid conflicts (Walker et al., 2013). Furthermore, they show higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than Generation X and Millennials (Kee et al., 2019). They also possess a high sense of autonomy that is characterized by more individualism and higher consumer expectations compared to previous generations (Jonge et al., 2016). Baby Boomers care about work values which consist of learning new things and freedom from job pressures (Kidwell, 2003). They feel more satisfied about their jobs compared to their younger colleagues or peers (Coburn & Hall, 2014). Research has suggested that Baby Boomers report high levels of environmental concern and behaviors and are more likely to have higher levels of civic engagement through volunteering activities in retirement (Venn et al., 2015). There are also some challenges involved despite of these positive attributes. Their age hinders recruitment causing Baby Boomers not to get hired at workplace because employers believe they are very expensive labor force (Hennekam, 2015).

[3] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/dashboard-arbeidsmarkt/werkenden/arbeidsparticipatie-naar-leeftijd-en-geslacht

[4] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/dashboard-arbeidsmarkt/werkenden/arbeidsparticipatie-naar-leeftijd-en-geslacht

Generation X is also known by specific values, work preferences and behavioral patterns. Research indicates that Generation X values meaningful work assignments that align with their career aspirations (Chawla et al., 2017). They have been shown to be responsible for their job tasks and other employees, who see a strong working ethic in them (Usmani et al., 2019). Generation X also is more willing to work if motivated and supported by management (Gallo et al., 2023). Regarding work preferences Generation X has been found to lean more towards intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivations (Hee & Yi, 2023). They tend to engage themselves into their working tasks and show high levels of commitment towards their job responsibilities (Usmani et al., 2019). Generation X prefers to work in organizations where they could gain satisfaction through meaningful work assignments which match their career aspiration (Chawla et al., 2017). Behaviorally, Generation X prefers to be adaptable, independent and find good work-life balance (Usmani et al., 2019). Generation X employees like to give more importance to collaborative approaches at the workplace rather than working individually, these people value teamwork a lot (Hisel, 2020).

Next, we have *Millennials*. Millennials find meaningful work that is in line with personal or organizational value as valuable. They are understood to search for higher wages, rapid career advancement, and are more likely to change jobs until they find a match between personal and organizational values. It is important to understand the work motivations, attitudes and job outcomes of Millennials (Aboobaker et al., 2020). In terms of work preferences, Millennials also prefer intrinsic over extrinsic values. They value job satisfaction, meaningful contributions, and want to find personal fulfillment in their career (Heath et al., 2022). Millennials are also characterized by their creativity, confidence, and desire for a work-life balance (Dayanti & Yulianti, 2023). They tend to prefer a sense of purpose from their jobs over financial compensation and value social involvement and a sense of well-being at work (Gerard, 2019). Millennials are known for their technological skills, teamwork orientation, and preference for participative management, making them valuable assets in the era of organizational transformation (Camp et al., 2022)

Lastly there is *Generation Z*. This generation has been largely influenced by technology having grown up in the digital era which greatly shapes their common traits (Bulut, 2021). Generation Z prefers jobs that provide an interesting and friendly work environment, good salary, and flexible working hours (Lukić & Lazarević, 2022). They prioritize a dynamic work setting, non-monetary incentives such as opportunities for career growth, work-life balance, job security, autonomy, and openness in communication (Mahapatra et al., 2022). Generation Z tends to have idealistic ideas that the work will be entertaining, meaningful, developing, that every colleague at work will respect and consider their thoughts and ideas, not having to deal with forced working because they expect to have flexibility in schedule, and having an understanding partner (Nabahani & Riyanto, 2020). When it comes to work preferences though they value autonomy at the workplace including independence among colleagues (Aldjic & Farrell, 2022). Quality relationships with colleagues, personal goal achievement, and job enjoyment are key motivational factors for Generation Z (Septiawan & Masrunik, 2020). Lyons and Kuron (2014) argue that the perceptions and behaviors that an individual shows in the workplace are largely influenced by the societal, technological, and economically drawn influence of particular generations in their lifetime. These distinctions certainly affect the type of flexibility, which they consider important, in the workplace. Life stage theories provide further evidence for this, as an individual's focus and requirements change with age. For example, Baby Boomers on the verge of retirement favor the reducing of their workload, Generation X prefers to have a mix between work and family, while the younger age groups, Like Gen Z, focus on self-development and flexibility instead (Twenge, 2010). For companies trying to develop work policies that promote employee satisfaction and productivity, it is important to identify these generational differences and their preferences for FWAs. If there are significant differences in FWA preferences across generations, this could have important implications for how organizations attract, retain, and engage employees. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H2: The types of FWAs preferred vary significantly across different generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers).

2.3 Challenges and Opportunities of Multigenerational Workforces

Having a multigenerational workforce is both a challenge and an opportunity in terms of communication, collaboration, and management. When having multiple generations in your workforce, it can lead to certain conflicts and problems (Gürsoy et al., 2008). Generational conflict can lead to decreased productivity, employee turnover, and difficulties in knowledge transfer within the organization (Carpenter & Charon, 2014). Research has shown that generational diversity can result in dangerous workplace conflicts, as individuals from different age groups can have difficulties to understand and respect each other's perspectives and approaches to work (Tanveer et al., 2020). This conflict may hinder effective communication and collaboration with direct impacts on service delivery and the overall productivity. To solve this organizations should be more inclusive and employ flexible styles of management that consider diverse perspectives from different generations (Glass, 2007). Resistance from management is often due to fears of productivity loss, communication problems, and loss of control of the operations while working in a flexible way (Ford & Ford, 2010). For instance, this resistance manifests in delayed approvals for flexible work arrangements, little willingness to adopt policies, or inconsistent implementation across teams. If managers are not well trained or convinced of the benefits of FWAs, these beneficial arrangements stand the risk of not being used to their full potential or being completely abandoned. Organizations need to adopt flexible management practices such as reverse mentoring, flexible work roles, and self-managed teams to optimize the talents of multigenerational employees and enhance knowledge sharing (Flinchbaugh et al., 2016). It is essential that leaders cultivate an employee engagement culture across a multigenerational workforce (Hisel, 2020). Generation X is frequently seen as demonstrating an independent lifestyle and ability to adapt, but they have also been noted to preference a strong structure with formal leadership in organizations (Chawla et al., 2017). Since this generation grew up and started working in relatively more traditional workplaces, they are likely to experience more resistance from the management in relation to the adoption of FWAs. This aligns with the results which suggest that employees belonging to Generation X are more accepting of manager-initiated structural changes in the organizations (Becton et al., 2014). The hypothesis that Gen X and Baby Boomers have access to tools as a greater hindrance to the FWAs is explained by the differences in technological familiarity and comfort. Communication platforms and remote work technologies must be accessible to FWAs in order to work properly. Differences in digital literacy between generations tend to cause barriers in adoption patterns, usually placing older employees in a state of insecurity or anger. FWAs tend to restrict prompt communication within the organization. If organizations would not provide the training and resources that enable FWAs to work successfully, the anticipated benefits of FWA cannot be realized (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). Employees never want to use these options when they don't feel comfortable with the tools they are required to use. For example, the older generations perceive failing to get proper training or support as an additional burden rather than an enhancement and thus would not think that the organization can still benefit from it, which could reduce the effectiveness of FWA implementation. Baby Boomers who started their careers in a time when technology was not widely used may feel less able to utilize the technologies such as collaboration software (e.g., Microsoft Teams), virtual meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet), and remote access systems (e.g., VPNs, cloud-based project management tools) for remote working and other digital devices necessary for the FWAs (Tolbize, 2008). Likewise, even though Generation X is adopting technology to some extent, they probably do not possess the high level of technological proficiency that Millennials and Gen Z do as the these two have been immersed in the digital technologies throughout their lives (Bulut, 2021).

Understanding how different generations perceive barriers to implementing flexible work arrangements is critical for organizations aiming to design inclusive and effective workplace policies. Generational cohorts differ in their workplace experiences, technological adaptability, and expectations regarding flexibility, which can shape how they perceive and respond to workplace changes (Becton et al., 2014). Such perceptions do need to be changed because when particular generations perceive more barriers to FWAs, they are not that likely to adopt or benefit from the arrangements, hence resulting in reduced levels of employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. For example, managerial resistance can hinder the implementation of FWAs. Managerial resistance is an unwillingness on the part of managers to approve, implement, or change certain things, in this case flexible work arrangements (Catana et al.,

1999). Because Generation X occupies most of the middle-level managerial positions, their resistance to change may be partly because they often play the dual roles of being the implementors and recipients of various organizational policies (Becton et al., 2014). Having started their careers in more traditional, hierarchical workplaces (Chawla et al., 2017), Gen X employees might encounter or perceive greater opposition from upper management when advocating for or adopting flexible work practices. This perception could stem from organizational cultures that emphasize control and physical presence, especially in manufacturing settings where in-person oversight is traditionally valued (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2018).

Another critical factor affecting the ability to work successfully with FWAs is the ability to access technological tools. This barrier may be perceived as much greater by Baby Boomers and Generation X employees, simply due to the difference in technological awareness and agility. In fact, Baby Boomers began their careers at a period when the development of digital technologies was poor, so using certain technological softwares which often form the base for both remote and flexible work may make Baby Boomers feel rather uncomfortable (Tolbize, 2008). Generation X, being even more adaptive than Baby Boomers, can still remain far from the digital competences of Millennials and Gen Z, who grew up in the digital world (Bulut, 2021). Such gaps in technological knowledge may be one more barrier to working with FWAs, especially in industries that demand certain digital tools for the working process, like manufacturing (Rüßmann et al., 2015). Gaining insight into how these generational perceptions in managerial resistance and technological tool access influence FWA implementation helps organizations in formatting targeted policies that reduce such barriers. This will be important in creating an inclusive work environment within which diverse employees can engage with flexible work options that improve satisfaction, retention, and productivity. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H3: Managerial resistance is perceived as a greater barrier to FWAs among Gen X compared to Gen Z and Millennials.

H4: Gen X and Baby Boomers perceive access to tools as a greater barrier to using FWAs compared to Gen Z and Millennials.

2.4 Impact of Flexible Work Arrangements on Organizations

In this chapter, some studies are discussed on the relationship between flexible work arrangements and their impact on organizations. Several studies have investigated whether flexible working arrangements improve productivity and if so, to what extent. According to Russell et al. (2008), increased productivity is one of the benefits of reduced work hours and flexible working which lead to high employee performance rates and lower turnover levels in organizations. On the other hand, Menezes and Kelliher (2016) found that formal arrangements for flexibility over working hours were negatively associated with performance but a source of greater job satisfaction, while informal remote working arrangements had positive indirect effects on worker performance via organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Other studies such as Hashmi et al. (2021) and Bett et al. (2022), for example looked at how flexible work affected employees' perceived productivity, quality of work, organizational commitment, and job performance, with findings suggesting a positive effect on these aspects. Research by Giovanis (2018) and Sanders and Karmowska (2020) also revealed that there is significant improvement in workplace performance by increasing the number of workers who are engaged in flexible employment policies. Overall, the literature suggests that there is mostly a positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee productivity. In Lithuania, a case study was done to show how private companies and public organizations have taken up flexible work arrangements as a way of balancing work-family demands and improving efficiency in their operations. By using FWAs, these companies were able to adapt to changes in demand, lower their costs, and be more attractive for employees outside (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2018). Flexibility at work has a big influence on job satisfaction, employee engagement, and retention for different generations. Flexibility help employees to deal with certain work demands, they will reach higher job performance, since they are becoming more engaged in their jobs (Bal & De Lange, 2015). Employee engagement can be increased which also means that people will stay longer in their jobs (Richman et al., 2008). What researchers have shown with these studies is that

there are positive impacts towards the workers' engagement levels when introduced with flexible work arrangements (Marumpe et al., 2023). Both high- and low-wage workers value work flexibility in terms of work schedules, which contributes a lot to job engagement and satisfaction (Ray & Pana-Cryan, 2021). Flexible work arrangements can also have an impact on the strategy of organizations and their competitive business environment. They have an influence on the innovation behavior of employees (Jiang et al., 2023). The implementation of flexible work arrangements can lead to increased organizational agility (Arokodare & Falana, 2021).

However, there are also some contradictory studies which found out the opposite on the impact of FWAs in organizations. A key concern brought up in the literature is that it could negatively affect employees' mental wellbeing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Yeves et al. (2022) discovered that with the implementation of flexible work arrangements and telecommuting came increased work overload which affected employee's mental health via stress. Although they provide autonomy and a better work-life balance, these types of programs can also encourage anxiety among employees, especially with something that happened that quickly like what happened during this global crisis. Flexible working hours have also been found by Alsulami et al. (2022) to pose problems in the balance of work and life even though it allows employees to be in control of their lives. This study showed that employees are sometimes forced to take care of others while performing their jobs, which limits their free time and overall wellbeing. Organizational support is essential too for the effective implementation of flexible work hours. Companies need to provide sufficient assistance for their employees to make flexible work practices to be successful at all. When this assistance is lacking, disagreement to implementing or adopting these programs can arise, which has an impact on employee output and overall job satisfaction (Pramaditya & Pusparini, 2022). Supervisors have difficulties managing employees who work from home. It becomes challenging to monitor individuals who are not physically present in an office setting because there are no longer any conventional ways to keep track of what each person does at certain times (Groen et al., 2018).

For companies looking to improve the impact of their flexible work arrangements, it is very important to look into how flexible work arrangements, job satisfaction, and productivity relate across generational cohorts. Studies have indicated that FWAs generally enhance levels of job satisfaction and productivity since employees are given more autonomy and it will improve their work-life balance (Bal & De Lange, 2015; Russell et al., 2008). The security of having such benefits may not be distributed evenly across generations because of different preferences for specific kinds of FWAs (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2018). Nevertheless, the impact of flexible work arrangements on satisfaction and productivity might depend on availability and also on the match between employee preferences and actual arrangements. The more closely FWAs fit employee needs, such as flexible hours for autonomy or phased retirement for older workers, the more satisfied they are with their jobs and productive while working (Bal & De Lange, 2015). On the other hand, if expectations and reality clash, dissatisfaction and lowered levels of motivation could set in. For example, an employee's wish for part-time work becomes a source of frustration if that schedule is somehow unavailable to him or her. While a good number of research articles have outlined the positive impacts that FWAs usually have on work outcomes (Russell et al., 2008), the role of alignment in these outcomes remains less explored. This research will examine the way FWAs, in combination with generational differences, might account for different satisfaction and productivity levels, with also researching the role of preferences in FWAs with the alignment of their actual use have different impacts.

The effectiveness of the FWAs does not only revolve around their existence but more around its fit to employee preferences. The more such arrangements are tailored to these preferences, the more they tend to be associated with improved job satisfaction and productivity across generations. Therefore, a preference-use alignment variable would be created, reflecting the difference between the preferred FWAs by the employees and the FWAs they actually use. This variable would be one of the dependent variables for a linear regression analysis focusing on job satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H5: Workers who use FWAs that align with their preferences report higher job satisfaction than those who do not, across all generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers).

H6: Workers who use FWAs that align with their preferences report higher productivity levels than those who do not, across all generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will describe the research design and methodology that was used to study how flexible work arrangements are perceived by different generations at Droste Bejah, as well as their popularity and influence. It includes a description of the mixed-methods approach employed, the study framework, the variables and hypotheses, the sample size, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

This research focuses on Droste Bejah, a leading company in the metalworking industry, to explore the impact of FWAs on job satisfaction and well-being across different generations of employees. Droste Bejah was established in Hardenberg in 1948 as a small local blacksmith shop but has since grown into an international supplier specializing in custom metal products. Over the years under Droste family management, it has continuously upgraded its systems with tube bending, welding laser cutting and stamping being its main operations. Utilizing modern CNC machines for precision and quality control, the company serves various OEM clients from across both national and international borders. Customer satisfaction, efficiency and partnership are important to Droste Bejah. The company, like many others in the manufacturing industry, has problems such as high staff turnover rates and different job satisfaction levels amongst employees. These problems are also caused by the diverse generational structure of its workforce, which includes both younger employees and older employees approaching retirement.

The research is closely related to the company's strategic goals which are growth, innovation and maintaining a satisfied workforce. Droste Bejah wants to foster a culture of continuous improvement and well-being among employees by investigating how FWAs can be customized for different age groups. This aligns with the company's broader objectives of sustaining its competitive edge and ensuring long-term success. This study research is to find out what types of flexible work arrangements are favored by different generations within Droste Bejah as well as look into their effects on job satisfaction levels and their perception of productivity. By narrowing down on Droste Bejah itself, this research offers practical recommendations that could help improve HR practice within the company while also supporting its strategic direction.

3.1 Research Design

This research uses a mixed-methods design by using quantitative and qualitative research methods. Using the mixed-methods design is suitable because it helps answer this research question by considering all sides of popularity and impact of flexible work arrangements on different generations at Droste Bejah. With this approach, researchers can collect, evaluate, and integrate data from many sources to gain a deeper understanding of the study (Farquhar et al., 2013). This paper can then give a more detailed, complex understanding of what is being studied, achieving both breadth and depth of insights (Arifin & Razali, 2022). The quantitative research will involve structured survey with the employees in the company. This study has mostly closed-ended questions and uses a Likert scale so individuals can rate their experiences. This numerical data will then be analyzed using statistical methods, which help to see if there are any patterns or trends in terms of how flexible work arrangements are used or perceived across generations at Droste Bejah. Conducting surveys is an efficient way to gather information from large groups of people, which means an increasing sample size is necessary for generalization (Dzul et al., 2012). In the qualitative part of this research study also open-ended questions are asked to the employees. This allows for the collection of more detailed descriptions about personal experiences with flexible working arrangements which gives more context behind what individuals think works best based on their own situation. A mixed-methods approach is chosen because it helps

overcome some limitations which are with single methods designs. Qualitative study gives a broader view of the topic while more quantitative approach narrows down to specific information, providing good understanding about the subject and giving more room for generalization (Morse, 2010).

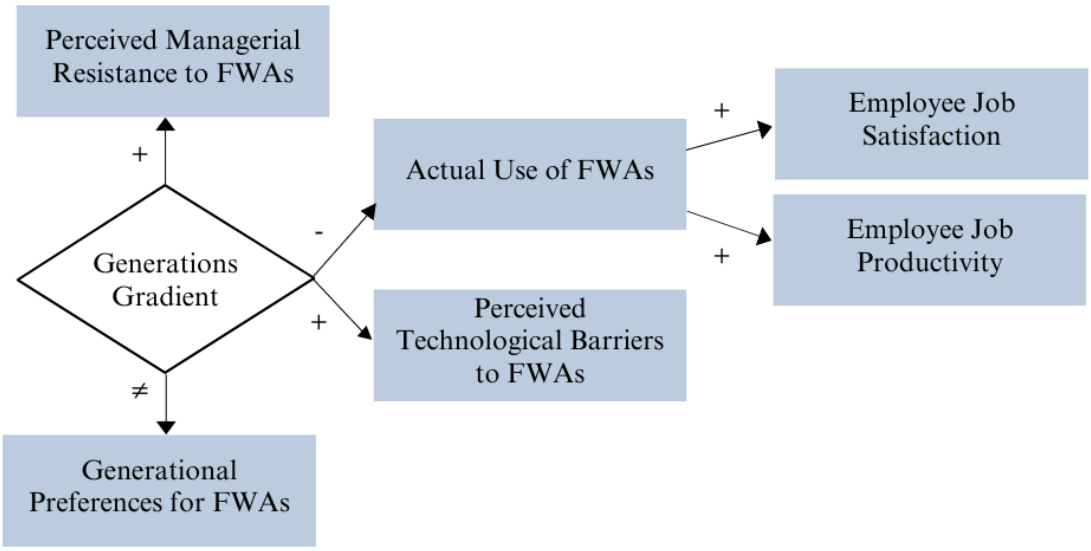

Figure 2: Research Model

This research model was built to investigate the effects of various flexible working arrangements on important job-related outcomes at Droste Bejah, with a particular emphasis on the differences in these impacts across age groups. The ultimate aim is to determine how these arrangements will eventually help to optimize workforce management, resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction among employees, enhanced productivity, and improved performance throughout Droste Bejah.

This is a model showing how generational differences, a function of the Generations Gradient, influence the perceptions, use, and outcomes of FWAs. The model describes how different generations experience and engage in FWAs and how this engagement further affects the outcome regarding organizational outcomes like job satisfaction and productivity among employees.

Generations Gradient:
The Generations Gradient is a variable showing age-related differences across generational cohorts moving from the youngest to the oldest workers in the workforce. This gradient could influence multiple factors that shape the adoption and effectiveness of FWAs.

Perceived Managerial Resistance to FWAs (+):
It can be expected that older generations would perceive greater managerial resistance to implementing FWAs, as they are more or less used to the traditional structures of work. With age, the perception of an increase in managerial resistance to FWAs strengthens, thus showing a positive relationship.

Perceived Technological Barriers to FWAs (+):
Older employees also tend to perceive more technological barriers toward adopting FWAs, such as having problems operating remote work tools or digital platforms. It thus follows that there is a positive relationship between age and perception of technology barriers.

Actual Use of FWAs (−):
Younger generations are hypothesized to utilize FWAs more than older generations. This negative association is based on the belief that the role in the organization constrains the adoption of FWAs by the older worker, or they have a resistance to change.

Generational Preferences for FWAs (≠):
Preference for FWAs is assumed to differ significantly across generations. While younger workers will likely desire the availability of flexible hours and or possibility of working from home, phased retirement or a structured flexibility will be relevant to the older employee. The ≠ sign suggests variation, not a directional relationship.

Impacting Employee Job Satisfaction and Productivity (+):
Actual FWAs used is positively related to employee job satisfaction and productivity. If employees are enabled to adapt work schedules to meet their personal needs, this is expected to bring increased job satisfaction and lead to better employee performance.

3.2 Data Collection Method

In order to collect data for this research, the primary method is a structured survey that was made specifically to gather in-depth information about the usage and understanding of flexible work arrangements across generations at Droste Bejah. This survey aims to find out how popular different kinds of FWAs are, what each generation prefers and how it impacts job satisfaction as well as their perception of productivity.

The survey is divided into multiple sections which include demographic information, current working arrangement, preference towards FWA's, benefits and barriers faced while using them, effect on job satisfaction and productivity levels, awareness of policies related to FWA's and also some open-ended questions.

Demographic Information
What is your age group?
- 15–25 (Gen Z)
- 26–44 (Millennials)
- 45–64 (Gen X)
- 65+ (Baby Boomers)

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/Other

Which department do you work in?
- Procurement, Sales, HR, Production (incl. assembly, welding, etc.), Logistics, Quality Control, Finance, Technical Service, Work Preparation & Engineering, Management

How many years have you worked at Droste Bejah?
- 0–2, 3–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21+

What type of contract do you have?
- Permanent Contract, Temporary Contract, Agency Work, Internship

Source: (Twenge, 2023)
Scale: Categorical

Current Work Arrangements
Do you currently use flexible work arrangements (FWAs)?
- Yes / No

If yes, which FWAs do you use? (Select all that apply)
- Flexible Hours (Employees choose their own working hours within set limits)
- Remote Work (Employees work partly or fully from home)
- Part-time Work (Employees work fewer hours than a full-time schedule)
- Compressed Workweek (Working longer days to work fewer days, e.g., 40 hours in 4 days)
- Job Sharing (Two employees share one full-time role)
- Phased Retirement (Gradual reduction of work hours approaching retirement)

- Extra Leave (More vacation days or longer holidays)

Source: (Berkery et al., 2017)
Scale: Dichotomous (Yes/No) and Multiple Choice

Preferences Towards Flexible Work Arrangements
How interested are you in the following types of FWAs?

- Flexible Hours
- Remote Work
- Part-time Work
- Compressed Workweek
- Job Sharing
- Phased Retirement
- Extra Leave

Source: (Twenge, 2010)
Scale: 1 = Not interested at all to 7 = Very interested

Benefits And Barriers Of FWAs
What benefits do you associate with FWAs? (Select all that apply)

- Improved work-life balance
- Higher productivity
- Less stress
- More control over personal time
- Increased job satisfaction

What barriers do you perceive for implementing FWAs at Droste Bejah? (Select all that apply)

- The nature of the work requires physical presence
- Lack of technology/resources
- Managerial resistance
- Colleague resistance
- Lack of clear policies
- Decreased productivity

Source: (Becton et al., 2014)
Scale: Multiple choice

Effects of FWA's on Job Satisfaction and Productivity
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your work?

- Communication within the company
- Ability to manage your own time
- Overall job satisfaction
- Flexibility of your work schedule

Scale: 1 = Very dissatisfied to 7 = Very satisfied

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- I can maintain a good work-life balance.
- I experience little work-life conflict.
- I have enough control over my time for family and personal obligations.

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree

How would you rate your performance in terms of the following aspects?

- I am able to efficiently complete the core tasks of my job
- I make a positive contribution to the overall team or organization
- I can adapt well to changes at work

Scale: 1 = Very negative, 7 = Very positive
Source: (Bal & De Lange, 2015)

Awareness of FWA Policies
How familiar are you with the flexible work arrangements currently offered at Droste Bejah?

Scale: 1 = Not familiar at all to 7 = Very familiar

Open-Ended Questions
- Do you have suggestions for how Droste Bejah can better implement or improve FWAs?
- Would you like to share any additional thoughts on FWAs at Droste Bejah?

It is important to have a well-designed sampling strategy so that the results of the survey will represent the most of the workforce of Droste Bejah (Kelley et al., 2003). The aim is to get responses from at least 90% of the workforce selected across different age numbers and departments.

Every employee will be involved directly by using an internal communication channel like the company's intranet. They are given explicit instructions together with an assurance on confidentiality in order to motivate them take part in the survey. Anonymity will be maintained during the survey for the reason of encouraging honest responses from participants. All individuals will remain anonymous when responding and making them feel free to give their true opinions about various aspects within the organization. Attempts were made to involve workers from all units which will enable capturing diverse views as well as experiences towards the company.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

For this research the statistical software SPSS is used, this is a statistical software that has an interface which is easy to use and it has strong statistical capabilities. The descriptive statistics part of the analysis will provide information about demographic characteristics of survey respondents as well as closed-ended questions responses such as means, medians, standard deviations, frequency distributions, in order to have an overview of the sample features and overall patterns in data.

Multiple regression analysis is conducted to examine relationships between independent and dependent variables, compared with different generations. This allows different types of flexible working arrangements to be compared against each outcome while controlling for other factors and showing which ones have more significant impacts over others. In addition, ANOVA will compare means differences in the perceived benefits, barriers, job satisfaction and productivity across various generational cohorts. ANOVA can help establish if there are any statistically significant age group variations among these measures. A chi-square test will also be performed, a chi-square test is a statistical significance test to find association between categorical variables based on observed and expected data to check if observed differences happened by chance or as a true relationship (Curtis & Youngquist, 2013). These statistical techniques are great because they allow detailed examination of the relationship between several variables within different groups based on the collected information. Thematic analysis will be used to analyze qualitative data collected from open-ended survey. This involves identifying themes or patterns within data by closely reading through the collected answers for recurring ideas or phrases. A systematic approach is then done where these responses are put systematically under various categories to bring out relevant themes that best show the participants' views about the specific topic. In order to make the findings more valid and reliable, the outcomes of the quantitative study will be compared against themes identified in qualitative research. This step can confirm such outcomes using both numeric information and narrative insights.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this section, the quantitative findings from the survey are presented. The aim of the study was to determine whether or not there were differences based on generational expectations with respect to work related flexibility demands in a manufacturing environment and whether this expectancy affected job satisfaction, productivity and perceived costs and benefits. The analysis of data comprises both descriptive and inferential statistics in order to establish some meaningful relationships and variations within the parameters of the various age cohorts. For ease of comprehension, results are given according to topics, demography of the respondents in the first section, and the rest of the main research areas. Tables and figures are employed to enhance clarity and give the reader a complete picture of the findings.

4.1 Overview of Data and Participant Demographics

Generational Distribution

Based on their ages, respondents have been classified into four generations, namely Generation Z (15–25 years), Millennials (26–44 years), Generation X (45–64 years), and Baby Boomers (65 and above). The age group of respondents was in the categories shown in table 1. In the sample, the largest group is Generation X – as many as 44% of the respondents belong to this group, followed by 36% of the sample that are Millennials. 16% of the sample are from Generation Z while only 3% of the sample are Baby Boomers.

This distribution highlights a predominantly mid-career workforce with Generation X and Millennials accounting for like 80% of the sample. However, in this case, Generation Z members are relatively less represented in the sample while Baby Boomers hardly appear in the sample. There were two non-responses on the age variable which were equivalent to 3.2% of the sample. Coming from a small amount of data, it is acknowledged here for assurance purposes.

Generation	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Gen Z	10	15.9	16.4	16.4
Millennials	22	34.9	36.1	52.5
Gen X	27	42.9	44.3	96.7
Baby Boomers	2	3.2	3.3	100.0
Total (Valid)	61	96.8	100.0	
Missing (System)	2	3.2		
Total	63	100.0		

Table 1: Generational Distribution

Gender Representation

The survey data set contains gender in three categories: male, female and other. As seen in table 2, out of the total respondents, most of them categorized themselves as males, 66.7% of valid responses, while of the sample, the female respondents constituted a smaller percentage 25.4% of the sample. Furthermore, 3.2% of the respondents chose the gender identity category that ‘neither’ describes them. Three responses were missing from the gender variable, this made about 4.8 percent of all respondents. This missing data is of value in respect of the complete data set but does not alter the general gender mix in any significant way.

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
No Response	3	4.8	4.8	4.8
Neither	2	3.2	3.2	7.9
Male	42	66.7	66.7	74.6
Female	16	25.4	25.4	100.0
Total	63	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Gender Representation

Department Representation

The respondents are from different areas of the organizational structure. The distribution of the departments is highlighted in table 3. The majority of the respondents work in Production activities (assembly, welding, etc.) which constitutes 50.8% of the valid responses. Work preparation & engineering and Sales also stand out with 11.1% and 6.3% of the workforce, respectively.

Department	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
HR (Human Resources)	2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Procurement	1	1.6	1.6	4.8
Quality Control	2	3.2	3.2	7.9
Logistics	3	4.8	4.8	12.7
Management	3	4.8	4.8	17.5
Production (incl. assembly, welding, etc.)	32	50.8	50.8	68.3
Technical Service (Maintenance)	2	3.2	3.2	71.5
Sales	4	6.3	6.3	77.8
Work Preparation & Engineering	7	11.1	11.1	88.9
Total	63	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Department Representation

Years of Service

The survey sent to the respondents showed a range of service seniority, from novices of 0-2 years in the organization to veteran employees of twenty-one years and above. The largest group which are the workers with 3-5 years at the company existed of 30.2%. Also, the second largest group, a number of respondents which stands at 25.4% served the organization for 0-2 years suggesting that this part of the organization is composed of a good number of younger employees. 6-10 years of employees account for 14.3% while 14.3% of those who answered the survey had been in the organization for over 21 years.

Years of Service	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
0–2 years	16	25.4	25.4	27.0
3–5 years	19	30.2	30.2	57.2
6–10 years	9	14.3	14.3	71.5
11–15 years	7	11.1	11.1	82.6
16–20 years	2	3.2	3.2	85.7
21+ years	9	14.3	14.3	100.0
Total	63	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Year of Service

This demographic overview offers a good starting point for the analysis of preferences for FWAs. By having members of different generations, departments and experience, it is possible to gain the understanding of how flexible work arrangements can be designed to suit the interests of different employee segments within the company.

4.2 Interest and Current Use of Flexible Work Arrangements by Generation

The section investigates the current application of FWAs by employees and their willingness to utilize various types of FWAs. By looking at both the level of current use and the level of interest, this section attempts to highlight possible differences between the existing opportunities and the employees' needs that could inform about how the organizational policies with regard to flexible work might be made in the future.

Current Use of Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements are not widely adopted in the organization as shown in table 3 as only 24.2 % of the respondents (15 employees) utilizes any form of FWA. This suggests that the implementation of FWAs across the organization is still at the beginning stage or the current arrangement fails to meet the aspirations of the employees.

Of the workers who do use FWA's:

- Flexible hours are most common among participants in the study since 12.9 % of all the respondents (53.3 % of FWA users) reported employing this arrangement. This indeed suggests that there are decent levels among those that use flexible working of a desire to manage their own work time even though the flexibility afforded is limited.

- The second most popular FWA was being part time which was employed by 9.7% of the respondents or 40% of the FWA users. This indicates that there is some element of a desire to work lesser hours a situation that may serve the needs of employees who have to integrate family and work responsibilities.

- The percentage of FWA users who currently work from home is only 6.7 % which can be attributed as the least common form of using FWA confirming the least flexible work arrangement used of all the respondents being 1.6%.

Which FWAs do you use?	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent(%)
Flexible Hours	8	12.9	53.3	53.3
Part-time Work	6	9.7	40.0	93.3
Remote Work	1	1.6	6.7	100.0
Missing	47	75.8		
Total	63	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Current FWA users

The interests of the current users of FWAs have also been researched. This part analyzes the interest of employees who use certain flexible work arrangements within the company in other such arrangements. Mean interest scores and standard deviations for each type of FWA are presented in Table 6 and were rated on a 7-point ordinal scale whereby 1 stands for Not Interested and 7 for Very Interested.

These findings reveal interesting gaps between actual use and expressed interest in various types of FWAs. With a 12.9% current score from the survey respondents, Flexible Hours is the most used FWA feature, existing from 53.3% of the FWA users. The mean interest score for Flexible Hours is 4.50 (SD = 2.14), suggesting a good level of interest yet this demand is barely met. In contrast, Part-Time Work is used by only 9.7% of respondents (40% of FWA users), yet it holds the highest mean interest rating of 4.77 (SD = 2.62). This indicates a big gap in utilization and interest whereby a high level of interest is unable to meet current availability of this FWA. Respondents reported Remote Work as hardly utilized at 1.6% of the workers use it, but the average interest score of 3.64 (SD = 2.42) suggests a substantial part of the workforce could be interested in this arrangement if it was more widely available. A similar story applies to Compressed Workweeks, which are completely unused, even though the mean interest score there is 3.55 (SD = 2.16). These gaps between actual use and interest indicate that perhaps some FWAs, such as Part-Time Work and Remote Work, are actually underused compared to employee interest. Working on closing these gaps could allow Droste Bejah to fit its FWA schemes more in line with the interest of its multigenerational workforce.

Flexible Work Arrangement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Flexible Hours	4.500	2.139	1.000	7.000
Remote Work	3.636	2.420	1.000	7.000
Part-time Work	4.769	2.619	1.000	7.000
Compressed Workweek	3.545	2.162	1.000	7.000
Job Sharing	2.364	1.629	1.000	6.000
Phased Retirement	2.167	1.850	1.000	6.000

Table 6: Current FWA users' interests

4.3 Satisfaction with Job Aspects Related to FWAs

This section examines employee satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs, particularly those related to FWAs. Key job satisfaction variables include satisfaction with work schedule flexibility, satisfaction with the communication within the company, overall job satisfaction, and the ability to decide their own time. For each satisfaction variable, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. It's important to mark that the Baby Boomer sample had only two respondents (n = 2), which considerably restricts the generalizability and reliability of the findings associated with this group. Table 7 summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations for these variables across generational groups.

Generations	Satisfaction with the Communication in the Company	Satisfaction with Ability to Decide Own Time	Overall Job Satisfaction	Satisfaction with Work Schedule Flexibility
Gen Z	Mean: 5.00 N: 8 SD: 1.414	Mean: 5.38 SD: 0.916	Mean: 5.87 SD: 0.991	Mean: 5.00 SD: 1.195
Millennials	Mean: 3.82 N: 22 SD: 1.842	Mean: 5.00 SD: 1.549	Mean: 5.71 SD: 1.146	Mean: 5.33 SD: 1.426
Gen X	Mean: 3.31 N: 26 SD: 1.436	Mean: 5.27 SD: 1.511	Mean: 5.68 SD: 1.406	Mean: 5.20 SD: 1.581
Baby Boomers	Mean: 3.00 N: 2 SD: 0.000	Mean: 7.00 SD: 0.000	Mean: 7.00 SD: 0.000	Mean: 7.00 SD: 0.000
Total	Mean: 3.72 N: 58 SD: 1.652	Mean: 5.25 SD: 1.455	Mean: 5.77 SD: 1.236	Mean: 5.29 SD: 1.461

Table 7: Job Aspects Related to FWAs

Looking at Table 7, it presents the satisfaction measures for the four job-related domains for four generations groups which are Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X and the Baby Boomers.

Satisfaction Towards Work Schedule Flexibility

As a whole, employees were moderately satisfied with work schedule flexibility (M = 5.29, SD = 1.46). The Millennials showed a high level of satisfaction (M = 5.33, SD = 1.43) and this was followed by Generation Zs (M = 5.00, SD = 1.20) and Generation Xs who had (M = 5.20, SD = 1.58) respectively. Baby Boomers (n = 2) scored the highest on this metric (M = 7.00). The statistical analysis involving one-way ANOVA indicated that there are not any meaningful changes with regards to the satisfaction with work schedule flexibility across generations ($F(3, 55) = 1.059$, $p = .374$). This means that there are not significant differences between the groups in terms of satisfaction towards work schedule flexibility.

Generation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gen Z	8	5.00	1.195
Millennials	21	5.33	1.426
Gen X	25	5.20	1.581
Baby Boomers	2	7.00	0.000
Total	56	5.29	1.461

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction with Work Schedule Flexibility Across Generations

Satisfaction with Communication In the Organization

In terms of satisfaction with communication, those figures shown more variability (M = 3.72, SD = 1.65). Generation Z (M = 5.00, SD = 1.41) had way higher results in terms of satisfaction levels than the Millennials (M = 3.82, SD = 1.84) and Generation X (M = 3.31, SD = 1.44). The Baby Boomers respondents that answered the question reported the lowest levels of satisfaction (M = 3.00). Since the

one way ANOVA did not establish a pattern of statistical difference across the generations ($F(3, 57) = 2.47$, $p = .074$), we can say that satisfaction with communication in the organization does not differ across the generations.

Generation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gen Z	8	5.00	1.414
Millennials	22	3.82	1.842
Gen X	26	3.31	1.436
Baby Boomers	2	3.00	0.000
Total	58	3.72	1.652

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction with Communication within the Company Across Generations

Overall Job Satisfaction

There was an overall job satisfaction which was comparatively higher for the different groups that were interviewed (M=5.77, SD=1.24). Very high satisfaction level (M=5.88, SD=0.99) was reported by Gen Z respondents with satisfaction levels for Millennials (M=5.71, SD=1.15) and Gen X (M=5.68, SD=1.41) not far behind in the rankings. Once more, Baby Boomers had the largest possible score with (M=7.00). The one way ANOVA analysis regarding cumulative job satisfaction among the respondents did not produce significant outcomes ($F(3, 55) = 0.73$, $p = 0.54$). We can conclude that there are not signification differences in terms of overall job satisfaction across generational groups.

Generation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gen Z	8	5.88	0.991
Millennials	21	5.71	1.146
Gen X	25	5.68	1.406
Baby Boomers	2	7.00	0.000
Total	56	5.77	1.236

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics for Overall Job Satisfaction Across Generations

Satisfaction with Ability to Decide Own Time

Employees on their end have shown good satisfaction levels, but it was more moderate regarding the ability to decide own time (M=5.25, SD=1.46). Millennials satisfaction was slightly lower (M = 5.00, SD 1.55) in comparison to Generation Z (M = 5.38, SD = 0.92) and Generation X (M = 5.27, SD = 1.51) which was placed slightly lower. The Baby Boomers respondent scored the highest (M = 7.00). One way ANOVAs did not indicate a significant difference in satisfaction of the employees with the ability to decide their own time ($F(3, 56) = 1.21$, $p = 0.32$).

Generation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gen Z	8	5.38	0.916
Millennials	21	5.00	1.549
Gen X	26	5.27	1.511
Baby Boomers	2	7.00	0.000
Total	57	5.25	1.455

Table 11: Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction with Ability to Decide Own Time Across Generations

4.4 Current Usage of Flexible Work Arrangements Between Younger and Older Generations (H1)

The first hypothesis (H1) is that the younger generations, Gen Z and Millennials (15-44 years of age), are more inclined towards the preference and the use of flexible work arrangements as compared to older generations, Gen X and Baby Boomers (45 years and older). A chi-square test for independence was carried out to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the two categorical generational groups and FWA usage. The usage of FWA was defined in the following categories: 0 for employees that do not use FWAs, and 1 for employees that use FWAs. The cross-tabulation of generational groups and FWA usage provided valuable insights into generational differences in FWA adoption. For instance, with the younger generation between the ages of 15 and 44 years old, about 18.8% of those individuals reported using FWAs with the majority, 81.3%, not using the arrangements. In contrast, amongst the older generation 27.6% used FWAs with 72.4% not using them. These results indicate that the use of FWAs is most likely to be adopted by older generation users. As for the group of employees who indicated that they used FWAs, 42.9 % belonged to the younger generation whereas 57.1% belonged to the older generation. This distribution evidence shows that older groups of generations are more of the users of FWAs than those of the younger generation groups in this study, despite their lesser representation of the total sample. A chi-square test for independence was used to examine the association between different categorical generations and the use of FWA. The results indicated that this relationship was statistically insignificant, $\chi^2(1, N = 61) = 0.672$, $p = 0.412$. The implication of this finding is that there are no generational group differences for the use of FWA. The row percentages provide support for this conclusion.

Generations Group	**FWA Usage: No (0)**	**FWA Usage: Yes (1)**	**Total**
Younger Generation	Count: 26	Count: 6	**32**
	81.3% within Generation Group	18.8% within Generation Group	100.0%
	55.3% within FWA Usage	42.9% within FWA Usage	52.5%
Older Generation	Count: 21	Count: 8	**29**
	72.4% within Generation Group	27.6% within Generation Group	100.0%
	44.7% within FWA Usage	57.1% within FWA Usage	47.5%
Total	**Count: 47**	**Count: 14**	**61**
	77.0% within Generation Group	23.0% within Generation Group	100.0%
	100.0% within FWA Usage	100.0% within FWA Usage	100.0%

Table 12: FWA Usage between Younger and Older Generations

4.5 Preference for Flexible Work Arrangements Across Generations (H2)

This section examines the hypothesis (H2) that there is a significant variation across generations in the kinds of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) that individuals prefer: Gen Z (15–25), Millennials (26–44), Gen X (45–64), and Baby Boomers (65 and older). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the generational differences in preference for each of the seven types of FWAs: flexible hours, remote work, part-time work, job sharing, compressed workweek, phased retirement, and extra holidays. Table 13 shows means and standard deviations of preference scores for each of these FWAs for each generation.

Preference was rated on a binary scale, with a mean closer to 1 indicating greater preference for the FWA and a mean closer to 0 reflecting little or no preference for it. Findings for each of these FWAs are elaborated in the next section.

FWA Type	Generations	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Flexible Hours	Gen Z	0.6000	0.51640	10
	Gen X	0.3704	0.49210	27
Remote Work	Millennials	0.1364	0.35125	22
	Gen Z	0.1000	0.31623	10
Part-Time Work	Millennials	0.0909	0.29424	22
	Gen X	0.0741	0.26688	27
Job Sharing	Millennials	0.0909	0.29424	22
	(None)	0.0000	0.00000	—
Compressed Workweek	Gen Z	0.4000	0.51640	10
	Millennials	0.3636	0.49237	22
Phased Retirement	Baby Boomers	1.0000	0.00000	2
	Gen X	0.2222	0.42366	27
Extra Holiday	Gen Z	0.3000	0.48305	10
	Millennials	0.2273	0.42893	22

Table 13: Top Two Generational Preferences for Each FWA

To better understand how the generations varied in FWA preference, ANOVAs on each of the arrangements were carried out. The results below show interesting differences and trends in preferences across generations.

Phased Retirement

The preference for Phased Retirement was significantly different among the generations ($F(3, 57) = 4.605$, $p = 0.006$, Partial Eta Squared = 0.195). There was a clear focus for Baby Boomers to have a strong preference towards this form of arrangement, with a mean preference of 1.000 which indicates the total interest by the entire group. However, the younger generations had lower levels of enthusiasm toward Phased Retirement with mean of 0.000 for Gen Z, 0.136 for Millennials and 0.222 for Generation X. This result demonstrates clearly that there is a life stage driven preference with those of the Baby Boomers generation getting closer to retirement age wanting to have options to scale down their work involvements slowly.

Flexible Hours

preferences for Flexible Hours did not vary significantly across generations ($F(3, 57) = 1.212$, $p = 0.314$, Partial Eta Squared = 0.060). However, it was noted that Gen Z showed the highest preference towards Flexible Hours with a mean of 0.600 while Gen X and Millennials had a mean of 0.370 and 0.318 respectively. Baby Boomers showed no interest (Mean = 0.000). This trend, whilst not statistically significant, indicates that Flexible Hours may particularly appeal to younger employees who desire more control over when they work.

Compressed Workweek

The test for Compressed Workweek as a preference also demonstrated no statistically significant generational differences ($F(3, 57) = 0.608$, $p = 0.612$, Partial Eta Squared = 0.031). In this case, the younger cohorts of Gen Z (Mean = 0.400) and Millennials (Mean = 0.363) exhibited greater interest than Gen X with 0.259 and the Baby Boomers with 0.000. Although this was not significant, it shows other evidence indicating a growing approach among young workers towards flexible working hours in order to achieve a better work-life balance.

Extra Holidays
The preference for Extra Holidays also did not get significant results ($F(3, 57) = 0.850$, $p = 0.472$, Partial Eta Squared = 0.043) with Gen Z ranking the highest (Mean = 0.300) after which are the Millennials (Mean = 0.227) and Gen X (Mean = 0.111). Baby Boomers again showed no interest (Mean = 0.000). These findings suggest that younger employees might prefer to take more time off so as to achieve a better work-life balance.

Other FWAs
There is no evidence of a generational bias in the case of Remote Work Preference ($F(3, 57)= 0.239$ $p= 0.869$), Part-time Work ($F(3, 57)= 0.350$ $p= 0.789$) and Job Sharing ($F(3, 57)= 1.215$ $p= 0.313$). More specifically, these FWAs can be said to have been in general, relatively least popular FWA across all the generations with most means falling below 0.100.

The assumption that FWA preferences differ immensely across generations (H2) is supported to some extent. While most FWAs did not show statistically significant generational differences, Phased Retirement emerged as an exception as Baby Boomers significantly preferred it more than younger generations. Also, descriptive trends portray that Gen Z does relatively carry the most interest in most FWAs. For example, Gen Z had the highest preference for Flexible Hours, Compressed Work week and Extra Holidays which points out that younger employees value the ability to be flexible and manage their time well.

These findings highlight the reality of designing FWA policies that will cater for the varying needs of a multigenerational workforce. For their part, Baby Boomers appear to get considerable benefits when they use transition alternatives such as Phased Retirement, while Gen Z as well as Millennials will probably favor flexible hours and more time off. These generational issues need to be taken into account by managers in order to maximize employee satisfaction and productivity.

4.6 Managerial Resistance as a Barrier to FWAs (H3)

The analysis of how different generations along the whole sample examine the perception of managerial resistance as a barrier to the implementation of flexible working arrangements across different age cohorts was done to see whether there were significant differences. The analysis focused on four generations again: Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers. While descriptive statistics extend their first views, ANOVA analyses bring them a deeper look at the possible generational differences.

From the descriptive statistics (Table 14), it can be seen that differences exist in the perception of managerial resistance across generations, with Millennials scoring the highest mean score across all cohorts. Millennials attained a mean score of 0.27 (SD = 0.45) which is the highest score of the managerial resistance as a barrier for FWAs adoption. The Generation Z cohort had a mean score of 0.20 (SD = 0.42), even though they view managerial resistance to be an obstacle, it is not as high a problem as it is among the Millennials. A much lower mean score of 0.07 (SD = 0.27) was returned by Generation X respondents indicating that they perceive that there is little or no likelihood of any managerial resistance being that much of a barrier. Baby Boomers reported a mean score of 0.00 (SD = 0.00), indicating no perception of managerial resistance among the two respondents in this cohort. These generational patterns emphasize the situation of the Millennials who are the group most likely to see managers as barriers to the implementation of FWAs, whereas the Baby Boomers and Gen X seem to be the least troubled by this.

In order to determine if these differences between the generations in how managerial resistance was perceive were statistically tested, a one way ANOVA was performed. $F(3, 57) = 1.325$, $p = 0.275$ were the results of the analysis and they indicated that the differences observed were not significant. Hence, data did not sufficiently support the hypothesis that there were generational differences in perceptions of managerial resistance among the wider population.

4.7 Access to Technological Tools as a Barrier to FWAs (H4)

To explore whether generational differences exist between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers, the perception of the lack of technological tools as an obstacle to the adoption of flexible work arrangements was examined across generations. Descriptive statistics seem to indicate a few variations, but an inferential analysis focuses on more detailed generational differences.

According to descriptive statistics (Table 14), there is some variation among generations regarding the views concerning technological tool access as a barrier. The lowest mean score was reported by the Millennials, M = 0.045, SD = 0.21, indicating that for them this issue is not so much a problem in comparison to other generations. Gen X follows with a higher mean M = 0.19, SD = 0.40. Generation Z scored the highest mean M = 0.20 (SD = 0.42) and Baby Boomers the lowest M = 0.00 (SD = 0.00) indicating that even though they only had two respondents, they perceived this barrier in no sense.

A one-way ANOVA was done to test whether these generational perceived technological barriers were statistically significant. Results suggested there were no significant differences between generations ($F(3, 57) = 0.924$, $p = 0.435$), suggesting that perceived access to technological tools does not vary significantly by generation.

Generations	Physical Presence	Lack of Technology/ Tools	Managerial Resistance	Colleague Resistance	Lack of Policy/ Guidelines	Perceived Lower Productivity
Gen Z	**Mean**: 0.3000	**Mean**: 0.2000	**Mean**: 0.2000	**Mean**: 0.3000	**Mean**: 0.2000	**Mean**: 0.1000
	SD: 0.48305	**SD**: 0.42164	**SD**: 0.42164	**SD**: 0.48305	**SD**: 0.42164	**SD**: 0.31623
Millennials	**Mean**: 0.6364	**Mean**: 0.0455	**Mean**: 0.2727	**Mean**: 0.1818	**Mean**: 0.5000	**Mean**: 0.2273
	SD: 0.49237	**SD**: 0.21320	**SD**: 0.45584	**SD**: 0.39477	**SD**: 0.51177	**SD**: 0.42893
Gen X	**Mean**: 0.4815	**Mean**: 0.1852	**Mean**: 0.0741	**Mean**: 0.1852	**Mean**: 0.4444	**Mean**: 0.0741
	SD: 0.50918	**SD**: 0.39585	**SD**: 0.26688	**SD**: 0.39585	**SD**: 0.50637	**SD**: 0.26688
Baby Boomers	**Mean**: 1.0000	**Mean**: 0.0000	**Mean**: 0.0000	**Mean**: 0.0000	**Mean**: 0.0000	**Mean**: 0.0000
	SD: 0.00000	**SD**: 0.00000	**SD**: 0.00000	**SD**: 0.00000	**SD**: 0.00000	**SD**: 0.00000
Total	**Mean**: 0.5246	**Mean**: 0.1311	**Mean**: 0.1639	**Mean**: 0.1967	**Mean**: 0.4426	**Mean**: 0.1311
	SD: 0.50354	**SD**: 0.34036	**SD**: 0.37329	**SD**: 0.40082	**SD**: 0.50082	**SD**: 0.34036

Table 14: Perceived Barriers to FWAs per Generation

The most noticeable barriers were physical presence and absence of well-defined policies. The most impacted generation was Generation X and the Millennials. As they were also at the top of both of these barriers. For physical presence, Millennials (M = 0.64, SD = 0.49) and Generation X (M = 0.48, SD = 0.51) raised greatest issues, thus the usual procedure of working at the company location seemed to be a problem among these age cohorts. It was the same with lack of clear policies, these two generation groups were once more on top, with Millennials recording a mean of 0.50 (SD = 0.51) and Generation X 0.44 (SD = 0.51). On the other hand, even while Gen Z did mention these barriers, they did so to a lesser degree in the case of both lack of policies (M = 0.30, SD = 0.42) and physical presence (M = 0.30, SD = 0.48).

4.8 Job Satisfaction and the Alignment of Preferred and Actual FWAs (H5)

H5 was tested by performing linear regression analysis in which a computed alignment score (Actual FWA - Preferred FWA) was the independent variable, while Overall Job Satisfaction was considered the dependent variable. The regression results are given in Table 15.

The analysis established no significant results of FWA alignment variables on overall job satisfaction. The highest standardized coefficient was for Alignment with Compromised Workweek ($\beta = 0.258$, $p = 0.099$) but did not reach statistically significant results. Alignment with Flexible Hours ($\beta = 0.015$, $p = 0.928$), Alignment with Part-Time Work ($\beta = 0.052$, $p = 0.747$), and Alignment with Remote Work ($\beta = 0.015$, $p = 0.920$) were all statistically non-significant predictors of job satisfaction. Alignments with Job Sharing ($\beta = 0.011$, $p = 0.942$), Phased Retirement ($\beta = 0.110$, $p = 0.533$), and Extra Holiday ($\beta = -0.018$, $p = 0.902$) also did not produce significant results.

Regarding differences across generations, the variable Generations ($\beta = 0.048$, $p = 0.763$) indicates no significant relationship with job satisfaction, implying that differences across age cohorts did not determine how FWA alignment affected job satisfaction.

Overall, the model showed no statistical significance, signifying that alignment between preferred and actual FWAs does not significantly affect job satisfaction across generations.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.250	.731		7.179	<.001
Alignment_FlexibleHours	.037	.409	.015	.091	.928
Alignment_PartTime	.182	.562	.052	.324	.747
Alignment_RemoteWork	.061	.598	.015	.101	.920
Alignment_CompromisedWorkweek	.667	.396	.258	1.684	.099
Alignment_JobSharing	.072	.993	.011	.073	.942
Alignment_PhasedRetirement	.339	.539	.110	.629	.533
Alignment_ExtraHoliday	-.057	.459	-.018	-.124	.902
Generations	.077	.254	.048	.303	.763

Table 15: Regression Analysis of Alignment Between Preferred and Actual FWAs on Overall Job Satisfaction

4.9 Job Productivity and the Alignment of Preferred and Actual FWAs (H6)

A regression analyses was performed again, which assessed how far the alignment of preferred and actual FWAs affected self-reported productivity. Among the alignment variables, only the Alignment with Extra Holiday was statistically significant ($B = 0.958$, $SE = 0.418$, $\beta = 0.307$, $t = 2.293$, $p = 0.026$) because they reported higher levels of productivity when the actual use of these extra holiday arrangements aligned with their preferences. All the other alignment variables which included Flexible Hours ($B = -0.229$, $SE = 0.364$, $p = 0.532$), Part-Time Work ($B = 0.370$, $SE = 0.486$, $p = 0.450$), Remote Work ($B = -0.510$, $SE = 0.545$, $p = 0.354$), Compressed Workweek ($B = 0.213$, $SE = 0.359$, $p = 0.555$), Job Sharing ($B = 0.235$, $SE = 0.913$, $p = 0.797$), and Phased Retirement ($B = -0.239$, $SE = 0.494$, $p = 0.630$), never had any statistically significant relationship with productivity.

The generation variable never produced a statistically significant effect ($B = -0.277$, $SE = 0.224$, $t = -1.238$, $p = 0.222$). The results suggest that alignment of FWAs with productivity is consistent across generational cohorts. In fact, except for the extra holiday arrangement, alignment between employee

preferences and actual flexible work arrangements does not have any significant impact on their self-reported productivity.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.222	0.638		9.755	<.001
Alignment_FlexibleHours	-0.229	0.364	-0.094	-0.629	0.532
Alignment_PartTime	0.370	0.486	0.110	0.762	0.450
Alignment_RemoteWork	-0.510	0.545	-0.127	-0.936	0.354
Alignment_Compromised Workweek	0.213	0.359	0.082	0.595	0.555
Alignment_JobSharing	0.235	0.913	0.035	0.258	0.797
Alignment_PhasedRetirement	-0.239	0.494	-0.077	-0.485	0.630
Alignment_ExtraHoliday	0.958	0.418	0.307	2.293	0.026
Generations	-0.277	0.224	-0.177	-1.238	0.222

Table 16: Regression Analysis of Alignment Between Preferred and Actual FWAs on Job Productivity

Open Ended Questions

The open-ended replies provided further elaborations on the employees' views relating to flexible work arrangements in Droste Bejah. A common theme that emerged from the responses is the requirement for clearer policies and better communication from management in relation to all available options. Several respondents indicated inconsistencies and suggested that defining and openly sharing such policies will reduce confusion and promote understanding among employees. Besides, other employees said that flexible schedules were helpful in improving well-being and productivity, underscoring the potential gains from well-established FWAs. However, some of the operational challenges, such as tight production role demands, were included as barriers to flexibility in some contexts. Nonetheless, a minority of employees were satisfied and mentioning good things about the current processes, they encouraged ongoing improvement. These responses speak for greater clarity, availability, and flexibility in implementing FWAs for a variety of roles.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The results and the findings of the previous section are discussed in this section. The findings will be related to the literature that is dealt with in the literature review and it is discussed whether these findings are in line with existing research or not. Moreover, this section will also elaborate on some limitations of this research and some suggestions for future research.

Discussion of the findings

H1: Gen Z and Millennials (ages 15-44) are more likely to use flexible work arrangements compared to Gen X and Baby Boomers (ages 45+).

There was no support for the theory that flexible work arrangements would be more frequently available for Gen Z and Millennials (ages 15-44) compared to Gen X and Baby Boomers (ages 45+). Contrary to what had been expected, the chi-square analysis got no significant differences that were statistically relevant between generational groups concerning the likelihood of using an FWA. This stands in contrast to most of the existing literature, which mostly speaks about a generation's interest in flexible work options.

As noted in the literature, work-life balance has become the critical value at which younger generations, primarily Gen Z and Millennials, have pitched their relationship with flexible work arrangements. For instance, Twenge (2010) states that younger workers, being more technologically adept and inclined towards work-life balance, are natural adopters of flexibility-enhancing arrangements such as remote work and flextime. Similarly, Schroth (2019) identified Gen Z's strong preference for autonomy and flexibility; further, Mahapatra et al. (2022) found that younger employees value highly the flexible scheduling option in their career preferences. The findings of this study suggest, however, that FWA use at present is not suitable for these preferences, possibly reflecting some contextual factors, such as organizational policies or job roles, that restrict their use.

One possible explanation here might be the specific organization involved in the study, as it operates largely in manufacturing. As discussed by De Menezes and Kelliher (2017), within industries with rigid schedules characterized by 'on-site' presence needed for most tasks, the FWAs may not be feasible. All of this could, in fact, considerably underrepresent young individuals taking up such roles. Boomers and Gen X workers have traditionally been considered less flexible (Cahill & Sedrak, 2012), but might actually hold higher into managerial ranks or senior positions which might allow them to access FWAs even in such a traditionally structured industry. The literature, again, affirms that preferences may not always correspond to the actual use of FWAs. There are barriers like lack of managerial support or structural constraints in the usage of an FWA. Becton et al. (2014) argue that multigenerational workplaces generally do not succeed in implementing FWAs in just and equal terms for these arrangements to be available to young workers, despite of their preference. This might have contributed to the absence of significant generational differences in the results of this particular study.

H2: The types of FWAs preferred vary significantly across different generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers).

The findings suggest that the generational variation in preferred FWAs is not as wide as has been assumed, although specific arrangements such as Phased Retirement highlight some significant results. On the whole, the picture aligns with life-stage theory, which posits that work preferences of individuals relate very closely to their age and stage along their career life cycle (Twenge, 2010). Much of that supports the data that Baby Boomers would strongly prefer Phased Retirement because they are now nearing the age of retirement and wish gradually to reduce their responsibilities before totally stepping out. This finding is consistent with prior research by Allen et al. (2005) and Durrant et al. (2017), which emphasized the value of phased retirement programs in facilitating smooth transitions for older workers while allowing organizations to retain critical institutional knowledge.

Interestingly, the very limited generational differences found about Flexible Hours, Compressed Workweeks, and Remote Work were in contrast to much of the literature claiming that younger generations, especially Gen Z and Millennials, extremely value autonomy and flexible arrangements in their work (Mahapatra et al., 2022). Of course, descriptive trends did indicate some agreement with these findings, for example Gen-Z preferred Flexible Hours and Compressed Workweeks higher than other generations, but the lack of any statistically significant results raised the question of whether preferences were strong enough to require specific generational policies or were influenced by something else, by organizational norms or job types for example. Moreover, these findings also challenge the arguments of universal appeal for FWAs such as Remote Work. Whereas research during the COVID-19 pandemic (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020) has revealed that remote work adoption exploded during the pandemic and other benefits associated with it, it has also shown that such availability did not matter equally to everyone. Low interests have been revealed across the generations consistently and may be attributed to the specific industrial or organizational environment considered in this study. For instance, in a production or industrial setting, in which physical presence is mandatory, remote work could be less relevant or feasible and thus explain the trends that are observed (Čiarnienė & Vienažindienė, 2018). This would mean that generational stereotypes are not as functional as they could be in workforce management. Even though Baby Boomers would expect Phased Retirement to guide their adoption, the mixed evidence on all other FWAs points to a complexity surrounding generational difference, other things such as an individual's personality traits, job roles, or even cultural norms in the regions, may more significantly shape preferences than generation membership alone. This is in line with (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2017), who argued that FWA preferences are often influenced by situational personal factors rather than broad demographic categories.

H3: Managerial resistance is perceived as a greater barrier to FWAs among Gen X compared to Gen Z and Millennials.

The findings have revealed that Millennials perceived resistance from managers to be more of a barrier in implementing FWAs than Generation X. This observation contrasts with earlier research, which suggested that Gen X is likely to have more difficulties with traditional managerial structures, regarding to supporting flexible work arrangements (Becton et al., 2014). The overall data did not show significant generational differences except for a significant difference between Millennials and Baby Boomers. But the small sample size of Baby Boomers (N = 2) limits its generalizability.

The stronger and presumably higher expectations of workplace flexibility that Millennials possess may be seen by their appreciation of workplace principles that align with their own. In the literature, this generation is said to be one that values work-life balance that even its workplace preferably adapts to such needs (Heath et al., 2022; Ng et al., 2010). When these things are not met, this generation of course seems more sensitive to any resistance than any other generation, especially less so in organizations where traditional hierarchies still dominate.

As for Generation X, who is hypothesized to be the generation that faces maximum managerial resistance, there are low perceptions that it faces these resistances. Probably, this could be attributed to its ability to change and be a pragmatic worker along with having the experience of less flexible workplaces at the earlier stages of their careers. Rather than seeing resistance as a bad thing, Gen X employees are likely to have adapted to such systems or are much less inclined to see managerial resistances as opposition (Dries et al., 2008).

H4: Gen X and Baby Boomers perceive access to tools as a greater barrier to using FWAs compared to Gen Z and Millennials.

The results for H4 did not support the hypothesis that Generation X and Baby Boomers perceive access to technological tools as a barrier to FWAs more than Generation Z and Millennials. Contrary to the information in the literature, generational perception differences in technological barriers were not

statistically significant. This contradicts the belief that the older generations face more barriers in respect to adapting to technology as compared with the young generation (Bulut, 2021; Tolbize, 2008).

Perhaps the explanation for this could be found in need for using digital tools across the generations, particularly in the period of COVID-19. This may have required a high increase in technological skills because nearly all age groups would have to have had a rapid transition to some kind of flexible working. This could have lowered generational gap in using technology (Yeves et al., 2022). The tools which are required for work would not be very complex and could therefore be straightforward and simple enough so that less generation difference has evolved. Furthermore, the production department keep a larger segment of the workforce among generations. Access to tools is not just a career flexibility facilitator, it is a must for performing jobs. For example, these employees in production will use technology to both operate machinery and give them efficiency. This means that the barriers perceived may relate less to the generational differences and more to the specific role needs that they have (Rüßmann et al., 2015). As for the importance of these tools in their roles, it could be that perceptions about the differences of technological barriers are not significant across generations since employees working in production would consider tool access as a basic requirement rather than an available support.

H5: Workers who use FWAs that align with their preferences report higher job satisfaction than those who do not, across all generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers). The regression analysis failed to find support for the hypothesis that alignment between employees' preferred and actual use of flexible working arrangements is positively associated with job satisfaction. The only alignment variable that came close to a significant result was alignment with a Compromised Workweek ($p=0.099$). This suggests that employees who are able to work compressed workweeks along with their preferences might report slightly higher job satisfaction, although the evidence is not strong enough to confirm this finding.

These findings contradict research supporting the idea that FWA is another important characteristic of job satisfaction (Mahapatra et al., 2022; Twenge, 2010). Earlier studies have found that when employees have the flexibility they want, work-life balance improves, causing job satisfaction to increase (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2017). However, the current study shows that FWA alignment does not necessarily lead to increased satisfaction, which demonstrates the complexity of workplace flexibility and employee well-being. One possible explanation for these findings is that there are several sources of job satisfaction besides the alignment of FWA. The most common influences on job satisfaction seem to be more based on organizational constraints, managerial attitudes, job demand, and company culture (Becton et al., 2014). Even when an arrangement is preferred by the employee, factors such as workload, opportunities for career advancement, and social relationships are likely to outweigh the benefit received from using the preferred work arrangement. This may also mean that there are practical hurdles to the successful implementation of such FWAs. Research points out that while employees might theoretically prefer some flexibility options, applying them in real world situations does not always increase job satisfaction (Yeves et al., 2022). One primary explanation in this case can be attributed to the nature of the manufacturing industry, which requires almost all jobs to be physically present. This could be why flexibility cannot be realized in such cases, like it is possible for office jobs. According to Berkery et al. (2017), flexible work arrangements would not be much effective in the manufacturing industries, having rigid work schedules in comparison to knowledge-based jobs where different employees can work more independently and at different times.

H6: Workers who use FWAs that align with their preferences report higher productivity levels than those who do not, across all generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers). The results challenge the hypothesis that alignment between preferred and active flexible work arrangements leads to higher productivity. Among the various FWAs assessed, only the alignment of extra holiday arrangements was positively correlated with increased self-reported productivity. This finding could suggest that offering enough opportunities for rest and recovery may prove to be a more powerful support for productivity than solely having access to flexible work structures.

Interestingly no significant differences were observed across different generations regarding the relationship between FWA alignment and productivity. This suggests that the relative benefits of FWAs in terms of productivity would be experienced the same across generations. Earlier studies pointed out that different generations might experience FWAs differently, especially with younger workers being more adaptable to flexible work structures (Schroth, 2019; Twenge, 2010), yet these differences do not seem to affect the FWA alignment impact on productivity. This further supports the argument that productivity outcomes are determined more by contextual and organizational factors than by generational preferences alone (Menezes & Kelliher, 2016).

The findings on the extra holiday alignment correspond with the idea that job satisfaction and productivity tend to be higher when employees' actual work arrangements align with their preferences (Bal & De Lange, 2015). However, lack of significant effects in the other types of FWA says that alignment alone may not always be sufficient to make a productivity increase. There are many other possible factors like workload management, collaboration problems, and organizational culture that may have a very important role in determining whether flexibility means a real performance improvement (Alsulami et al., 2022; Yeves et al., 2022).

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The sixth and last section is going to conclude this paper. This section uses the findings of the data analysis to answer the research question. Theoretical and practical contributions to this research will also be discussed.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The goal of this study was to investigate how different generations experience and prefer flexible work arrangements and how these preferences influence their job satisfaction and productivity. The research question made was:

How do different generations experience and prefer flexible work arrangements, and how does the alignment between these preferences and the available arrangements influence their job satisfaction and productivity?

To answer this question, six hypotheses were constructed and tested, and the results were summarized as follows. The hypothesis whether the younger generation was more likely to use FWAs compared to the older generation did not find support. There were no statistically significant differences among generational cohorts in likelihood to use FWAs. Whereas descriptive statistics indicated that the highest usage rate of FWAs was scored by Gen X, likely due to their representation in the company and the alignment of FWAs with their life stage responsibilities. Baby Boomers and Gen Z, with reduced representation in the workforce and different needs or constraints, showed the lowest usage levels. The hypothesis that types of FWAs preferred very significantly across generation has received only partial support. Meaning, while it is true that there were no significant differences related to generations discovered across all the five FWA preferences through multivariate tests, the only exception was related to phased retirement, which was preferred most by Baby Boomers compared to younger generations which sounds like a logical outcome. Descriptive trends indicate that Gen Z prefers flexible hours, compressed work weeks, and additional holidays most strongly compared to other cohorts, thus indicating a desire for control over their time and work-life balance. The hypothesis whether managerial resistance is perceived as a greater barrier to FWAs among Gen X compared to Gen Z and Millennials was proved false. The descriptive data indicated that Millennials tend to perceive managerial resistance more as a barrier than Gen X or Baby Boomers, however this data only indicated differences in the perception of these barriers and not in statistical significance. The only significant finding came between Millennials and Baby Boomers because Millennials perceived much greater resistances from managers. Still, it would be a good decision to interpret this result with caution, given the small sample size of Baby Boomers. The hypothesis that Gen X and Baby Boomers perceive access to tools as a greater barrier to using FWAs compared to Gen Z and Millennials was also not supported by the findings. No

statistically significant generational differences emerged regarding the perceived experience that access to tools is seen as a barrier. On the other hand, descriptive findings painted a picture in which Gen Z and Gen X have a higher concern regarding access to tools compared to Millennials. These differences might reflect more on generational roles and work contexts because a great part of both groups (Gen Z & Gen X) works in production roles where tool access matters. The hypothesis that workers who use FWAs report higher job satisfaction than those who do not is unsupported as well. The analysis showed that there were no significant differences in job satisfaction across generations between those who use FWA and those who do not. In the descriptives, it shows that compared to their non-FWA-users, FWA users in Gen X reported higher job satisfaction levels. This suggests that FWAs are compatible with the needs of this particular group. However, it turns out that this measure does not improve satisfaction for the other generations significantly. There was no support to the hypothesis that workers who use FWAs report higher productivity levels than those who do not either. Findings from analysis showed no significant interaction between generations with the FWA use on productivity level. Descriptive trends pointed to the fact that productivity levels as reported by FWA users of Gen X was the highest compared to the other generations, while Baby Boomers reported the lowest productivity levels across the groups. FWAs tend to play a slighter role in productivity, depending on the generational characteristics of the employees involved and the kind of work being done.

Each generation has different preferences and experiences regarding flexible work arrangements. In this regard, Baby Boomers have a strong preference for Phased Retirement, as they are closer to retirement and prefer disengagement from the workforce gradually. The trend is quite the opposite among Gen Z and Millennials, who prefer a flexible schedule, compressed workweeks, and more days off as their preference is more of a work-life balance and autonomy. Gen X, on the other hand, seems to utilize this more and use FWAs the most as they are probably at a stage of life where the greatest responsibilities come with keeping up with work and family demands. About how job preferences affect satisfaction and productivity, the findings indicate that this association is not straightforward. Although Gen Xers who used FWA reported slightly higher satisfaction and productivity, we could not find any statistically significant effects of FWA use across any of the generations on these outcomes. This suggests that something more than generational identity and the use of FWAs is of a factor to these outcomes, including what kind of job is workers do, what type of organizational culture exists, or personal preferences may shape satisfaction and productivity outcomes. The understanding of FWA usage concerning outcomes such as job satisfaction and productivity seems to have a complex dimension determined by individual, organizational, and generational factors. This complexity calls for nuanced policies recognizing these differences while also promoting inclusiveness and flexibility. This is why a culture that promotes flexibility, gives necessary tools among employees, and eliminates barriers, enhances employee satisfaction, productivity, and competitiveness in a more dynamic work environment.
The findings of this research indicate that FWA policies should be configured more thoughtfully and should not be focused blindly on, taking into account generational differences but also integrating a better overall employee experience to achieve long-term success in the modern workplace.

Theoretical Contribution

This research creates several theoretical contributions to the development of the growing field of research on flexible work arrangements and the management of a multigenerational workforce.

In the first place, it offers an improvement in understanding the generational differences for FWAs, which was a pretty limited area of study. Existing literature, such as Twenge (2010) and Schroth (2019), has pointed out how preferences in work values and behaviors may differ from one generation to another. However, this research empirically shows the generational differences in preference regarding actual FWA types. For example, Baby Boomers are primarily in favor of phased retirement, whereas Gen Z's and Millennials value more flexible hours and compressed workweeks. These empirical results support stage in life theories that hypothesize that generational preference should be explained with respect to career trajectories and personal priorities. These findings add to understanding employee dynamics along generational lines and provide empirical validation of theoretical models such as life-stage theory.

This study also offers its own contribution to the literature on the consequences of flexible work arrangements as to the impact of generational differences on job satisfaction and productivity. While prior studies have shown the overall benefits of FWAs (Gašić & Berber, 2023; Jiang et al., 2023), this current study provides evidence that FWAs differentially impact job satisfaction and productivity among generations. Here Gen X members seem to experience the highest levels of job satisfaction and productivity in relation to using FWAs. The findings in this study emphasize the need to align workplace policies with generational needs and preferences in terms of work-life balance, thereby getting the bigger picture of the assumption that FWAs will not always be advantageous for all employees. Following the likes of Lambert et al. (2008) and Bulut (2021), these studies can address demographic characteristics in relation to flexible working arrangements.

Another contribution of this research is concerned with the barriers to flexible work arrangements. Managerial resistance was found most perceived by the Millennials, while Gen X respondents identified a big barrier in terms of access to technological tools, since this generation is the most represented in the factory and is in need of physical job tools. These findings align with Becton et al. (2014) and Bulut (2021), who stated that generational differences existed in workplace adaptability and technological skills. This contributes to the understanding of context and relevance of these barriers in particular sectors like manufacturing, in which access to physical tools and policies plays a critical role.

Finally, the research sheds some light on the multigenerational workforce and adds onto the existing knowledge around workplace management. It emphasizes the importance of understanding generational characteristics as a set of ongoing processes rather than fixed categories shaped by age. This agrees with and develops the conclusions of Lambert et al. (2008) and De Menezes and Kelliher (2017), which state that for successful workforce management, both the requirements of the individuals and of the organization should be satisfied, and this can depend on multiple factors.

Practical Contribution

This study also provides some implication for business directors, HR managers and policymakers in their overall role for optimizing workforce management in a multi-generational setting. In the first instance, the research has indicated that flexible working arrangements will not be of equal preference for the different generations and will require more targeted policy development. Generation Z and Millennials feel strong preference flexible hours, working from home, and compressed work weeks, while putting a lot of value into autonomy as being able to have choices in their obligations regarding their own work-life balance. In contrast, the oldest cohort (Baby Boomers) shows preference for phased retirement, and this shows the need for transition-oriented policies for older workers about to retire. Managers should not assume that one size fits all but rather adopt a tailored approach as Twenge (2010) indicates, to align FWAs with the life stage and priorities of each generational cohort. Such an approach can therefore led to a more satisfactory experience for employees, which in turn may benefit retention and ultimately performance of the organization. Aligning flexible working arrangements with specific role requirements and generational characteristics is very important, as can be seen in the results concerning job satisfaction and productivity. Gen X workers, for instance, tend to be more satisfied and productive when making use by FWAs, showing that this cohort is most likely to benefit from an expansion in flexibility. Managers should take advantage of this by promoting FWAs as a healthy principle for middle-career employees, who often exercise leadership roles, and have the possibility to perform their work in a flexible way. Organizational productivity can be further enhanced, not to mention consolidating a culture of adaptability. This research highlights the importance to adopt a nuanced approached strategy in policy formulation. Even though FWAs cannot qualify as similar for all generations, the descriptive evidence indicates that they can improve work-life interaction and enhance employee well-being. Businesses should further test FWA arrangements and policies in combination with staff input and make adjustments based on this input. As pointed out by Becton et al. (2014), the presence of multiple generations within the workforce can still be beneficial for innovation within workforce management regardless of the lack of significant results. Although the results of this research were not consistently significant, they bring to focus some of the major trends and concerns faced by organizations that look to formulate effective FWA policies. Aligning workplace flexibility with

generational needs and removing barriers to adoption will put companies in a good place to attract and retain a diverse and engaged workforce.

Limitations & Future Research

Several limitations must be considered in this study. The primary source of data in this study was one manufacturing company, Droste Bejah, which has limited generalizability for this study. The effect therefore cannot be generalized to other industries or to other organizations with different working environments, structures, and flexibilities. Regarding future research, inclusion of several organizations from different industries could improve the generalizability of the results. The second limitation concerns the imbalance in generations included in the sample. There were very few responses by the Baby Boomers, which reduces the confidence of this study in identifying important generational differences. Further research should be balanced between generational groups to make sure that proper comparisons can be done. Also, while this study is focused on employees' perceptions and preferences in relation to FWAs, such factors as organizational culture, leadership support, and particular job demands have not been taken into consideration. Such factors are likely to affect usage and effectiveness. Future research may investigate how generational preferences interact with various contextual factors. Finally, the design of this study provides a short period in time and therefore cannot really get causal conclusions. Longer studies would be better suited for providing exactly how changes in preferences for FWA and their impacts on satisfaction and productivity change over time. When taking these limitations into account, future research could give a deeper more elaborate understanding of how different generations after affected by different flexible work arrangements. By addressing these limitations, future research can provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how flexible work arrangements affect multigenerational workforces in diverse organizational settings

CHAPTER 7: APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

Demographic Information

What is your age group?

- 15–25 (Gen Z)
- 26–44 (Millennials)
- 45–64 (Gen X)
- 65+ (Baby Boomers)

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/Other

Which department do you work in?

- Procurement, Sales, HR, Production (incl. assembly, welding, etc.), Logistics, Quality Control, Finance, Technical Service, Work Preparation & Engineering, Management

How many years have you worked at Droste Bejah?

- 0–2, 3–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, 21+

What type of contract do you have?

- Permanent Contract, Temporary Contract, Agency Work, Internship

Current Work Arrangements

Do you currently use flexible work arrangements (FWAs)?

- Yes / No

If yes, which FWAs do you use? (Select all that apply)

- Flexible Hours (Employees choose their own working hours within set limits)
- Remote Work (Employees work partly or fully from home)
- Part-time Work (Employees work fewer hours than a full-time schedule)
- Compressed Workweek (Working longer days to work fewer days, e.g., 40 hours in 4 days)
- Job Sharing (Two employees share one full-time role)
- Phased Retirement (Gradual reduction of work hours approaching retirement)
- Extra Leave (More vacation days or longer holidays)

Preferences Towards Flexible Work Arrangements

How interested are you in the following types of FWAs?

- Flexible Hours
- Remote Work
- Part-time Work
- Compressed Workweek
- Job Sharing
- Phased Retirement
- Extra Leave

Scale: 1 = Not interested at all to 7 = Very interested

Benefits And Barriers Of FWAs

What benefits do you associate with FWAs? (Select all that apply)

- Improved work-life balance
- Higher productivity
- Less stress
- More control over personal time
- Increased job satisfaction

What barriers do you perceive for implementing FWAs at Droste Bejah? (Select all that apply)

- The nature of the work requires physical presence
- Lack of technology/resources
- Managerial resistance
- Colleague resistance
- Lack of clear policies
- Decreased productivity

Scale: Multiple choice

Effects of FWA's on Job Satisfaction and Productivity

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your work?

- Communication within the company
- Ability to manage your own time
- Overall job satisfaction
- Flexibility of your work schedule

Scale: 1 = Very dissatisfied to 7 = Very satisfied

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- I can maintain a good work-life balance.
- I experience little work-life conflict.
- I have enough control over my time for family and personal obligations.

Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree

How would you rate your performance in terms of the following aspects?

- I am able to efficiently complete the core tasks of my job
- I make a positive contribution to the overall team or organization
- I can adapt well to changes at work

Scale: 1 = Very negative, 7 = Very positive

Awareness of FWA Policies

How familiar are you with the flexible work arrangements currently offered at Droste Bejah?

Scale: 1 = Not familiar at all to 7 = Very familiar

Open-Ended Questions

- Do you have suggestions for how Droste Bejah can better implement or improve FWAs?
- Would you like to share any additional thoughts on FWAs at Droste Bejah?

CHAPTER 8: REFERENCES

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