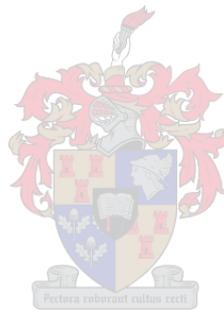


**ANTECEDENTS FOR AND OUTCOMES OF THE PURSUIT OF CUSTOMISED CAREERS  
FOR MILLENNIAL WOMEN IN SKILLED OCCUPATIONS**

**BY**

**SERINA VAN HUYSSTEEN**



***Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Commerce in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Stellenbosch  
University***

**SUPERVISOR: MRS M DE WET**

**DECEMBER 2017**

## DECLARATION

I, Serina van Huyssteen, herewith declare the entirety of this work to be my own, and that I am the sole author thereof unless explicitly stated otherwise.

I further declare that I have not previously partly or in its entirety submitted this work for obtaining any qualification.

I acknowledge that the reproduction and/or publication of this work by the Stellenbosch University will not infringe on any of my third party rights.

Signed: Serina van Huyssteen

Date: December 2017

Copyright © 2017 Stellenbosch University

All rights reserved

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to contribute to the field of Industrial and Organisation Psychology by shedding light on the increasing diversity of gender and generation which make up the global workforce today and how this diversity could alter an organisation's strategies in attracting and retaining the most valuable employees. With this in mind the study explores the work-life values and -preferences which drive millennial women currently active in the workplace. The focus is on career customisation, which includes several work time and work location alternatives (part-time work, flexi-hours, time banking, compressed work work, job sharing, telecommuting, hot-desking, agency employment, portfolio careers) as well as the manner in which work-life conflict and work-life enrichment is impacted by career customisation.

The research question is formulated around the antecedents which facilitate millennial women to actively pursue career customisation, especially in terms of their generation and the development of technology. In addition, the study explores the outcomes of career customisation for women on an individual level, for their families and for their careers, questioning whether the gains were worth the sacrifices. Furthermore their views are explored regarding the potential benefits of career customisation for organisations.

Great care was taken to ensure adherence to ethical research guidelines during the research process. The research strategy and design consisted of a qualitative nonexperimental method using semi-structured questionnaires and symbol discussion in one-on-one interviews with thirteen individual millennial women of various races and millennial generation age categories active in a several forms of customised careers. Strategies to ensure quality of data were based on the confirmability, credibility, dependability and transferability of the data. Sampling of the participants was done by combining snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Data analysis and interpretation followed a process of idea categorisation which resulted in the identification of interrelated concepts in the material, from which themes and sub-themes were extracted.

Seven main themes and twenty-two sub-themes emerged from the data. As main themes the millennial mind-set, the social culture which the woman forms part of and the prevailing organisation culture of their organisation were all themes which were indicated to be driving forces towards the pursuit of a customised career. In terms of outcomes of the pursuit of a customised career the main themes included mostly positive implications on the levels of individual well-being and the household as well as the benefits to the organisation if career customisation is accommodated. Lastly the need for organisations to embrace the reality of a changing work environment was indicated as a separate theme by the participants. These main- and sub-themes were discussed in depth, after which a structural model was created as visual representation of the associations between themes.

Lastly the limitations of the study were discussed along with suggestions for further studies which could be valuable on the same or related subjects.

*Key words:* work-life conflict, work-life enrichment, career customisation, diversity, millennials, women, technology, part-time work, flexi-hours, time banking, compressed work week, job sharing, telecommuting, hot-desking, agency employment, portfolio careers

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie beoog om 'n bydrae te lewer tot the veld van Bedryfsielkunde deur fokus te plaas op die toenemende diversiteit van geslag en generasie in die werkplek van vandag en hoe hierdie diversiteit die indiensnemingstrategieë van organisasies kan beïnvloed om seker te maak dat hulle die mees waardevolle werknemers na die organisasie lok en behou. Met dit in gedagte wil die studie die werk-lewe waardes en –voorkeure ondersoek wat millennial vroue in die werkplek dryf en motiveer. Die fokus is op loopbaan-selfskepping, wat verskeie vorme van werkstyd- en werksplek alternatiewe insluit (deeltydse werk, flexi-ure, die bank van tyd, gekompakteerde werksweke, werk- en voordeelverdeling, telewerk, warm werkplekke of “hot-desking”, agentskapswerk, portfolio loopbane), asook die wyse waarop werk-lewe konflik en werk-lewe verryking deur loopbaanselfskepping geaffekteer word.

Die navorsingsvraag is geformuleer rondom agtergrondsfaktore wat dien as fasiliteerders vir millennial vroue om aktief te werk te gaan om loopbaan-selfskepping 'n realiteit te maak met hulle generasie en die ontwikkeling van tegnologie in gedagte. Die studie ondersoek die uitkomst van selfskepping vir vroue op individuele vlak, vir hulle gesinne en loopbane en die vraag word gevra of the voordele van die keuse die opofferings werd was. Navraag word verder gedoen na hulle siening van potensiële voordele wat loopbaan-selfskepping vir organisasies kan inhou.

Spesifieke aandag is gegee aan die versekering dat die etiese riglyne van die navorsingsproses gerespekteer is. Die navorsingstrategie en –ontwerp is gebaseer op 'n kwalitatiewe nie-eksperimentele metode deur die gebruik van semi-gestruktureerde vraelyste, asook simbool-bespreking tydens een-op-een onderhoude met dertien individuele vroue in verskillende oudersomskategorieë en rasgroepe in die millennial generasie tans aktief in verskillende vorme van selfskeppings-loopbane. Strategieë om die kwaliteit van data te verseker is gebaseer op bevestigbaarheid, geloofwaardigheid, konsekwentheid en oordraagbaarheid van die data. Die steekproef is getrek deur 'n kombinasie van sneeubal-

en doelgerigte steekproefneming. Data-analise en –interpretasie het ‘n proses van idee kategorisering gevolg en interafhanklike konsepte is geïdentifiseer as basis vir die temas en sub-temas wat na vore gekom het.

Sewe hooftemas en twee-en-twintig sub-temas is uit die data geïdentifiseer. Hooftemas as motiveringskragte in die keuse van loopbaan-selfskepping sluit in millennial ingesteldheid, die sosiale kultuur van die deelnemer en die heersende organisasie-kultuur by haar werksplek. Hooftemas van gevolge van die keuse was die hoofsaaklik positiewe implikasies op individuele welstandsvlak, huishoudingsvlak en ook voordele vir die organisasie in gevalle waar selfskeppingsloopbane geakkommodeer is. Laastens is die noodigheid van organisasies om die realiteit van ‘n veranderende werksomgewing aan te neem uitgelig as ‘n aparte tema. Temas en sub-temas is in diepte bespreek waarna ‘n gestruktureerde model geskep is as visuele voorstelling van onderlinge verhoudings tussen temas.

Laastens is die beperkings van die studie bespreek en voorstelle gemaak vir verdere navorsing wat waardevol kan wees in terme van dieselfde of verwante onderwerpe.

*Sleutelwoorde:* werk-lewe konflik, werk-lewe verryking, selfskeppingsloopbaan, diversiteit, millennials, vroue, tegnologie, deeltydse werk, flexi-ure, die bank van tyd, gekompakteerde werkswaek, werkverdeling, voordeelverdeling, telewerk, warm werksplekke, “hot-desking”, agentskapswerk, portfolio loopbane

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their support and contribution in the completion of this study:

- To my supervisor for her advice and enthusiasm and also for making me a soothing cup of coffee on every occasion we sat down for a discussion;
- To every participant who was willing to share her experiences, views, perceptions and thoughts for the eventual purpose of helping others - I thank you from the bottom of my heart;
- To my husband not only for emotional support, but for always being willing to read and discuss parts of - and eventually the whole - study so that I could clarify and better make sense of my own thoughts;
- To my children who on numerous occasions had to wait patiently for me to finish typing a thought, sentence or paragraph before they could speak to me – sometimes when it was important or even somewhat urgent;
- To my parents, who instilled in me a hunger for knowledge and making a contribution to society;
- To my Heavenly Father for countless blessings including this opportunity to broaden my horizons and learn from others.

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>OPSOMMING</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY</b>	
<b>1.1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Context and rationale of the study</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 Research initiating question</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.4 Title of the study</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.5 Research objectives</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.6 Chapter overview</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.7 Conclusion</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY</b>	
<b>2.1 Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2 The changing world of work</b>	<b>9</b>
2.2.1 Women in the workplace	9
2.2.2 Millennials in the workplace	10
2.2.3 Technology	11
<b>2.3 Work-life integration</b>	<b>11</b>
2.3.1 Work-life conflict	12
2.3.2 Work-life enrichment	13

<b>2.4</b>	<b>The pursuit of a customised career</b>	<b>14</b>
2.4.1	Traditional careers vs customised careers	14
2.4.2	Types of customisation	15
2.4.2.1	Time and location flexibility	15
2.4.2.2	Timing and continuity	17
2.4.2.3	Alternative employment relationship	18
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Antecedents of pursuing a customised career</b>	<b>19</b>
2.5.1	Individual factors	20
2.5.2	Household factors	21
2.5.3	Organisation factors	22
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Outcomes of career customisation</b>	<b>24</b>
2.6.1	Individual outcomes	24
2.6.2	Family outcomes	25
2.6.3	Career outcomes	25
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>27</b>
 <b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>		
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Research strategy</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Research design</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Selection of cases</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Data collection</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.7</b>	<b>Research instrument</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.8</b>	<b>Data analysis and -interpretation</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.9</b>	<b>Strategies to ensure quality of data</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>3.10</b>	<b>Ethical considerations</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3.11</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>46</b>

**CHAPTER 4: RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Sample demographics</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Framework on themes and sub-themes</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Participants' individual contributions in context</b>	<b>51</b>
4.4.1	Participant 01817	52
4.4.2	Participant 02818	54
4.4.3	Participant 03818	57
4.4.4	Participant 04248	59
4.4.5	Participant 05901	62
4.4.6	Participant 06901	65
4.4.7	Participant 07907	68
4.4.8	Participant 08916	71
4.4.9	Participant 09920	74
4.4.10	Participant 10920	77
4.4.11	Participant 11921	79
4.4.12	Participant 121012	82
4.4.13	Participant 131014	85
4.4.14	Summary of individual participant theme count	87
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Discussion of themes and sub-themes</b>	<b>88</b>
4.5.1	Antecedents	88
4.5.1.1	Theme 1: Millennial mind-set	91
4.5.1.2	Theme 2: Social culture	100
4.5.1.3	Theme 3: Organisation culture	106
4.5.2	Outcomes	113
4.5.2.1	Theme 4: Individual well-being	116
4.5.2.2	Theme 5: Household	117
4.5.2.3	Theme 6: Organisation	121

4.5.3	Attracting and retaining valuable employees	125
	4.5.3.1 Theme 7: Embracing the reality of a changing workplace	127
4.6	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS</b>		
5.1	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>136</b>
5.2	<b>Summary of the principal findings</b>	<b>136</b>
5.3	<b>Limitations of the study</b>	<b>140</b>
5.4	<b>Suggestions for future study</b>	<b>141</b>
5.5	<b>Concluding remarks</b>	<b>142</b>
	<b>REFERENCE LIST</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>		
	<b>Appendix A: Invitation letter</b>	<b>152</b>
	<b>Appendix B: Questionnaire</b>	<b>154</b>
	<b>Appendix C: Low inference descriptors</b>	<b>155</b>
	<b>Appendix D: Informed consent</b>	<b>156</b>
	<b>Appendix E: Information sheet</b>	<b>160</b>
	<b>Appendix F: Example 1 of interview transcript</b>	<b>163</b>
	<b>Appendix G: Example 2 of interview transcript</b>	<b>175</b>
	<b>Appendix H: Codebook sheet</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>		
	Figure 1. Initial conceptual framework	27
	Figure 2. Stethoscope	53
	Figure 3. Wedding ring	53
	Figure 4. 01817 Individual text to sub-theme	54
	Figure 5. Olympic medal	56

Figure 6. Soft toy elephant and Olympic medal	56
Figure 7. 02818 Individual text to sub-themes	56
Figure 8. Gift from daughter	58
Figure 9. Gift to self	58
Figure 10. 03818 Individual text to sub-theme	59
Figure 11. Heap of diaries	61
Figure 12. Cellular phone	61
Figure 13. 04248 Individual text to sub-theme	62
Figure 14. First row of photographs	64
Figure 15. Second row of photographs	64
Figure 16. 05901 Individual text to sub-theme	65
Figure 17. Stethoscope	67
Figure 18. Paintbrush and passport	67
Figure 19. 06901 Individual text to sub-themes	68
Figure 20. Lion in a cage	70
Figure 21. Wild springbok	70
Figure 22. 07907 Individual text to sub-theme	71
Figure 23. Fish tank	73
Figure 24. Aquarium	73
Figure 25 08916 Individual text to sub-theme	73
Figure 26. Handbag	76
Figure 27. Whiteboard	76
Figure 28. 09920 Individual text to sub-theme	76
Figure 29. Toy rabbit	78
Figure 30. Bunch of keys	78
Figure 31 10920 Individual text to sub-theme	79
Figure 32. Breast pump	81
Figure 33. Watch symbolising time	81

Figure 34. 11921 Individual text to sub-theme	81
Figure 35. Mask	84
Figure 36. Examination study table	84
Figure 37. 121012 Individual text to sub-theme	84
Figure 38. Portrait	86
Figure 39 Cross symbolising faith	86
Figure 40. 131014 Individual text to sub-theme	87
Figure 41. Antecedents themes	89
Figure 42. Antecedents themes per sub-theme	98
Figure 43. Outcomes themes	113
Figure 44. Outcomes themes per sub-theme	115
Figure 45. How to attract and retain employees	125
Figure 46. Attract and retain themes per sub-theme	127
Figure 47. Structural model of antecedents and outcomes of customisation	139

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Sample demographics	34
Table 2: Framework of themes and sub-themes	49
Table 2 (continued)	50
Table 2 (continued)	51
Table 3: Summary of individual participant and sub-theme count	88
Table 4: Antecedents text count per theme and sub-theme	90
Table 5: Outcomes text count per theme and sub-theme	115
Table 6: Attract and retain text count per sub-theme	125

## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

If both men and women were equally likely to take time out, it would change the way hiring decisions were made. It would move us from talking about childcare as a women's issue and start us thinking about how to effectively employ parents.

- Dr Sarah Amalia Teichmann, Principal Research Associate, Department of Physics, Cambridge University (Bostock, 2014)

### 1.1 Introduction

One could pick up any book on business, the workplace or corporate life and one would find a chapter written on the changing nature of the workplace of today. Organisations are challenged to adapt to complexity and uncertainty on technological-, economic-, political- and cultural fronts as well as to the changes in workforce demographics (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Luthans, 2011).

In order to stay ahead of the dynamics and factors that impact an organisation's ability to stay competitive in the cut-throat world of work, it is vital for decision-makers to understand the mind-set of its greatest asset – its human capital. This knowledge is crucial in order to recognise, adapt to, and strategically manage the continually shifting dynamics brought about by increasing diversity, especially in terms of gender and generation. Landy and Conte (2007, p. 491) recognise that "... diversity is a reality, not a goal, and that the organizations that manage this reality will be more profitable than those that do not".

As change agents, industrial psychologists have an important role to play in helping modern organisations pro-actively plan for the impact of gender and generation diversity on business. In order to be in a position to fulfil the role of such a change agent, in-depth information is needed on the subject.

One specific area of change which diversity of gender and generation brings, comes in the form of alternative choices for work-life integration as millennial women's priorities include different personal preferences and needs to those of the typical employee of the past (Valcour, Bailyn & Quijada, 2007; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).

In this study the general aim will be to explore the motivations behind the choices millennial women in skilled occupations make in their careers in an attempt to create a workable fit

between their work demands and personal life demands and the impact these choices have on their lives and the organisations they work for.

## **1.2 Context and rationale of the study**

The trend of globalisation combined with fierce economic competition has created fertile ground for increased intensity of work demands on employees (Cummings & Worley, 2015). This reinforces the need for employers to attract and retain committed and loyal employees who will be highly valuable to them. However, *who* those employees worth attracting and retaining are, might have changed in recent times.

The traditional workplace has over many years functioned on the breadwinner/ homemaker model, which was a good fit for traditional families consisting of a married couple of one male and one female in which only the male worked outside the home (Waite & Nielson, 2001). This model assumed that all employees in skilled occupations were men and that they had very little or no responsibilities concerning the household and children, which the wife and mother was there to take care of full time (Valcour et al., 2007). Organisations only had to cater for their own needs as an organisation, and the needs and preferences of fulltime and mostly male employees with no responsibilities other than those that were work-related (Waite & Nielson, 2001).

Then, as the demographics changed with an increasing number of women entering the skilled work domain, women's role in society changed: they also became financial contributors to the household and intellectual contributors to the workforce. Yet, their household responsibilities did not proportionately decrease, and the traditional career model was still the prevailing model in the workplace (Messenger, 2010). Thus, neither the traditional household model, nor the conventional workplace model were adjusted to accommodate the changing social and economic roles of women (Woodfield, 2007). As a consequence, intense role conflict developed between work demands and household demands which women were under pressure to still satisfy to a certain pre-determined standard (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).

This created a scenario where many women saw only one solution: they had to choose to either stay employed in the traditional workplace fulltime, thereby depriving themselves of many household- and family activities, or exit this work domain and sacrifice the meaning, stimulation and monetary benefits being employed brings (Woodfield, 2007). As a third alternative, some women had an option to enter into a part-time employment contract, which usually consisted of lesser skilled positions with much lower remuneration (Messenger,

2010). This scenario served as “proof” for some to make statements about the questionable ambition seen in the behaviour of women as quoted by Republic Senator Glenn Grothman:

Money is more important for men. Take a hypothetical husband and wife who are both lawyers. But the husband is working 50 or 60 hours a week, going all out, making 200 grand a year. The woman *takes time off*, raises kids, it's not 'go go go'. Now they're 50 years old. The husband is making 200 grand a year, the woman is making 40 grand a year. It wasn't discrimination. There was a different sense of urgency in each person (Waldron, 2012, n.p.).

Yet perhaps it is not that there is a different sense of urgency or ambition between men and women when it comes to continuous commitment to a conventional workplace as argued by Grothman, but rather a question of poor person-environment fit between the structure of the conventional career path and the realities of the lives of women, as stated by Benko and Weissberg (2008). They believe that while it is generally accepted that women are a huge source of talent for the current and future workforce, there is a significant ill fit or mismatch between the current manner in which careers are structured and the reality of how women's lives and life phases unfold, especially women who become mothers.

Today, the ever-increasing number of women entering the workforce is starting to have a significant impact on the nature of the workforce (Waite & Nielson, 2001). For the first time in history, more women in the USA are graduating from college and university than men (Blain, 2008; Erickson, 2008; NASA Insights, 2008). While women in the USA only made up 18% of the workforce at the turn of the previous century, by the year 2001, this number climbed to 61% (Boeri, Del Boca & Pissarides, 2007).

This trend is visible across the world with more and more women, single and married, joining the world of work (Boeri, et al., 2007; Cummings & Worley, 2015). More recently between 2001 and 2011 in South Africa, women entering the workforce increased from 31,5% to 34.6% in just ten years – a number even more significant when borne in mind that general unemployment in the country is steadily at an increase (Marais, de Klerk, Nel & De Beer, 2014).

An added dynamic to the demographic diversity of the future global workforce is the increasing number of *millennial* women becoming part of the skilled work domain (Boeri et al., 2007; Cummings & Worley, 2015; Dowdy, 2015; Robb, 2015). Depending on the age boundaries used, the millennial population is currently estimated at being between 70 and 90

million people, who by 2025 will make up 40% of the workforce, according to a projection by the U.S. Bureau of Statistics (Dowdy, 2015; Robb, 2015). This group has become the most highly educated generation with more college students studying for degrees and advanced degrees than any other generation (Blain, 2008; BSG Concours, 2007; Erickson, 2008; NASA Insights, 2015; Robb, 2015). The reality is therefore that this generation is now increasingly supplying the workforce with employees.

The constantly increasing generational and gender diversity has brought about a different dynamic in terms of work-life integration and alternative choices for the prioritisation of time, energy and attention (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011; Valcour et al., 2007). Members of the new generation see their time as an extremely valuable commodity and they want to know that what they spend this valuable commodity on has meaning, significance and purpose (Busser, 2012). This trend is not only applicable to the hours and content of work. Work schedules, undesirable locations or even commuting time to work are factors with enough impact to make employees reconsider whether their working environment fits their preferences and desires (Garde, 2014).

In addition, unlike those who functioned effectively in a traditional workplace setting in the past, women and millennials are also driven by different values in terms of the meaning of work in their lives, as well as their open-mindedness about the degree of flexibility which technology brings concerning time and location of work (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).

Furthermore, it is not necessarily the achievement of traditional criteria which create meaning for them, nor is it only upward mobility which is generally celebrated as success. Recent research in the UK confirmed that women's conceptions of what constitutes career success had less to do with pay and hierarchical position and more with personal recognition and internal satisfaction (Guest & Sturges, 2007). The existence of this mind-set is demonstrated by Dr Fanni Gergely, Royal Society University Research Fellow and Research Group Leader at the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute when she states the following in reaction to a question on the meaning of career success: "Setting up a small yet productive research group has probably been the achievement that mattered to me the most" (Bostock, 2014, p. 93).

However, despite the widespread desire of modern employees to better integrate their work and personal domains, many business leaders and decision-makers in organisations still assume that everyone defines success in the traditional way (Bostock, 2014). This is clear when one examines how promotional criteria, reward systems and incentive schemes are

designed. Within this paradigm, the only ones who could achieve “success” will be those who choose total identification with and prioritisation of the career above all else (Valcour et al., 2007).

Valcour et al. (2007) make the point that the choice for customisation is a difficult and uncomfortable path to follow. It involves a process during which the individual has to negotiate not only with her own organisation and family, but also with herself and on a different level, with the occupational community. These women challenge traditional career norms and therefore the burden is on them to justify their preferences and their choices and to persuade the decision-makers as to the feasibility and sensibility of their plans, as well as to the benefits for the employer. Individuals pursuing customised careers “must struggle both to construct a new kind of professional identity and to create the arrangement that allow them to live it” (Valcour et al., 2007, p. 192).

To exacerbate the struggle for women on this front, the successful negotiation of a customised arrangement by one woman in an organisation does not necessarily mean that it will automatically be an option to all those in the organisation with similar circumstances and with similar needs. Frequently, even in one organisation, everyone has to negotiate flexibility from step one. This is evident in the way in which some organisations gallantly offer as part of their information services to employees support for when they have to write a proposal for flexible work arrangements, thereby acknowledging that it might suit some women better, yet not offering the option as a standard practice (Paludi et al., 2007).

Yet, it seems the challenge for employers will increasingly be that generally speaking, most women cannot, and most millennials will not, choose the prioritisation of their careers above all else to the detriment of themselves and their significant others. The situation should eventually arise where the modern organisation which will prove successful will be the one that is willing to strategically manage the needs and preferences of both the organisation *and* its employees – and to not tend only to their own business needs for survival.

Gottlieb, Kelloway and Barham (1998) state that world demographics and the latest social trends highlight the need for employers to acknowledge the personal and family challenges their employees face. Landy and Conte (2007) feel even stronger when they make the point that there is very strong justification for efforts by organisations to manage diversity strategically, namely: survival.

This reality then brings one to the practical question: how can employers attract and retain committed and loyal employees amidst the increased diversity of the workforce in terms of gender and generation?

### **1.3 Research initiating question**

The question which gave rise to the pondering of the above discussion was threefold.

- Firstly, what are the forces or antecedents that drive millennial women to choose something other than a traditional career path and rather customise a career path to suit their own circumstances?
- Once chosen, what are the outcomes of choosing a customised career for them as individuals, their families, their careers and the organisations they work for? Did this alternative path bring them the joy and satisfaction they expected? Or, differently put – was it worth it?
- Given the needs and preferences of millennial female employees, are there alternative employment policies regarding time and location which could be utilised to an improved benefit of both the individual and the organisation?

### **1.4 Title of the study**

The following title was decided upon for this study: Antecedents for and outcomes of the pursuit of customised careers for millennial women in skilled occupations.

The term *Millennial women* in this context refers to female members of the millennial generation based on age ranges found in literature (Erickson, 2008; Garde, 2014; Karefalk, Petterssen & Zhu, 2007; NASA Insights, 2008). According to these ranges, at the date of this study in 2016, millennial women will fall within an age group of between 14 and 39 years.

The term *customised career* describes a career or career path which was created by the individual by consciously choosing to deviate from the traditional or conventional career route in terms of time, location and/or energy committed to the employment relationship and that which constitutes career success (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; Valcour et al., 2007). A *customised career* thus denotes a form of individually adjusted career in terms of career path, amount of hours committed to working, location of work and/or amount of work to better suit personal preferences.

The term *skilled* indicates occupations that require workers to have had specialised training or a learned skill-set to perform the work (“Skilled”, 2011), and in this instance refers to specialised training or education to have occurred on a post-matric level.

## 1.5 Research objectives

Gottlieb et al. (1998 p. 5) make the following strong statement: “Just as organizations devise new products and services to meet the needs of their external environments, so too are they innovating new policies and programmes to meet the shifting needs of their employees to attract the talent that will give them a competitive edge”.

However, business leaders might not always be aware of these driving forces or have sufficient knowledge of how these forces impact the decisions of this “alternatively thinking” workforce. This lack of insight could have the result that they either continue with traditional policies and plans for their alternative workforce, or that they create alternative policies which still miss the mark.

This study fills a gap in that it will provide a broad and general base of information on the antecedents which act as motivational forces for millennial women in skilled occupations to sacrifice the benefits offered by a conventional career, in favour of the benefits of a customised career with the inevitable consequences and challenges that choice brings. In addition, it will focus on the outcomes, negative and positive, of pursuing a customised career for millennial women on individual, family and career level in evaluation of the value it brought to them on a personal level.

Based on the above, the following objectives for the study are stated:

- To investigate the antecedents that drive millennial women to pursue a customised career path as opposed to a traditional/conventional career path;
- To gather information regarding the outcomes of choosing a customised career on individual-, family- and career level and to explore the perceptions of participants on the outcomes of their customisation on the organisation where they are employed;
- To consider their views regarding employment policies in terms of time and location and how these could be adapted to be more beneficial to both the individual and the organisation?

The aim is for the findings of the study to be of value to further studies as well as to be used by business when making decisions to the benefit of both employees - specifically millennial

women - and organisations: “Taking steps to address these issues and thus promote decent working time can benefit not only workers but also enterprises in several different ways such as through increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and staff turnover and improved employee attitudes and morale, which can translate into a better ‘bottom line’” (Messenger, 2011, p. 313).

## **1.6 Chapter overview**

The chapters of the study were arranged in the following manner:

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

Chapter 2: Literature study

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 4: Results, findings and discussion

Chapter 5: Conclusions and suggestions

## **1.7 Conclusion**

The researcher truly believes in the vast potential contribution of millennial women to the workplace of the future if both these women and business are willing to open their minds to alternative and smart angles from which to view the way in which talent and quality as an organisational resource can more effectively be utilised. If this study could create a base of information for further studies, these could arm positive and open-minded business leaders with information to guide the management of the human capital strategically in terms of policies, regulations, structures, rewards systems and service contracts - not only as a way to adapt to the wave of change but also to empower themselves in industry to ride the wave to prosperity on multiple levels.

The ultimate aim and hope for this study is for it to be part of the development of intellectual enquiry into this subject to the point where we as a business community can start thinking about how to effectively employ – not only parents, or women, or millennials, but *people* - in this ever changing world of work – to the benefit of all.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

Many women walk away when they look at what it takes to make it to the top. I know there are people who say you can have it all, but I'm not convinced; something has to give.

– Professor Dame Carol Black, FRCP FMedSci, Principle of Newnham College, University of Cambridge (Bostock, 2014, p. 16)

### 2.1 Introduction

In this literature review attention will be given to the individual, family and organisational factors as antecedents in the pursuit of non-conventional, customised careers for millennial women in skilled occupations and the outcomes thereof for them on the individual-, family and career domain.

### 2.2 The changing world of work

The world of work is changing on various fronts, including economic, technological, cultural and political levels. In addition, workforce demographics are also changing, not only in terms of educational level, but also in terms of gender and generation.

#### 2.2.1 Women in the workplace

With the growth in the numbers and education level of women in the workplace, it follows that some changes in culture, values and policies had to inevitably have already taken place as organisations adapt to the preferences and needs of female employees in addition to their male counterparts. However, in a pamphlet by UNICEF called “The State of the world's children 2007: Executive Summary” as cited in Paludi and Neidermeyer (2007, p. ix) the following statement is made:

While there has been great progress in recent decades in engaging women in the labour force, there has been considerable less advance on improving the conditions under which they work ...recognising unpaid work, eliminating discriminatory practices ... and providing support for childcare. Ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to generate and manage income is an important step towards realising women's rights.

When women's roles started changing with their entrance into the workforce as another financial contributor to the household, their household responsibilities did not decrease in proportion to the increase in financial contribution, work time and work demands. Across the world women are still responsible for most of the childcare, elderly care and domestic work, while there has not been a significant reduction in the paid working hours by men in order to take over some domestic responsibility (Messenger, 2011, Woodfield, 2007).

Melinda Gates, wife of famous businessman, Bill Gates, recently made some statements regarding this issue (Zarya, 2016):

“Globally, women participate in the labor force at lower rates than men — something that is surprising to no one, but should be. The division of work depends on cultural norms, and we call them norms because they seem normal — so normal that many of us don't notice the assumptions we're making.”

Gates does not advocate for the 50/50 division of unpaid household work, but rather for society to challenge what is seen as normal in the division of household and child care responsibilities.

### 2.2.2 Millennials in the workplace

When the rugby players are on tour, we don't work in class, because they will miss out. But we are not allowed to stay home where there's access to Wi-Fi, using our time to finish school projects due after the weekend. No, they think it's better for us to physically sit in class doing nothing rather than spend time at home working, 'because during school hours you have to be at school'. What a stupid way of looking at things!

– M van Huyssteen, Gr 10 learner, Paarl  
(Personal communication, 29 April, 2016)

Literature varies in terms of not only the name, but also the exact age boundaries of Millennials. They are also known as Generation Y, Gen Y and depending on different sources could have been born from as early as 1977 to as late as 1981, with the end birth boundary ranging from as early as 1994 up to the year 2002 (Erickson, 2008; Garde, 2014; Karefalk, Petterssen & Zhu, 2007; NASA Insights, 2008).

This generation places high value on healthy work-life integration. They value healthy family relationships and often actively pursue the possibilities of customising their working

environment to suit their current needs or phase of life (BSG Concours, 2007; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). They have a preference for flexibility in terms of work hours and location and believe that their skills with technology ensures that they work faster and more effectively than generations before them, reducing what they see as *wasted time*: non-essential face-to-face office interaction (Erickson, 2008; Lloyd, 2007).

The use of current technology provides a variety of ways they can fulfil their desire for flexibility and finding healthier ways of merging their work and personal lives (Spiro, 2006). For this reason they see as senseless the view that the only way for an organisation to get a return on their investment from an employee is the compulsory physical presence of the employee at a specific work location in order to be checked upon to adhere to their responsibilities.

### 2.2.3 Technology

Employees entering the workplace today and those who have joined roughly in the last fifteen years grew up with technology. They did not have to gradually lose their fear of it or be taught how it works like some of the older generations who had to face technology as a new challenge when they were already grown up. They are the most interconnected group of employees to date and are used to having and providing instant informational gratification (Bassett, 2008; Cruz, 2007; Erickson, 2008; Spiro, 2006). Because they grew up with technology, it has become such a part of the lives of millennials that they do not consciously ponder how it helps them achieve flexibility – being flexible in terms of time and space to them is already status quo.

Technological advances which facilitate flexibility in the workplace include wireless connection to the internet, the instant accessibility of information using smart phones and tablets, the capability of smart devices to accommodate most applications and programmes previously only available on desk computers and laptops and the use of video- and teleconferencing, to name but a few. With this in mind, millennials know that technology makes it possible for them to work from virtually anywhere. Therefore, to them the idea of being stuck behind a desk for eight hours a day does not make any sense at all (Robb, 2015).

## 2.3 Work-life integration

The constant use of technology by most employees today increasingly blurs the lines between work- and personal lives. People are just as likely to download work e-mails at

home on a weekend as they are to make arrangements for personal activities when they are at the office (Cruz, 2007; Robb, 2015). According to Trunk (2007) for many modern employees this line has all but disappeared, as their only interest is spending their time in a meaningful way, irrespective of where they physically find themselves at that moment. Yet, with the benefits of the elimination of barriers between work and life which technology brings, an expectation is also created of people to always be available. Employees are expected to always be “on”, and immediately responsive, which can be overwhelming for some. "Employers are trying to figure out how to make work easier and more meaningful to people, to attract both the very ambitious people that want to really move up and drive change and run things, and the people who want to work hard but not ruin their lives" (Lindzon, 2015, n.p.). When employees have time away from the office, these hours are spent on a variety of activities, including household responsibilities, child care, elder care, social and leisure activities, even including further studies. Being able to find the golden patch between living a fulfilling work- and personal life has become a top priority for modern day employees (Garde, 2014; Gottlieb et al., 1998).

### 2.3.1 Work-life conflict

“I can't have a baby. I have a 12 o'clock lunch meeting.”

-J.C. Wiatt in *Baby Boom* (Paludi & Neidermeyer, 2007)

When employees are not able to find this golden patch between work and life, conflict ensues. Work-life conflict is widely defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). This type of conflict arises when an individual's participation in one role is the reason for them not being able to, or it being difficult to, also participate in the other role or, when the presence of stressors in one role interferes with the effective functioning in the other (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Landy & Conte, 2007; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). The conflict perspective is derived from a scarcity hypothesis, which assumes a fixed amount of time and energy available to both roles. Based on this view, when the resources are depleted in one role, it in effect becomes unavailable to the other, creating conflict between the domains and thereby reducing quality of life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Dual career couples often find themselves under constant pressure tending to the activities and needs which their work and life domains demand (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Apart from an ongoing, yet manageable juggling of time and attention between the domains,

simultaneous demands exacerbated the situation. Conflict is bi-directional in nature. An example of work-life conflict is when business travelling makes one miss a child's birthday while life-work conflict takes place when for example a sick child causes one to cancel an important work appointment (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Often even recreational time with the family can create stress and conflict. These times are arranged specifically for fun and stress releasing purposes, yet trying to fit it in between all the work and life responsibilities add to the physical and emotional exhaustion people often experience (Bellavia & Frone, 2005).

### 2.3.2 Work-life enrichment

Some of my best ideas come to me in the middle of Jazzercise or karate!  
Being around my children helps me put a better perspective on life – so a disastrous day at work where nothing has worked is quickly forgotten about. This keeps me fresh for the next day!

– Dr Jennifer Hirst, Principal Research Associate, Clinical Biochemistry,  
Cambridge University (Bostock, 2014)

Work-life conflict is not the only outcome waiting for those who simultaneously venture into both the work- and family domain. Some employees enjoy their work, but want to merge their work- and life roles to best fit with their lifestyles (Harris & Hollman, 2016). In such a case, there is also a possibility of one role enriching the other for a positive experience in both domains. Work-life enrichment is defined as the degree to which experiences and resources in one role improve the quality of life in the other role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). While work-family conflict stifles one's capacity to function effectively and experience satisfaction from both roles, enrichment expands this capacity and increases its probability (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). This relationship, as with work-life conflict, is bi-directional.

There are three clear ways in which work-life enrichment manifests itself (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marais et al., 2014). Firstly, positive work and family experiences have beneficial effects on the physical and psychological well-being of those who "accumulate" roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006, p. 73). Secondly, the two roles can serve as a buffer to limit negative experiences in one of the two roles, e.g. when someone experiences failure in one role, but keeps in mind that they are successful in the other to carry them through to a better day. In the third instance, being involved in both roles can produce positive outcomes across the roles, by using resources provided and created by one role, to improve the

quality of the other role, for example skills, perspectives, psychological resources, information, influence and financial resources (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).

Another powerful resource which positively spills over between the two roles and which is of extreme importance in today's society, is the networking opportunities both roles bring (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). One only has to look around to see some examples of the benefits of this form of networking: many a business contact has been secured on the side of a school sports field, while countless school sports teams have had some form of clothing on occasion sponsored by private business.

## **2.4 The pursuit of a customised career**

Understanding the differences between traditional or conventional and customised careers will shed light on antecedents in the pursuit of customised careers by some employees.

### **2.4.1 Traditional careers vs customised careers**

The terms *traditional career* or *conventional career* refer to an orderly pattern of work which is defined by Valcour et al. (2007, p. 189) as "work involving intense commitment to and continuous engagement with the occupational world, along with a striving for upward mobility and achievement of external markers of success". A traditional career generally includes continuous, full-time involvement in the workforce, starting in the employee's early 20's and ending at retirement roughly forty or fifty years later (Guest & Sturges, 2007; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; Valcour et al., 2007). The traditional model was built on assumptions that work and non-work domains were kept separate, with any conflict handled from the understanding that employment demands were given priority and upward advancement was seen as the ultimate goal. The model worked comfortably enough when only men were breadwinners and women only took care of the household (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008).

As a general description, the term *customised career* refers to those careers which involve conscious deviance from the traditional or conventional career path in terms of time and energy committed to the employment relationship and that which constitutes career success (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; Valcour et al., 2007). Customisation involves crafting a non-traditional career or career path in reaction to changes in individual needs, preference and circumstance (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). Two main characteristics separate the customised career from the conventional career, namely choice and control - of the amount of work done, the work schedule and the continuity of the career path (Valcour et al., 2007).

According to Mainiero and Sullivan (2005, p. 111) there is a complete non-fit and non-applicability of the traditional career model to female workers. As an alternative career option to the traditional model they propose the Kaleidoscope Career Model instead, which suggests the following: "Like a kaleidoscope that produces changing patterns when the tube is rotated and its glass chips fall into new arrangements, women shift the pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects of their lives to arrange roles and relationships in new ways". These "chips" could include many different factors throughout their lives and careers, e.g. their own changing life phases or changing life phases of their children, changing circumstances of elderly parents or spouses, challenging and exciting career opportunities offered to them or their spouses, as well as different prospects in community involvement, further studies or other learning opportunities, even including pursuing hobbies or leisure interests.

#### 2.4.2 Types of customisation

According to Messenger (2011) and Schreuder and Coetzee (2011) there is a global trend towards a reduction in full time workers – men and women – with the extra hours being spent on community work, leisure and family responsibilities. Various possibilities exist for employees who consider customisation of their career paths and these could be summarised in three categories, namely time and location flexibility, timing and continuity and alternative employment relationship.

##### 2.4.2.1 Time and location flexibility

For a healthy merging of work and life activities, the amount of work hours one is expected to be present at work is a huge factor. Messenger (2011) states that long working hours has the most significant negative effect on a healthy work-life integration, noting that in the last few decades a gradual but significant trend could be observed in terms of a move away from the traditional standard workweek towards a diverse range of possible options which employees and/or employers could base policies of working hours upon. Reduced working hour schedules is the strategy most often used to reconcile work- and personal needs (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; Messenger, 2011). It is predominantly used by women with family responsibilities, but also increasingly by the youth to combine paid work and education.

- Part time work

Part time work refers very simply to jobs in which the employees are only expected to be present in the workplace for a portion of the standard hours which would normally be

applicable to that position (Messenger, 2011). Although part-time work can be organised in various ways, it normally refers to fewer fixed hours for each working day.

- Flexi-hours

Flexitime or flexi-hours is the most general form of customised working arrangements (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; Gottlieb et al., 1998; Valcour et al., 2007). It generally refers to flexible starting and finishing hours, yet with the same amount of hours spent at the workplace per day. It allows employees the flexibility to e.g. personally take care of the school-run, or be available earlier in the afternoon to assist with homework. It is also often utilised to avoid early morning- or late afternoon traffic. Most organisations prefer employees to overlap their flexi-hours for a specific core time-period, e.g. between 10h00 and 15h00 during the day, depending on the type of business and customer needs (Dziech, 2007; Gottlieb et al., 1998; Messenger, 2011).

- Time banking/annualised hours

Some organisations make use of “time banking” or “time savings accounts”, which allows employees to work extra hours and “bank” it or “save” it for use on personal activities. Hours are averaged out over extended periods of time and could be used for paid time off in the form of hours (e.g. to attend a child’s sporting activity), days (e.g. for travel) or even for extended periods for activities such as sabbaticals or early retirement (Messenger, 2011). The same wage rate is applicable for banked hours as for normal hours.

- Compressed work week

A compressed workweek refers to an arrangement in which a fixed number of hours is worked in fewer days (Messenger, 2011). It allows full-time employees to work longer days for part of the week or pay period in exchange for shorter days, or one day off each week or pay period. For example, employees may work for four days of ten hours each and not work at all on the fifth work day of that week (Cioffi, 2007).

- Job sharing and job splitting

Job sharing is a time management strategy for employees in which the tasks and job rewards of a single position is voluntarily shared between two employees, who are both responsible for the tasks and outcomes of a single position. In job sharing or -splitting, certain tasks belonging to one job are split between two workers who will each only be responsible for their own independent tasks (Bostock, 2014; Valcour et al., 2007). Jobs do not always have to be shared or split on a 50/50 basis, but could be divided according to the

needs and preferences of the employees involved, with the benefits divided proportionately (Gottlieb et al., 1998).

- Telecommuting

Telecommuting is an arrangement which allows employees the flexibility of working from a remote location away from the primary workplace for a portion of the workday, workweek or pay period. Employees communicate with the main office via technology (Cioffi, 2007; Landy & Conte, 2007).

Telecommuting schedules could vary widely, from arrangements where employees choose whenever and wherever they want to work remotely to stipulations where they are expected to spend a certain amount of time at a central location such as the main office (Gottlieb et al., 1998). According to Landy and Conte (2007), seen in the light changing preferences of individuals, technological developments and the high costs of business real estate, the number of telecommuters is destined to increase in future.

- Hoteling/Hot desking

Where employees who normally work at home or at a remote destination need formal office space, they could make use of hoteling or hot-desking. Prior arrangements are made with their organisation to book office space, meeting rooms and equipment at the main office or at a branch office. Office space and equipment are shared by several so called guests at different times (Gottlieb et al., 1998) and use is determined by availability.

#### 2.4.2.2 Timing and continuity

Customised careers are frequently marked by discontinuities and periods of withdrawal, often preceded by changed needs brought about by the start of a family. Women, especially those in their 30's, often exit the workforce temporarily for this reason. Many will initially re-enter the workforce in a reduced-hour position and only after a few years resume full-time employment. Even though the pursuit of customisation is a personal choice, the temporary exit from the workforce could place them at some professional disadvantage.

This is based on assumptions of a lack of ambition and commitment compared to their male or female counterparts without children, "who are able to use their prime career building time to focus exclusively on their careers and whose unflagging participation in continuous employment and long work hours are seen as evidence of their superior organisational and career commitment" (Valcour et al., 2007, p. 192).

- Discontinuities and periods of temporary withdrawal

Also called career break policies, extended leave periods are a way for organisations to retain valuable employees who wish to take a temporary break from the workplace (Cioffi, 2007). In this context, employers allow employees to leave their employ temporarily (generally for a period of between one and five years), mainly to fulfil family commitments and responsibilities. Normally, these career breaks are seen as special leave without pay or benefits. However, Messenger (2011) notes that sometimes an administrative arrangement is made regarding the sharp reduction of hours and pay of an employee, but that they may continue to receive some company-specific benefits (e.g. subsidised housing and/or pension benefits). In this situation there will be a clear contractual agreement between the two parties that the employee will return to their employ after the time period has lapsed. If this is not possible, certain monetary consequences will come into play (Cioffi, 2007).

- Opting out

According to Sullivan and Mainiero (2008) there are several reasons why women choose to exit the work domain permanently or semi-permanently, including child- and eldercare demands coupled with full-time working hours. Some choose to opt out of the workforce permanently, while others leave in order to re-enter later or craft a different working environment which fits better with their lifestyle and circumstances at the time. Still others exit the work environment temporarily and combine childcare during this phase with increasing their employability through further education in preparation for when they do re-enter the workplace.

Some women even establish new organisations which reflect their values of delivering meaningful work in a flexible, yet intellectually challenging environment. One such organisation is a New York law firm called Cioffi, Slezak and Wildgrube P.C. which was established in 2005 for this very reason. The main characteristic of this firm is that it values the healthy personal lives of their employees as much as their commitment to their work. They encourage a culture of a healthy work-life merge by establishing and implementing flexible time policies amongst other types of customisation. Incidentally, all their employees are women (Cioffi, 2007).

#### 2.4.2.3 Alternative employment relationship

Exiting the comfort and security of permanent employment with the benefits it brings and thus severing the employment relationship with an organisation could sound like a high-risk

choice to make, yet for many millennial women it is preferable to the time demands and inflexibility fulltime employment brings (Cruz, 2007).

- Agency employment

Agency employment refers to an arrangement where individuals register a profile at an employment agency, which then offer their services to a wide network of organisations on a temporary basis. Compensation is calculated hourly and remuneration is the responsibility of the agency, paid over directly to the individual either monthly or on a job-by-job arrangement (Guest & Sturges, 2007). The flexibility lies in the control over the days or periods they offer their services, e.g. choosing not to work on days they care for elderly parents or during school holidays. Traditionally these services have not included highly skilled occupations (Gallagher, 2005).

- Portfolio careers

An increasing number of skilled and professional workers are opting for portfolio careers, defined by Valcour et al. (2007, p. 192) as “independent contractors who are highly skilled and have decided to work independently for one or many clients at the same time, none of whom assumes the legal responsibilities of an employer”. While some similarities with agency employment do exist, the main difference between the two types of customisation lies therein that in this case there is no wage contract with any employer or agency and tax arrangements are the responsibility of the employee themselves. The benefit again lies in the flexibility of choice and control of time while still engaging in challenging and stimulating work. For organisations the benefits include having the professional, and often specialised - yet frequently expensive - skills available from someone who can work on demand, yet only for the period necessary (Guest & Sturges, 2007; Lindzon, 2015).

## **2.5 Antecedents of pursuing career customisation**

Participants would not view themselves as an overall success if their achievements in the work sphere fundamentally undermined family life. If they could see themselves as having integrated their work and home lives in a way that was broadly healthy and viable, then it was an achievement based on deeply held beliefs about what mattered most to them in life (Bostock, 2014, 23).

Employees choose to customise their careers in order to satisfy needs and preferences related to personal, family and community responsibilities. In addition they attempt to realise

the desire to bring their career into better alignment with their personal values and preferences (Valcour et al., 2007). Yet, antecedents do not only include factors on individual level, but also on household- and organisational level.

### 2.5.1 Individual factors

The choice for a customised career is facilitated by the prevalence of the following factors on the individual level.

- Meaning of work and success

Unlike many extremely ambitious employees functioning in the traditional model, the millennial woman does not necessarily build her identity only on her profession. The notion of work for them is simply that it is a part of their identities and not the reason for their existence. On its own their choice of career does not define them (Garde, 2014).

At the same time, for the millennial woman, work has developed into more than merely a means to a salary. For the higher educated employee it has become a way to consciously express themselves, providing membership opportunities to social groups, satisfying affiliation- and interpersonal contact needs and providing feelings of being useful (Busser, 2012; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).

In addition, as mentioned, employees today define success more as the degree to which they have spent their time in a meaningful way and whether they could find fulfilment in all the roles they play from day to day, than in external criteria of success such as upward mobility and the achievement of the highest possible monetary compensation. Professor Valerie Gibson, Professor of High Energy Physics, Cavendish Laboratory, explains the shift in her meaning of success:

“You CAN do research and have a family. If you decide to go down this route, make sure that you have understanding and support in place from your partner/family/childcare etc. Accept that you will not necessarily have the same career trajectory as others – yet if the quality of your research is excellent that will be success” (Bostock, 2014, p. 93).

- Values, Identity and Preferences

The values found in big, faceless, corporate companies which underlay the culture of so many traditional organisations, are not the same values as those of the millennial woman, who would rather build her identity and career on her personal values and principles. According to some studies by Casey and Alack, 2004; Hewlett and Luce, 2005; Ibarra, 2003

and Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005 (as cited in Valcour et al., 2007, p. 199), “employees’ choices to reduce work time, temporarily leave the workforce or change careers are based on preferences and needs to achieve a greater sense of personal authenticity, to be true to themselves, to enable altruistic activity or to find spiritual fulfilment”. More and more, employees are willing to forfeit monetary benefits and upward mobility in favour of increased flexibility to spend more time as they choose, not only on their personal needs, but also on some form of volunteerism or public service (Gottlieb et al., 1998; Lindquist, 2008).

According to Dorsey (2010), employees will increasingly value those organisations who promote healthy work-life integration by instituting policies and programs that support flexibility and a healthy work-life merge which will assist them in meeting both their workplace and personal needs and priorities.

- Individual Resources

Employees who choose to negotiate a customised career with an existing organisation need leverage. The most common pattern of customisation starts with entry into the workplace in a traditional career and then setting about (consciously or unconsciously) creating leverage over time for customisation negotiation at a later stage. Leverage includes an established track record regarding knowledge and skills, as well as social capital. This is built up through effort and energy spent actively securing a positive employee identity: one with those characteristics valued by the organisation, which could include conscientiousness, punctuality, loyalty, being hardworking and the like (Valcour et al., 2007). Only once this identity is established, would employees feel they have enough in the bank to secure a solid base from which to negotiate customised work arrangements (Cioffi, 2007). Studies show that organisations indeed are more likely to accommodate the customisation needs of employees who have proven themselves worthy and difficult to replace (Valcour et al., 2007).

## 2.5.2 Household factors

Several factors on the home-front can positively or negatively influence the choice to pursue a customised career of which the most impactful include the amount of household resources a family has access to, the extent of the familial responsibilities and the degree of spousal support forthcoming to enable the choice (Messenger, 2011; Paludi & Neidermeyer, 2007).

- Financial resources

Households who do not have concerns about adequate financial resources if there were to be only one income are much more likely to choose customisation (Paludi & Neidermeyer, 2007). Having a partner/spouse whose individual income and benefits are still enough to

serve all the family needs enables the choice for the other partner/spouse. Valcour et al. (2007) makes the obvious irony of this situation clear when they highlight that one individual's opportunity to make use of a customised career in effect depends upon their partner's lack of the same choice.

- Spousal support

Husbands and fathers who see their total expected contribution to the household as being financial, with no physical or emotional support offered in terms of childcare and other household responsibilities, put extra weight on the scale in favour of their wives' preference to customise. A woman who has to work outside of the home as well as take care of almost all of the household responsibilities in addition to demands in terms of community service will experience work-life conflict to a greater extent than one who has spousal support with children and domestic tasks.

Messenger (2011) found in a study that even when men had time to help around the house, they offered their wives limited household support. Unlike their female part-time counterparts, male workers did not spend time saved in reduced hour jobs on family or domestic responsibilities, but on increased leisure activities for themselves.

- Quality childcare

Lack of quality and affordable child care serves as a strong influencing factor for career customisation. While studies found that high quality child care did not have a detrimental effect on children's interpersonal relationships and emotional adjustment, low quality child care was found to undermine children's emotional, social and cognitive development (Boschee & Jacobs, 1997; Caruso, 1996; Hill et al., 2005 as cited in Paludi et al., 2007).

When quality child care is not an option for reasons of availability and/or affordability, mothers often choose customisation in order to take care of the child-caring duties themselves.

### 2.5.3 Organisation factors

The organisation environment in which female workers find themselves could be a significant influencing factor in their choice for or against customisation. Directly put, if they make it impossible for a mother to tend to the demands of both her work and her personal life by demanding sixty hour work weeks with no support, she will most probably feel that she has no choice but to seek an alternative arrangement – either with her current employer or somewhere else.

- Culture

Organisation culture refers to a general (conscious or unconscious) agreement amongst members of a company of what is meaningful which distinguishes it from others. Once an organisation culture becomes institutionalised it can take on a life of its own, apart from its founders or members (Martins & Martins, 2009). The culture in an organisation will thus have a significant impact on the choices organisations make in terms of female-friendly policies.

While it could be seen as noble and honourable for organisations to implement policies to accommodate women in the workplace, the overarching culture in an organisation will still be the driving force behind the attitudes and behaviours of those making the day-to-day decisions. Ron Shaich, the chairman of Panera Bread made the statement at a Conscious Capitalism Conference that “culture eats strategy for breakfast” (Busser, 2012, p. 46), implying that merely writing policies of support for work-life integration is not enough if the culture still demands and rewards sixty hour work weeks. If a traditional career culture is prevalent at the organisation, it is very difficult for a woman to be seen as committed to and serious about her career if her choice to customise her career for personal reasons is still seen as deviant (Paludi et al., 2007). In such an organisation, even though they do exist, women often feel that if they were to make use of such so-called family-friendly policies and programmes will be to their career detriment, which makes them avoid these policies altogether (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008).

- Company Policies

There are various ways in which organisations could communicate their accommodation and support of their workforce’s preferences through their policies and benefits. While all of these policies and services might not generally be applicable or realistic in all organisations, it does speak to an overall attitude of care and support of the organisation. Paludi et al. (2007) lists some examples:

- Time-based strategies, including flexitime, job sharing, telecommuting, reduced hours, flexible time-frames and other examples found in the discussion on types of customisation;
- Information services, include training and information on childcare, children’s external educational activities and services and eldercare, support services on coping strategies;
- Direct services, e.g. on-site childcare, emergency back-up care, on-site healthcare services, car maintenance, dry cleaning, grocery shopping services, on-site breastfeeding facilities, educational services such as on-site maths and science

tutoring for school-going children, holiday school, transport services for children of employees, paid eldercare, fitness facilities.

- Supervisor support and co-worker support

The organisational culture will also have an impact on the attitudes and behaviours of the supervisors and co-workers the employees share their workday with (Paludi et al., 2007; Valcour et al., 2007). If it is the norm to openly take the time needed to care for family and tend to personal needs, women who form part of the workforce will not be perceived as uncommitted if they do the same. Yet if having family needs or preferences are seen as proof of a lack of ambition or commitment by supervisors or co-workers, employees will experience role conflict, which will motivate them towards choosing customisation (Gallagher, 2005; Marais et al., 2014).

## **2.6 Outcomes of career customisation**

The outcomes of the pursuit of customised- over traditional career paths has consequences on the individual-, family- and career level.

### **2.6.1 Individual outcomes**

Landy and Conte (2007) mention that on a psychological level, some flexible arrangements in terms of location such as telecommuting sounds only positive, yet could have the negative effect on the employee of feeling disconnected and disengaged from the office and the working environment. Positive outcomes of career customisation mostly centre on internal reward. Many women who customise experience high levels of personal satisfaction and the belief that adhering to the need and preference of a healthy personal and family life makes it worth the sacrifice. On the other hand, according to Dziech (2007) studies found that despite only limited adherence to customisation preferences and needs of employees in some cases, a positive improvement was recorded in terms of employee morale, satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation.

According to the literature, what makes the difference in the positive or negative experience of customisation for these careerists is their definition of career success (Bostock, 2014; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; Valcour et al., 2007). Those who experienced the outcomes as more negative than positive have a traditional definition of what career success entails: promotions, raises and job titles. Those with a positive experience had personal definitions of what career success meant for them personally and these focused more on learning, social relationships and the content of their jobs (Bostock, 2014, Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008).

### 2.6.2 Family outcomes

Literature on working mothers provide various studies which indicate the positive outcomes not only for children in these families, but for the families as a whole. Not least of these include the additional financial resources a dual income brings which is then available to spend on family needs (Boeri et al., 2007; Paludi et al., 2007).

At the same time there are also studies indicating detrimental effects on children's emotional and relational development when working mothers fail to achieve some form of healthy work-life integration while fulfilling the roles of both employee and mother (Gottlieb et al., 1998; Paludi et al., 2007). Being the child of a working mother is seen as key factor in processes that shape the welfare of children, specifically because of the direct reduction in the time mothers spend with her children if they have work responsibilities (Boeri et al., 2007).

Concerning the pursuit of customisation and the outcomes thereof for the family, Gottlieb et al. (1998) note that research indicates that when conflict occurs between work and family spheres, it is the family which normally pays the highest price. The most prevalent outcome of the customisation of a career on the family is the marked reduction in the interference of work demands on family time (Valcour et al., 2007). The mother's availability to tend to their children's needs is widely indicated as positively impacting the physical health, emotional development and academic performance of children (Boeri et al., 2007; Paludi et al., 2007). Following this thread, customisation seems to afford families the "best of both worlds" - sharing in the increased financial, emotional and cognitive resources brought about by having a working mother in the home, as well as reaping the nurturing, caring and teaching benefits of actually having that mother *in* the home.

### 2.6.3 Career outcomes

"With the demands of motherhood I needed to restrict my time in the lab, and this increased my focus and resulted in my science really taking off".

– Professor Gillian Griffiths, Director of Cambridge Institute for Medical Research, University of Cambridge (Bostock, 2014, p. 95).

When literature is studied on all the positive outcomes of career customisation for organisations, the overwhelming prevalence of traditional careers as opposed to customised careers seems peculiar. Benefits of customisation for organisations include increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and improved attitudes and moral (Gallagher, 2005; Messenger, 2011; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; Valcour et al., 2007). In

addition, with part-time work the employer has the benefit of the employee probably doing a full day's work at a lower salary, bringing about a cost saving for the organisation (Valcour et al., 2007). Telecommuting similarly aids the organisation's bottom line through lower expenditure on office and parking space, but it brings an additional advantage – benefiting the organisations social responsibility image by lowering automobile pollution in the process (Gottlieb et al., 1998).

Job sharing as a specific example of career customisation is beneficial to the organisation in the sense that it allows full time coverage of the work (often with increased productivity), while reducing vacation time for the position. Furthermore, it increases the range of abilities and skills available because of having two individuals committed to the position (Valcour et al., 2007). Having someone on duty permanently is not an unrealistic preference in the minds of customers today. Various industries, including financial- and technological services offer a 24 hour service, partly because of the effect of globalisation and partly because customers now expect to be serviced at a time convenient to them, even if that means in the middle of the night (Gottlieb et al., 1998). Flexible schedules and creative part-time arrangements make it possible for organisations to cover a broader range of time periods catering for high demand, while having fewer members of staff on duty during low demand (Gallagher, 2005; Gottlieb et al., 1998).

From a traditional career perspective Valcour et al. (2007) note that women find themselves choosing customisation at the worst time period possible for their careers for them personally. They have to reduce their labour force participation during their prime career building years, when their co-workers on a traditional career path have the luxury to use this prime time to build theirs. In addition, those who customise their careers by opting for a part-time position have to adapt to disproportionately heavy wage penalties, even though part-time work has been shown to increase hourly productivity (Messenger, 2011, Valcour et al., 2007). Furthermore, Messenger (2011) states that generally customised and part-time jobs are often of lower quality than similar fulltime jobs in their terms and conditions of employment, including opportunities for training and career development. In addition, many women experience that once they opted to work in a part-time job for a period, returning to a full-time position is not easy, as the perception the organisation has of their commitment to their careers has been “tainted” by their choice to temporarily work part-time (Gallagher, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). The impression is that organisations label them as unambitious and not committed to organisation goals and therefore unworthy to be further invested in by the company. For this reason many organisations often choose not to invest the same amount and quality of resources on part-time employees as on full-time

employees. Therefore, many customised careerists struggle with issues such as diminished professional esteem, morale, even disgrace as well as disappointment at the idea of opportunities lost (Valcour et al., 2007).

## 2.7 Conclusion

Propositions for research are drawn based on literature, personal experience and generalisations of empirical studies and are used for two distinct purposes: Initially it serves to form the foundation for a conceptual structure or framework and later it guides the process of data creation and analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008). From this literature review, three specific propositions are drawn, namely:

- The environment in which a millennial women functions has an influence on her choice whether to choose customisation in her career or not;
- Career customisation has a definite impact in many areas of a millennial woman's life;
- Individual factors influence her choice to pursue a customised career as well as her experience of the outcomes of customisation.

Initial frameworks do not show relationships between constructs. Relationships only emerge once themes and links surface from the data during the analysis process and will then be shown in actual conceptual framework. Based on the literature and guided by the propositions, the following initial conceptual framework was originally offered:

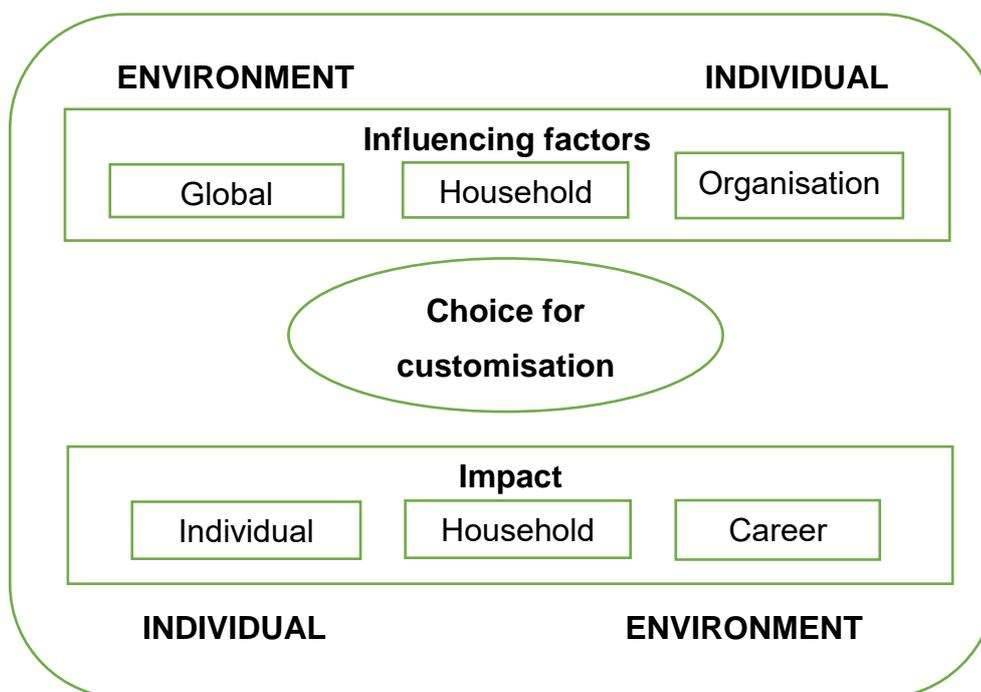


Figure 1. Initial conceptual framework (as adapted from Baxter & Jack, 2008)

The researcher continued with the quest for more specific information into this subject by gathering data from thirteen millennial women active in customised careers and who shared their opinions and views on their experiences. The process followed and the findings of the data analysis are offered in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“It was incredibly exciting to start to appreciate how extraordinarily open-ended intellectual enquiry could be.”

– Professor Mary Beard Professor of Classics, University of Cambridge  
(Bostock, 2014, p. 38).

### 3.1 Introduction

When it comes to research, certain common goals are shared irrespective of academic field, including “the understanding, prediction and control of some phenomenon of interest” (Landy & Conte, 2007, p. 49). In psychology, research is concerned with human behaviour, while research in Industrial Psychology focuses specifically on human behaviour in the workplace. The concern and focus of this study is the increased understanding of the phenomenon of career customisation amongst millennial women in skilled occupations.

### 3.2 Research strategy

In order to explore the subject of this study in depth, the choice was made to use a qualitative research strategy. Salkind (2012) defines qualitative research as social science research which examines and considers human behavioural processes with the use of investigative techniques such as interviews, surveys, case studies and other comparatively personal methods.

Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena, e.g. the world in which we live, why things are the way they are, why people behave the way they do, how people are affected by what is going on around them and the differences between social groups (Salkind, 2012). Differently put, qualitative questions include the how, why and what of research (Myers, 2009).

Three dimensions are focussed on in qualitative research (Nigatu, 2009): Firstly understanding *context*, which refers to exploring how economic, political, social, cultural, environmental and organisational factors influence behaviour; secondly the dimension of understanding *people*, referring to how people make sense of their experiences; and lastly the dimension of understanding *interaction*, which explores how the various actors involved interact with each other.

Lofland and Lofland (as cited in Berg, 2007, p. 101) agree that the emphasis in qualitative research and specifically interviewing, is on obtaining the narratives of issues and

happenings in the participants' own terms so as better to capture the "character and contour" of these accounts. Thus, qualitative research helps to identify context for the behaviour in question as opposed to most experiments which control variables that might complicate the research and in this process, eliminate the context. (Landy & Conte, 2007).

Qualitative and quantitative research are often described as two opposing strategies, as mutually exclusive or as strategies or methods of which one (quantitative) is superior to the other (qualitative) (Landy & Conte, 2007). Shenton (2004) comments that the trustworthiness of qualitative studies is often questionable based on the difficulty of establishing its validity and reliability in the same manner as is possible in quantitative research.

However, researchers of qualitative studies argue that there are measures which could be used to deal with these issues and that often concerns are misplaced when one considers that the conscious goal of qualitative research is to understand people in terms of their own experiences and descriptions of the world (Landy & Conte, 2007). Their view is supported by Boyd (2016) who describes qualitative research as primarily exploratory research used to bring insight and gain an understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations that drive specific human behaviour.

This view has been the guiding force behind the choice of research strategy for this study: to explore and attempt to find insight and a better understanding of the context in which millennial women integrate their lives with their work, as well as to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for their pursuit of customised careers.

The longer term vision is that the insight provided by this study could help guide and direct ideas for potential further quantitative research concerning the work circumstances of millennial women, as well as the attitude of business towards customisation and the possibilities of a more widespread implementation of customisation in broad business to the financial and emotional well-being of both employer and employee.

### **3.3 Research design**

In addition to sharing common goals, all sciences share common methods for research, which broadly includes a process starting with a logical approach to investigation, then data-gathering, moving on to interpretation and lastly the communication of findings (Landy & Conte, 2007; Salkind, 2012). The research design provides the researcher with the overall structure within which the study can be conducted (Landy & Conte, 2007).

Typical research designs in Industrial Psychology are categorised by Spector (2001) as falling into one of three categories, namely experimental, quasi-experimental and nonexperimental. Richards (2010, p. 14) suggests that the researchers ask themselves three questions to guide them to the appropriate design for their study. Firstly, “what are you asking?”, secondly, “how are you asking it?” and lastly “what data will you need to provide a good answer?”

Based on the answers to these questions, the nonexperimental design seemed the most applicable in this study. With nonexperimental designs the researcher gathers data from participants without introducing any form of condition or treatment, as is the case in experimental and quasi-experimental designs (Landy & Conte, 2007). Millennial women employees as the participants in this study, were not assigned to different conditions and were invited to share their experiences on the subject without prior intervention from the researcher.

Various research tools are used in qualitative research. These usually include direct interaction - either on a one-on-one basis, or with individuals in a group setting (Myers, 2009). Qualitative methods of data collection, including semi-structured interviews as utilised in this study, are usually time consuming, which implicates that the process can be expensive. However, this disadvantage is tempered by the fact that this one-on-one data-collection method is mostly focused on a smaller group of individuals than in quantitative research (Myers, 2009; Salkind, 2012).

Qualitative studies benefit greatly from using one-on-one interviews for data-collection, bringing a richer understanding and deeper insight of the phenomenon which the interviewer has access to in such an intimate setting. A further benefit includes gathering knowledge first hand in terms of people’s feelings and perceptions in a given situation (Salkind, 2012). The interviewer is in a position to notice body language, voice intonations, and facial expressions and has the flexibility to respond to it. Polkinghorne (2008) makes an interesting statement concerning the researchers in qualitative research, describing them as the tool through which the required data is collected in order to meet the desired objectives.

According to Landy and Conte (2007), interview content is strongly dictated by the amount of structure built into the conversation. They believe that for research purposes, interviews are most effective when they are structured with a specific set of questions asked in a certain order. Semi-structured interviews allow a researcher to be guided by a series of broad questions related to the specific topic, yet which allow them to prompt for more information if necessary (Moerdyk, 2009).

In the case of this study, the purpose of the interview was to gather in-depth information on each of the participants' circumstances and perceptions. Therefore, the decision was made to create structure for the interviews using an overarching main question, whilst keeping a list of pre-prepared questions ready for guidance if the need occurred for further prompts to facilitate certain specific information. In addition, props or articles symbolising specific information were discussed as part of the interview.

### **3.4 Population**

The population for this research study was women of 39 years or younger by January 2016 and thus part of the millennial generation, who at the time of the study were active in the work domain and who crafted for themselves a customised career in a skilled occupation as defined in the literature review. The participant's gender, age and work circumstances were thus the criteria on which inclusion or exclusion from the study was based.

### **3.5 Selection of cases**

A combination of snowball sampling and purposive sampling was used as the method of selecting participants. Purposive sampling refers to the selection of the most productive sample to answer the research question (Berg, 2007; Nigatu, 2009). Snowball sampling or chain referral sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which there are two steps (Berg, 2007; Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). In Step 1 the researcher tries to identify one or more potential participants in the desired population and then goes on to Step 2, in which these participants are used to find further potential participants until the desired number is met.

As a point of departure for the sampling process to start snowballing, the decision was made to reach out to women in customised careers known to the researcher in a work or social setting and requesting them to identify any other potential participants. The person identifying and suggesting such potential participants and who was thus familiar with the potential candidates, was asked to contact such individual in order to find out whether they would be comfortable being approached by the researcher. Once confirmation of this was received, the researcher made contact with the potential participants and invited them to participate in the study telephonically or by e-mail.

The invitation letter containing the necessary information a potential participant would need in order to base her decision to participate on, was e-mailed to them. Only once such a potential participant approached the researcher to indicate their willingness to participate via

Whatsapp, e-mail or telephonically, were arrangements made for a time and date for the interview. This process was followed until such time as an appropriate number of participants were found and interviewed.

The researcher proposed during the first stage of the study that if a large number of potential participants were identified, there would be a purposeful attempt to include women from the four broad race groups in the country, as well as women in as many types of customisation as possible to enrich the information gathered. By the time thirteen interviews had been conducted, participants included women from the black, coloured and white race groups.

Various industries were represented, namely retail, academia, the health industry, engineering and law and order. Several types of customisation were encountered, including portfolio careers, part-time work, flexible fulltime hours, flexible reduced hours, telecommuting, alternative employment relationships through new businesses in the same industries, alternative employment relationships through new businesses in different industries, elements of time banking and also job sharing.

The participants also included single women, married women without children and married women with children. Participants represented women in age ranges between 25-29, 30-34 and 35-39 years.

By the end of the data-gathering process additional potential participants as identified by snowball sampling proved to repeat the same profiles in terms of the above categories of customisation type, age, marital status, industry and race group. In addition, repetition and recurrence of information started to surface in terms of participants' experiences and perceptions. Considering all of the above as well as the geographical area concerned, the researcher concluded that a saturation point had been reached and brought an end to the process of requesting references from participants for more potential candidates.

Table 1 displays detailed information of the total of thirteen participants who took part in the study.

Table 1

*Sample demographics*

Number	Age range	Marital Status	Children	Industry	Job	Customisation type	Location	Hours	Time	Exit/ Stay
01817	25-29	Married	0	Health	Doctor	Portfolio career	Fixed	Reduced	Flexible	Exit
02818	30-34	Married	1	Health	Physio-therapist	Own business, same industry	Fixed	Reduced	Flexible	Exit
03818	35-39	Married	3	Food	Marketing Consultant	Own business, same industry	Flexible	Reduced	Flexible	Exit
04824	25-29	Married	0	Academia	Industrial Psychologist	Telecommuting, time banking	Flexible	Full	Flexible	Exit
05901	25-29	Married	1	Communi- cation	Research Manager	Telecommuting, flexi-hours	Fixed	Reduced	Fixed	Stay
06901	35-39	Single	0	Health	Doctor	Portfolio career	Fixed	Reduced	Flexible	Exit
07907	35-39	Single	0	Retail	Buyer	Own business, different industry	Flexible	Reduced	Flexible	Exit
08916	30-34	Married	1	Engineering; City Planning	<i>Request to exclude</i>	Part-time	Fixed	Reduced	Flexible	Stay
09920	30-34	Single	0	Academia	Industrial Psychologist	Telecommuting, time-banking	Flexible	Full	Flexible	Exit
10920	30-34	Married	1	Publishing	Editor	Own business, same industry	Fixed	Reduced	Flexible	Exit
11921	30-34	Married	1	Health	Doctor	Job share	Fixed	Reduced	Fixed	Stay
121012	35-39	Married	2	Academia	Industrial Psychologist	Telecommuting, time banking	Flexible	Full	Flexible	Exit
131014	30-34	Single	0	Law and order	Advocate	Portfolio career	Flexible	Full	Flexible	Exit

**3.6 Data collection**

Data collection was guided by the initial framework of constructs which was developed based on the literature review and offered in Figure 1. The method of data collection was a semi-structured interview. Richards (2010, p. 44) comments that an interactive relationship is created when gathering data through interviews, as the data is “made collaboratively by you and those you interview”. Therefore the preparation for and conduct during the interview should be taken seriously, and was. Appointments were made with each participant at a time and place convenient to them and conducive to having an uninterrupted and focused conversation. Locations included offices, boardrooms, lounges in participants’ homes, home offices and coffee shops.

The interviews were started by asking non-threatening general and biographical questions informally, with the purpose of creating a comfortable setting. During this time the researcher reiterated the ethical issues as stated in the invitation letter (Appendix A) and Point 3.10 in this chapter regarding voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and the aim of the research. In addition, the participants were requested to refrain from revealing the identities of organisations referred to during the interview as any such organisation would not be aware that information regarding their practices were revealed and would thus not have had the opportunity to consent to or refuse the use of any such information. However, they were assured that in case of them mentioning the name of an organisation, individual or industry by accident, a “XXX” symbol would be used in all written accounts of the study to make sure the information is not displayed further.

Once settled, the researcher asked the participant to take their time reading the informed consent form (Appendix D), and then sign it if they felt comfortable with the content thereof, giving permission to the researcher to audio record the session and to use information gathered in the interview for the purpose of the study. An information sheet (Appendix E) containing the same relevant information on ethics was given to all participants to take home. This way they had the ethical principles guiding the study, as well as their rights as participants on record. After these matters were settled, the interview commenced.

Audio recordings were made of all interviews using the voice recorder of a Samsung S6 cell phone. The quality of the sound from this device was excellent, notwithstanding the fact that some interviews were conducted in noisy coffee shops. Once recorded, the recorded voice files were downloaded to the researcher’s laptop and then deleted from the cell phone. This was done in order to better manage the safe storing of the raw data. The voice files (and the consequent transcript files) were numbered according to the allocation of a number to the interview as well as the date, e.g. “07907” indicating that this was the seventh interview conducted and that it took place on 7 September. This was done to firstly ensure anonymity and secondly so that an orderly system could be kept.

After consultation with the Ethics Committee of the university, the researcher added a paragraph to the informed consent form in which participants were urged to make contact with a registered counsellor of their choice in case of any experience of emotional discomfort as a result of their participation in the study. They were also offered the services of a registered counselling psychologist, Mrs Christine Cuyler (021 872 1411) in case they felt they were in need of such services. This was done with the assumption that the information would serve as a comfort to the participants.

Only one participant (131014) made a comment in reaction to the added paragraph. For her the information offered had the opposite effect. She voiced her concern about the emotional depth the interview would explore, saying the invitation implicated that emotional trauma could be the result of the interview. In reaction to this the researcher did explain to her that the offer was merely made as a precaution and that the likelihood of it being necessary was very small. She was reminded that she was free to choose not to participate if she felt too uncomfortable. However, she stated that she was quite comfortable to continue. After the interview she stated that she thought the decision-makers should know that the offer for counselling was unnecessary and that it was more likely that it would scare people off than comfort them. The researcher thanked her for sharing her opinion and assured her that her view would be shared in the study.

### **3.7 Research instrument**

In a semi-structured interview used in qualitative research, questions are structured beforehand, yet the sequence and wording of questions could be flexible. It is considered appropriate and not uncommon to make adjustments during an interview when necessary. These adjustments could include reframing questions, changing the order of questions, adding or deleting probes, adjusting the level of language when needed, and/or for the interviewer to answer questions and clarify the meaning of questions when not understood (Berg, 2007). This is because in qualitative research, techniques used are not linear, but rather looping in nature: "The researcher learns from the data, returning to revise or revisit steps taken before that understanding developed" (Richards, 2010, p.7).

A pre-prepared list of questions was used as the research instrument. These questions were guided by the initial conceptual framework (Figure 1). The list consisted of an overarching, open question which was asked at the start of the interview, as well as ten additional questions, which were used to guide the conversation to the point where the necessary information was gathered in the event of all areas not spontaneously being covered by the overarching question.

During the very first interview, as part of the informal conversation, a question was spontaneously put to the candidate regarding obstacles which could be holding organisations back from implementing options for customisation as the norm in their environment. Based on the relevance of her response to the rationale of the study, the researcher made the decision to include this question in all other interviews in a further attempt to add to the thickness of the study.

In addition to using the questionnaire as guide to the interview, the participants were all invited to bring along to the interview two articles or symbols which in their minds represented them and/or their lives prior to, as well as after, their pursuit of career customisation. The motivation for the choice of symbols as well as the meaning the participant attached to the symbols were then explored.

The research instrument is attached as Appendix B.

### **3.8 Data analysis and -interpretation**

There are various procedures available to researchers when analysing data in a qualitative study. For this study an interpretive approach was used, which allowed the researcher to treat human behaviour and social action as "a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning" (Berg, 2007, p. 304).

Richard (2010) is of the opinion that the usefulness of data is increased when specific attention is given to accuracy, context and "thickness" of description. The word thick in this context refers to a concept generally used in ethnography which describes the detailed account of the participants' experiences in which the researcher explicitly notes the patterns and context of relationships and human activity and in which multiple levels of meaning is analysed (Berg, 2007; Holloway, 1997; Silverman, 2011).

According to Richards (2010, p. 73) "qualitative research works up from the data", emphasising that one aim of qualitative research is to learn from the data, allowing ideas to emerge while you are busy with the process of analysing it. This creates a scenario where one could gather knowledge during the analysis of the data of one interview and then take this new-found knowledge into account and use it when gathering data and/or analysing the data of the next interview, as was done with the additional question which was added after the first interview.

Moerdyk (2009) warns of the possibility of confirmatory biases and self-fulfilling hypotheses as possible danger areas when making use of especially unstructured interviews in research. These terms refer to the known situation where people tend to see the information they are expecting or looking for or information which confirms what they have already decided on. This could cause them to ignore information that contradicts their already established views. With this in mind, Richards (2010) argues that in qualitative research, it is more appropriate to think of the gathering of data as it being created collaboratively by researcher and participant, rather than using the term *collected*. This view has some meaning when one considers the notes made during the interview of facial expressions, body language, voice

intonations and other relevant and significant observations. In addition, the interview was conducted in a manner typical of an informal conversation more than the asking and answering of the pre-prepared questions. In this context, it was thus important for the researcher to reflect on her own input in the creation of the data. It is acknowledged that her perceptions and views were not without impact or influence on the outcome of the study.

Data analysis and interpretation was conducted by means of several steps as described by Berg (2007). Firstly, the data was collected using audio recordings of each interview, and by exploration of the meaning of the symbols the participants brought along to the interview, as well as the researcher's observations at the time.

Once data was collected from a participant, the process of analysis was started by attentively listening to the audio version of each interview while making further notes of observations, thoughts, recollections and reflections on what was heard the second time around.

Following this, the researcher transcribed the interview from the audio recording into an MS Word document and e-mailed this transcription to the participant with the request that she reads through the transcription, confirm it as accurate if she believed it to be so and subsequently give permission to the researcher via e-mail or Whatsapp to use the data in the researcher study. This process was repeated with each individual participant.

Once confirmation and permission were received from the participants, the researcher started reading and re-reading each interview in an attempt to gain a deep understanding of each participant's experiences, views and perceptions on the subject. This technique is called "purposive reading" (Richard, 2010, p. 75), and is a process during which the researchers again record their thoughts and reflections on what they read in the transcription for further enhancing the thickness, complexity and richness of the data. This repetition process makes it possible for the researcher to identify links and themes within one interview and across several interviews (Poovan, 2005).

In the next step in the process the researcher identified a framework of idea categories into which the data could be organised and ordered (Nigatu, 2009). The literature review and initial framework (Figure 1) as well as the researcher's general perceptions on the content of the data digested up to this point offered the guidelines in terms of how to categorise views, thoughts, and information emerging from the data into "intellectual bins" (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

The transcriptions were then again read through line by line. The most important or most recurring words, phrases or clusters of ideas were identified through this process (Babbie,

2010; Berg, 2007). These were then highlighted and then arranged within a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet according to idea categories, themes and sub-themes, relationships, commonalities or disparities (Berg, 2007, Poovan, 2005). The information in the idea categories were then represented as coded themes and sub-themes (Richards, 2010), identified based on patterns which emerged from the data.

Following this, the next step involved using the sorted material to isolate specific meaningful patterns and identifying interrelated concepts which emerged from data and which shed light on the subject at hand, as suggested by Nigatu (2009).

Lastly, the researcher used these patterns and interrelated concepts to create a final conceptual framework in the form of a structural model, which indicates all the themes that materialised as the drivers and outcomes of behaviour by the millennial women in pursuing their customised careers as it emerged from the data.

### **3.9 Strategies to ensure quality of data**

In scientific research, the levels of reliability and validity in a study is one indication of the trustworthiness of the research findings. Reliability refers to the consistency with which a test or measure achieves the same result in the same circumstances - in other words, does it have the same outcome every time (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2011; Moerdyk, 2009; Shenton, 2004). Reliability deals with the idea of replicability, referring to the notion that other, future researchers could repeat the same research project and find the same outcomes, making it possible to come to the same interpretations and make the same claims as in the first project. (Silverman, 2011).

The internal validity of a measure indicates whether the test measures what it intends to and claims to measure (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2011; Moerdyk, 2009; Shenton, 2004), while external validity or generalisability indicating the degree to which the findings of one study could also be applicable to other situations (Shenton, 2004). Validity in social research is concerned with the degree to which the research outcomes and claims accurately denotes the social phenomena it refers to. (Hammersley, 1990).

Generally speaking and very simply put, reliability indicates the stability of findings while validity refers to its truthfulness (Silverman, 2011).

A further important concept to be kept in mind in research is objectivity. According to Shenton (2004, p. 72), objectivity in research is associated “with the use of instruments that are not dependent on human skill and perception”, yet recognises that the achievement of

absolute objectivity is very unlikely since even questionnaires and tests are designed by humans who cannot separate themselves entirely from their subjective views and perceptions during the design process.

According to Shenton (2004) the trustworthiness of qualitative research is often seen as questionable by those researchers with a positivist paradigm. This paradigm is based on the assumption that there exists a social reality " 'out there' which is available to be naturally observed and reported on by the researcher as it 'really is' " (Babbie, 2010, p. 304). A naturalist approach on the other hand, is based on telling their stories the way they deeply believe them to be true, not the way they are understood by the researcher (Babbie, 2010).

The concepts of reliability and validity seen from the positivist paradigm cannot be applied in the same way from a naturalist perspective. For this reason, many naturalistic investigators attempt with the use of terminology to distance themselves from a positivistic paradigm. They choose to establish the trustworthiness of their research findings using terms such as confirmability, credibility, dependability and transferability (Babbie, 2010; Shenton, 2004). These concepts could correspond in the following way to criteria used by researchers in quantitative studies (Shenton, 2004).

- Confirmability rather than objectivity
- Credibility rather than internal validity
- Dependability rather than reliability
- Transferability rather than external validity/generalisability

As a first step confirmability can be increased when the researcher admits to their own predispositions and acknowledges this throughout the research process as well as in the research report (Shenton, 2004). Credibility in qualitative research deals with the question whether the findings are an accurate version of the phenomena under study and is very important in establishing the trustworthiness of the study (Shenton, 2004). Two specific methods are used in qualitative research to increase the credibility and confirmability of the study, namely triangulation and respondent validation which both reduce the effect of researcher bias. Triangulation describes the comparison of data collected through different methods to establish whether the different methods still produced the same data (Shenton, 2004).

In the context of this study information was gathered using a semi-structured interview as well as by requesting participants beforehand to bring a physical symbol or article along to the interview which they saw as being representative of them or their lives before and after

their pursuit of the customised career. From this perspective bringing and explaining the choice of the symbol was used to gain an even deeper and richer understanding of their experiences as well as a way of monitoring the consistency of information given during the answering of the interview questions.

Respondent validation is the action of sharing the transcriptions of the interviews with the participants in order for them to verify whether it indeed is a reflection of their views and experiences and is another form of increasing the confirmability and credibility of the study. Through this action the participant has a second chance to consider the answers she gave the first time and whether she still views her answers as a true reflection of her views (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2011; Landy & Conte, 2007).

Respondent validation was pursued in this study when transcripts of the interviews were made and presented to each participant in order for them to confirm that their recorded answers did indicate their views and perceptions and that the impressions they presented during the interview were indeed their intention. An offer was extended to them all to communicate if they wished for any adjustments to be made to the data once they read the transcripts, viewing such changes and the participants' motivations for the adjustments as adding additional thickness to the gathered data.

Three participants, namely 06901, 08916 and 10920 responded to this invitation to make adjustments or emphasise information by return e-mail. The requests by 06901 and 08916 were based on a need to clarify facts or better explain some factual detail, e.g. promotion possibilities or the timeline of the narrative. Participant 06901 also indicated that wanted to make adjustments to her conversational style during the interview:

"I edited the transcript. I don't always finish my sentences and use *do you know what I mean* far too often, so I just want to make some points clear. Some things I've edited may seem silly to you but to me I like to make sure it's my story and the time line is correct."

Participant 08916 requested her job type to be removed from the transcript as the small number of women in such a position in South Africa might make her identifiable:

"As moontlik hou die JOB seksie leeg. Daar is bitter min XXX'e so dis bietjie telling. "

["If possible, please keep the JOB section empty. There are very few XXX's, so it is a little telling."]

The requests from both these participants were adhered to.

Participant 10920 did not request any adjustments to be made, but did wish to emphasise a specific point:

“Thank you again for your patience with my tardiness! I've given the transcript a good read-through and I'm happy for it to be used as is. There is only one thing I'd like to add really, something that I touched on during the interview but would like to emphasise: ...” (Continuation of quoted text on productivity to be used during discussion in Chapter 5).

None of the other participants sent any requests for adjustments or additional notes to be added to their transcripts and all confirmed the transcripts as accurate presentations of their views and experiences. Permission was granted in all cases to use the data in the study. In this way, confirmability, credibility and dependability were increased in that the participants confirmed that the interview did measure what it intended to measure – their views, perceptions and experiences and that these were confirmed on a second occasion.

The dependability of a study refers to the degree to which it will be possible for future researchers to repeat the study with the same outcomes (Shenton, 2004). In an attempt to increase dependability, Berg (2007) argues that specific attention should be given to the process and system of data collection, reduction and transformation which will be used. This will ensure data is systematically documented and analysed, which will make it possible in principle for the study to be replicated and therefore will increase its dependability.

Silverman (2011, p. 361) proposes that increased dependability is more likely if all interviews are audio-recorded and if a standardised system of low inference descriptors are used during the interview. Low-inference descriptors attempt to record observations in terms as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what people say, as well as notes on pauses, body language and other non-verbal behaviour. A set of transcription symbols decided upon beforehand give context and meaning to transcriptions, e.g. (.) indicates a tiny gap in conversation of less than a second in the phrase *before I get (.) treatment*. This tiny pause could be significantly meaningful in the context of the interview and thus should be recorded. Silverman (2011) argues that it is these small details that help make it more convincing when the validity of the research has to be argued.

To increase the level of dependability, the researcher, as already indicated, made audio recordings of each interview (with the permission of the participant) to ensure accuracy of

information, while a system of low-inference descriptors was used to record observations. See Appendix C attached for a list of the low-inference descriptors.

The concept of transferability is concerned with the applicability of the findings of a study on other situations. According to Shenton (2004) many authors propose that in qualitative research, it is not for the researcher to determine the degree of applicability of their study to others, but rather the responsibility of the reader to determine to which degree they are confident to transfer the results and conclusions of a study to their situation. For this reason the thickness of information provided through sufficiently detailed and precise descriptions of the subjective experiences of the participants in the study becomes of vital importance for the consideration of applicability or transferability to be realistically possible at all.

In this study, the researcher attempted to record and provide detailed descriptions and information of the experiences of the participants, not only by deeply engaging in the relevant literature at the start of the process, nor by merely preparing with seriousness and consideration the interview questions in order to gather relevant and meaningful information. It was also done by conducting the interview with intense engagement - reflecting, probing and querying information and answers in an attempt to fully understand the views, opinions and experiences of the participants. This implicated that the interviews – while guided by pre-prepared questions – were conducted in a way which suggested an informal conversation in which participants were encouraged to share that which they believed were important and relevant to the subject.

In addition, specific factual information as well as participants' perceptions and opinions were viewed from the circumstances of their particular world in terms of e.g. marital status, family structure, industry, organisation culture and more if those circumstances and their context give meaning and a better understanding of their opinions and behaviour. Only because of all these reasons is it possible for the researcher to offer the findings in a sufficiently thick and layered manner for other researchers to be in a position to assess the applicability of this study to their own investigations and explorations.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

Babbie (2010) mention two specific areas of concern regarding the ethics of qualitative research which were consciously adhered to in the study. These were firstly the concern for the impact of subjective judgement of the researcher and secondly the protection of the participants' privacy rights. Regarding subjective judgement, Babbie (2010) encourages the researcher to manage this issue through a conscious awareness of the values and

preferences upon which their views are based, as well as deliberately and strictly adhering to the established data collection (creation) and analysis techniques.

In terms of confidentiality of the participants' identity, Berg (2007) considers it the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the privacy rights of the participants are respected. They further clarify the distinction between confidentiality and anonymity, where confidentiality refers to the active attempt to conceal or remove any elements in the research records which could identify the participant, while anonymity means that the participant is not named at all in any of the records.

The audio recordings of the interviews were downloaded directly from the cell phone onto the laptop of the researcher after which it was deleted from the cell phone to lessen the possibility of the raw data falling into the wrong hands in case of the theft or loss of the cell phone. The laptop on which the data was stored was locked away in the home of the researcher at all times and as mentioned, a numbering system as opposed to names and surnames was used for identification purposes.

Only in one instance were the first names of participants used during the study, namely in the original invitation letter which was e-mailed to them in which all relevant information regarding the study was explained. This decision was taken in order to connect with the potential participant on a more personal level as they were invited to become part of the study. Once participants indicated their decision to participate, the invitation letters containing their first names were deleted as there was no reason for these to be kept on record.

Even if not named at all, it is sometimes possible for participants to be identified by others based on the specific nature of the information shared and this situation should therefore be managed in order for anonymity to be respected. According to Babbie (2010) this could include using pseudonyms, or even suppressing details such as age, gender, race, location of work or other facts which could harm the privacy of the participant.

Even though participants were requested not to identify organisations or individuals in the interviews, on some occasions some participants did make mention in passing of their current or previous organisations, named individuals, or identified towns, cities or industries which, when the interview is read as a whole, could make it possible for certain organisations to be identified. When this occurred in the interviews, the researcher actively concealed the identities of such individuals, organisations and/or communities in the transcripts by simply replacing the identifiable information with the symbol XXX.

In cases where the naming of the industry added to the thickness of the descriptions, yet did not make the identification of the organisations known, the name of the industry was left as given. When necessary, a note of explanation was given if the meaning of the information supplied was unclear by not supplying the replaced information. An example was in a case where the name of a town was mentioned in order to emphasize its small size and distance from an urban area, and the effect that had on the nature of the participant's work schedule. The researcher still replaced the town name by XXX, but made an explanatory note in the transcription. If this was not done, the meaning of the information would have been lost.

Salkind (2012) is of the opinion that informed consent is the most important requirement in terms of the ethical considerations of research and that written consent should be gained from each participant involved in the study. Specific information that should be contained in such a document of written consent include the following (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2011; Salkind, 2012):

- The purpose of the study
- Relevant information on the researcher
- Rights of the participants in terms of anonymity and confidentiality
- Voluntary participation and an offer of withdrawal irrespective of time or reason
- Withdrawal of data if requested by the participant
- Potential benefits to the researcher and society
- Potential harm or risk to the participant
- The safe storage of data

In the invitation letter (Appendix A), some of the above points were already covered in an attempt to provide information to potential participants who were at the time still in a process of making a choice for participation. For reasons of accuracy and record, some of these issues were again discussed in the informed consent form (Appendix D) as well as the information letter (Appendix E) which was provided to the participant to take away with them after the interview as a matter of record. The participants were given ample time to read through the informed consent form and ask clarifying questions regarding the content. Only participant 06901 requested information to be clarified, specifically with regards to the phrase *you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study*. The meaning of the phrase was explained by the researcher and accepted by the participant. Once the participants read the consent form, indicated that they understood the content and expressed their comfort with all the information, they were

requested to indicate this with their signature. None of the participants declined to sign the form.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

“Maybe we feel people are at their most authentic when they are, in fact, reproducing a cultural script.” (Silverman, 2011, p. 177).

It is extremely important to the researcher that the findings in this study are based on the authentic stories of the participants' experiences and not on information shared based on a cultural script they felt themselves compelled to follow. For it is only based on authentic information that the hope for the study could be fulfilled in that a process might be started which could eventually lead to a workable structure of employment which fits with the way in which the lives of a diverse workforce unfolds.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

In order to present the findings in a logical and meaningful way, a framework summary of the themes and sub-themes which emerged from the data is offered. These should serve as background to the more detailed presentation of each participant's interview results, as well as the in-depth explanation and discussion of the identified themes and how these relate to patterns and disparities which emerged from the data.

### 4.2 Sample demographics

Thirteen millennial women in various forms of skilled occupations formed part of the study. Participants represented both the married and single communities of women. Four women were single, while nine women were married. Of the nine women who were married, seven had children, while the other two mentioned that they did plan on having children at a later stage. Five of the seven mothers had one child, with one woman raising two children and one woman, three children. The ages of the children in all families with one child only, were three years and younger. The children in the families with multiple children were of nursery- and primary school age.

The ages of the participants fell into three ranges. Three women were part of the 25–29 age range, while five women were part of the 30–35 age range and four women were part of the 35–39 age range.

Several industries and occupations were represented in the sample. Four participants worked in the health profession - three doctors and one physiotherapist. Three women are industrial psychologists, two of which are employed in Academia and one in industry. The other six participants all represent different industries and occupations. One participant works in publishing as a writer and editor, and another is a Human Resources professional while one participant is a marketing consultant in the food industry. In addition there was one participant active in the engineering industry, one advocate and one retail buyer who changed her occupation in the process of customisation. This participant was the only one who made the decision to resign from her organisation as well as change her occupation in order to successfully negotiate customisation. Nine participants' customisation journey included leaving their previous organisations, but continuing in their current occupations in a customised set-up, while only three participants successfully negotiated customisation in the same occupation and in the same organisation. In nine of the thirteen cases, customisation

included the reduction of set work hours. Seven of these nine women also enjoy flexibility of work location, while two still work at a fixed location. Four women still work full hours, but in all four these cases, there is flexibility of location and time-frame in which the work is expected to be done.

An interesting fact of the group was the amount of additional formal qualifications most of the participants were currently pursuing or have already pursued previously. Three participants completed or were busy with Diplomas in different areas of study additional to their existing qualifications. One participant already complete a PhD, while another was currently working on her PhD. Four participants had Masters Degrees as their highest qualifications, while one planned on handing in her Master's thesis one month after the interview. The remaining three participants were the advocate, whose pupillage could also be seen as an additional qualification, and two doctors, who both mentioned that if opportunities for specialising crossed their paths later in their lives, they would seriously consider it. This unintentional occurrence confirmed the trend found in theory and mentioned in 2.2.1 of the increasing education level of women in the modern workplace.

### **4.3 Framework of themes and sub-themes**

Recurring thoughts and views identified from the data-analysis were arranged into seven themes, each broken down into sub-themes. These were linked to interview questions, in turn related to the original research questions and study rational. In Table 2 these relations are shown in a summarised framework, connecting themes, sub-themes and theory.

Table 2

*Framework of themes and sub-themes*

Research questions; rationale of study	Interview question	Main themes and sub-themes	Code	Patterns & links with theory	
<b>ANTECEDENTS</b>					
What are the forces that drive millennial women to choose something other than a conventional work setup and rather customise their career circumstances to suit their personal preferences and needs?	Q2: Please tell me about the extent of work/life conflict and work/life enrichment you experienced when you were employed in a conventional career setup.	<b>MILLENNIAL MIND-SET</b>	1	Theme correlates with literature in 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 2.5.1.	
			1a		
			1b	Links found between 1a and 1c, 1b, 2a, 6a, 1e, 6b, 3d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 1b.	
			1c	1b and 4a, 1d, 2c, 5a-c, 1c	
			1d	1c and 3d, 2a, 1a, 1b, 1d, 1e, 6a, 7a, 7b	
	Q3: What were the circumstances which lead you to decide on career customisation in terms of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your personal needs and preferences?</li> <li>Your household needs and preferences?</li> <li>Organisational circumstances and demands?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-management and time spent meaningfully</li> <li>• Personal needs</li> <li>• Attitude of entitlement (demanding)</li> <li>• Meaning of success</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	1e	1d and 1b, 3d, 5b, 1b, 1e and 2a, 1e, 1a, 6a	
			<b>SOCIAL CULTURE</b>	2	
			2a	Theme correlates with the literature discussion in 2.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.5.1, 2.5.2.	
			2b		
			2c	Links found between 2a and 7a, 2b, 1d, 5a-c, 7a, 1e; 2b and 5b, 7c, 1d, 2a, 6a; 2c and 2a, 2b, 7c	
Q4: How did the development of technology facilitate your choice to customise, if at all?					
		<b>ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE</b>	3		
		• Leverage	3a	Theme correlates with literature in 2.1, 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.	
		• Support from superiors	3b		
		• Support from colleagues	3c	Links found between 3a and 3b, 3d, 6a	
		• Inflexible rules and policies	3d	3b and 3d, 1a, 1b 3c and 2a, 2c, 7a 3d and 7a, 1d, 6a	

Table 2 (continued)

*Framework of themes and sub-themes*

Research questions; rational of study	Interview question	Main themes and sub-themes	Code	Patterns & links with theory
<b>OUTCOMES</b>				
Once chosen, what are the outcomes of choosing a customised career for themselves, their families and also their careers and the organisation?	Q5: What were the outcomes of your decision to customise your career in terms of the gains and losses you experienced	<b>INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	4	Theme correlates with literature in 2.6.1.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as an individual?</li> <li>• in terms of your family?</li> <li>• in terms of your career?</li> </ul>		4a 4b	Links found between 4a and 5a-c, 6a, 6b 4b and 1a, 6a, 6b
	Q6: Do you experience work-life conflict- and enrichment differently since customisation? How?	<b>HOUSEHOLD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housekeeping management</li> <li>• Family needs</li> <li>• Enrichment</li> </ul>	5 5a 5b 5c	Theme correlates with literature in 2.1, 2.3.2 and 2.6.2.  Links found between 5a and 2b 5b and 1a, 5a-c, 1b 5c and 1b, 5a
Did this alternative path bring them the joy and satisfaction they expected? Or, differently put – was it worth it?	Q7: Have the losses of crafting a customised career been worth the gains for you?			
	Q8: If you could choose again, would you choose differently? If so, why? If not, is there anything you would do differently in the process of crafting your customised career?	<b>ORGANISATIONAL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Productivity &amp; commitment</li> <li>• Return on investment</li> </ul>	6 6a 6b	Theme correlates with literature in 2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.6.3.  Links found between 6a and 1a, 1b, 1d, 1e 6b and 1b, 4a, 1a, 6a, 2a-c
Q10: What do you think are the losses for organisations who only have the traditional/conventional career model?				

Table 2 (continued)

*Framework of themes and sub-themes*

Research questions; rational of study	Interview question	Main themes and sub-themes	Code	Patterns & links with theory
<b>CHANGE</b>				
How can employers attract and retain committed and loyal employees amidst the increased diversity of the workforce in terms of gender and generation?	Q9: What do you think organisations could do differently to accommodate millennial women in the workplace?	<b>EMBRACING THE REALITY OF A CHANGING WORKPLACE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing change</li> <li>• Further investment</li> <li>• Alternative processes and policies</li> </ul>	7	Theme correlates with literature in 1.1 and 1.2.
	Q11: Which obstacles could be holding decision-makers in the workplace back from implementing customisation or flexibility as a norm?		7a 7b 7c	Links found between 7a and 1e, 2a, 2b, 3d 7b and 6b 7c and 1a, 2a, 1e, 1b, 2b, 6a, 3c, 7a, 1b, 2a, 2c

The framework shown in Table 2 should serve as background information with the introduction and brief discussion of the contributions of each individual participant. Its contents will be discussed in detail thereafter.

#### 4.4 Participants' individual contributions in context

As previously discussed, in qualitative research the individual's narrative helps to identify the context for the behaviour in question as opposed to most experiments which control variables that might complicate the research and in this process, eliminate the context. (Landy & Conte, 2007). The context within which the behaviour takes place provides better understanding and insight into the reasons for opinions, perceptions and decisions and is therefore of vital importance to make sense of the information given. For this reason, before any data could sensibly be discussed, an introduction of each participant is in order. In Table 1 the sample demographics of all the participants have already been summarised and briefly clarified.

A short summary is now offered of each interview, followed by a discussion of the symbols brought along by the women to the interviews, as well as their motivations for electing the specific articles chosen as representation of them or their lives before and after

customisation. Thereafter, a bar chart indicating the frequency with which each participant shared information and opinions categorised by theme will be shown to complete the general contextual information of each participant. After the presentation of each participant individually, the themes and sub-themes as they emerged as a whole, with patterns, links and disparities found amongst them, will be discussed.

#### 4.4.1 Participant 01817

This participant falls within the 25 – 29 age range and is qualified as a medical doctor. She has been married for three years and has no children yet, although she does plan on starting a family within a year or two. Being employed full time in a hospital she was overwhelmed by the number of hours they were expected to work, (80 hours per week), and the superiors' complete lack of empathy with personal and household needs and demands. As a result she took the decision to end her formal relationship with the institution, despite several factors motivating her to stay, including the fulfilment of the work and that she contributed to society, the fact that she needed the financial rewards and her enjoyment of the collegial interaction.

*“Want die werk self het ek (.6) actually baie geniet. Dit was nie vir my sleg om daar te werk nie, ek het gehou van my kollegas daar, dit het vir my gevoel ek doen goeie werk en ek contribute en elke ding, maar jy kom op 'n punt wat jy net (.4) oor dit raak, want dit is net die HEEL tyd en dit is letterlik, jy reël nie jou werk om jou lewe nie, jy reël letterlik jou lewe rondom jou werk.”*

[“Because I (.6) actually enjoyed the work quite a lot. I liked working there, I liked my colleagues and it felt like I did good work and contributed and so on , but you get to the point where you just get (.4) over it, because it is just the WHOLE time and it is literally – you don't adjust your job around your life, you adjust your life around your job.”]

She opted to create a more flexible and sustainable work environment for herself by doing locums at various hospitals and private practices in her area. However, at first there were not too many of these opportunities and she was very surprised that the very few working hours she worked at first left her feeling very depressed. Because her life was completely taken up by work before and she does not have children, she realised that she did not know what to do with all her time at first. At one point she felt that her skills and knowledge were wasted after all those years of studying to become a doctor.

This brought her to the point of realisation that although she could not and would not put herself in a position again where she was in an environment where not even a person's death could be enough reason to stop and reflect, she did need the stimulation, social engagement and feelings of fulfilment and value which contributing in a work environment brought. However, she also realised that she does not share the opinion of previous generation decision-makers who still believe that working excessive hours is the only way for a doctor to contribute to society. For this reason she decided to continue working in a portfolio career thereby making her medical contribution through choosing locum work which suit her needs and preferences. In addition she decided to increase her employability with further formal studies, preparing herself in this manner for setting up her own practice in the future. This choice has left her happy, content and satisfied.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation - Stethoscope*

The participant stated that the stethoscope symbolises something around your neck which can suffocate you, yet it is also an instrument which is used to save lives. As a doctor you cannot do your work without it, yet it has no place in your home-life. Her life as a fulltime doctor suffocated her and left no time for a healthy home-life (Figure 2).

*After customisation - Wedding ring*

Her wedding ring is light, bright and something which can fit in everywhere. While she cannot do "life" with a stethoscope around her neck, she can work very well with her wedding ring on her finger. After the initial difficulty in adjusting to a less demanding work- life with more leisure time, she now sees her life as one in which work and home can comfortably run in parallel (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Stethoscope



Figure 3. Wedding ring

The sub-themes which emerged from the interview with participant 01817 are displayed in Figure 4.

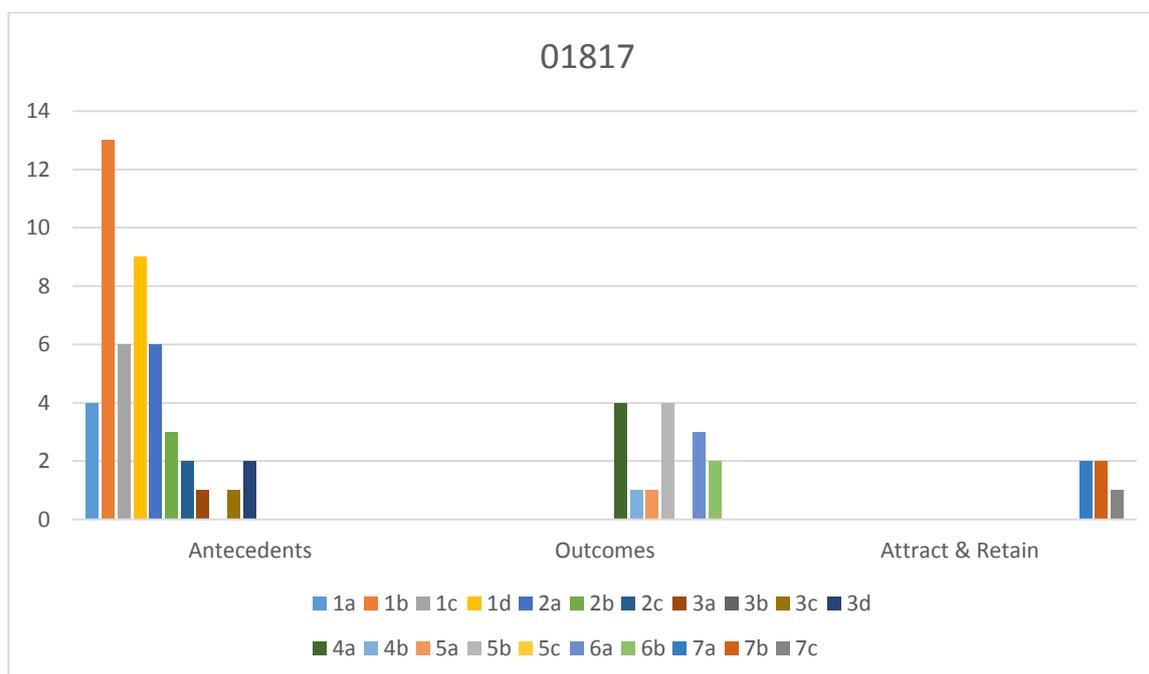


Figure 4. 01817 Individual text to sub-theme

Antecedents sub-themes indicated in this participant's interview and confirmed in her symbol description are specifically as 1b and 2d (*personal needs and meaning of success*), which emerged strongly during the interview. Outcomes which featured strongly were spread evenly between 4a and 5b (*emotional well-being and family needs*). This confirms her *personal need* (1b) to create a warm and happy home for herself, her husband and her future family. Her view on the way in which employees could be employed more sensibly featured highest on 7a and 7b (*managing change and further investment*), which shows her view on the insensibility of replacing existing employees whose needs change simply because the supply of doctors willing to work exorbitant hours is so high.

#### 4.4.2 Participant 02818

Participant 02818 is a registered physiotherapist and falls within the 30 – 34 age range. She is married and has one daughter of pre-school age. Pre-customisation she was involved in sport physiotherapy and travelled with national sports teams who participated internationally. She also served on executive committees of national sports federations. The position involved full-time commitment and international travelling which occurred for days or weeks mostly on an annual, two yearly or four yearly cycle.

With the birth of her daughter, the work demands came into conflict with the family demands to such an extent that she opted to exit that specific work environment. She customised her career by starting a physiotherapy practice from home and buying a second practice in another town as well. She appointed other physiotherapists at the second practice and only sees patients herself during the morning hours in order for her to spend afternoons with her daughter.

Her employees are encouraged to be smart about how they use their time, e.g. to go to the gym when there are no patients to see and to use their time at the gym to network instead of sitting idly during work hours but then having to go to the gym to stay healthy after hours during their family time.

Initially this participant felt a great loss when she chose to exit the high performing environment which is characteristic of international sporting competition. Yet she could not bring herself to stay in that environment and live with the detrimental effect she believes it could have on her daughter. With this realisation she came to the conclusion that your view of success and meaning could be different in different phases of your life and that in this phase of her life her time is best spent in a customised career which leaves time for her family too. The fact that she now tends to both these spheres makes her happy and content.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation - Olympic medal*

The medal symbolises her life before customisation as a token of focus, commitment and excellence, which facilitates success on the highest level possible (Figure 5).

*After customisation – Toy elephant and Olympic medal*

The soft toy represents the “deal” she has with her daughter that she will take the soft toy with her wherever she goes when her daughter is not with her, e.g. to work. To her this symbolises that when she had her daughter, she could never again function as if she were alone – in all actions and decisions her daughter was there with her. However, she still sees the medal as a symbol of her life now, albeit in a different way. After customisation it symbolises the meaning and fulfilment participation and being healthy can bring; that sometimes, taking part and staying in the game is the achievement. Now, success is striking the balance between all the spheres of her life – something which not everyone gets right. That is the performance she now strives for and this brings a huge amount of satisfaction (Figure 6).

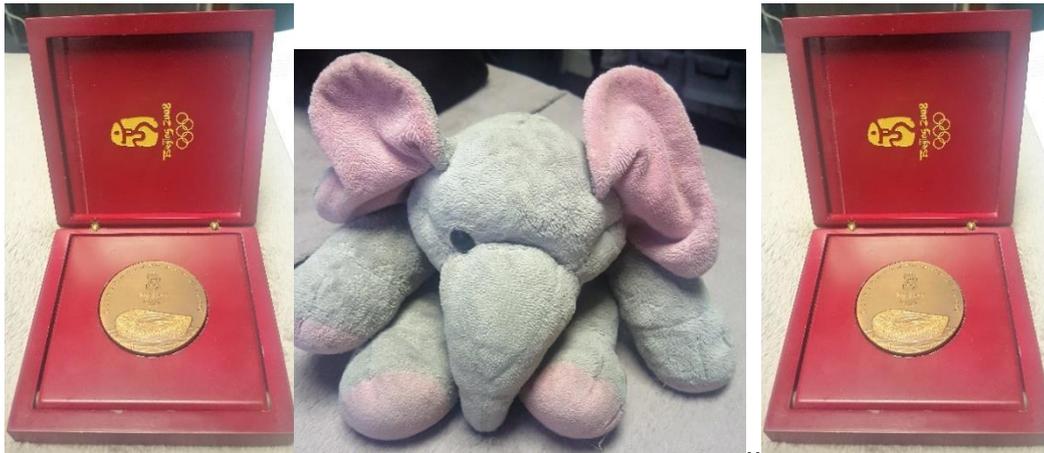


Figure 5. Olympic medal    Figure 6. Toy elephant and Olympic medal

The sub-themes which emerged from the interview with this participant are shown in Figure 7.

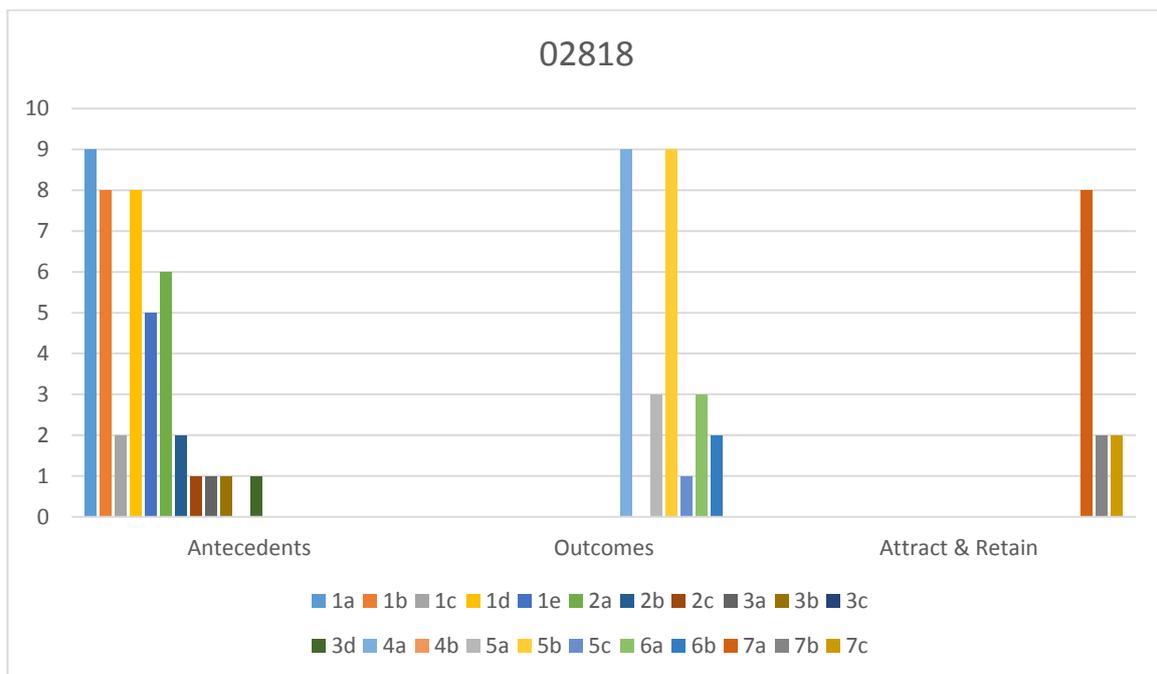


Figure 7. 02818 Individual text to sub-themes

Sub-themes 1a, 1b and 1d (*self-management and time spent meaningfully, personal needs and meaning of success*) were indicated during the interview as the strongest antecedents of her pursuit of customisation – themes confirmed by the discussion she offered for the choice of her symbols.

The outcomes of customisation most valued by her are shown in the strong indication of 4a and 5b (*emotional needs and family needs*). It is also this participant’s view that valuable

employees will be retained at an organisation if the *changes* necessary to satisfy their needs are *managed* strategically (7a) by organisations instead of being avoided because of an attitude of resistance to change.

#### 4.4.3 Participant 03818

This participant falls within the 35 – 39 age range. She is married with three children and has a unique skillset with experience and tertiary qualifications in marketing as well as food technology.

Pre-customisation she was employed full time in a senior management position in the marketing department of a large and dynamic organisation. The realisation that she was leaving herself and some of her family responsibilities behind as a result of mostly work demands motivated her to go and see a career psychologist to help her cope with the emotional turmoil this brought about.

After a process of self-search, she came to the conclusion that she was living an unhealthy life and that the core reason was that she was overwhelmed with “work-family-self” conflict. She named the main reason for this the inflexibility of her working environment in terms of working hours and location.

The preferred scenario which she tried to negotiate with the organisation included that she stayed on with them in the same position, but that the hours she spent physically at the office were adjusted to 8h30 – 14h00, (as opposed to 8h – 16h30). This meant that without the lunch hour, she would be at the office for only 5.5 hours out of the normal seven hours, with the commitment that she would telecommute and be available through technology for the remaining hours of the day.

She shared that she was known in the organisation as a highly ambitious and committed person. She enjoyed the power, thrill, excitement and fulfilment which she experienced in her managerial position in this dynamic organisation. She believed that the fact that the organisation knew her and her work ethic, commitment and high levels of productivity would make her request easy for them to accept, or at least consider. However, her request was met with a rigid and almost shocked refusal. Even though they were more than keen to keep her there, they simply could not get their heads around the change in policy this way of working would imply.

Because the organisation was not willing to accommodate her needs, she resigned and started her own marketing company, securing her first contract with the very same organisation as her first client. She serves them and her other clients mostly between 8h00

and 13h00 in the mornings (she now works from home) and also tends to her family and personal needs, which includes a far healthier lifestyle concerning exercise and rest.

She likens her resignation from the organisation to a very sad and traumatic divorce which left her devastated with grief at the time. However, today she is so happy and content with the decision she made, even believing that there is spiritual meaning in the decision not to only invest in one aspect of life, but to care for your personal needs, the needs of your husband and family and also your intellectual needs.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation – Paperweight gift from daughter*

The participant shared that she was so focussed on work and her commitment to the organisation that it became her whole life. Her daughter gave her the gift, saying that in this way her mother had something physical at work to “remind” her she had a family too. She felt at the time that her life consisted of work and of a reminder of a family (Figure 8).

*After customisation - Glass paperweight gift to herself*

Once she resigned from the organisation the participant actually left her daughter’s gift behind at her old office. To her it symbolised that during her time there she had to keep a “family-substitute” with her as there was no time for the real family or herself. For her new office at home she bought herself a glass paperweight she personally found beautiful. It symbolises to her that in her new life there is more than enough time for work and family, yet that now there is also the time and the freedom to also tend to her own needs (Figure 9).



Figure 8. Gift from daughter



Figure 9. Gift to self

The sub-themes which were identified from the interview with this participant are displayed in Figure 10.

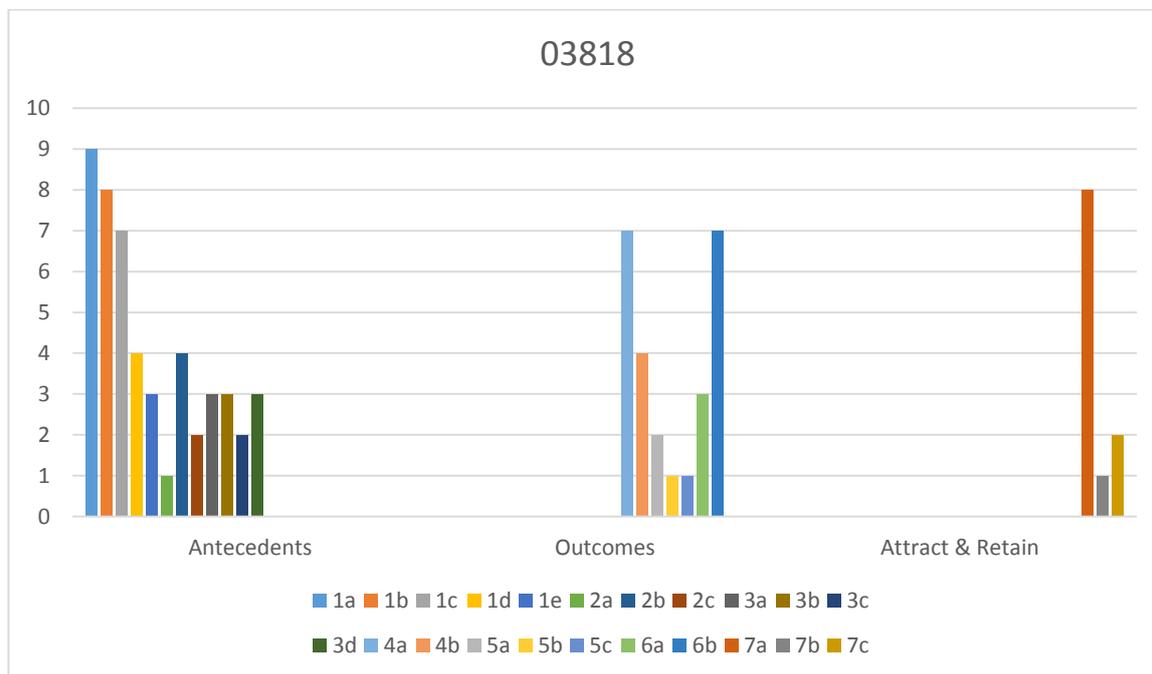


Figure 10. 03818 Individual text to sub-theme

The antecedents which shone through strongly in the participant's interview are 1a and 1b (*self-management and time spent meaningfully*), confirming the motivation for her choice of symbols. A demanding or *entitled attitude* (1c) was also noticed during the interview. This could be seen in the context of her frustration with her *superiors' lack of support* (2b) and inability to acknowledge her past value and worth to the organisation and their inflexibility to accommodate needs of her new life phase.

Outcomes centred on the *emotional well-being* (4a) she experienced since customisation, as well as her view on the loss for the organisation in terms of the *return on their investment* of her over the years (6b) when they did not even try to accommodate her.

She felt strongly that it is the decision-makers in the organisation's resistance to change which makes it impossible for them to embrace and *manage the changes* (7a) brought about by a changing workforce.

#### 4.4.4 Participant 04248

Participant 04248 is a married Human Resource professional employed in Academia. She has no children and falls within the 25 – 29 years age range.

Her time spent at the office are determined more by work load and responsibilities than by set work hours. She is also allowed to telecommute when needed and is never checked up on by management to see if she is working. This makes it possible for her to not only tend to her work responsibilities, but also household responsibilities in terms of housekeeping, animals and general administration - sometimes in what would traditionally have been viewed as work hours. Her customisation type could also in a sense be likened to time banking.

She views herself as a highly committed and productive individual who takes her work responsibilities very seriously. Despite the lack of micro-management and control over her movements by management – some would say because of it – she is of the opinion that she actually spends more time and effort with her work responsibilities now than when she was working in industry full time in a setup where strict and set work hours were held. Despite this, her levels of exhaustion and anxiety were definitely higher in the inflexible environment, where she was not given space to self-manage her time. In addition her physical and mental health suffered, leaving her feeling utterly overwhelmed.

She stated that the flexible work environment is an excellent fit with her as autonomy is one of her biggest needs. However, she did mention that she had to adjust to the alternative reward system she encountered in Academia as opposed to industry. In industry she was rewarded mostly by monetary means and also by words of affirmation when work was done well. In Academia she found that praise for good work did not necessarily take the form of verbal compliments or material rewards, but would rather be expressed by colleagues and management through further inclusion and involvement in more projects and tasks. These types of offers or orders to get involved in additional projects was a subtle sign of respect and came to be seen by her as a message that her efforts were valued. Her view of what constituted success and what the meaning of success was changed and became much more focused on personal self-actualisation than external rewards.

She stated very clearly that since she moved into this space where she is allowed to self-manage her time and effort, she has become a much happier person who is more productive and whose contribution to all levels of her life has become far more substantive and valuable to others and far more meaningful to herself.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation – Heap of diaries*

To the participant the heap of diaries symbolised a life which is heavy, cumbersome, and limited to work only. It is also limiting in terms how it is used and how it has to be managed -

an entry can only be done on one page unless you go to the trouble of copying it by hand on another page. It is also limiting in terms of only being used as a diary – it has a single purpose: work responsibilities. This symbolised that there was no space for her personal life in her work life. In addition she mentioned how pen and paper symbolise an old way of keeping record, not the way in which most people in today's environment would keep track of their lives (Figure 11).

*After customisation – Cellular phone*

The participant stated that her cell-phone symbolises her life after customisation in various ways. Firstly is with us whether we are busy with work or with life. It is used to make both life and work easier and can seamlessly be used to cross over from work to life and back. To her it also symbolises the flexibility of location of work brought about by technology. Furthermore, the sky is the limit in terms of possible uses: it is used not only as a telephone but also as a computer, still camera, video camera, GPS, torch and much more. To her the cell phone symbolises the new way in which it is possible for many human beings to work – unattached, yet with limitless information and knowledge literally at your fingertips (Figure 12).



*Figure 11. Heap of diaries*



*Figure 12. Cellular phone*

The sub-themes which emerged from the interview with this participant is displayed in Figure 13.

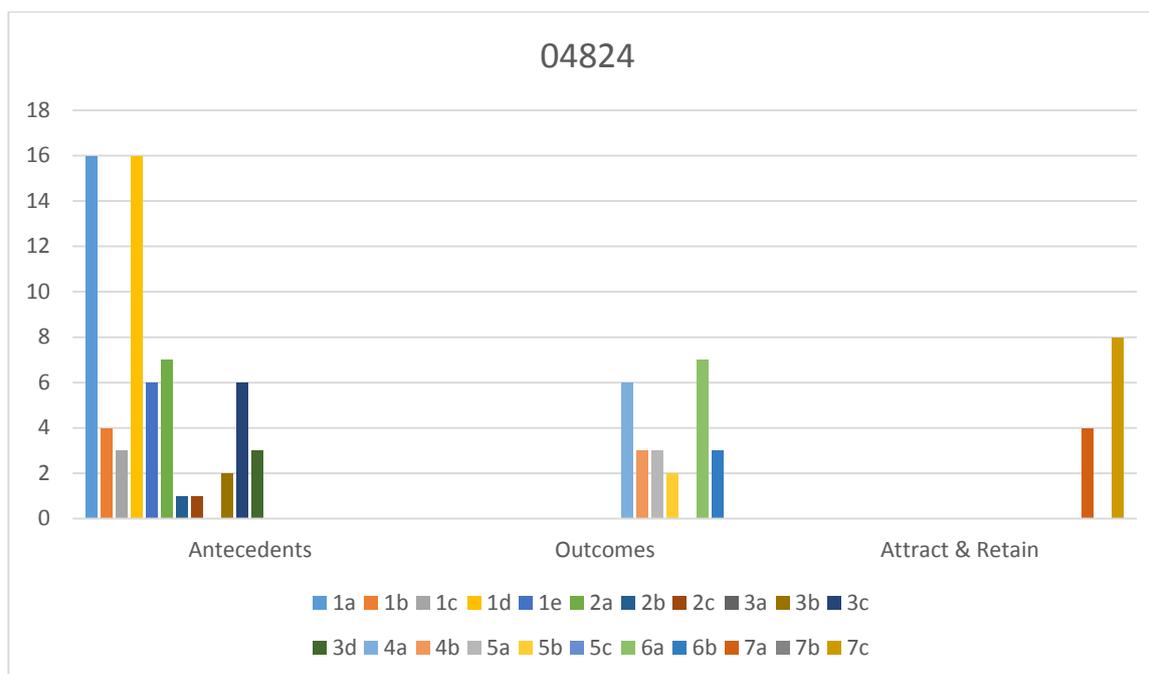


Figure 13. 04824 Individual text to sub-theme

Interestingly enough, although this participant's article symbolising her life after customisation is an item of technology and despite mentioning technology several times during the interview, she did not dwell on *technology* (1e) as a major motivating factor in her choice to customise, stating that it is almost a non-issue as it is obviously such an integral part of life and work that viewing it as a reason for behaviour is strange to her. She was more strongly motivated to pursue customisation by her need for *self-management and time spent meaningfully*, and her personal view on the *meaning of success* (1a & 1b). Her view on the positive outcomes of customisation can be seen in the high count of sub-theme 5b and 4a (*productivity and commitment*, as well as *emotional well-being*). She believes strongly that her increased productivity as well as the positive effects on her emotional well-being can be directly linked with the sense she now has that she is using her time meaningfully.

Being a Human Resources professional, she had various ideas and suggestions regarding alternative processes and policies which would help employ the new generation, as well as opinions on how an old school mentality is holding some decision-makers back from *embracing change* (7a).

#### 4.4.5 Participant 05901

This participant is employed as an industrial psychology research manager at a communications company and falls within the 25 – 29 age range. She is married and has one baby daughter.

Her formal work hours involve reduced hours and telecommuting. The hours that she is expected to physically be available in the office is Mondays to Wednesdays and Fridays from 9h00 – 15h00. She telecommutes once a week on a Thursday.

She comes across as a confident individual who holds strong opinions and who is not too shy to express them. Her need for customisation only developed when she had her daughter. With the conjuncture of various forces after the birth of her baby, it became clear to her that she would have to have some flexibility built into her work schedule if she were to stay a highly functioning employee and mother.

She registered her daughter to attend a crèche when she returned to work after her maternity leave. However, this resulted in her baby becoming sick so often that she ended up spending very little time at the office and almost all of her time tending to her sick child. As a solution she then appointed a full-time child-minder who now looks after her daughter at home. However, because of the work hours she negotiated with this employee, she has to leave the office no later than 15h00 every day to be at home in time for the child-minder to leave.

The telecommuting came about when the organisation where she is employed did not see the possibility of paying transport grants to employees and she negotiated telecommuting once per week to save on transport costs. She now books activities such as swimming lessons for her daughter on a Thursday when she has the flexibility to take her herself. Furthermore she shared that she and her husband have a much healthier lifestyle now, engaging together in exercise and spending more time together.

This participant voiced on several occasions that she could understand that it must be difficult for employers during certain periods of employment of specifically women, when maternity leave, sick children and other household demands could interfere with work commitment. However, it is her view that the organisation should plan for this through thorough succession planning, department by department, to avoid a situation where the employees' needs as mothers are seen as the problem, when proper planning could have accommodated temporary absences from the office. In addition, her view is that an individual's commitment and productivity shines through in more than set working hours. According to her, the use of technology could be used to tremendous benefit to accommodate working mothers, especially in those phases of their children's lives when they are more demanding.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation – First row of photographs taken on the commute to the office*

According to the participant these photographs symbolise the dread, unhappiness, stress, frustration and struggle she experienced during her time as an employee of the organisation before flexibility was negotiated. Her morning commute is remembered as a world of darkness and rain and bumper-to-bumper traffic in which she was stuck. She mentioned that she even took photographs of accident scenes, but deleted them later (Figure 14).

*After customisation – Second row of photographs taken after pursuit of customisation*

Even though travelling the same road to the office, after a PPI (Positive Psychology Intervention) and the successful negotiation of flexibility, the participant saw different things and saw the same things differently. The pictures she took randomly indicates her changed mind-set. Instead of the rain, she saw rainbows; instead of seeing only the bakkies and trucks in the bumper-to-bumper traffic, she saw a beautiful dog on the back of a bakkie; instead of the traffic sign indicating a bridge where the traffic was always stuck, she noticed the mountain behind the bridge; and instead of the literal darkness dragging her down, she saw an uplifting message of Light (Figure 15).



Figure 14. First row of photographs

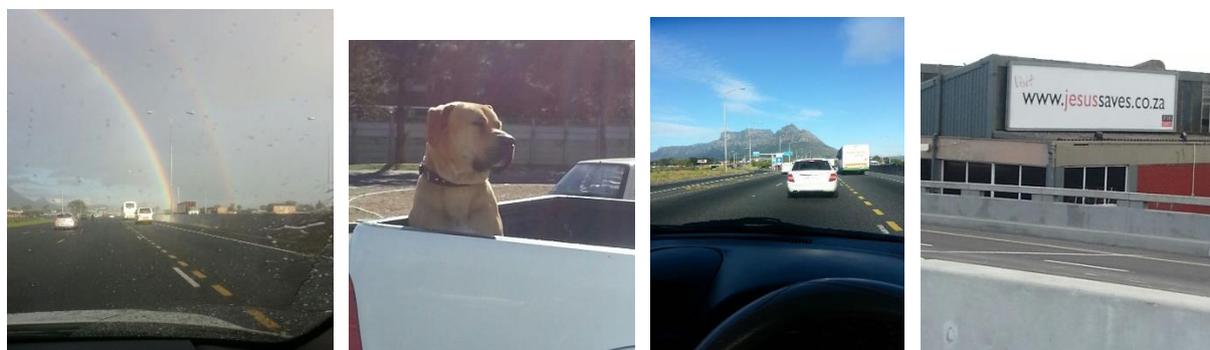


Figure 15. Second row of photographs

The subthemes which emerged from this interview are displayed in Figure 16.

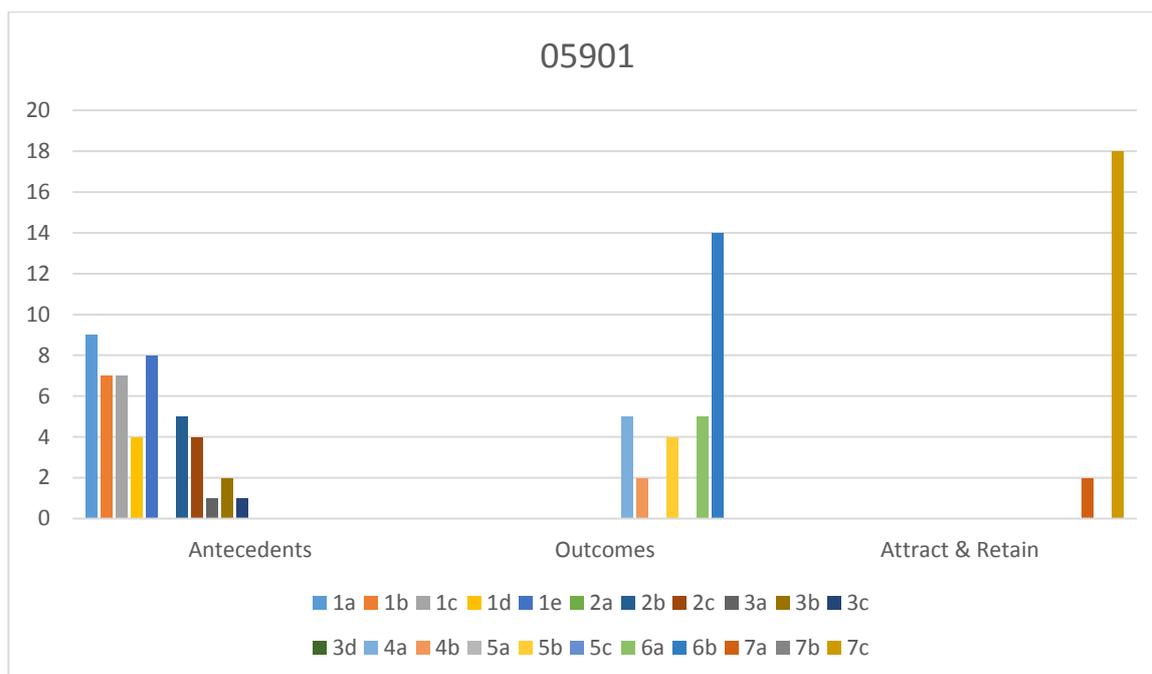


Figure 16: 05901 Individual text to sub-theme

While this participant made various references of the sub-theme of *self-management and time spent meaningfully* (1a) as the strongest antecedent in her pursuit of customisation with the facilitating role of *technology* (1e) in strong support thereof, the conversation was dominated by the discussion of the outcomes of customisation. The interview centred on sub-theme 6b, representing the *return on investment* an organisation could experience if they were open to negotiating flexible work schedules for their employees, as well as the negative effect it could have on the organisation if they resisted adjusting to the increasingly *changing* (7a) needs of their workforce. Furthermore, she made several suggestions and recommendations of *alternative processes and policies* (7c) as examples of ways in which employees of the new generation could be effectively managed.

#### 4.4.6 Participant 06901

Participant 06901 is a medical doctor in the age range 35 – 39, unmarried and without children. She is registered with employment agencies as a doctor who is available for locum work in South African and internationally. As a result, there is very little routine to her work schedules. She could locum at a hospital for just a day, for weeks or months or even take on international assignments which could stretch over even longer periods.

The decision not to work in a conventional hospital environment was brought about by various reasons. Firstly, she describes herself as extremely thorough and someone who is so committed to her job, that when the system facilitates or encourages over-commitment,

she easily falls into that trap. She mentioned what happened when she was employed full-time at a specific hospital:

“Basically I ended up working very hard there and before you know it ... I just realised after a time there that I was taking better care of my patients than myself and I thought, you know, it’s not supposed to be like that. I would get migraines and extreme tiredness, like EXTREME tiredness which was worsened by my diet. You would go on duty and you would hardly function, you know? And then, I just got that thing where I decided, this can’t go on.”

This choice of customisation was also a good fit for the participant as the autonomy and self-management of her time allows her to pursue one of her great hobbies, namely mountaineering. She has already climbed Kilimanjaro and reached the Mount Everest base camp on two occasions. (Unfortunately on both occasions there were natural disasters with several deaths, which culminated both times in their group having to abandon their attempts to summit.)

The participant described herself as someone who loves to travel and experience new things, yet also someone who enjoys her work and making a difference. For this reason travelling to faraway places for medical assignments suits her extremely well.

When an assignment ends and she is back in South Africa, she takes on locums at hospitals when other doctors are ill, on leave or on maternity leave. Because of traffic and the management culture in some hospitals, she is quite selective in terms of the locums she accepts insofar as her financial circumstances allow it.

Although she enjoys her lifestyle and the flexibility to travel which her choice for customisation has brought, she did mention that she also enjoys the camaraderie and social interaction with colleagues which one experiences when you are employed at one hospital for longer periods. Also, there is very little financial stability in doing it the way she is doing it. However, even with these two factors being a reality, she would not choose to do it differently.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation – Stethoscope 2*

To her the stethoscope symbolised her identity as being limited to being only a doctor when she was still working fulltime. Once people see you with it around your neck, you are defined as a doctor – nothing else and nothing more. However, she saw herself as a doctor as well as other things such as an artist, aunt, friend and mountain climber, but struggled to combine

all the roles because of the all-consuming work schedule. She also mentioned that the stethoscope sometimes looks like it is tied in a knot – similar to how she felt in the conventional work environment (Figure 17).

*After customisation - Paintbrush and passport*

The participant loves arts and crafts, as well as travelling and mountain climbing. To her the paintbrush symbolises how she could “paint” or create a new picture of herself once she “escaped” from her previously strict and rigid work environment. Her passport symbolises opportunities, freedom, and a life in which one does not have to be restricted by so many boundaries. The passport also limits the financial restrictions or boundaries brought about by being paid in ZAR. When working on international assignments she is remunerated in US Dollar which also helps her to reach financial freedom, especially seen in the light of her now having less financial stability.

As an afterthought she stated that it also helps her with confidence, because she can become anyone when she meets new people on a trip who have never met her before (Figure 18).



Figure 17. Stethoscope



Figure 18. Paintbrush and passport

The sub-themes identified during the interview with participant 06901 are displayed in Figure 19:

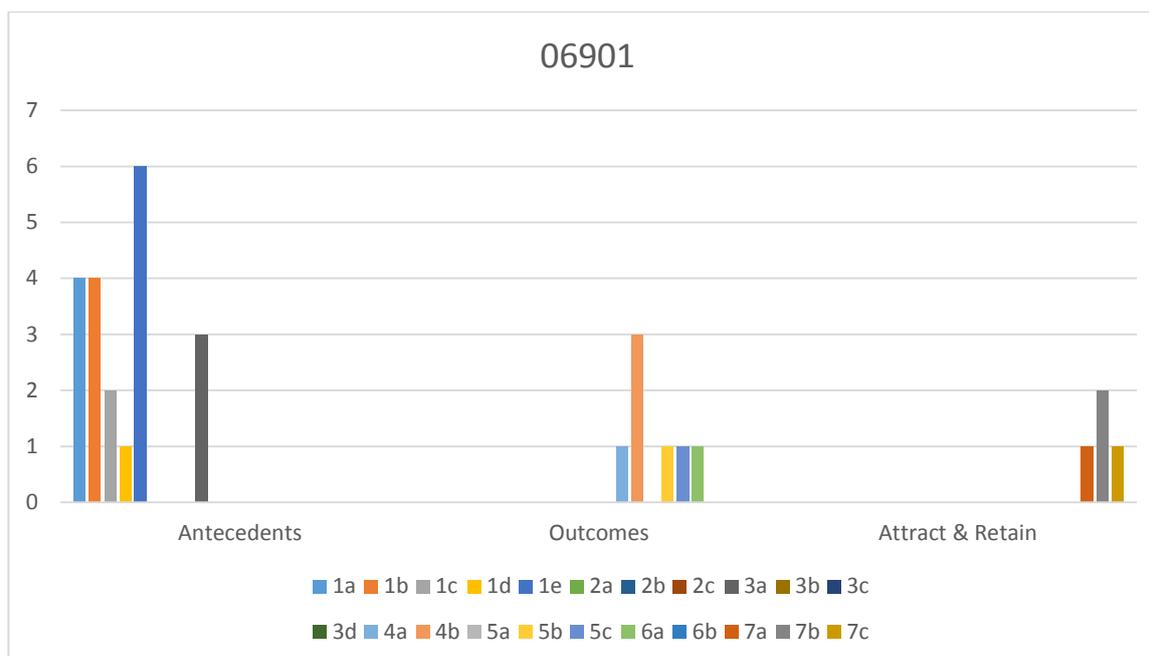


Figure 19. 06901 Individual text to sub-theme

During the interview this participant identified *technology* (1d) as the strongest facilitating factor in her choice to customise her career as the use of specifically Skype and Whatsapp makes it possible for her to keep relationships strong and meaningful with her family and friends when she is out of the country on longer assignments. She believes that without this form of technology she would have become very lonely when travelling and this could have influenced her in her choice to customise. These antecedents were strongly supported by her alternative *personal needs* (1b) and the *meaning of success* (1d) for her, which she acknowledges differs from that of many others. The most positive outcome for her was indicated as the positive affect her new work schedule had on her *health* (4b). She was of the opinion that there is little motivation for most hospitals to embrace the realities of a changing workforce as there would always be doctors who would be willing to work within the system as it is now, with the result that hospitals do not have to *invest further* (7b) in current employees with different needs – they could simply replace them.

#### 4.4.7 Participant 07907

Participant 07907 is a single women in the 35 – 39 age range without children. She has been a buyer for a large clothing retailer for 11 years, but has recently resigned in order to pursue further studies and a change in career. She is now a part-time student, part-time sports massage therapist and part-time personal trainer.

The overwhelming motivation for her choice to resign came about when her organisation changed the work hours from flexi-time system to a set time-frame, which she felt herself unable to adjust to, especially after having had the flexibility for a number of years previously in the very same organisation. In the flexi-time system employees were expected to be available in the office for 8.5 hours (which included a lunch hour), but that these hours had to include the core hours from 10h00 to 15h00. Some employees chose to start early in the morning and leave at 15h00, while others only came in later and then left the office later.

According to the participant, this flexi-hour system worked for everyone. It enabled employees with children to manage at least one of the school drop-off or pick-up turns personally, and to have the flexibility to arrange their day in such a way that they could attend a week-day school activity like a sporting match when needed. For others, such as herself, the flexibility made it possible to follow a healthy exercise program by getting to the gym every day either before or after work without having to get up at 4h00 in the morning or only getting home at 8h00 at night. But what the participant enjoyed most of all about this arrangement was the fact that she did not have to sit in traffic for up three hours each day because her starting and leaving times coincided with hundreds of thousands of other workers in the region.

The reason given to the employees when the system was changed, was that it did not suit particular members of management who wanted to start their day at 8h00 and wanted everyone to be at the office when they were at the office.

Eventually it was the inability to self-manage and spend her time meaningfully, combined with the general inflexible management style and culture which facilitated her decision to resign and find another way to create flexible work hours for herself. She decided to study further in an area which had been a hobby up to then, making a complete career change.

The decision could not have left her happier:

“So I think my life is just ... it’s a healthier life. Also, I am a lot less stressed as a person being able to do that, I am eating better, because now I can eat when I need to eat as opposed to being stuck in meetings and then skipping meals or rushing to work not wanting to be late. Even though my hours are longer, it’s a healthier life because I can plan it better. And I can work around what suits me and when. The flexibility of managing it myself makes all the difference. I couldn’t be happier.”

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation – Lion in a cage*

Pre-customisation the participant felt completely caged, bound, suppressed, imprisoned, and limited, with no way out. She stated that she felt poked by management and the system and forced to perform according to others' rules, which resulted in her being sad, hurt, angry, frustrated, stressed and getting more aggressive all the time. She confessed that in the end, just before she resigned, she was behaving like a caged animal, lashing out because the prison-like environment drove her to madness (Figure 20).

*After customisation – Wild springbok*

In the participant's words: "Now I feel the complete opposite. I feel like a *sprinkbokkie* running and jumping in the open veld. I have a spring in my step. Life is good. There is so much to be had and seen. I have a choice of where I want to be and when and for how long. I have no boundaries."

She acknowledged that being a little springbok in the wild is not necessarily comfortable - there are "dangers" and responsibilities in a customised set-up, such as having to find your own "food" (financial means to survive). Yet according to her nothing can compare with the freedom and autonomy and the joy the self-management brings. You can run wherever you want as fast as you want, with whomever you want. "It makes me feel healthy and so, so happy", she said (Figure 21).



Figure 20. Lion in a cage



Figure 21. Wild springbok

The sub-themes which emerged from the interview with this participant are displayed in Figure 22.

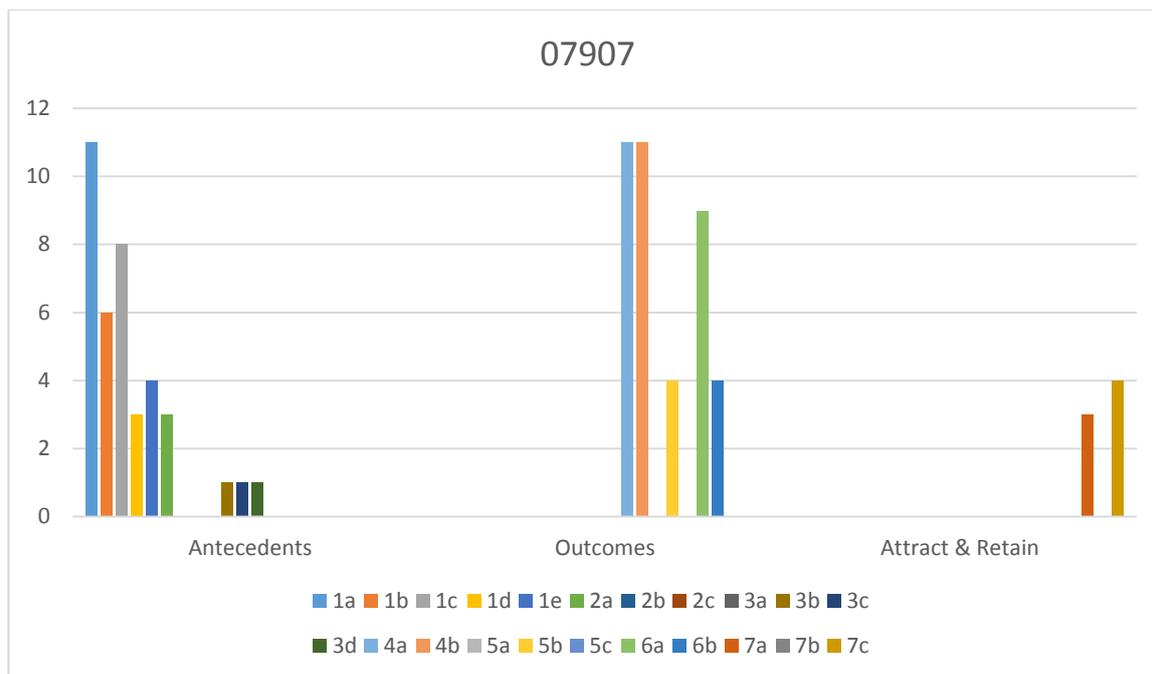


Figure 22: 07907 Individual text to sub-theme

*Self-management and time spent meaningfully* (1a) was indicated as the most important facilitator for this participant to have pursued customisation, while her *individual well-being* on both *emotional* and *health* levels (4a and 4b) was the most significant outcome in her view. This was supported by her view that *productivity and commitment* (6a) increase when employees are given more flexibility of decision-making and *self-management* (1a). She indicated intense frustration with the management of her organisation for not having insight in the realities of the need to *manage change* (7a) as well as adjusting work *processes and policies* (7c). She indicated that management's resistance to change could be one of the most significant factors holding them back in this regard.

#### 4.4.8 Participant 08916

This married participant is in the 30 – 34 age range and has one child of three years old. She is currently employed in a large organisation in the engineering and city planning industry. As there are very few women in her profession, she asked that her profession not be named as it could identify her.

When her daughter was born, she negotiated a customised contract in which she does not work eight out of the eight required hours from 8h30 – 17h30 (excluding the lunch hour), but rather only works seven hours, forfeiting 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the salary, giving up a lunch hour and working the hours from 7h00 – 14h00 daily. Her daughter attends the on-site crèche situated only 200 meters from her office. On days that she does not make the 7h00 starting time, she

is not worried as she normally works back the time anyway with administration done later in the day from home.

In addition, time is always banked when she travels (locally and internationally). When she travels, her support system consisting of her husband and both sets of grandparents take care of her daughter's needs. She stated that the travelling would not have been possible if she did not have this support system. Her husband works in a very small organisation where flexible hours is the norm. His parents are both retired and live close by. Although both her parents still work, they also live close to the family and can help out when necessary.

The reason why she insists on still travelling for work is because she believes the broadening of her own frame of reference. She highly values the work-life enrichment she experiences as a direct result of her travelling, which she views as beneficial to her daughter and other children to come. She believes that the open-mindedness of her direct superior made customisation possible even though it is not the norm in the organisation and actually frowned upon by many, including some of her colleagues.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

#### *Before customisation – Fish tank*

Life before customisation for this participant could be compared to life in a fish tank where everything was beautiful and all worked well. Almost all of her basic needs were "meticulously cared for" and catered for by others in terms of intellectual stimulation, social encounters with colleagues and financial rewards, which she compares to the fish in a fish tank getting fed every day, and having others manage the temperature and even the pH in the tank perfectly. Because of the design of the tank, she says that reflecting the mirror image back to you when you looked toward the side of the tank, you were not aware of the restrictions placed on you. Before children, she did not have the need for freedom, so she did not even realise there were boundaries. Once she had a child, her needs changed and she became aware that those in control did not cater for her changed needs. Now she wanted to swim further, but was not allowed to, which made her overly aware of the restrictive boundaries holding her captive and disallowing her freedom of autonomy and decision-making. She realised that the tank was far too small for her and that she needed to break free (Figure 23).

#### *After customisation - Aquarium*

Life after customisation is characterised by freedom in the sense that there is freedom of self-management of time and location. It is not as if she is now in the open ocean and thus

experiences her world as without boundaries altogether - only that her boundaries now do not inhibit her ability to satisfy her personal needs anymore. Her world expanded not only “physically”, but also in terms of exposure to different worlds socially and intellectually (in her motherhood role), while still being “in the water” (in the role of employee) where she believes she belongs. She now experiences feelings of great happiness and fulfilment (Figure 24).



Figure 23. Fish tank



Figure 24. Aquarium

The sub-themes identified during this interview are displayed in Figure 25.

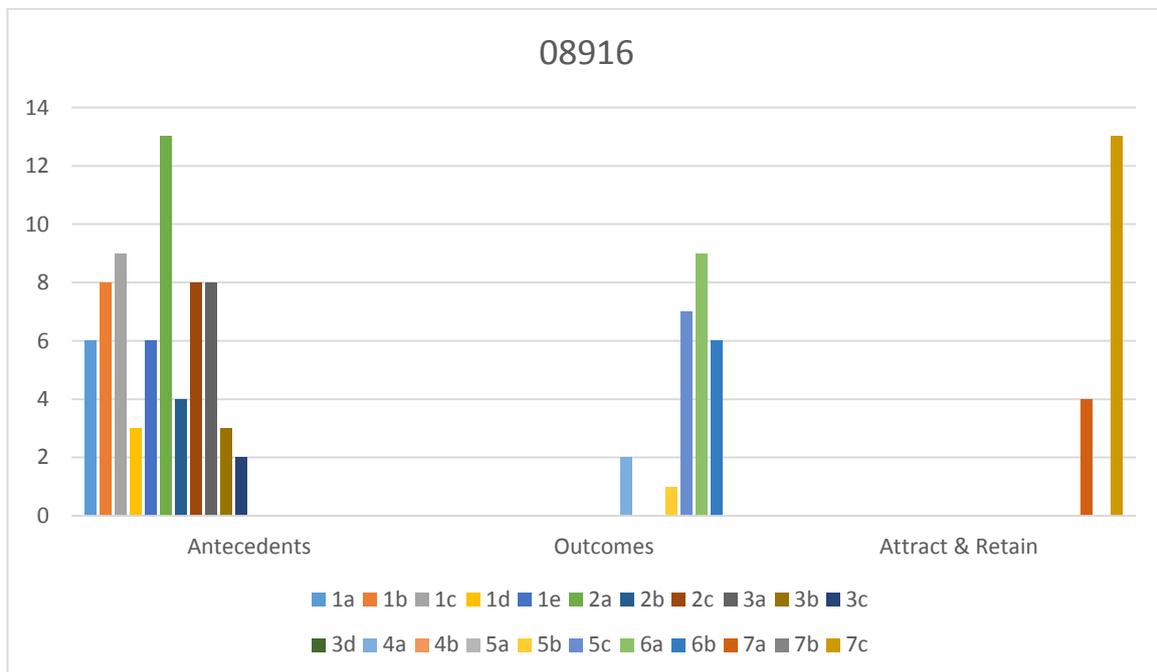


Figure 25. 08916 Individual text to sub-theme

The millennial *generation* (2a) of which this participant is a member, and their way of operating and managing themselves and their environment through *technology* (1e) were in her mind the facilitating factors for the pursuit of a customised career environment. Her

*personal needs* (1b) and an *attitude of entitlement* (1c) manifested strongly in the interview, linking with her belief that the *leverage* (3a) which she has built up during her previous years of employment in the organisation made customisation a logical adjustment when her circumstances changed.

Her increased *productivity* (6a) in terms of *meaningfully using the work time* available to her (1a), as well as the work-life and life-work *enrichment* (5c) she experiences since taking on this journey has convinced her of the overwhelming positive results of customisation in the workplace of today. She believes that the *return on investment* (6b) for organisations who are willing to accommodate millennial mothers during a life phase which will pass anyway, makes it more than profitable for them too.

According to her organisations should embrace the realities of the *changing workplace* (7a) by looking at their *processes and policies* (7c) in a different way, bearing in mind how the world has changed around them.

#### 4.4.9 Participant 09920

Participant 09920 is a single woman with no children in the 30 – 34 age range. She is currently employed as a lecturer in an academic institution.

Her customisation includes flexibility of hours and location and involves a great deal of autonomy and self-management of time. She has negotiated one set day per week on which she telecommutes from home. On that day she tries to focus solely on her doctoral studies, although she is available through technology if needed. In addition, she has the autonomy to change her own schedule if she deems it necessary, e.g. if she decides to spend time on her studies on a different day while at the office, she has the freedom to do that, as she will then simply get her work done at another time.

She states that the facilitating factors for opting to move to her current flexible environment are twofold: firstly her own very strong needs and preferences in terms of self-management and autonomy.

“I need more flexibility. I don’t like to be boxed in. Let me make up my own mind about how I’m going to structure my time. Not that I am going to take advantage if I have more time or less time, but at least give me the discretion to do that.”

The open-mindedness and support of her superiors regarding self-management of time is something that she values to such an extent that it would keep her from considering offers at other organisations for as long as it prevails.

“Whereas on the other hand, in this environment at present - I know this works for me. So I could see myself staying on here for a number of years if the environment keeps facilitating and supporting the flexibility that I crave.”

The flexibility she is allowed in her current job is in sharp contrast to the inflexible rule-bound environment she was employed in before. This setup was a complete mismatch with her personal needs to the extent that she could not see herself remaining there for longer than was absolutely necessary to serve her own needs:

“Actually, I probably would not have lasted very long within that environment at all. I would most probably have stayed for a couple of years, taken what I could from them, learnt as much as I could from them and then I would have left.”

According to her she is not unique in her need for flexibility and that the lack thereof in her previous environment simply led to a manipulation of the system in order for employees to have the flexibility they wanted.

This candidate did not bring her symbols along on the day of the interview and asked if she could mail photographs of it to the researcher with motivations on her choice of the symbols. The motivations below have been copied directly from her e-mail.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation – Handbag*

“The handbag represents structure in terms of time and my initial conceptualisation of how a professional career should be structured. I chose the handbag because it looks professional, it has a purpose but it is limited in terms of what I can put in it due to its size (e.g. I can’t put documents in without crushing them or folding them in half). In the same way when I started out in my career the prescriptions that were made about how my time should be structured seemed to make sense for a professional environment but were limiting in terms of my needs.” (Figure 26)

*After customisation - Whiteboard*

“The white board represents the freedom I have to express myself and use it the way that I see fit. I think it also speaks to the decisions I am able to make about how I structure my

time, plan my day to day activities and my career within the parameters that are provided in my contract and the new standards I have negotiated.” (Figure 27)



Figure 26. Handbag

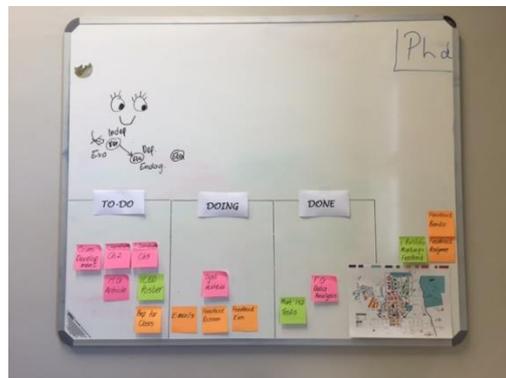


Figure 27. Whiteboard

The sub-themes identified in this interview are displayed in Figure 28:

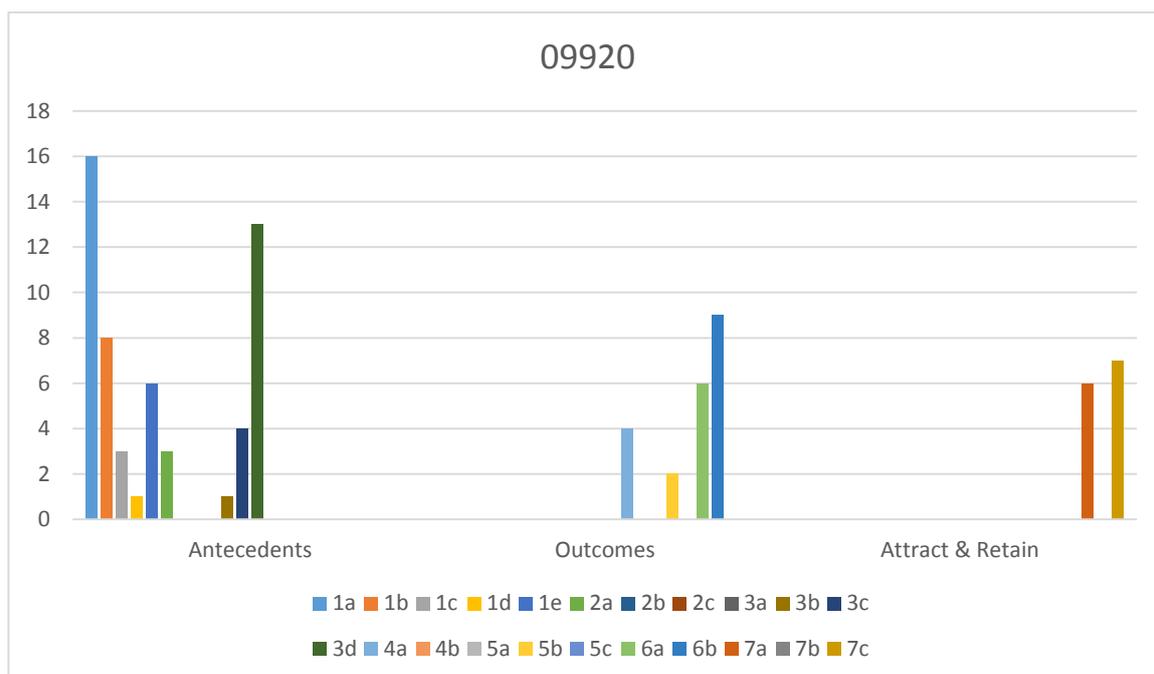


Figure 28. 09920 Individual text to sub-theme

The participant’s personal need for *self-management* in order to spend her time *meaningfully* (1a) came out clearly in the interview. In addition, the contrast of this environment to her previous environment, which was characterised by heavy control and *inflexible rules and policies* (3d) were the two most significant antecedents to her pursuit of the customisation. In terms of outcomes, the *return on investment* (6b) for an organisation who allows self-management featured strongly, as well as the participant’s belief that customisation had a

positive effect on her *productivity and commitment* (6a). Being an industrial psychologist, a fruitful discussion was had regarding ways in which other organisations could also practically embrace the changing workplace in terms of *management* (7a) as well as alternative *processes and policies* (7c).

#### 4.4.10 Participant 10920

Participant 10920 is a married mother of a two year old girl and falls within the 30-34 years age range. She is a highly qualified publisher, editor and writer and is currently working side-by-side with her husband, with whom she started a publishing company a few years ago.

She currently tries to spend around four hours physically at the office every day, even though these hours are sometimes during the morning and sometimes during the afternoon. She has a very good childcare support system in that her mother lives with them on the premises and mostly takes care of looking after her daughter while she works. If her work schedule is more demanding, her husband will stand in so that her mother, who is a senior citizen, does not have to spend the whole day with the toddler, which according to her, can be very tiring.

Before customisation, this participant work fulltime for a publishing organisation in London. She had to work set hours, even though it was frustrating given the fact that she did not have enough work to fill the hours per day. That meant she had to try and look busy for parts of the day without the possibility of managing her own time.

The participant did her doctorate degree in feminist literature and describes herself as a feminist. Yet she was very surprised to notice the traditional manner in which her and her husband's roles ended up developing when her daughter was born with her taking much more of the responsibility of child caring and nurturing.

However, the environment she is in now accommodates the different roles she has to play. Self-managing her time means she can experience high-level stimulation at work, yet also spend quality time with her daughter. She felt very strongly that less time at work did not necessarily mean lower productivity as she is now simply more focussed and does not waste the limited time she has with too much office chat and coffee breaks.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

##### *Before customisation – Toy rabbit*

From feminist angle the participant always believed that women CAN have it all, yet when her daughter was born, the reality for her was that her child's needs came first. Her daughter cannot fall asleep without knowing her "dudu bunny" is there in the same way that the

participant cannot function properly at work without knowing that her daughter's needs are met. In the participant's mind, one of her daughter's needs is having her mother spend enough time with her nurturing her and caring for her (Figure 29).

*After customisation – Bunch of keys*

To the participant the reality of life is that we have different keys giving us access to different spaces and we carry these keys around with us permanently and actually without even thinking about it. In the same way her customisation has created a life for her where the different facets which make up her life naturally make up the whole of who she is and is carried with her whether she is at work or at home. Each key or key ring represents a different role or area of her life and is easily bunched together and carried as a whole.

- Car key: represents freedom – the freedom of being able to get into your car and leave to go somewhere or away from a location whenever you decide it is necessary;
- Key to the front door – home life;
- Paris key ring: having time to spend making memories with family and friends;
- Kitty key ring: her daughter;
- Office key: work;
- Remote control: the opportunity to open various new and exciting doors facilitated by flexibility.

All the keys are bunched together and carried with her without hassle and when she finds herself in a certain situation, she just uses whatever key is appropriate or effective in a similar way in which she will use and manage her time according to what is needed or appropriate in that scenario (Figure 30).



Figure 29. Toy rabbit



Figure 30. Bunch of keys

Sub-themes from the interview with participant 10920 can be seen in Figure 31.

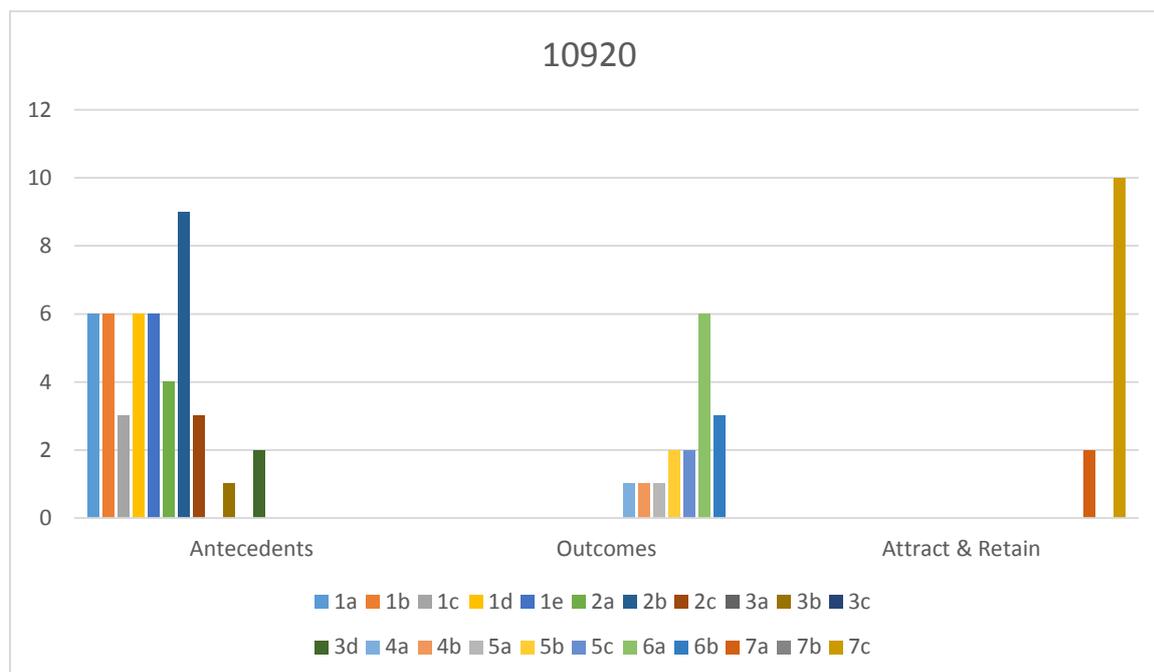


Figure 31. 10920 Individual text to sub-theme

The participant found *self-management and time spent meaningfully* (1a), *personal needs* (1b), the *meaning of success* (1d) and the opportunities made possible by *technology* (1e) equally valuable in contributing to her choice to pursue customisation. Her opinion on the set traditional *gender roles* (2b) which form part of society, however, was the most significant influencing factor in her decision to pursue flexibility in order to spend more time with her daughter. She believes an increase in her *productivity* (6a) as being the most significant outcome of this choice. Her exposure to different working environments overseas has opened her mind to various ways in which organisation could adjust their work *processes and policies* (7c) to better accommodate employees – especially those with families – with benefits to both parties involved.

#### 4.4.11 Participant 11921

This participant is a medical doctor in the age range 30 – 34, is married and has one 11 month old son. She is currently employed in a government hospital in a job share position.

She and another doctor in the department, who is also a mother of small children, went through a long and tough negotiation process to make the job share a reality and eventually succeeded. Standard hours for a doctor employed in a permanent position in a government hospital is 40 day hours and 20 night hours per week. She and the other doctor now split the hours 50/50, yet could negotiate to both keep their benefits as well as keeping their

government status as being employed in a permanent position. She acknowledges that the leverage she built for herself as a committed, productive and valuable doctor during the years she did work full time, as well as the meaning she saw in her role as mother gave her the motivation to keep pushing for the job share during the negotiation process. The hospital realised the value the two doctors brought and therefore did not want to lose them. From their side they made it abundantly clear that losing them was the only outcome if their needs for flexibility were not met:

“So I was quite clear (.8) with my boss that it’s either something is worked out (.8) or I am going to leave. There was no in-between.”

She feels very strongly about acknowledging the support they received from their direct superiors as well as other colleagues to be resilient in their fight for flexibility, even though it was completely unheard of up to then. The benefit they saw in it, not only for themselves and their families, but also for the hospital, kept them working hard to fulfil the dream. She repeatedly emphasised the benefits to both her in terms of emotional well-being and to the hospital in terms of the quality of work she does.

“If you’re not content in your life, it’s difficult to give fully to your work and your family. And now, I am now so happy with life and the balance in my life. I am happy in my home, my baby’s happy, my husband’s happy, I’m happy, and my boss is happy, because I can also now give the hospital the best of me.”

This participant is not concerned about the damage it can do to her career if she does not specialise now or even that she could be seen as less committed because of opting for a job share instead of the full hours. Her attitude is that it is more important to spend the time meaningful in the phase in her life that she is in at a specific time. Currently it is meaningful to spend time with her family and success to her would be bringing up a decent human being. Time for specialisation could come later.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

#### *Before customisation – Breast pump*

The participant stated that the breast pump symbolises that while still working full time, she and her body was there mainly for the literal use and survival of others and did not firstly belong to her. It was also the one article that made it possible to keep both her work and her family in survival mode: she could work even though she had a baby she had to nurse and she could breastfeed her baby even though she was working full time. Yet it was not an ideal

situation, with her being in a constant state of being pulled between two lives. She called the breast pump her “breast friend” (Figure 32).

*After customisation – Watch symbolising time*

The extra time after customisation made all the difference to the participant. The watch symbolises the time she now has, not only with her baby and husband, but also extra time for personal needs and activities, which fell completely to the wayside previously. As there was already not enough time for her family while working full time, spending time on herself was a luxury she could only dream of. Now, that dream has become a reality (Figure 33).



Figure 32. Breast pump



Figure 33. Watch symbolising time

The sub-themes identified in this interview are displayed in Figure 34.

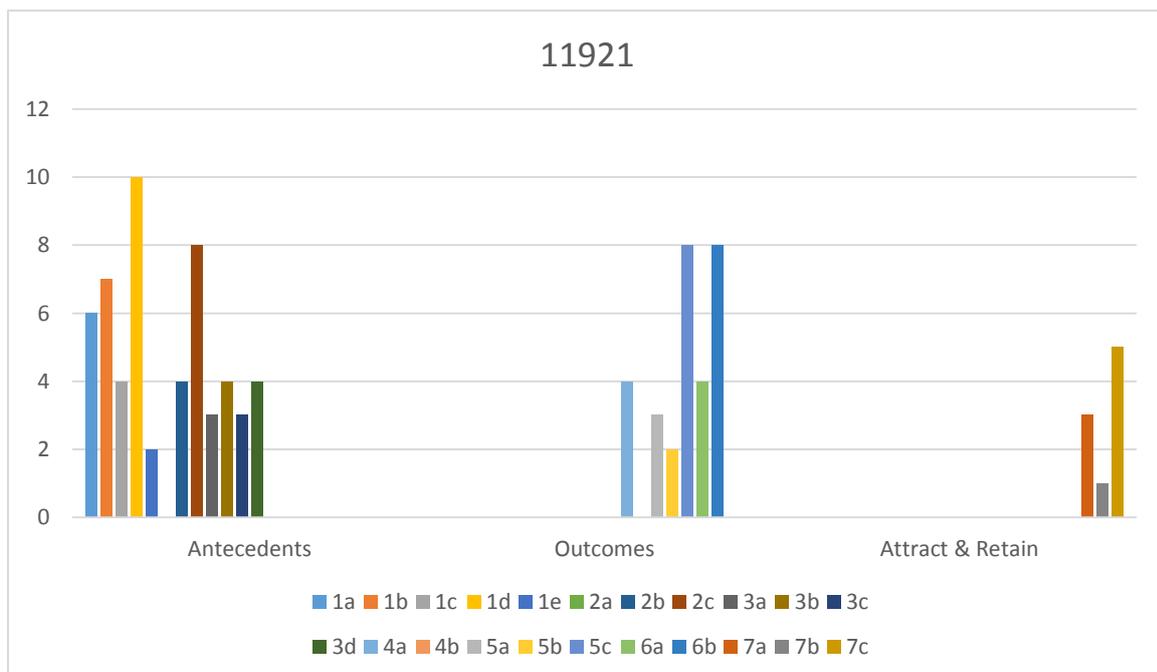


Figure 34. 11921 Individual text to sub-theme

According to the participant, her view on the *meaning of success* (1d) changed when she had a baby and that this was the antecedent with the single most significant influence in her choice to pursue customisation. In addition the *spousal support* (2c) she received emotionally and financially from her husband had a huge impact. Without it, customisation would have been very difficult, as her salary was split in half along with her hours.

The outcome which came out strongly and which was quite surprisingly to her, was the level of *enrichment* (5c), especially on a life-work terrain, which became a reality when she went back to work after having her baby. She describes the exposure to being a mother as invaluable as a doctor working in a Paediatrics ward, thus making their accommodation of her request for a job share an excellent *return on their investment* (6b).

She believes strongly that management in organisations should allow themselves to think differently on how to employ the new generation as the benefits to them would outweigh the losses.

#### 4.4.12 Participant 121012

The participant is a married mother of two children in the age range 35-39. She is employed in academia as a lecturer.

She was formerly employed in a non-flexible environment where she received little to no support from superiors in terms of flexibility of hours and location. Her family and the demands of a family was seen as a weakness and something that would hold her back in reaching her career goals (which her superior believed her to be capable of reaching). In addition, she experienced various incidents of lack of collegial support during this time towards her as an individual, as well as towards women with family and child care responsibilities in general.

Her husband's work demands include international travelling for extended periods with the result that he is not in a position to be supportive of the day-to-day nurturing and caring of the children when he travels. Her own work demands thus could not practically also include travelling and excessive demands in terms of time.

It is interesting that when she made the decision to resign from her previous workplace based on the intense work-life conflict which she experienced, her superiors were very disappointed and dismayed by the loss of her as an employee and tried to negotiate with her to keep her at the organisation. Eventually it took the organisation four years to appoint someone in her position who managed to cope for more than a few months with the

management style and time demands placed before them. Incidentally this eventual fit only came with the appointment of an employee who is single with one child of an older age who is less demanding on her time and attention than the participants' two small children.

Her current environment is much more flexible and focused on autonomy. She is expected to work 30 hours per week and has the prerogative to self-manage in terms of how, when and where these hours are worked. Her outcomes are measured and monitored rather than her hours spent at the workplace.

The participant finds it interesting that it took her quite a while to adapt to her more flexible environment at first, but she is adamant that her current workplace is a much better fit with her and the phase of her life. She states that even though she now actually works harder sometimes than she ever did in industry, she is very happy and content, with both work and home life getting the time and attention it needs without her being in a constant state of guilt caused by feelings of inadequate commitment in both areas.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation - Mask*

The participant stated that pre-customisation she did not have the freedom to be herself. She had to hide behind a mask pretending that she is coping with work and life and that she had everything under control. Especially in the work environment, she had to pretend she did not have a family with the demands and responsibilities it brings. When she wore the mask, she denied some parts of who she was – being a mother, a wife and also an individual -, not only a career woman (Figure 35).

*After customisation – Examination study table*

Her son's examination study table symbolises her life after customisation. Even though her life now still has a lot of responsibilities, these are arranged according to a schedule which allows adequate time for all those responsibilities or activities to be executed efficiently – student classes, consultation hours, family time, and preparation time on a Sunday. Everything can fit in and there is enough space for everyone, including her work, husband, children and herself. If there is a double booking, the flexibility to manage her own time means that she is in control of making an adjustment which solves the problem. She finds this comforting (Figure 36).



Figure 35. Mask

Time:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15:00						
15:30						
16:00						
16:30						
17:00						
17:30						
18:00						
18:30						
19:00						

Figure 36. Examination study table

Sub-themes from the interview with participant 121012 are on display in Figure 37.

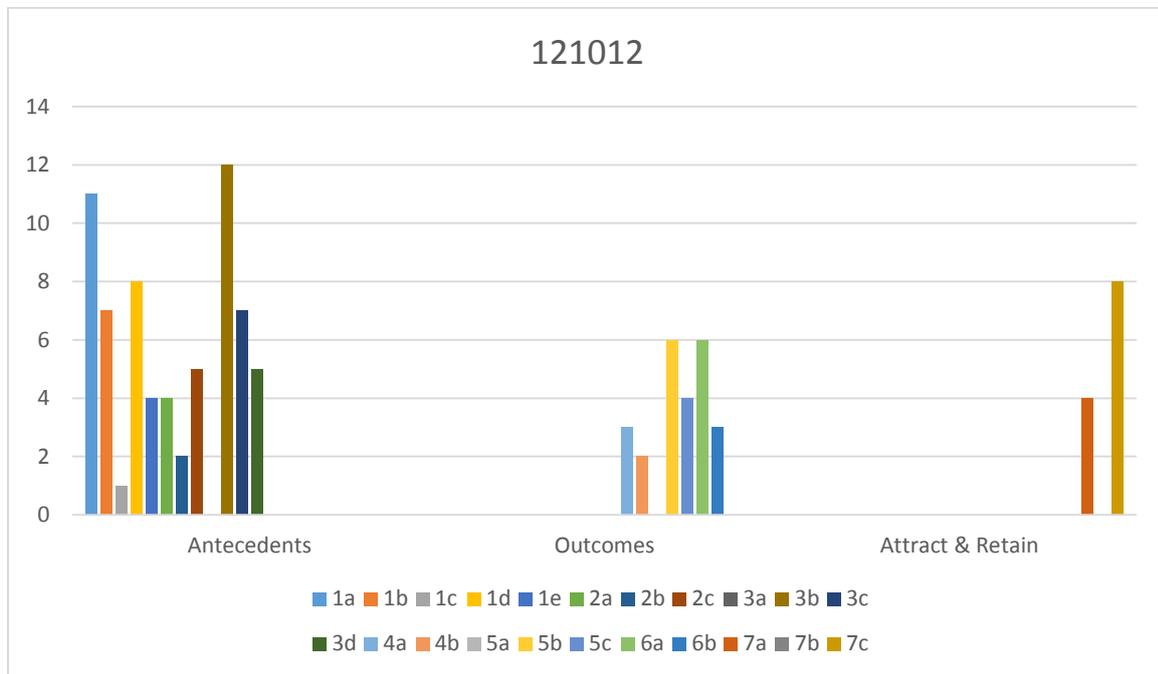


Figure 37. 121012 Individual text to sub-theme

Antecedents for the pursuit of customisation by this participant centred on her need to *self-manage her time and to spend it meaningfully* (1a) in combination with her view on the *meaning of success* (1d) and her *personal needs* (1b). These needs motivated her towards a more flexible environment, while the lack of *support from superiors* (3b) mainly and *collegial support* (3c) to a lesser extent, motivated her to exit the inflexible work environment .which she found herself in previously. These factors in combination with her husband’s international travelling work demands made it impossible for her to choose differently.

Concerning outcomes, the participant believes that the biggest effect of customisation she noticed in her work environment and in her home-life can be seen in her increased

*productivity and commitment* (6a) to the work environment, as well as the freedom she now has to tend to *family needs* (5b).

The way to attract and retain employees in the workplace of today according to her, is based in alternative work structures in terms of *processes and policies* (7c) which she believes is more than logical considering the possibilities brought about by the millennial mind-set and technology.

#### 4.4.13 Participant 131014

Participant 131014 is a single woman in the age range of 30-34 and has no children. She is qualified as an advocate.

She started her career as an attorney working in a firm where a normal employment contract involved fixed hours and physical attendance for all those hours and more, at the office. She was only exposed to cases in which they believed her skills would be beneficial to them as organisation. She saw many attorneys getting stuck with work content they were good at, yet missing out on work content they wanted to get involved in, even though these opportunities were available at the organisation. Her own needs and preferences to get involved in litigation were not seen as relevant to the organisation in any way. In this environment she felt like a slave who was there only to be of value to others and in which her needs were not met at all. Consequently she resigned and did her pupillage so that she could work independently as an advocate, although this is a male-dominated environment, traditionally characterised by fulltime commitment and excessive hours.

She describes customisation as being stressful in terms of lack of financial stability, but extremely fulfilling in terms of self-actualisation, stimulation, self-management and individual accomplishment with the consequence that her productivity increased tremendously. Previously she resisted putting in too many hours for the organisation as an almost passive-aggressive reaction to their attitude of dismissing her preferences as irrelevant, but now finds it a joy to be working into the deep hours of the night, even getting irritated with her body which needs rest when she wants to carry on working.

Her perception of what is seen as success has dramatically changed since she is in her new environment where she is in control of various decisions. Being successful to her now is centred more on her own opinion of what had meaning and what was an accomplishment and based less on the opinions or structures of achievement around her.

The participant shared the following information as motivation for the chosen symbols:

*Before customisation - Portrait*

The portrait symbolised her and her life when she was still employed full time in an organisation. She described herself as feeling boxed in and miserable all the time, and saw everything as dark and gloomy. When she saw this portrait at a market one day, she identified with it immediately. Not only did it resemble her as well as being a visual representation of what she felt like all the time, but mostly she saw the heartbeat symbol on the girl's forehead as a "message" to her that she would be okay, her heart would start beating again and she would live. Shortly thereafter she resigned and started her pupillage. In addition, she mentioned that the front glass in the left hand bottom corner broke when the picture fell one day. Instead of having it fixed, she opted to keep it broken as it reminded her even more of that time in her life when part of her was "broken" and yet still made up part of her story and who she was today. (She felt slightly embarrassed about becoming a little emotional during her explanation of the meaning of the symbol.) (Figure 38)

*After customisation - Faith*

The participant mentioned that her faith symbolises who she is now that she is in her current work environment. Even though there are guidelines in her faith, which could be likened to rules, Christ brought her freedom instead of bounds. She compares this to her new work environment: even though there are guidelines and rules which she has to adhere to, especially given that she works with the law, the freedom of self-management, autonomy and ownership of her space and time is what is most valuable to her and what brings her the emotional happiness and contentment she experiences now (Figure 39).



Figure 38. Portrait



Figure 39. Cross symbolising faith

Sub-themes identified in the interview with this participant are shown in Figure 40.

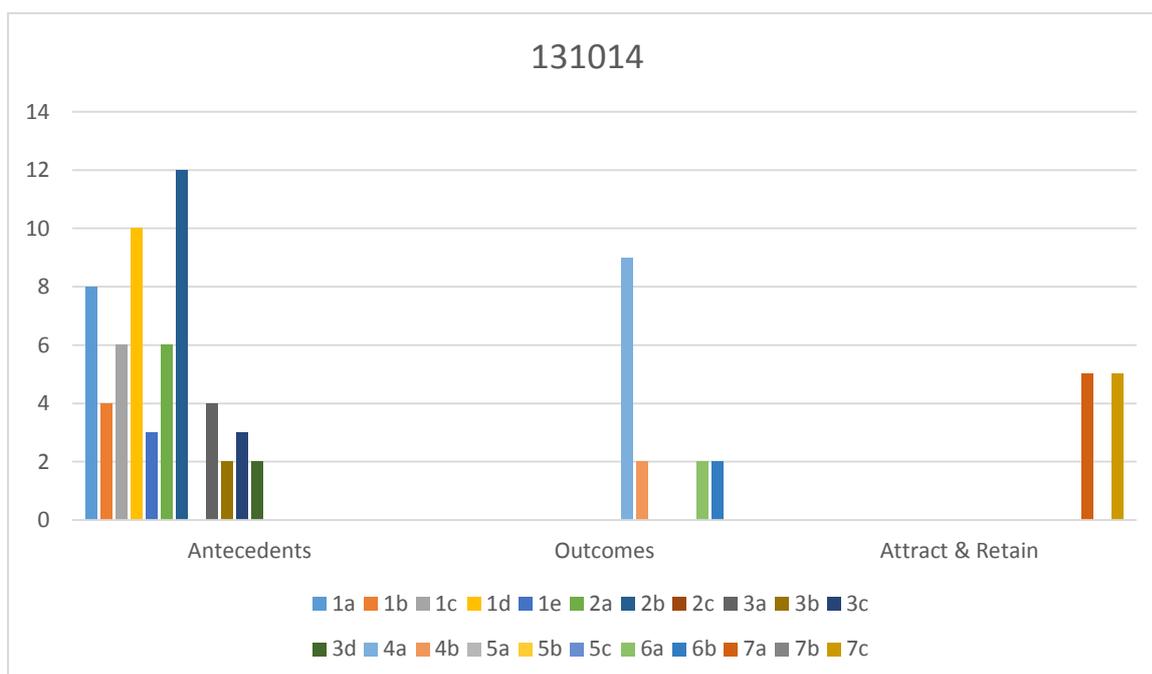


Figure 40. 131014 Individual text to sub-theme

The *meaning of success* (1d) and the need for *self-management and time spent meaningfully* (1a) were the driving forces for this participant to pursue a customised career. The increase in her *emotional well-being* was a very significant outcome of her decision, while she felt equally strongly about *managing change* (7a) and *alternative processes and policies* (7c) as the way forward in *attracting and retaining* valuable individuals in the workplace.

#### 4.4.14 Summary of individual participant theme count

Individual context as provided in the previous discussion does give meaning and insight to information gathered from participants. In this manner it is easier for information shown in Table 3 to be understood.

One example is the following: sub-theme 2c – *spousal support and quality childcare*, and the whole of theme 5, namely *household* outcomes, did not feature strongly in the interviews of those candidates who are single or married without children.

In the same manner, one can appreciate the considerable contributions to Theme 6 – *organisation* outcomes, as well as Theme 7 – *embracing the reality of a changing workplace*, from those participants who are qualified and employed in a Human Resources or Industrial Psychology environment.

Table 3

Summary of individual participant and sub-theme count

	1a	1b	1c	1d	1e	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	3d	4a	4b	5a	5b	5c	6a	6b	7a	7b	7c
<b>01817</b>	4	13	6	9	3	5	3	2	1	0	1	2	4	1	1	4	0	3	2	3	2	1
<b>02818</b>	9	8	2	8	5	6	2	1	1	1	0	1	9	0	3	9	1	3	2	8	2	2
<b>03818</b>	9	8	7	4	3	1	4	2	3	3	2	3	7	4	2	1	1	3	7	8	1	2
<b>04824</b>	16	4	3	16	6	7	1	1	0	2	6	3	6	3	3	2	0	7	3	4	0	8
<b>05901</b>	9	7	7	4	8	0	5	4	1	2	1	0	5	2	0	4	0	5	14	2	0	18
<b>06901</b>	4	4	2	1	6	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1
<b>07907</b>	11	6	8	3	4	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	11	11	0	4	0	9	4	3	0	4
<b>08916</b>	6	8	9	3	6	13	4	8	8	3	2	0	2	0	0	1	7	9	6	4	0	13
<b>09920</b>	16	8	3	1	6	3	0	0	0	1	4	13	4	0	0	2	0	6	9	6	0	7
<b>10920</b>	6	6	3	6	6	4	9	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	2	6	3	2	0	10
<b>11921</b>	6	7	4	10	2	0	4	8	3	4	3	4	4	0	3	2	8	4	8	3	1	5
<b>121014</b>	11	7	1	8	4	4	2	5	0	12	7	5	3	2	0	6	4	6	3	4	0	8
<b>131014</b>	10	6	6	11	3	6	7	0	4	2	3	2	9	2	0	0	0	3	3	5	0	5
	<b>117</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>84</b>

However, unlike the previous section in which meaning was attached to examples of individual views or perceptions of a homogenous cluster, in the following discussion of the themes and sub-themes the overall context of the sample as a whole will be discussed and analysed given in terms of all participants as a group.

#### 4.5 Discussion of themes and sub-themes

As shown in Table 2 the data was ordered in terms of three distinct idea categories, namely the *antecedents* to the pursuit of a customised career, the *outcomes* of that decision and the use of customisation as a tool for organisations in *attracting and retaining* valuable employees in today's workplace. The findings of the data will be discussed arranged within these three idea categories and guided by the identified themes and sub-themes.

##### 4.5.1 Antecedents

In Figure 41 the antecedents which were shown by the participants to have had the most influence on their decision to pursue a customised career were organised into three themes, namely *millennial mind-set*, *social culture* and *organisation culture*, with the *millennial mind-set* having the most significant impact at 63% of the quoted comments by participants referring to sub-themes in this category. *Social culture* (19%) and *organisation culture* (18%) had a similar count of total comments by the participants.

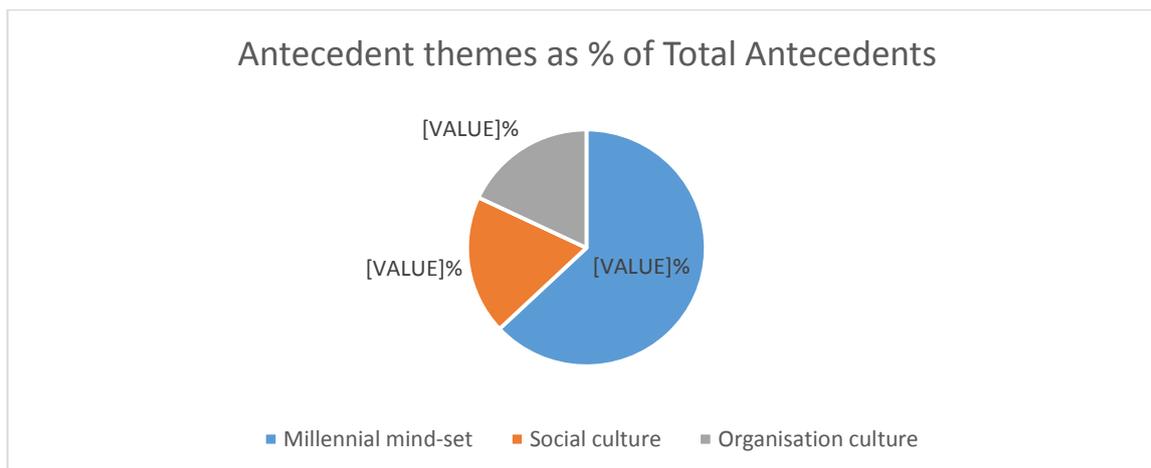


Figure 41. Antecedents themes

When perusing Table 4 and Figure 42 which show how the different sub-themes within a theme were represented by words, phrases and comments in the data, it is clear that sub-theme 1a - *self-management and time spent meaningfully* - featured the strongest, followed by *personal needs* (1b) and *meaning of success* (1d). An *attitude of entitlement* (1c) and the role of *technology* (1e) were more evenly represented.

In terms of the role of *social culture* as an antecedent to the pursuit of customisation by participants, the differences in *generations* (2a) were commented on most frequently with *gender roles* (2b) and the *support from spouses and quality childcare* (2c) following closely.

Concerning *organisation culture* and its influence on the decisions for customisation, a very even distribution of comments were found between all four sub-themes with the highest count for *inflexible rules and policies* (3d), counting down to *support from superiors* (3b) and *support from colleagues* (3c) as well as *leverage* (3a).

Table 4

*Antecedents text count per theme and sub-theme*

ALL PARTICIPANTS	THEME	COUNT	% of Theme	% of Total Antecedents
<b>ANTECEDENT TOTAL COUNT OF QUOTED TEXT</b>		<b>665</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>MILLENNIAL MINDSET</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>63</b>
Self-management and time spent meaningfully	1a	117	28	18
Personal needs	1b	92	22	14
Attitude of entitlement (demanding)	1c	61	15	9
Meaning of success	1d	84	20	13
Technology	1e	62	15	9
<b>SOCIAL CULTURE</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>
Generations	2a	52	41	8
Gender roles	2b	41	32	6
Spousal support & Quality childcare	2c	34	27	5
<b>ORG CULTURE</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>
Leverage	3a	24	20	4
Support from superiors	3b	32	26	5
Support from colleagues	3c	30	25	5
Inflexible rules and policies	3d	36	30	5

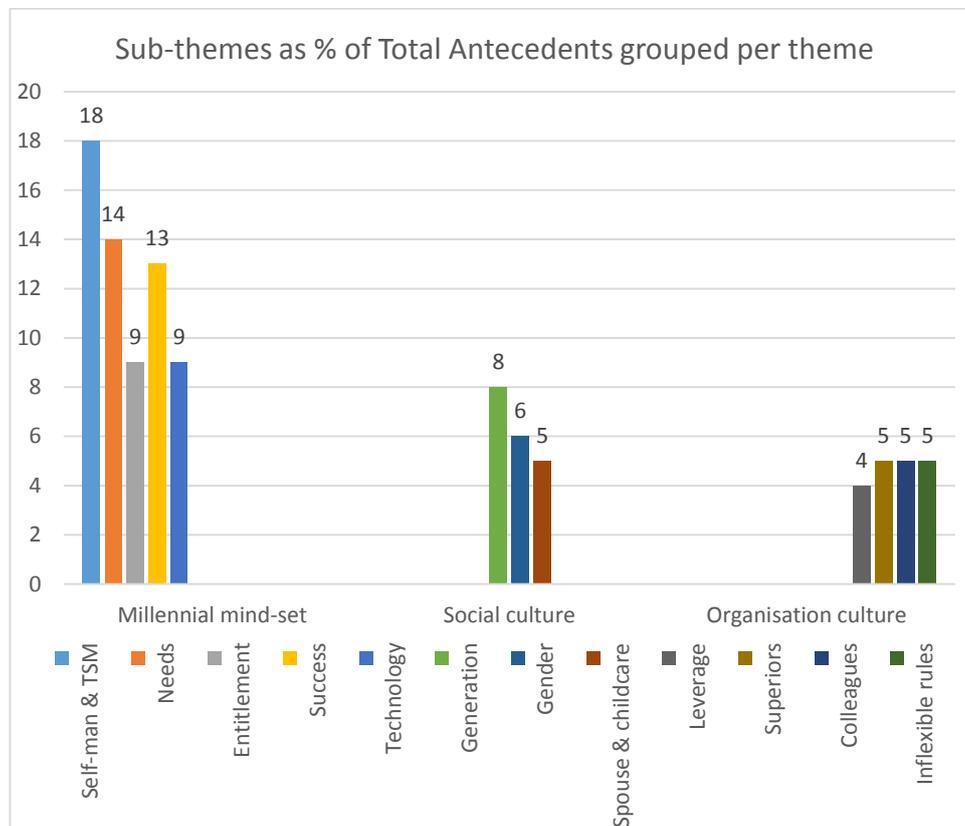


Figure 42. Antecedents themes per sub-theme

#### 4.5.1.1 Theme 1: Millennial mind-set

Four sub-themes which all have to do with personal views and preferences in combination with the global developmental “explosion” in the field of technology were grouped together into one theme and labelled *millennial mind-set*. Each of these sub-themes will be discussed individually, as well as in terms of links and relationships with other sub-themes and theory.

- ***Sub-theme 1a: Self-management and time spent meaningfully***

“I mean, my life now ... the highway runs right past where I train in the mornings and I watch this lot stuck in their cars in bumper-to-bumper traffic, trying to get into town, while I am jumping and hanging off things and swinging around and skipping and carrying on like a two-year old. And then I think to myself, if you just allowed people flexibility of say, to come in at 9h00. Just only being expected to be there at 9h00 and not 8h00 or 8h30 already makes a difference. Because the two hours they’re sitting in traffic in order to make it there on time, they could have been productive! Either doing e-mails and admin at home on the laptop or making calls, or going to the gym and staying healthy. And then when you do get to the office you are actually energised and you didn’t waste two hours sitting in your car being utterly unproductive.

– Participant 07907

In all the interviews the general mind-set was one of “I know best how to manage myself and my time”. The impression by the researcher was that this general need to manage their own time expressed by all the participants was not based on the typical millennial *entitled attitude* (1c) allocated to this *generation* (2a) in popular literature, but rather a question of confirmation that they are the ones in the best position to make decisions on what would be most effective, most productive and most sensible within the bigger picture of their day or week. This need for self-management in combination with the need to spend time meaningfully widely acknowledged in theoretical literature, was the strongest sub-theme observed in the interviews as a whole.

With this in mind it makes sense that so many participants expressed the view that spending long hours in traffic was such a ridiculous practise. The general view was that to spend unproductive time in traffic simply because of a fixed work starting hour coinciding with the fixed starting hour of thousands of other workers across a city, made no logical sense. In their minds, flexibility in terms of work hours did not only make sense seen as an opportunity

for more *productive* (6a) usage of traffic time for administration, e-mail communication and the like from home through *technology* (1e), but could also serve to lessen road congestion during certain hours of the day to the benefit of the community as a whole. The reference to the time wasting of sitting in traffic was not only made by participants who actually did face or used to face this obstacle, but even by participants who worked from home. This reiterates that as a whole, to not spend the valuable commodity of time meaningfully to millennial women is to waste it, and this wastage could be reduced if employees are given control to – within boundaries - manage it themselves. This theme and reference to congested traffic as a senseless time wasting routine if not well managed confirmed the worldwide views on the subject found in the literature.

However, the reference to working from home to wait for traffic to become less congested should not be confused with an attitude of laziness or trying to get away with not working. When participants were of the opinion that *not* being at the office would hinder their productivity instead of increasing it, they actually chose to work at the office, even if they had the option to work at home. Several comments supported this notion that they simply want to work where there is less distraction, leading to increased *productivity* (6a) and therefore facilitating time spent meaningfully. This might mean working at home rather than at the office during some part of the day, but it might also mean driving to the office at another time if children are a distraction at home.

“... *die tipe werk wat ek doen is meer analities en die groter rekenaars is daar (by die kantoor). Ook, dan is die distraction van die huis nie daar nie.*”

[“... the type of work I do is more analytical in nature and the bigger computers are there (at the office). Also, then the distraction of home isn't there.”

- Participant 08916

“...now working in the office is actually working a lot better, because I am able to get away from home. If I tried to work from home now it obviously wouldn't work, because she would harass me constantly.”

- Participant 10920

These text examples from the data again demonstrate the *millennial mind-set* of preferring to use *time meaningfully* (1a) and also shows the value the millennial women attached to *productivity and commitment* (6a) to doing the work and doing it well. They would not risk working in a space where they could not work effectively. If they do find themselves in a location or time space where this kind of *productivity and commitment* (6a) to the work is not

possible or hindered, they adjust what needs to be adjusted through self-management and thereby still reach their goal of doing their job well.

This theme manifested strongly in certain general acknowledgements which came through naturally during the interviews. Firstly, there was no argument made for customisation meaning lower quality of work or that the employer should be satisfied with lower productivity because the woman has a baby. Participants believed that tending to the bottom line and getting *return on their investment* (6b) is the responsibility of management and they not only acknowledged that, but expected management to manage their organisation with this in mind to the benefit of all employees – them included.

Secondly, there was acknowledgement that time spent meaningfully in some professions or work environments meant spending time physically at a work location. When working with valuable documents or expensive jewellery, one had to be where the vault is where these were kept, or when one had to be at a hospital where patients had to be seen. Thus, time spent meaningfully did not mean time spent at home – it meant time spent wherever it would facilitate productivity and effective usage of time.

Other ways in which this theme manifested was in the many references to being “forced” by *inflexible organisational rules and policies* (3d) and/or the law in conventional work environments to have a formal lunch time of one hour or 30 minutes during their day, which in their view was almost always spent working while eating a quick sandwich at their desks, yet increased the number of hours one was expected to be at the office.

In addition mention was made often – both by mothers and those who were not mothers – of the benefit of self-management of time when it comes to the *care of children* and *housekeeping* (theme 5). Self-management could allow an employee to rearrange her day to e.g. attend a child’s sporting match, take a dog to the vet, or meet a plumber at home and then to complete work responsibilities earlier or later during that day or that week. In fact, examples were even offered on how flexibility should make it possible for an employee to - on occasion - attend a friend’s birthday breakfast during a week morning and simply make up for the work time later during that day through self-management of her time and responsibilities.

It is important to note that the women do not look at these non-work activities as once-off needs which they would most probably get permission for if they were to ask their superiors. They see it as activities which should - within boundaries of responsibility, of course - be within their decision-making powers to attend or not attend, arrange for or not arrange for,

based on their *own* judgement and sense of commitment to delivering on their responsibilities. The value of pride in the quality of work they deliver (*personal needs* - 1b) and *entitlement* – (1c) would not allow them to even contemplate shirking their work responsibilities, but having flexibility and autonomy to self-manage would allow them to satisfy needs on more levels, i.e. on the work level, family level, home level and socialising level.

Interestingly the need to spend time meaningfully did not only manifest in references to day-to-day time management, but also in terms of time spent during different life phases. Time – in this case years - was seen by participants as being spent much more sensibly and meaningfully with their children when there was a need for nurturing during a specific life phase. On the other hand, time would be more meaningfully spent fully committed to the work environment before or after children were in a life phase where they needed hands-on care. In this regard the impression was that even though all the participants were seen as ambitious and keen to make a difference in the work environment, they were clear and calm in their explanations of how they planned ahead for their careers and how they saw it integrated with different life phases.

- ***Sub-theme 1b: Personal needs***

All the participants were very vocal about their personal need to work, to contribute to society, to learn and to grow. They said that working in a skilled profession brought them fulfilment and satisfaction (*emotional well-being* – 4a), which they valued intensely. They enjoyed working, were proud of their efforts, had confidence in their knowledge and skills and believed the work environment would be a poorer place without their contributions. They were also very serious about their work and delivering on their promises and reaching their goals.

*“Ek wil nie net ... ek wil nie net ‘n job hê nie. Ek wil ‘n career hê.”*

[“I don’t want ... I don’t want just a job. I want a career.”]

- Participant 02818

However, they were also of the opinion that being an employee (doctor, psychologist, or editor, etc.) on its own did not define who they were (*meaning of success* – 1d). The notion of needing to work for the fulfilment and joy it brings, but not wanting to be overwhelmed by it is reflected in the following statement:

*Vir my is werk nie die nommer een nie, maar ek is totaal en al depro as ek dit nie doen nie.*

[For me, work is not the number one, but I am totally depro if I don't do it.]

- Participant 01817

They see themselves as multi-dimensional, fulfilling various roles. They further believe they could be successful in other roles in the same way that they saw themselves as being successful in their role as employee, but need flexibility of environment to enable this (1d).

All the participants who are mothers mentioned their desire to nurture and mother their children as an intense need (2c). Not being in a position to fulfil that need was not an option they were comfortable entertaining:

*“En ek weet ook (1.0) ag, ek is liefdevol grootgemaak, maar ek weet ook wat het ek ... wat voel ek het ek (.4) gemis? En ek sal dit graag WEL vir my dogtertjie wil gee. Want my ma was NIE in die bevoorregte posisie om 'n werk te kon gehad het waar sy vir haar werkgewer kon sê, ek gaan nou by die huis werk nie. So sy het 'n 8h – 5h werk gehad, wat beteken ... wat beteken (.6) ons was in (.8) naskool. So ek dink net, as ek daaraan terugdink, dan dink ek net ... as my kind nie dit HOEF te hê nie ...”*

[“And I also know (1.0), ah, I was brought up in a loving home, but I also know what I ... what I felt I missed out on? And what I would want to give to my daughter. Because my mother was not in the privileged position where she could tell her employer, I am now going to work from home. So she had an 8h – 5h job, which meant ... which meant (.6) we were in aftercare. So I just thought, if I think back on it, then I just think ... if my daughter doesn't HAVE to have that ...”]

- Participant 08916

Everyone spoke of their need to take part and immerse themselves in other activities in addition to work activities and saw this and time with extended family and friends as non-negotiable. Many participants also mentioned their need to run an organised *household*, where things are under control and everything works (theme 5).

In addition, participants vocalised their need for camaraderie, interaction and socialisation and the sharing of their lives with colleagues on an informal as well as an intellectual level, so aptly described by one participant:

*“Ek het die sosial interaksie nodig. En as ek verjaar wil ek koek vat. Dit klink nou stupid, maar ek is een van daai mense. Daai goed is vir my belangrik.”*

“I need the social interaction. And if it’s my birthday, I want to take cake to work. It might sound stupid, but I am one of those people. Those things are important to me.”]

- Participant 01817

It is important to mention that none of the participants actually considered becoming fulltime housewives if work demands were too high, neither did they consider being subjected in the long term to a work environment which did not serve their personal- and family needs. The general attitude was that if they could not negotiate a customised option at one workplace, they would leave that organisation and then look for - or create - a customised opportunity in a different work environment. To *not* customise at all and either keep working in a conventional set-up or exit the work environment completely were not options they considered at all.

This attitude speaks not only of the manifestation of their personal need for self-actualisation, but also of the attitude of *entitlement* which is discussed as sub-theme 1c.

- ***Sub-theme 1c: Attitude of entitlement (demanding)***

In popular literature millennials are often portrayed as demanding little brats who think they are entitled to walk into an office and make the decisions on what they want to do and how and when they want to do it. In the data, however, the researcher found that although a definite element of entitlement could be observed in their language and descriptions of behaviour and needs, the angle from which it came was enlightening. Their entitlement was not rooted in a belief that they know better than their seniors because they are superior to their seniors, but rather from an angle of knowing better what would make them more effective because they know themselves, their bodies, their time schedules and their abilities. From this point of view it made no sense to them to be managed and controlled by impractical and illogical *rules and policies* (3d) which were applicable years ago, but not applicable in the *changed work environment* (2a). Their attitude, in other words, is simply one of “no, this could be more effective if we do it differently, so let us change it”.

*“Ek het teruggekome by die werk as ‘n nuwe mamma en ‘n bestuurder en ek wou aanhou borsvoed. So ek het reguit na hulle toe gegaan en vir hulle gesê, ek GAAN uitpomp, my kind se gesondheid is op die spel. So òf haar*

*gesondheid raak depleted, òf ek kan iets doen om te help dat sy nie so siek raak nie. Dit gaan help met my salaris, want dis vrek baie geld om vir formule te betaal. Plus, wat van julle mense wat rook? Dan vat ek 'n "smoke break".*

"I got back to work being a new mom and a manager and I wanted to keep breastfeeding. So I went straight to them and said I AM going to express milk, it's my child's health that's on the line. So either her health gets depleted, or I am going to do something to keep her healthier. It will help with my salary, because it's very expensive to pay for formula. Plus, what about all your people who smoke? Then it's like I'm taking a smoke break."]

- Participant 05901

From the data it was found that this generation often believe that their *millennial mind-set* (theme 1) is being misunderstood and therefore mismanaged by the decision-makers in organisations and in society. They describe themselves as a *generation* (2a) with a very strong need to be talked about and labelled as the best at something. They will work very hard to achieve a name for themselves, much in the same way businesses strive to build a brand. It is this desire to build their own brand of themselves that they believe is what makes them ideal for a less micro-managed and more *self-managed* (1a) type of working environment. While they want autonomy and the freedom to control and self-manage their world, very few will risk being seen as lazy or *unproductive* (6a) as it will harm the "brand" they are trying to market in the organisation and in society.

To get to the point of being known and being talked about, they have to put in the hours, which means, they have to "slay". The word "slay" was used by some of the younger participants and refers to an example of millennial jargon which is explained by Kline (2016, n.p.) as "a verb meaning 'to do something really well, to 'kill it'. An example is: 'Just got a promotion because I slay every single day'." Descriptions by the participants revealed that being known as a slayer is sometimes a goal in itself.

For these reasons it seems that in general, those who manage members of this *generation* (2a) could probably worry less that their employees are not working hard if they cannot see them. If organisations could therefore refrain from *blocking this energy* (phrase used by participants) by trying to control it and micro-manage it rather than to channel it positively, the benefits to both sides could be unimaginable (7a, 7c).

- **Sub-theme 1d: Meaning of success**

It will be a big mistake to assume or misunderstand that the brand a millennial woman is trying to build in an organisation and in society is based on the same definitions of success as was the norm for previous generations. As stated in the literature study, the data confirmed that the women did not define success as the degree to which one is able to climb the corporate ladder and the monetary rewards associated with that. Furthermore, their definitions of what makes them successful were not limited the achievements of work goals only, but included being successful on many other levels, not least of which their goal of being true to themselves. Their criteria of what was successful were also customised to their own *personal* circumstances, values and *needs* (1b) which meant that what was seen as success to one person could be something another would not strive for at all.

“It’s a big thing to be a mom and a wife and do well at that. It’s HUGE. It’s a huge part of what I define as being a success. If I could raise a good human I would have done well. That’s enough actually.”

- Participant 11921

“Actually, I’d rather be an adventurer and travelling and that. I’m doing it this way because I really truly believe that this is what I’m supposed to be doing. And do I know where I’m going? No freaking clue. And there are people outside going ‘Oh my gosh, no clear path!’ But for me, there’s a bigger picture.”

- Participant 06901

Several comments were made of the relief and gratitude they experienced for changing their circumstances before they got caught up in a system which has only the conventional performance criteria and rewards to base achievement upon (3d). The general view was that being good at something while not being fulfilled by it could not be seen as success.

It was interesting to find that an increase in remuneration was not described as the achievement of a goal, but merely as a way to satisfy *household* needs (5b). Mention was made of the financial discomfort which was brought about by a decrease in salary when customisation was pursued, yet all participants, even the single participants to whom having an unstable income was a risk, were still adamant that the gains on other levels far outweighed the financial loss they encountered when they made the decision to customise (1b).

“I HAVE taken a huge risk, I know I have, but it’s a risk I am prepared to take for my sanity, to be happy, to do things I really love and to be valued and appreciated and to be able to see that I am adding value.”

- Participant 07907

- **Sub-theme 1e: Technology**

An interesting link emerged between the sub-themes of technology and *generation* (2a). In the literature study mention was made of how the millennial generation was born and grew up with technology as a natural part of their lives. Because it already existed when they were born, they grew up having it around constantly. In the interviews the above was confirmed when it was found that the participants did not consciously think about how technology impacts their lives and behaviour in terms of flexibility of time and location.

*“Dis eintlik soos ‘n non-issue deesdae. Dis so geïntegreer in alles wat jy doen dat jy nie eers meer daaroor dink nie. Jy moet eintlik ‘n conscious decision maak om tegnologie te STOP as jy NIE beskikbaar wil wees nie.”*

[It’s actually like a non-issue these days. It’s so integrated in everything you do that you don’t think about it anymore. You actually have to make a conscious decision to STOP technology if you don’t want to be available.”]

- Participant 08916

The researcher found it interesting that this notion of not consciously being aware of the influence of technology in their lives manifested in an attitude of “of course, yes, why do you ask?” when the subject of technology was raised. After prompting, various examples were forthcoming on how technology is engrained in their workday and how it makes it possible for them to work flexibly, such as video-conferencing, being able to log into organisation networks, communication using voice, text, visual items and documents through various smart phone platforms and the like - all of which facilitate the continuation of work even without their physical presence at the office.

However, it was not a subject volunteered by them and at first was also not recognised as an antecedent to their pursuit of customisation. One reason for this could be that they have never worked in a time space where they were *not* able to mail a document to a client from their phone standing next to the pool where their son has a swimming lesson on a Tuesday afternoon or finish a document sitting in a coffee shop in town. In other words, while they supplied various examples of how technology made it possible for them to work flexibly, it was almost as though many only came to realise that the flexibility they enjoyed would not

have been possible without technology – mainly because they have never experienced or contemplated a world where this type of technology did not exist.

What was noticeable was the various examples mentioned by participants of how technology was a facilitating factor in helping them deal with work-life conflict, and in the process helping them *spend their time meaningfully* (1a). Examples included sitting next to a hospital bed working on a laptop, or taking part in a video-conference from home when the child-minder was late to work and they would not make it to the office in time for a meeting. Confirming again the theme of *self-management* (1a) one participant explained how she burnt the late-night oil one night to complete important documents due a few days later and mailing them to the manager in anticipation of possibly needing to stay home the following day when she noticed at around bed-time that her child was looking as though she might be getting ill. This way, if she could not go to work the next day and had to nurture her sick child, her work would be completed and they deadline would still be reached (*productivity and commitment – 6a*).

Of course it was also noticeable that technology was not a facilitating factor to the same extent to participants in the health professions as in the non-health professions. While it did enable more effective and easier communication between relevant parties and enabled some administrative tasks to be completed off-site, when they saw patients their physical presence was naturally still required at the hospitals or practices where they served.

#### 4.5.1.2 Theme 2: Social culture

Three sub-themes which all refer to factors that contribute to the general conscious or unconscious agreement in society on what is meaningful and proper were observed as antecedents to the pursuit of the participants' decision to pursue customised careers. These were categorised together under the theme label *social culture as generations* (2a), *gender roles* (2b) and *spousal support and quality childcare* (2c). Each of these sub-themes will be discussed separately.

- ***Sub-theme 2a: Generations***

Ek dink net daar is ook companies met ouer rolspelers wat nie gewoon is daaraan nie, wat eintlik nooit self die behoefte gehad het om dit te wil doen nie. Hulle (bestuur) het dit nie nodig gehad nie en nou sien hulle ook nie hoekom het ander dit nodig nie.

- Participant 08916

This sub-theme manifested in the interviews as opinions by participants that much of the resistance to *change* in how the modern employee could effectively be *managed* (7a) was rooted in the miss-match in mind-sets between those who managed and those who were managed. Some frustration was observed with decision-makers who were members of previous *generations* (2b) with a management style which based decisions on practices which were, according to the participants, quite outdated and *inflexible* (1d). These managers were perceived as rigid in their style, often expected all employees to be loyal and committed to the organisation as a first priority and saw *household* (theme 5) responsibilities and childcare demands as issues which had nothing to do with them or the organisation. This confirmed the view from literature that in today's workplace there are often decision-makers who still base their management style and expectations of employees on the traditional breadwinner-homemaker model in which the one who enters the work environment had no *household* or *childcare* (theme 5) responsibilities at all.

A strong link could be drawn between participants' view on generational differences and the reasons for the resistance to change and an inability to *manage the change* effectively (7a).

*“Daar is baie mans wat hier bly en in XXX (ander dorp) werk. Dis hoekom die werksure van 8 uur af is. Ek bedoel, wie kan hier bly, jou kind gaan aflaai in die oggend en voor 8 uur by die werk in XXX (ander dorp) wees? Want jy kan nie jou kind in die oggende nog vroeër aflaai nie. Dan is daar niemand by die skooltjie nie! So wie kan dit doen? Mense wat nie die kind hoef af te laai nie, dis wie. Soos mans wie se vrouens dit doen of mense wie se kinders nog nie gebore is nie of al uit die huis is. Maar nie jou gewone werkende ma nie.”*

[“There are many men who live here and work in XXX (other town). That's why they start at 8h in the morning. I mean, who can live here, drop their child off in the morning and arrive at work before 8h in XXX (other town)? Because you can't drop your child off even earlier. There's no one at school that early! So who can manage that? People who don't have to drop the child off at school, that's who. E.g. men whose wives do it or people whose kids aren't born yet or have already left home. But generally not your average working mother.”]

In addition, it manifested from the data that participants believed that it might not be a question of superiors consciously trying to block them or control them out of fear that they will definitely avoid their work responsibilities if they are not controlled, but rather a question of having always managed a workforce with a certain mentality within a certain structure relatively successfully within a model which views full-time commitment as the only indication of ambition and loyalty to the organisation. To be confronted with individuals who define ambition and the *meaning of success* (1d) differently and who therefore want to bring value to the organisation in an alternatively structured contract is simply not part of their reality, even though it can be demonstrated to them that it is possible through *technology* (1e) and a generation with a high work ethic.

*“Toe kom ek agter ... ek dink nie hy het dit lelik bedoel nie, maar toe kom ek agter, die penny het nog nie lekker by hom gedrop dat jy jou werk kan doen, maar jy hoef nie vir agt ure in ‘n spesifieke kantoor te sit nie.”*

[“Then I realised ... I don’t think he meant it in a nasty way, but then I realised the penny hasn’t dropped for him that you can do your work without sitting in an office for eight hours.”]

- Participant 08916

Participants also voiced their observation that when a superior was younger and therefore a member of the millennial generation, their management style allowed for more flexibility, notwithstanding the fact that so many of them were male (*gender roles* - 2b) and therefore did not have first-hand experiences of the work-life conflict which so many women experience.

Their belief was that their generation is what made the difference as firstly, their wives, sisters or female friends – those women whom they spend time with on a regular basis – exposed them to the realities of being working women or mothers and that this helped them develop some empathy with the circumstances of other working women.

Secondly, the view was being held that many of these younger men who were in managerial positions and had control over some policy decisions, took over more *household* responsibilities themselves and therefore had a better understanding of the challenges women face who had to play both roles.

- **Sub-theme 2b: Gender roles**

“And as great a husband or partner that you might have – and mine is FANTASTIC – the reality of it is ... and it burns me to admit this, because I am a self-declared feminist ... my idea before I had the baby is, oh, it can be 50/50, it’s possible. But the reality of it is ... the biological reality of it is that she is more dependent on me that she is on my husband. I end up doing a lot more for her than he does. And he does contribute massively. I am not taking that away at all, but at the end of the day his work life hasn’t changed all that much whereas mine HAS - completely. And my LIFE has changed completely.”

- Participant 09920

The atmosphere during the interviews when gender roles were brought up was generally not one of hostility, but rather one of attempts to explain, to co-evolve towards enlightenment and efforts to clarify why, despite the big contribution by spouses in the home already (2c) the following statement by one participant still has value:

“While the workplace has shifted in terms of women becoming more (.8) prominent, we haven’t achieved equality by any means, and still less change has taken place within the general mind-set of gender roles.”

- Participant 09920

A general view which manifested in terms of gender roles was that the women agreed that people in general should just accept the fact that men will not be having babies, women will (5b), and that this means that instead of trying to bring about equality by “allowing” women to compete with men on the same playing field, there should be an acknowledgement that the playing field is not equal and by the conventional definition of equality, will never be.

Thus, instead of the participants voicing a need to be acknowledged as having equal abilities and skills to their male counterparts, it seemed that issue of equality was not something they were even interested in discussing. The thoughts and ideas which emerged centred more on their frustration that the *differences* in the roles played by men and women are not recognised and sensibly managed by decision-makers. The general talk did not focus on issues such as equal pay and promotion, but rather on issues concerning flexibility to raise children while working (7c), having crèche facilities at the office or being allowed flexi-time in order to drop off and pick up their children from school themselves while still

filling a high-skilled position for which they did not have to take a demotion to be permitted to have the flexibility. Even though these women strongly believe that they should not have to take a demotion to be afforded flexibility, there was never an argument that they should be allowed to produce less work, yet still be given the same promotions/salaries as their male counterparts if there was a difference in outcome or productivity.

The millennial woman's definition of *success* (1d) seems to be strongly influencing the above mind-set. Millennial women are not pretending to be men and they are not judging their achievements in the workplace by the same criteria another employee (male or female) is judged. They do not insist on the same salary if they are not delivering the same outcomes, but they do expect the same salary if they deliver the same outcomes – irrespective of whether they spend the same amount of time at the office. It thus seemed as though there was a difference in mind-set from previous *generations* (2a) in terms of what it meant to be a working mother. Where a typical female employee of previous generations might have been slightly embarrassed if a baby toy were to fall out of a handbag during a board meeting as it was seen as unprofessional and reminded everyone around the table of the potential weakness it brings concerning *commitment*, *productivity* (6a) and *loyalty* compared to their male counterparts, this generation is proud of their status as women and mothers and insist on recognition for the alternative preferences and *needs* (1b) this new status brings about.

In summary, the women did not deny the differences which exist between genders in the workplace, they actually highlighted them. Yet they were of the opinion that these difference should be recognised and managed as differences and should not be used to judge women by labelling the differences as limitations or obstacles to high quality outcomes. The view is that if one acknowledges and manages the differences, they should not have to be obstacles.

- ***Sub-theme 2c: Spousal support & quality childcare***

It could be clearly heard in the interviews that those participants who were married had positive experiences with their husbands' involvement and help with *household* responsibilities and childcare demands, linking with sub-theme 2a (generations) and confirming to an extent the view on this subject found in the literature. Even though *gender roles* (2b) did play a role in the amount of support some of the women could expect from their husbands, generally speaking, the attitude of the participants was that their husbands hugely contributed to especially the childcare responsibilities.

It seemed that the problem women experienced on this subject was not with their husbands' attitudes or that their beliefs were based on rigid male/female gender roles, but rather one of difficulty when husbands were unable to be of more help due to their own work demands and -schedules. When husbands were themselves in a more flexible environment, women were able to count on them to take care of once-off crises such as taking a child to the doctor or fetching an elderly parent from the airport. In a more permanent sense, husbands' work circumstances had an effect on the type of contract their wives could negotiate with organisations e.g. whether it was possible to work night shifts, travel or if they could expect help from their spouses with the morning and/or afternoon school-run.

The availability of quality external childcare also proved to be an issue which facilitated the type of contract women attempted to negotiate with organisations. Depending on the nature of the childcare, the women were able to offer certain hours or certain commitments to organisations, for example if a child attended a crèche on the organisation premises (7c), neither traffic nor the child-minder's travelling arrangements had to be taken into account and the employee could offer to start her day already at 7h00 in the morning. If such a childcare option was not available and the women made use of external child-minding services at her home premises, she was dependant on the contract and time schedule negotiated with the child-minder when she looked at her own possible workday starting and ending times. External nursery schools and primary school hours affect the employee's day in the same manner. In addition, many nursery schools were mentioned to have strict rules regarding keeping sick children at home or sticking to drop-off and pick-up times.

From the above it is clear how spousal support and quality childcare has a direct effect on the possibility/impossibility of women to work conventional 8h00 to 5h00 work hours and also on the type of contract they are able to negotiate when they pursue customisation options, confirming the general view on this issue the view found in literature.

*P05: "As ek by die werk moes bly tot 5 uur ... ek sou nie kon ... ek sou dit nie ..."*

*R: "Sou jy bedank het?"*

*P05: "Vir seker. Ek bedoel, geen vrou kan produktief dink of werk as sy heeltyd worry oor die kind nie betyds by die crèche gehaal kan word nie."*

[P05: "If I had to stay at work until 5 o'clock ... I would not have been able to ... I couldn't have ..."

R: "Would you have resigned?"

P05: “Definitely. I mean, no woman can think or work productively if she had to worry all the time that the child could not be fetched from the crèche on time.”]

- Participant 05901

Even though most of the views concerning gender roles and childcare were offered by those participants who were married with children, other participants were often of the same opinion, even though there were fewer contributions from them and these did not include first-hand experiences. However, the general views which were shared by the participants and labeled as theme 2 – *social culture*, confirmed the view in literature which emphasises the need for household as well as workplace models to be adjusted to accommodate the changing social and economic roles of women.

#### 4.5.1.3 Theme 3: Organisation culture

An organisation culture has a huge effect on the mind-set of employees and their superiors concerning what is seen as *commitment*, *ambition*, *productivity* and *value* (6a), to the extent that even employees themselves sometimes buy into the view that organisation needs and demands are at all times more important than *personal needs* (1b) and preferences.

“I miscarried at work, with my feet on a bin, because I was working on a report which I HAD to finish. And I said to my colleague at one point, ‘I think I’m going to pass out’. And she said to me, that’s it. I’m taking you to the doctor. But it was too late, I had totally miscarried by then. I had been 13 weeks pregnant.”

- Participant 121012

In combination as well as individually, the four sub-themes arranged under the theme *organisation culture* has the power to *attract and retain* (theme 7) employees, but also the power to force employees to voluntarily resigning from a specific place of work if demands become unbearable.

- ***Sub-theme 3a: Leverage***

From the data it was clear that participants saw the leverage they had as valuable employees as a huge facilitating factor when it came to being in a strong position to negotiate a customised contract. As stated by one participant:

*“Ek sou definitief NIE in hierdie flexible setup NOU gewees het as ek nie die leverage gehad het van die vorige ses, sewe jaar van – nie eers 8h – 5h nie, maar 7h- tot 7h werk nie. Ek sou ook nie die vrymoedigheid gehad het om dit aan te pak en daarvoor te gaan vra nie. Die hele ding gaan oor trust. Hulle kan jou vertrou dat jy jou werk sal doen en goed sal doen.”*

[“I would definitely NOT have been in this flexible setup NOW if I didn’t have the leverage of working – not even from 8h – 5h, but from 7h – 7h – for the last six, seven years. I would also not have been so bold as to take it on and to go and ask for it. It’s all about trust. They can trust you to do your work and do it well.”]

- Participant 08916

As is clear from the quoted text, leverage is not only seen as a factor in the behaviour of management in organisation, but participants also expressed that they had the confidence to make an appointment with their superiors and put the issue of customisation on the table because of the knowledge that they had built a name and brand for themselves as being hardworking and trustworthy during previous years at the company. This made them valuable to the organisation and more likely that their request for customisation would be considered favourably. In fact, the view generally was that without this kind of leverage, an alternative contract would either not be driven from the organisation side, or not be considered by them at all.

“So I came to a place where I think they viewed me as (.4) an asset in the team. If it was someone from outside, unknown, I don’t think they would have worked so hard to make it happen.”

- Participant 11921

Interestingly, it seemed that participants saw the leverage an individual builds for herself as being applicable not only in the relationship she has with her organisation, but also with the clients she deals with.

“Some clients already know to give her space and not bother her, because they know when she does deliver, it will be a great product. And that is the relationship which she has already built.”

- Participant 131014

However, having leverage and a name as a valuable asset to the organisation did not automatically guarantee positive consideration for customisation in an organisation. In some cases, it seems that the organisation culture specifically regarding *support from superiors* (3b) and also *inflexible rules and regulations* (3d) trumped leverage in the negotiation process for customisation.

*“Ek het gedink ek is SO waardevol vir daai maatskappy, en SO onvervangbaar, hulle kan nie eintlik sonder my nie. Dit was ‘n helse ontnugtering om te beseft dat dit waarvoor jy al hierdie goeters insit – op die einde van die dag is jy so vervangbaar soos ‘n hand wat uit ‘n emmer water kom. Na alles het hulle my net so vervang.”*

[“I thought I was SO valuable to that company, and SO irreplaceable, they actually can’t do without me. I was a huge disillusionment to realise that everything you have put in for this place – at the end of the day you are as replaceable as taking a hand from a bucket of water. After everything they replaced me just like that.”]

- Participant 03818

Thus it seems that *having* leverage with which to enter the negotiation process for customisation does not necessarily guarantee a successful outcome, yet *not* having leverage is an almost guarantee that the attempt will fail. This confirms the views from theory that the degree to which the organisation views the employee as valuable is often a deciding factor in their decision to implement customisation.

Although not mentioned by the participants as an issue, the researcher did notice that in the cases of all three participants who managed to successfully negotiate customisation in the same organisation where they originally worked in a conventional environment, there were additional factors which could have increased their leverage. In one case the participant was of a different race to the vast majority of existing employees, in another case the participant was one of very few women countrywide who had the qualifications needed to perform the job and in the third instance the participant’s specific combination of skills most probably increased her leverage.

However, in all three cases the women had also proven themselves to be assets to the organisation in terms of *productivity and commitment* (6a), which is believed to be the factor which opened the door for them to request the alternative contract in the first place.

- ***Sub-theme 3b: Support from superiors***

From the data it was learnt that participants believed support from superiors to be an antecedent to the successful negotiation, implementation and management of customisation and flexibility in an organisation. It was also found that even though flexibility of hours or location was not necessarily officially recognised in some organisations, the direct superior to employees frequently made it possible for women to be granted one or another form of flexibility. When it came to official negotiations for customisation, support from a direct superior seemed to be contributing hugely to the eventual success of the negotiations.

Views were also offered of the opposite side of the coin, where the lack of understanding and support of superiors of the realities with which their employees are confronted on a personal level, could have the effect of the employees seeing no other option than to exit that particular work environment. Extreme examples were offered where superiors exhibited attitudes of non-empathy and insensitivity, using *rules and policies* (3d) rigidly in the management of their subordinates:

“My baby was misdiagnosed with cancer, but for a month we thought that she had a tumour in her tummy ... And she (boss) literally wouldn't let me come in earlier to leave earlier for the doctor if I had an appointment for her. I had to work my set hours. I would only leave at 5h00, pick my baby up at my mom's place and then rush from my mom's place back to Constantia and then get home with this little baby at 8h at night.”

- Participant 121012

It was noticeable that participants' stories often included examples where they did not even request time off for their personal needs/crisis and just tried through *Self-management* (1a) to keep all the balls in the air. It became clear that only when they became aware of the fact that the lack of superior support meant there was no room whatsoever to attempt *time spent meaningfully through self-management* (1a), did they start to believe that it had become impossible for them to successfully integrate work- and home life. In that scenario they felt they had no choice but to resign from that organisation. This decision was made despite believing themselves to be fiercely committed to their careers and despite the huge

satisfaction they experienced from contributing on an intellectual level in the workplace. Being confronted with a manager who made it impossible to tend to *personal and family needs* (1b) even in crisis situations, made the choice to exit that workplace inevitable.

- ***Sub-theme 3c: Support from colleagues***

Much in the same way that support from superiors contribute to the *organisation culture* (theme 3) could support or the lack of support from colleagues make it bearable or unbearable to the extent that employees are able to continue contributing in that environment or not. There were many examples of how colleagues were motivational forces for women who were busy negotiating their customisation contracts, as well as stories of how colleagues were helpful on an emotional level not only with personal issues, but also in times of crises at work or home when help was offered in the form of e.g. taking over night shifts or standing in for them at the office.

Unfortunately many examples were also shared on situations where an inability to put oneself in the shoes of others lead to an attitude of resentment when some employees were granted permission for flexibility other colleagues did not even experience the need for. The impression came across that women very often did not celebrate other women (especially mothers) being granted privileges which would make it easier for them to successfully manage both work and home, often being quite nasty about it.

“And then I was on the Employment Equity committee and one woman actually said, ‘these women are of NO use to us when they are pregnant, then they go off on maternity leave for six months, and they are of NO use to us for that six months, then they come back and for the first six months they are STILL of no use to us because they are still ‘gugu-going’ about their babies. So we lose almost two years and who has to stand in for them? It’s the other women, and it’s the men who have to fall in’.”

- Participant 121012

The impression from the participants during the interviews was not at all that they expected any organisation to pay a salary to an employee who is of no use to an organisation for two years.

They did believe that unsupportive attitudes from some colleagues who made unsubstantiated statements as fact in environments where decisions are made, were harmful

to those women who tried to work towards a situation where organisations re-thought how they could manage women differently to their benefit and the benefit of organisations.

In addition, participants made mention of ways in which an *organisation culture* overrode the rules and regulations which were officially in play, confirming statements in literature regarding *culture* and not necessarily *rules* being the motivational force for the existence of flexibility in an organisation or not:

*“Die kultuur daar ... mense kom almal tussen 7 uur en half agt werk toe. Daar was een vrou wat geweier het om dit te doen, sy het half nege daar aangekom, want die werksure sê, half nege tot half vyf, die werksure het niks van half agt gesê nie. Mense het, of dit nou vir persoonlike redes was soos verkeer of om meer werk gedoen te kry of wat ookal, het daai tyd ingekom. So die vrou wat half nege eers ingekom het het presies dieselfde werk as ons gedoen, maar snaaks genoeg, dit was maar die indruk wat mense gehad het, dat sy nie so hard werk nie. So ek dink dis ook maar ‘n mind-set waarin mens verval. Mens wil tog net nie lyk of jy nie jou werk doen nie.”*

[“The culture there ... people all come to work between 7 o’clock and half past seven. There was one woman who refused to do that, she arrived at half past eight, because those were the hours. Whether to miss traffic or to get more work done or for whatever reason, people arrived early. So the woman who only arrived at half past eight did exactly the same work as the rest of us, but funnily enough, it was the impression people had, that she didn’t work as hard. So I think it’s a kind of mind-set you fall into. You just don’t want to come across as someone who doesn’t do her job.”]

- Participant 04824

- ***Sub-theme 3d: Inflexible rules and policies***

The combination of timeworn rules and policies and an attitude of *resistance to change* (7a) was indicated as a contributing factor to the inability of some organisations to accommodate the alternative time and flexibility needs and preferences of millennial women. The rigid manner in which rules are often implemented makes it impossible for customisation to be allowed within the existing structures. It seems that even though employers and employees alike can clearly observe that the current manner of implementation of a policy or procedure

to have very little use or even to have detrimental effects, as well as knowing that the original reasons for the establishment of the rules have faded, the exploration of alternatives is still not a logical choice. It seems that *embracing and affecting change* (7a) in a system which has operated for years in a certain way is easier said than done.

Participants viewed the mindless following of rules for no other reason than it being a rule, as a senseless exercise. Their view was that superiors sometimes do not even try to consider the context and the possible benefits of customisation to the relevant parties at all, but instead spend time and energy gathering arguments for why customisation is *not* a viable option. This is demonstrated in the quoted text by a participant when the possibility of telecommuting on some days of the week were discussed in their organisation:

*“Daar was SIMPEL argumente, soos hulle moet nog steeds ‘n kantoor hê en die ligte en als moet nog steeds betaal word. So regtig snaakse argumente.”*

[“There were RIDICULOUS arguments, e.g. they would still need an office and the lights and so on would still have to be paid. So really funny arguments.”]

-Participant 08916

When customisation or flexibility was dismissed out of hand, the view of the participants was that more often than not this practice lead to the manipulation of the system by individuals who found a way to create ways around these rules without getting caught. Often actions of system manipulation were mentioned in situations where employees were expected to be present at a certain location for certain hours when there was not enough work to do to stay busy and productive for the duration of the hours. Yet, the inflexibility of the policies and rules of the structure left little or no room to negotiate an alternative.

When this situation is seen in the context of millennial women’s need for *self-management and time spent meaningfully*, (1d) it makes sense that the idea of “trying to look busy” at the office while having pressing tasks that need taking care of elsewhere makes no sense to them. They find it difficult to feel content and fulfilled in such a heavily controlled environment in which the chance to negotiate customisation would be extremely slim. In this manner inflexible rules and policies contribute to an organisation culture which would motivate millennial women to a choice to exit that workplace in order to look for or create a flexible work environment elsewhere.

#### 4.5.2 Outcomes

*“Ek het een keer met my man gespot en gesê, dankie dat hy my exciting lewe gevat het en dit kom staan en MEANingful maak het! Maar dis hoe ek voel daar oor, want daar is nou meaning en daar is diepte. Aan die ander kant was daar excitement en daar was vooruitgang.”*

[“I once told my husband in jest, well thank you very much for taking my exciting life and making it MEANingful! But that is how I feel about it, because now there is meaning and there is depth. On the other side there was excitement and growth.”]

- Participant 02818

Figure 43 shows how comments on the outcomes of customisation were arranged into three themes. Interestingly comments centred mostly on the view of the participants of the mostly positive outcome of customisation on the *organisation* (43%). The second most significant outcome seemed to be in terms of *individual well-being* with 32% and thirdly in terms of their *households* with 25%, which is understandable when taking into account that four of the participants were single and another were married, but have no children.

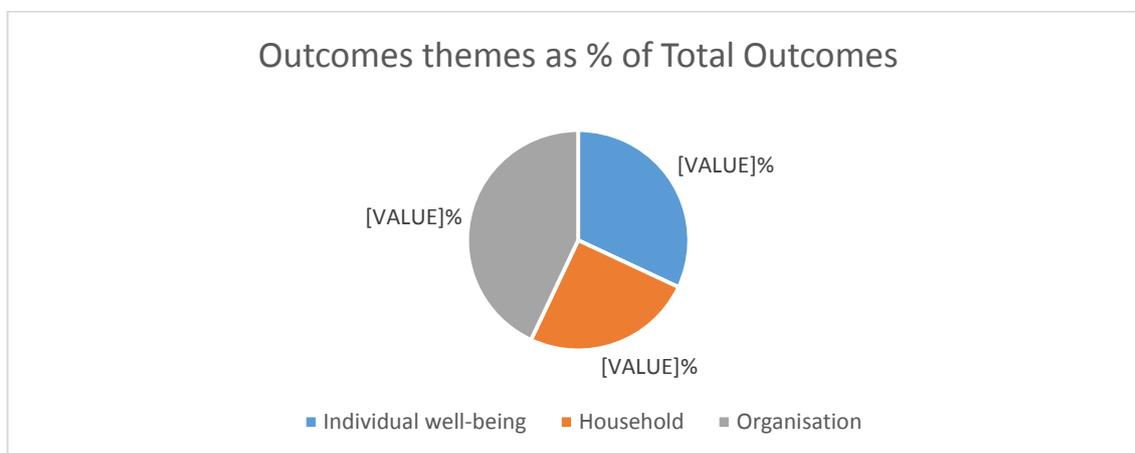


Figure 43. Outcomes themes

When Table 5 and Figure 44 are examined it is clear that participants saw the biggest outcome with regards to *individual well-being* on their *emotional* state (4a) and secondly on their *health* (4b). In terms of the outcome of customisation on their *households*, the comments centred mostly on the impact on *family needs* (5b) and secondly on the *enrichment* (5c) they experienced because of it. In the third instance their view was that there was also an impact on their ability to manage their *housekeeping* duties (5b).

The participants had strong views on the positive impact customisation had and could have on *organisations* where customisation was implemented, with an even spread between increased *productivity and commitment* (6a) from these employees and the *return on their investment* (6b) in those employees for the organisation.

The most significant indication of the participants' experience of customisation was the consistent view of the overwhelmingly positive effect thereof and the benefits to everyone concerned.

"I'm trying to think what losses... I can't even think of ONE loss, to be honest. Apart from the financial loss, which is not that important, we've not had any other losses. I gain from this, my family gains from this and so does the hospital."

- Participant 11921

*"Die vryheid om my tyd te manage is ON-GE-LOOF-LIK satisfying en soos ek gesê het, ek kry MEER gedoen, ek is MEER produktief, ek is MEER gelukkig as individu, ek dra meer by tot my omgewing en tot my huishouding. Ja, dis net all over positief. Ek kan nie eers sien hoekom dit nie meer algemeen is nie."*

["The freedom to manage my own time is UN-BE-LIE-VABLY satisfying and as I've said, I get MORE done, I am MORE productive, I am HAPPIER as an individual, and I contribute more to my environment and to my household. Yes, it's just positive all over. I cannot even see why it isn't more of a norm.']

- Participant 04824

Interestingly the only loss mentioned as a result of customisation was a financial loss, which they did not actually perceive as a significant loss in the context of the meaning they attach (or do not attach to) monetary rewards as an indication of success. The financial loss was merely seen as a decrease in financial resources to be used within the household.

Table 5

*Outcomes text count per theme and sub-theme*

ALL PARTICIPANTS	THEME	COUNT	% of Theme	% of Total Outcomes
<b>OUTCOMES TOTAL COUNT OF QUOTED TEXT</b>		<b>299</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>32</b>
Emotional	4a	66	69	22
Health	4b	29	31	10
<b>HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>
Housekeeping management	5a	13	17	4
Family needs	5b	38	51	13
Enrichment	5c	24	32	8
<b>ORGANISATIONAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>
Productivity and commitment	6a	65	50	22
Return on investment	6b	64	50	21

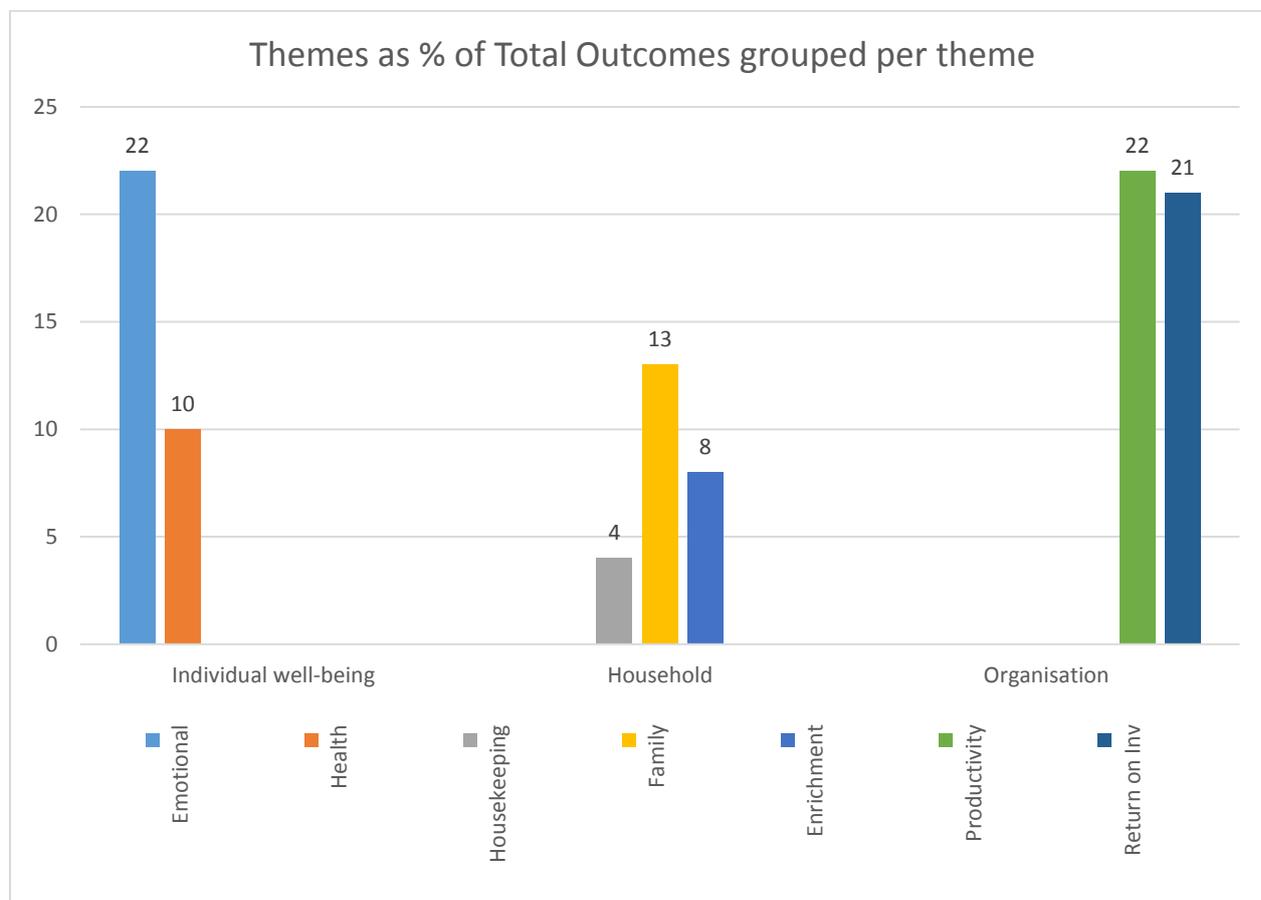


Figure 44. Outcomes themes per sub-theme

#### 4.5.2.1 Theme 4: Individual well-being

The contrast participants shared on the status of their *individual well-being* before customisation and after customisation was quite significant. Some experienced very high levels of work-life conflict while employed in a conventional environment resulting in major negative effects on their *individual well-being*, both in terms of emotions and health. Examples included instances of panic attacks in one participant and constant feelings of aggression in another. A third participant felt it necessary to see a therapist while another even went through a PPI (Positive Psychology Intervention) in order to cope with the conflict experienced.

##### ***Sub-theme 4a: Emotional well-being***

The recurrent words and phrases which spoken in individual interviews as well as across all interviews when outcomes were discussed were the words *satisfaction*, *fulfilment*, *contentment* and *relief*, and most of all, the word *happiness* and these words were spoken repeatedly.

“I mean, financially I am supposed to have reason to stress, but I am still a much happier person now and much more at peace. Everyone that I’ve seen in the last however long ... they cannot believe the change! Even physically, my face – it’s almost like I’ve had a facelift! I don’t have that aggression, that tightness that I’ve had anymore. It’s like a ton of bricks has been lifted from my shoulders.”

– Participant 07907

Participants also shared how their own positive emotional state had a positive effect on their environment, which included their *household* (theme 5), but also their *organisational* environment (theme 6), setting in motion a cycle of positive feedback on all levels of their lives.

- ***Sub-theme 4b: Health***

In terms of individual health, participants shared how customisation had a positive effect on both their physical health as well as their mental health. It emerged that the flexibility of either *self-management* (1a) or the reduced work hours negotiated by some meant that they had time for health-related tasks such as meal planning and preparation as well as exercising, which they did not have previously. It also emerged that in some cases an unhealthy lifestyle

was not only because of limited time for exercise, but because previously the level of exhaustion they experienced trying to keep everything together was overwhelming, which meant they simply did not bother, almost never exercising or trying to eat healthily, and even skipping meals when their programmes were too busy.

On a mental health level participants experienced after customisation that having some control over how they manage their time meant that they are more successful at keeping all the balls in the air. The mothers were especially vocal about experiencing less feelings of guilt, starting to believe instead that they are actually making it as successful working mothers, which was extremely fulfilling and satisfying to them.

A clear link could here be drawn to the *return on investment* (6b) for the organisation in terms of the positive outcome of a physically and mentally healthy and happy employee, with the mental and physical *well-being* of employees relating directly to less sick leave and higher *productivity* (6a) through increased focus.

#### 4.5.2.2 Theme 5: Household

The effect of customisation in the lives of the women also manifested in how they explained the outcomes in terms of their *households*. Three sub-themes were identified, namely housekeeping management (5a), family needs (5b) and enrichment (5c). It was noticeable that more comments were made on these sub-themes by women who have families than those who are single.

- ***Sub-theme 5a: Housekeeping management***

The millennial women were quite comfortable sharing their views on the importance they attached to running an organised household, an attitude which would not necessarily be something associated with most people's idea of the typical corporate career woman of thirty years ago. This can be linked to views on *gender roles* (2b) which indicated that instead of denying that they were women or that they also had ordinary household responsibilities which had to be taken care of, the women embraced such tasks as part of their lives, doing what needed to be done and striving to do it well.

“Obviously because we we're both very busy, it was sometimes difficult to always keep a handle on things. So this morning I actually had time to look through the kitchen cupboards, make a list ... it sounds like something so mundane, but I could walk through the house thinking what needs to be

cleaned, like my son's toys, you know? Just those little things. It does make me feel good to know that I have things more under control in my home now, because, as I say, I do like to be in control (laughs) and my home is important to me."

- Participant 11921

- **Theme 5b: Family needs**

The flexibility of *self-management* (1a) and/or the increased time available to the women also made it possible to tend to family responsibilities which previously caused work-life conflict. Views were expressed on the positive outcome customisation had on marriages and family relationships – not only because of more time spent together, but also because of the quality and meaning of conversations the women had the time and energy to engage in with their husbands and children.

The single women also commented on the pleasure it brings to their lives to have time and energy to spend with extended family and friends, and being in a position to host social events because they now had time to arrange and prepare for it.

"But once again I can structure my time and say okay this evening I'm having dinner with my family or dinner with my friends so maybe this afternoon I will do my work or this morning can put in the hours so that the rest of the day I can spend preparing or whatever the case is."

- Participant 09920

For the mothers, having time to spend with children and managing their activities had an extremely positive effect on their *individual well-being* (theme 4) as well as on their *households* (theme 5). These activities included tasks such as help with homework and examination preparation, taking children for appointments at the dentist, doctor or hairdresser, as well as the ordinary day-to-day dropping off and picking up duties from school or nursery school. Several mothers commented on the meaning it has for them to just be available in case a teacher wanted to have a word or being able to attend a child's extramural activity performances and matches.

This satisfaction with being able to be there for one's family or children links well with the *personal need* (1b) expressed by women to nurture and care for them as an antecedent to the pursuit of customisation.

- **Sub-theme 5c: Enrichment**

The participants stated that their experiences as women and mothers enriched their whole world, not only their personal lives. They believed that to an organisation having employees in their corner who are getting married, who are having children, who are looking after a sick parents, who are engaging in further learning or who are travelling overseas all contribute to a more life experienced individual with more skills and knowledge to be harvested and developed by the organisation.

In the same way they believed themselves to have been enriched as women and mothers because they were still in a work position where they could be intellectually stimulated, where they could gather knowledge, increase their skills and have experiences which could benefit them as individuals and their families.

From the ordinary to the momentous, many stories were shared of enrichment brought from one role to the other. Some spoke of the value of the friendships they built at work (*personal need* – 1b) and how elements of those relationships spilt over into their home lives. Others offered specific examples of how work skills and knowledge improved their *household* management (5a). In this specific example it was significant that the enrichment only became a reality once customisation was implemented.

*“Een ding is ... ek weet van kos - dis my werk. En die kinders se verskeidenheid kosse wat hulle eet, is nou ... want dit was altyd net spaghetti bolognese en een keer ‘n week vis en plain bruin vleis en chutney hoender, verstaan? So nou is daar ‘n groot push van hulle, want hulle moet nou ander goed begin eet. Die vakansie het XXX (seun) punte gekry vir elke nuwe ding wat hy probeer eet. Dit spruit alles daar uit. Want hulle was nou vir ‘n lang tyd blootgestel aan dieselfde boring kosse en nou het ek tyd en energie om vir hulle van kos te leer ... so dit is nou ‘n interessante spin off.”*

[“One thing ... I now about food – it’s my job. And the variety of food the children eat has now ... because it was always just spaghetti bolognese and fish once a week and plain brown meat and chutney chicken, you understand? So now there is a big push from them, because now they have to start eating different foods. During the holiday XXX (son) earned points for every new type of food he ate. Because for a long time now they were

exposed to the same boring foods and now I have the time and the energy to teach them about food ... it's an interesting spin-off.”]

- Participant 03818

Other examples indicated a deeper level of work-life enrichment:

*“En dan dink ek net die hoeveelheid goed wat mens daaglik beleef en veral met hierdie wat ons nou in verskillende lande en ook in Afrika was ... die goed wat jy sien en beleef en so, maak net jou ... dit maak net jou wêreld oop en dit maak net dat ek in die aande as ek by die huis kom, dan voel ek ek het perspektief oor dit wat ek vir haar kan leer en vertel oor die wêreld waarin sy is. Ek kan by die huis kom en vir haar vertel van kinders in Etiopië en in ander lande en ek kan vir haar vertel hoe doen hulle goeters in daai land en hoe doen ons goeters anders en HOEKOM doen ons dit anders. EN (.6) dat ONS manier NIE noodwendig reg is nie.”*

[“And then I just think that everything one experiences daily and especially with travelling to all these countries and also in Africa ... everything you see and experience and so on, just makes you ... it just opens your world up and it makes me get home in the evenings feeling I have perspective now on what I can teach her about the world she is in. I can get home and tell her about children in Ethiopia and in other countries and I can tell her how they are doing things there in that country and how we do things differently here and WHY we do it differently. AND (.6) that OUR way is NOT necessarily the right way.”]

- Participant 08916

Participants did not only comment on work-life enrichment, but also on life-work enrichment.

“It's interesting, one of the consultants actually said to me, 'you are a MUCH better doctor now than you were before and we wanted to keep you before, but now even more, because you get it now'. You know, it's so easy to come from an academic perspective. And one of them said to me at one point 'you know, with some things, you're quite like a brick wall (laughs) - there's not much give'. If I believed that something was the best way, then that is how it was done. And I think post becoming a mom, the brick wall started to fall

away. You're just more understanding, less judgemental, which is necessary. That experience changes your perspective on so many things."

- Participant 11921

Not one of the participants experienced any outcomes of customisation as a loss on the career level, expressing adamantly that they gained hugely as individuals, in their family lives and also in their careers as they were still in a position to fulfil their *personal need* (1b) for contributing to society, making a difference and being intellectually stimulated. This means that apart from the minor losses on financial and emotional levels, participants experienced the outcomes of customisations as overwhelmingly positive and a huge gain to them on all levels of their lives.

#### 4.5.2.3 Theme 6: Organisation

Comments regarding the positive outcomes for organisations in terms of *increased productivity and commitment* as well as the improved *return* an organisation gets on their *investment* and continued belief in their employees who are allowed to customise was significant. It was gathered from the interviews that the moment the women's work circumstances changed from being heavily controlled by set time frames and locations to a customised contract where they took over some of the control themselves, was the moment their work effort and sense of obligation towards their work increased, naturally forecasting major benefits to the organisation.

"My husband is confused, because he says sometimes 'you work so much harder now', but I don't always see it as work. It's okay to do it."

- Participant 121012

- **Sub-theme 6a: Productivity & commitment**

In the traditional work model where modern *technology* (1e) had no influence on the workplace, assumptions could often quite accurately be made on the direct relation between the amount of time spent at work and the amount of work done. While it would be incorrect even in those circumstances to assume that people were always productive when they were at work, it was mostly true that people could not be productive if they were *not* at work, because mostly work could only be done at the work premises. When the work content and the influence of technology on the modern work environment are considered, these assumed links between time spent at a work location and productivity become irrelevant. As stated by a participant:

“The amount of hours actually means diddly-squat. It’s all about whether you’re PRESENT and FOCUSSED when you’re there, not HOW LONG you are there!”

- Participant 07907

A central view heard in the interviews was that the participants believed their productivity to have increased since customisation. For some the increased productivity was directly related to reduced hours in which to complete the same tasks, again reiterating their need to spend their time meaningfully and sensibly (1a).

*“Want ek sal nou in twee ure die ekwivalent van vyf ure doen, want toe, tussen 8h en 1h kon daar veertien mense in jou kantoor gewees het waarvan (.6) vier van hulle sommer net wou gesels en (.6) die helfte van jou tyd opvreet. Nou sê ek sommer maklik, ‘sorry, maar julle kan nie nou hier by my staan en chat nie, ek moet werk. Onthou, ek loop 2 uur’.”*

[“Because I will now do the equivalent of five hours in two hours, because then between 8h and 1h there could have been fourteen people in your office of which (.4) four only wanted to chat taking up (.6) half of your time. Now I would easily say, ‘sorry, but you guys can’t stand here chatting to me, I have to work. Remember, I leave at 2 o’clock’.”]

- Participant 08916

In discussions on *self-management and time spent meaningfully* (1d) as well as *personal needs* (1b) the increased commitment to their work when there was higher levels of ownership and personal control of their day shone through seemingly without conscious intent and simply as part of another subject.

P13: “It’s just something that I thought of at 1h00 last night when I was working ...

R: Oh, shame, that’s late.

P13: No, not shame! It was an absolute joy! Actually, I got annoyed with myself when I got sleepy. Because it’s my product and I wanted to work on it some more.”

- Participant 131014

A strong sense of agreement was heard through all the interviews that participants saw themselves as naturally committed and productive individuals and that the flexibility of self-management brought about by customisation had the effect that this quality in them intensified (for more than one reason), instead of declining.

- **Sub-theme 6b: Return on investment**

When the women's *personal need* (1b) for excellence in their work environment and the fulfilment (*emotional well-being* – 4a) they get from delivering a high quality product is seen in combination with their need for *self-management and time spent meaningfully* (1a), it is easy to understand that the return on investment for an organisation on the positive side far outweighs the negative. Indeed, it seems the only loss for organisations in such a case is the feeling of loss of control over the micro-management of their employees' activities. The disparity in potential outcome for an organisation who sticks only to a heavily controlled management strategy, with the potential outcomes for the organisation when flexibility is allowed, is clear when the following two examples of quoted texts are understood:

*“Sien, as hulle begin met, oe nee, ons weet jy het 'n kind, maar jy moenie ..., jy mag nie ... dan gaan hulle ons negatief maak en ons gaan haat wat ons doen en dan gaan ons net doen wat ons MOET doen, jy gaan beslis nie enige iets ekstra doen nie. En is DIT nou die tipe mens wat jy in 'n werksplek soek? Die een wat net doen wat hy moet?”*

As opposed to:

*“Moet asseblief nie die kwantiteit van die ure wat ons by die kantoor is meet nie, meet die uitkomst en die kwaliteit van die uitkomst. Want wat julle NIE sien nie, is daai ma, wat by die hospital sit met 'n siek kind in haar arms, sit en e-posse antwoord. Wat julle nie sien nie, is as daai babatjie 7 uur in die aand gaan slaap, gaan lê sy nie voor die TV nie, sy haal haar werk uit en sy kom haar verantwoordelikhede na. Want dis die tipe mense wat julle het. Want ons is committed workers. Ons wil self ons deadlines ook bereik.”*

[“See, if they start with, oh, no, we know you have a child, but you shouldn't... you're not allowed to ..., then they are going to make us

negative and we are going to hate what we do and then we are only going to do what we HAVE to do, you are definitely not going to do anything extra. And is THAT the type of person you want in your organisation? The one who only does what he has to?”]

As opposed to:

[“Please don’t measure the quantity of hours we are at the office, rather measure the outcomes and quality of the outcomes. Because what you DON’T see, is that mother who is sitting at the hospital with a sick child is sitting there responding to e-mails. What you don’t see is when that baby goes to sleep at 7 o clock at night, then the mother doesn’t go and relax in front of the TV, she takes out her work and she tends to her responsibilities. Because that is the type of people you have. Because we are committed employees. We also want to meet our deadlines.”]

- Participant 05901

In cases where organisations were not willing to consider or grant customisation options and where they had to exit that work environment completely, some participants experienced a great emotional loss and disillusionment with their organisation’s lack of loyalty towards them and a lack of willingness to continue to invest belief and trust in them as the same committed, loyal and productive employees even if their contracts were to be adjusted.

*“Dit was soos ‘n skeisaak vir my. Ek was in rou. Ek het die ou XXX (maatksappy) verloor. Ek is nie meer deel van daai familie nie.”*

[“It was like a divorce to me. I was in mourning. I’ve lost the old XXX (organisation). I am not part of that family anymore.”]

- Participant 03818

Another interesting thought which participants emphasised was the wastage they saw in organisations who were not willing to accommodate their - often temporary – alternative needs and preferences. In their minds an organisation who had employed someone for a period of time would have invested in that individual in terms of training and development, creating combinations of skills and knowledge, as well as in terms of time building strong working relationships, not only with colleagues and superiors, but also with clients. They found it short-sighted that organisations would rather risk or even accept the resignation of

such an employee than to consider an alternative working contract with an already loyal employee - a contract which would most probably be to their benefit on more than one level such as increased *productivity and commitment* (6a) as well as *employee well-being* (theme 2) as discussed previously.

It is important to acknowledge that the views on the antecedents to the pursuit of customisation and the outcomes on the individual, household and career levels are based on the personal experiences of the participants and thus “factual” insofar as it reflects their own perceptions of their own experiences. The statements made on the return on investment for organisations who have accommodated women in customised contracts are the perceptions of the participants and reflect *their* views on the return on investment for organisations, not the actual calculated return on investment organisations experienced. Therefore, when the return on investment for organisations is discussed as a sub-theme, it is done so from the angle of the perceptions of a millennial woman who is currently active in a customised contract.

#### 4.5.3 Attracting and Retaining valuable employees

As can be seen in Figure 45 the participants’ views on the most effective manner in which to manage the increased diversity of gender and generation in the workplace could all be grouped under a central theme of *embracing the reality of a changing workplace*.

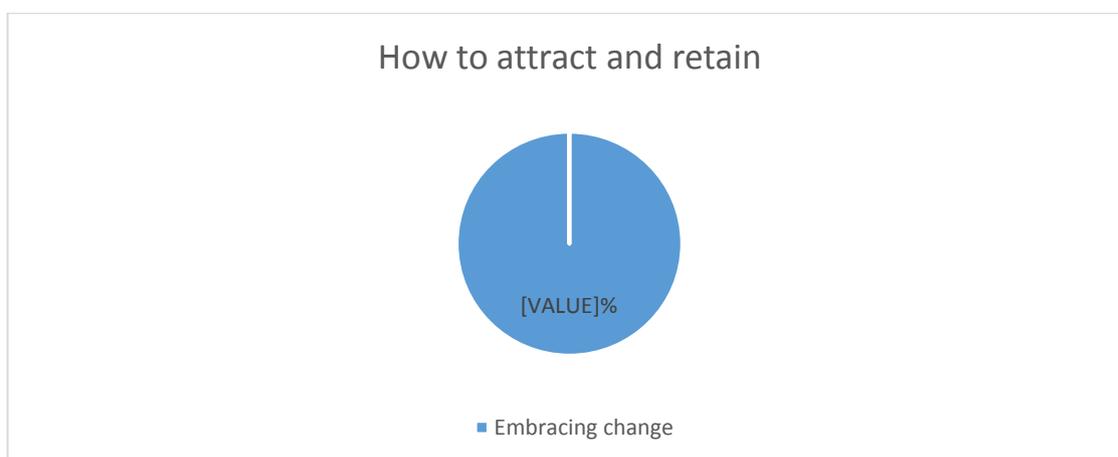


Figure 45. How to attract and retain employees

Examining Table 6 and Figure 45 it is clear that the most comments on how organisations could *embrace change* involved suggestions on *alternative processes and policies* (7c) which could be considered by organisations to better accommodate their employees. The view of participants on the reasons why there is reluctance from organisations to implement customisation options more regularly in their environments, centred on their opinion that it is

mostly that they ineffectively *manage change* (7a) or resist it altogether which is the obstacle to positive movement in that direction. Some comments were also made regarding the lack of a need for organisations to have alternative ways of *managing their changing workforce* as they often do not have to *further invest* (through customisation) in current employees as the replacement of those employees with other available workers is always an option seen in the light of the high unemployment figures in the country.

Table 6

*Attract and retain text count per sub-theme*

ALL PARTICIPANTS	THEME	COUNT	% of Theme	% of Total Attr & Ret
<b>ATTRACT AND RETAIN TOTAL COUNT OF QUOTED TEXT</b>		<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>EMBRACING THE REALITY OF A CHANGING WORKPLACE</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Managing change	7a	53	37	37
Further investment	7b	8	6	6
Alternative processes and policies	7c	84	58	58

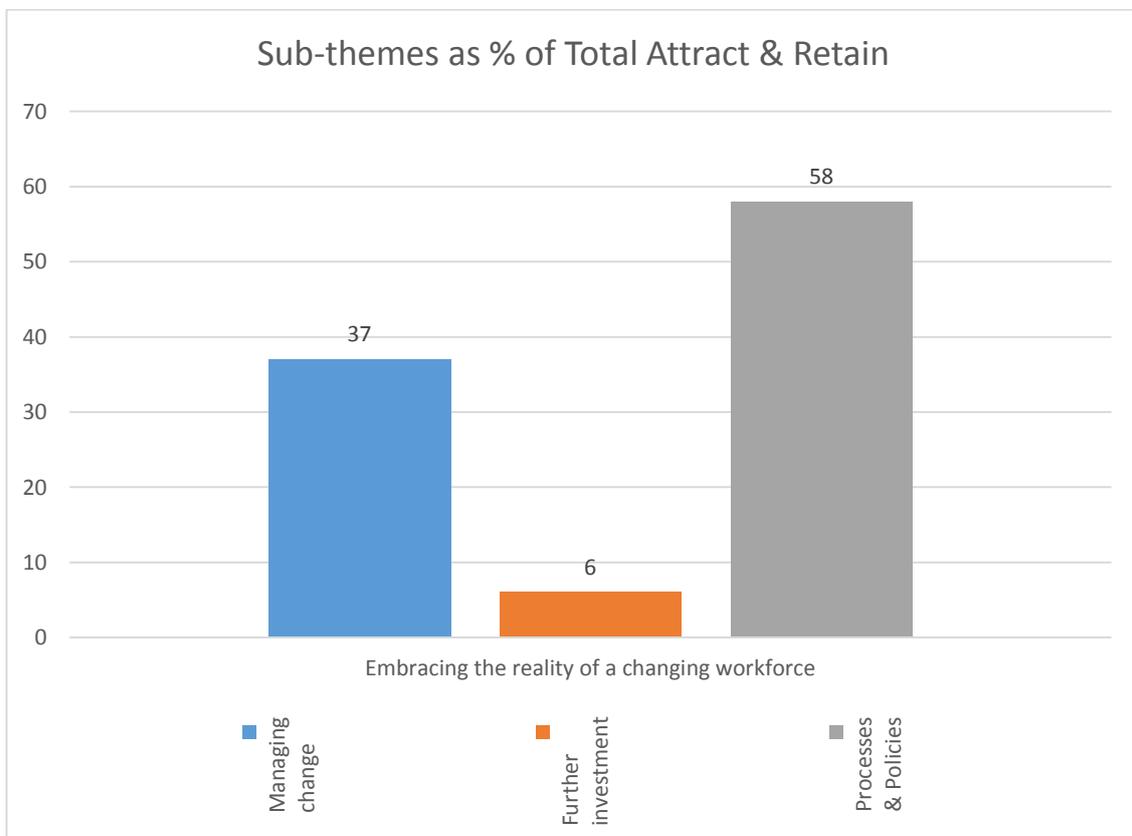


Figure 46. Attract and retain themes per sub-theme

#### 4.5.3.1 Theme 7: Embracing the reality of a changing workplace

Participants had the opinion that customisation would be implemented more frequently if the change currently sweeping through the world of work in terms of gender and generation was embraced instead of resisted. The three sub-themes, namely *managing change (7a)*, *further investment (7b)* and *processes and policies (7c)* will each be discussed separately.

- ***Sub-theme 7a: Managing change***

As discussed in the literature study, the idea of customisation is often so far removed from the mind-set of those who were “brought up” in a traditional career environment that they view it as deviant, even within the context of the changed demographics of the modern day workforce and the possibilities of alternative, yet effective management thereof with the aid of *technology (1e)*.

It was also interesting that in the descriptions of their new customised circumstances even participants themselves indicated through language that they too have not necessarily completely left the previous mind-set of the traditional system of work behind. One example was that they frequently used the term “taking time off” when they described leaving the office to work from home, as if they were taking time away from the office for leisure activities.

“We are also very lucky in the sense that when we do have marking you can say, okay, I’m taking the afternoon off, I am going to be marking from home, because my colleagues and my superior understand that it is a more comfortable environment and I would probably be more productive there. “

- Participant 09920

When discussions in the interviews reached the point where ideas were shared on the reasons why customisation was not offered as an option in more organisations, participants’ opinions were that there was often a noticeable resistance to change which served as an obstacle even when there was initial consideration for such an alternative. Strong links were drawn between their view of the resistance to change and differences between *generations* and *gender roles (2a & 2b)*. The main thought shared was that if the generation and/or gender of those in power differed from that of the millennial woman who has a need for the alternative work contract, it was more likely that they might have a lack of understanding and empathy for the world that person lives in and the realities they face every day. In this scenario they did not see it as a conscious decision to not accommodate the millennial

woman, but rather complete oblivion to their needs and challenges this group of employees face on a daily basis.

*“Die ander ouens wie se vrouens by die huis is en wat van daar af hulle kinders grootmaak ... dis soos my vorige baas. Hy het nou laasjaar afgetree. Hy was baie oulik, maar hy het ‘n vrou gehad wat ‘n huisvrou was en dedicated die kinders grootgemaak het. So hy kon bv. nie eers verstaan as mens 1h00 sou bank toe gaan om sake te doen nie ... om huishoudingsake te doen nie. Want iemand anders is daar wat dit vir jou gaan doen - jou vrou. So as HY nou my baas was, sou dit ook ‘n interessante ding gewees het ...”*

[“The other guys whose wives are at home and who raise their children from there ... it’s like my previous boss. He retired last year. He was really nice, but he had a wife who was a housewife and who was dedicated to raising their children. He could not even understand if you had to go to the bank at 1h00 to do business ... household business. Because there should be someone else who took care of that for you – your wife. So if HE were to be my boss, it would have been interesting ...”

- Participant 08916

Juxtaposed to the oblivion of some managers to the circumstances of their workforce was those in power who *were* aware of these women’s needs and challenges, but still could not get themselves to accommodate them in any way (3d), even if that meant losing the employee when they resigned and having to face losses of their own in that case.

*“Ja, kyk, die CEO) self ... hy het met een van my kollegas oor my en die hele ding gepraat. Hy was regtig hartseer. Hy het lank geglo dat hy my gaan kan oortuig om voltyds te bly. Maar aan die einde het hy net gesê, call me an old fart, call me conservative, but XXX (maatskappy) isn’t ready to make that shift to allow this ‘flexibility’.”*

[“Yes, you see, the CEO himself ... he spoke to one of my colleagues about me and this whole thing. He was really sad. He thought for a long time that he would be able to convince me to stay on full time. But in the end he just said, call me an old fart, call me conservative, but XXX (company) isn’t ready to make that shift to allow this ‘flexibility’.”]

- Participant 03818

However, on this note one is reminded by the statements made in the literature that with the increasing diversity in terms of gender and generation which has become a reality worldwide, organisations will not have the luxury of oblivion or resistance to change in future if they hope to survive in the highly competitive world of work.

- ***Sub-theme 7b: Further investment***

In the discussion of sub-theme 6b – *return on investment* the statement was made that participants found it counter-productive for organisations to give up on an employee in whom they have already invested time and money up to that point rather than to further invest in this human capital by temporarily accommodating the alternative needs and preferences they developed during passing life phases. They found it surprising that organisations would choose the resignation and loss of such an employee above the medium and long-term benefits which retaining that employee would have for the organisation. Some participants – notably those in the health industry - were of the opinion that one of the reasons behind this decision could be that the organisations find it very easy to replace such an employee with someone else who does not have alternative needs and preferences and who would gladly and without resistance, replace the employee with the “deviant” demands. This statement was frequently made with regards to health institutions situated in towns in the country which are popular and where many people would want to work.

“Basically, if you’re not prepared to do that, you’re out. Because there are a lot of people who want to work in XXX and there’s not a lot of jobs available in the province, so it’s quite competitive.”

- Participant 11921

- ***Sub-theme 7c: Alternative processes and policies***

As was indicated, participants were quite forthcoming in their suggestions of ways in which millennial women could be employed more effectively. However, it was found that suggestions were not made randomly or indiscriminately. Participants stated clearly that the type of industry and the work content would be the base from which different options of customisation would have to be considered. It could be useful to offer their suggestions in the same framework as found in the literature study, namely in terms of time-based strategies, information services and direct services, adding and starting with an additional point based on the data, namely relationship-based strategies.

Relationship-based strategies:

“It’s not that there will be no control whatsoever. It would be different, like I said, if you could focus on the tasks and deadlines ... and if people don’t perform, there are still ways of assessment and there are still ways of monitoring.”

- Participant 131014

Participants were quite vocal in their opinion that the relationship between superiors and subordinates has to adapt to the ever-changing workplace. Firstly they stated that there needs to be an acknowledgement that unlike in the past where most industries worked with products or services, in the new age many employees work increasingly with information and knowledge, which means that monitoring outcomes which are not service- or product-related will be different to monitoring outcomes which are information-related. In order to base the monitoring of outcomes on a workable performance management system, job descriptions would have to be re-designed and the criteria upon which employees are assessed, adapted. According to the participants, the acknowledgement that quality of outcome would be a better indication of the value of employees in skilled occupations than quantity of outcome would be the first step in adapting the work relationship between the parties.

Secondly, participants vocalised that their *personal need* (1b) for delivering high quality work has to be taken into account when they are managed by superiors, linking with earlier discussions in the literature and data on the millennial *generation* (2a) and implicating that a different management attitude would be effective when this is borne in mind.

Participants viewed the lack of trust between *superiors and subordinates* (3b & 3c) as one of the main reasons why customisation was not considered as an option in more organisations. They acknowledged that it is not only true that some managers are naturally suspicious of their employees’ work ethic but also that some employees are not worthy of the trust placed in them by their managers. This makes it even more difficult for those millennial women and other employees who are excellent candidates for customisation, but who are deprived of the possibility of such an option by uncommitted or malingering colleagues.

They believe a negative cycle could develop if employees who are offered the opportunity to customise do not take seriously their own responsibilities to make the new relationship work. Their behaviour will serve as proof to managers who did not believe in the viability of customisation in the first place, that employees cannot be trusted to manage themselves,

thereby lessening the possibility of other employees to be granted permission for it. The opposite is also true. Managers' mind-sets can be changed by experiencing first-hand how flexibility can lead to the more effective functioning of an employee to the benefit of the organisation.

Thus, in the third instance, with the facilitating role played by *technology* (1e) in terms of flexibility of work location, the relationship between superiors and subordinates in the new world of work has to be built on trust. This means that the superior has to trust the employee to be productive and committed to their work responsibilities at all times and the employees need to behave in such a way that the trust of their superiors is earned by their deliverance of high quality outcomes.

“So I think the secret is trusting the people to do what is expected of them, wherever they are working.”

- Participant 121012

-

In summary, the view of participants was thus that the relationship between the relevant parties would have to be adjusted in terms of the following:

- Development of a trust relationship between superiors and subordinates;
- Acknowledgement of technology and work content as facilitators of flexibility in the workplace;
- Acknowledgement of the alternative needs, preferences and challenges faced by employees of different genders and generations.

The participants were of the opinion that managers who do not adapt and who do not develop this alternative relationship with their subordinates will become increasingly ineffective as managers in the modern workplace.

Time-based strategies:

Various suggestions of time-based strategies were offered by participants. These could be implemented to accommodate not only millennial women, but all employees in the workplace today. Some of the suggestions were not simply ideas based on their thoughts and opinions, but on actual examples they know of from friends or family who live locally and abroad.

Participants expressed two major *needs* (1b) as guiding factors on which policies and procedures should be based to attract and retain employees, namely time and flexibility. It seems that the participants' preference for extra time to spend away from a permanent work

location could either be accommodated with fixed reduced hour contracts such as job sharing or mornings only contracts, or by flexibility of hours and/or location through *self-management* (1a).

The suggestions were always made in terms of the practicality and viability of the idea seen within the context of the industry or work content. In this way, suggestions from those in the health industry tended to centre on job-sharing and portfolio employment as well as reduced hour contracts. The reasoning behind their suggestions on specifically job-sharing was that in the health industry, which is known for its excessive work time demands, job sharing is not only ideal as a creator of time for the involved employees, but could also serve as a creator of employment, which is extremely relevant in South Africa. More individuals could be employed in this way with the benefit of increased variation of skill as well as an overlap of availability of the human resource in cases of emergencies or leave periods, with no additional expense to the organisation. They acknowledged the obvious impracticality of flexitime or telecommuting in their work environment.

Suggestions from those in other industries centred heavily on ideas surrounding flexibility of timeframes and location. These included flexi-hours, telecommuting combined with office time (suggestions of how many office days would be practical varied), time banking, and even hot-desking. When telecommuting was suggested, the point was made that it was sensible to have some days which should be spent at the work location to interact with fellow workers for the sake of social and intellectual engagement. The number of days telecommuting per week would be guided by the work content and nature of the industry.

Regarding reduced hours, participants shared that while they believe it would generally be an empathetic act to offer a contract of reduced hours to an employee with a need or preference for more time, they did not believe that fewer hours should necessarily be linked to a lighter workload with the automatically associated reduction in remuneration.

“So I don’t think it is necessarily a question of lightening workloads, but rather giving women the option to do their work in timeframes and in locations that will help them be more productive than they would be in a traditional set up.”

- Participant 10920

If decision-makers could adjust their mind-sets to a reduction in office-bound hours without a lightening of the workload or negatively adjusting remuneration, they could manage the flexibility in one of two ways. They could decide to offer all their employees who work

towards certain outcomes the same remuneration package yet within reduced hours or flexible hours. This would mean that all employees have the same option, regardless of their different needs based on *generation, gender (2a & 2b)* or parental status. In this case, superiors manage outcomes as the only indication and reflection of *productivity and commitment (6a)*. Participants acknowledged alternative ways of monitoring outcomes would come into play if quantity of hours is no longer controlled. The suggestion was often made that the quality of performance should be the base from which outcomes are then assessed.

The other alternative is to offer reduced hours or flexibility of hours only to those employees who request this, or to those individuals seen by the organisation as having a *need (1b)* for it. If this is the choice made by an organisation, information-based strategies discussed next, become extremely important.

Information-based services:

The participants did not volunteer suggestions regarding services such as information on child- or eldercare or information on coping strategies with work-life conflict as found in the literature. However, they felt strongly that information of a different kind could help in facilitating the attracting and retaining of employees, namely background information on how decisions are made. Firstly they believe that *support amongst co-workers (3c)* could be increased if there is transparency regarding the type of work contract that was negotiated with different employees. If employees know and understand why some people leave earlier, arrive later or work from home, and it is communicated to them what the official policy is on customisation and flexibility in the organisation, co-workers might support their colleagues instead of feeling done in because they think they are being deprived while others have unfair advantages.

“Others might perceive that ‘oh, she’s getting so much discession or she’s got a whole lot more flexibility than I do’, but it’s only because they don’t know what has been agreed upon or what has been discussed.”

- Participant 09920

The second significant value of information for an organisation in the modern era as mentioned by participants is the demographic information of its worker corps which can strategically be used in succession planning. If succession planning is done effectively, organisations would be in a position to accommodate their employees’ needs for time and location flexibility when they reach different life and family phases (7a).

Participants found it surprising that some organisations are astonished when women on their workforce begin to vocalise alternative needs and challenges when they start families, while they had in their possession all the information needed to have predicted the probable preferences and challenges their worker corpse would face over the course of time. According to them, if succession planning is done effectively, organisations should have alternative plans in place to accommodate women who go on maternity leave or who develop needs for flexibility or reduced hour contracts during their tenure. If organisations plan for the change (7a) instead of trying to repress it when it emerges, the increasing prevalence of millennial women in the workforce could be less of a hazard than some decision-makers might fear. This is not only applicable to millennial women whose needs develop throughout their lives, but to the human capital of an organisation as a whole.

*“In elk geval, ongeag of ek ‘n vrou is en of ek ‘n ma is, ek is ‘n individu wat vir jou werk en om vir my nie ‘n backup sisteem te hê in die werksplek nie ... wat gaan gebeur as ek in ‘n ongeluk is? Wie gaan my goed vir my doen?”*

[“In any case, irrespective of my gender and my parental status, I am an individual who works for you and to not have a backup system for me ... what is going to happen if I am in a car accident? Who is then going to do my work?”]

- Participant 05901

Direct services:

Three specific examples were mentioned of direct services which could make a difference in attracting and retaining valuable employees in an organisation, namely gymnasium facilities, having a crèche on the work premises and on-site breast-feeding facilities. According to participants, having gym facilities at the office would satisfy the *personal need* for living a *healthy* life (1b & 2a) as well as allow employees the flexibility of *spending time meaningfully* (1a) by not only tending to their health before or after work, but skipping the time wasting exercise of sitting in congested traffic in the process. On-site crèche facilities were mentioned as something that would attract and retain many of the participants to an organisations, despite the acknowledgement that many other alternatives of *quality childcare* (2c) are generally available.

Several participants expressed the need for organisations to recognise that breastfeeding mothers could be better accommodated at the workplace by supplying a private and comfortable space in which they could express breastmilk for their babies instead of having

to use the toilet facilities in order to have privacy. In addition, they voiced a need for there to be an accommodating attitude from superiors and colleagues when they did use some time for this practice. For the organisation there are some significant advantages in allowing mothers to keep breastfeeding their babies. If the baby is healthy, the probability of the mother having to spend time away from the office to tend to the sick child could be decreased considerably.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

From the discussion of the data it is clear that while there were some substantive differences in the circumstances of the individual participants, the central themes and sub-themes which emerged from the data can effectively be used to shed light on the alternative attitudes, mind-sets, motivational forces and anchors upon which they as members of a group of millennial women in skilled occupations, base their decisions. As a group they have also shown that while there might be many obstacles in preventing customisation from being implemented more widely as the norm in more organisations, the institutions which have taken the risk and embarked on the journey seems to have had an enormously positive influence on the individuals concerned as well as created significant benefits for themselves.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

*“Ja, exactly, en dit is wat ek dink ‘n meer ideale situasie sou wees – as organisasies na hulle spesifieke werksmag kon kyk en sê okay, hoe gaan ek die meeste uit HIERDIE spesifieke groep mense kry? As dit millennials is bv, moet ek meer self-management toelaat, as dit ma’s is moet ek meer time and location flexibility gee en so aan. Dat mens die regte fit kan kry.”*

[“Yes, exactly, and that is what I think would be a more ideal situation – where organisations could look at their employees and say, okay, how am I going to get the most out of THIS particular group of people? If they’re millennials, e.g. I should allow more self-management, if it’s mothers I should give more time and location flexibility and so on. So that you can get the right fit.”]

- Participant 04824

### 5.1 Introduction

The research objectives in the first chapter stated that the researcher wanted to establish what the forces are which drive millennial women to opt out of a conventional work contract and to negotiate or create for themselves a customised work set-up to suit their own preferences and circumstances. Secondly the aim was to explore what the outcomes to this decision were on different levels, learning whether the gains of the choice was worth the sacrifices they had to make. Lastly the researcher attempted to discover what their opinions were on changes organisations could make in attracting and retaining valuable employees. In this last chapter the limitations of the study as viewed by the researcher will be discussed after which the principal findings are offered in the form of a structural model and discussion. Lastly some suggestions are made for further research to be done in future.

### 5.2 Summary of the principal findings

The research strategy used in this study was based on the three dimensions of qualitative research as described by Nigatu (2009) in Chapter 2 and repeated for the sake of clarity.

Firstly an attempt was made to understand the *context* in which millennial women function who are active in a customised career in a skilled occupation. An attempt was made to understand how economic, social, cultural, environmental and organisational factors influenced the behaviour of the millennial women towards pursuing customisation as an

alternative to a career in a conventional environment. Secondly an effort was made to understand how the *individuals* – the millennial women - make sense of their experiences within this context. Lastly the researcher explored how the *interaction* and engagement between the context and the individuals facilitated the development of the perceptions, opinions, behaviour and decisions under discussion.

Different factors in the context of the millennial women had the power to drive their decision making away from the options of full time employment or exiting the workforce entirely on the one hand or attract it towards customisation on the other. It is within the context of the *interaction* amongst these factors within the lives of the millennial women which their decision to pursue customisation could be observed.

In the broader, global context the revolutionary influence of modern technology hugely influences the way in which society functions and connects with its environment. Modern technology was shown to almost unobtrusively be creating a facilitating environment within which millennial women are able to pursue customisation.

If the organisational culture within which they were employed at the time of making their decision for customisation was characterised by inflexible rules and regulations coupled with a lack of support from superiors and colleagues, the push towards customisation was increased.

The social context which impacted on movement towards the pursuit of customisation was created by the change in the demography of the workplace with increasing numbers of millennial women entering and staying in the workplace in skilled occupations. Yet, the influence of the cultural context could be seen in the reports of the slow pace at which changes took place as a result of the traditional breadwinner/homemaker model still prevalent in the minds of some superiors and some workplaces which participants were exposed to.

Lastly, from the angle of an economic context it was found that the existence of financial support from spouses was a definite influencing factor towards the choice for customisation.

In terms of the millennial women as *individuals* it was found that their generational mind-set drove them away from the consideration of either of the two options of staying employed full time in a conventional environment or exiting entirely. The millennial mind-set pushed them towards an option which could provide meaning and value based on their own personal criteria. Their gender and the child-bearing implications of being a woman also drove them in

the direction of the pursuit of customisation, while dismissing the conventional work environment as a viable option for successfully merging work and life.

Regarding the outcomes of customisation it was found that participants saw the benefits to them as individuals, to their families and to organisations as overwhelming compared to the losses. The increased amount of time available for personal and/or family responsibilities had a positive effect on their well-being on the emotional and health levels. This scenario created a positive cycle in which the increased individual well-being resulted in decreased absence from work, leading to increased effectivity as an employee, resulting in increased support from superiors, cycling back to increased individual well-being.

Participants shared the opinion that organisations will be able to attract and retain those employees they deem as valuable only by adjusting the system on which they base their employment and compensation contracts to accommodate the alternative needs, preferences and challenges faced by a new and different workforce.

The following structural model offers a visual representation of the relationships and links deduced from the data.

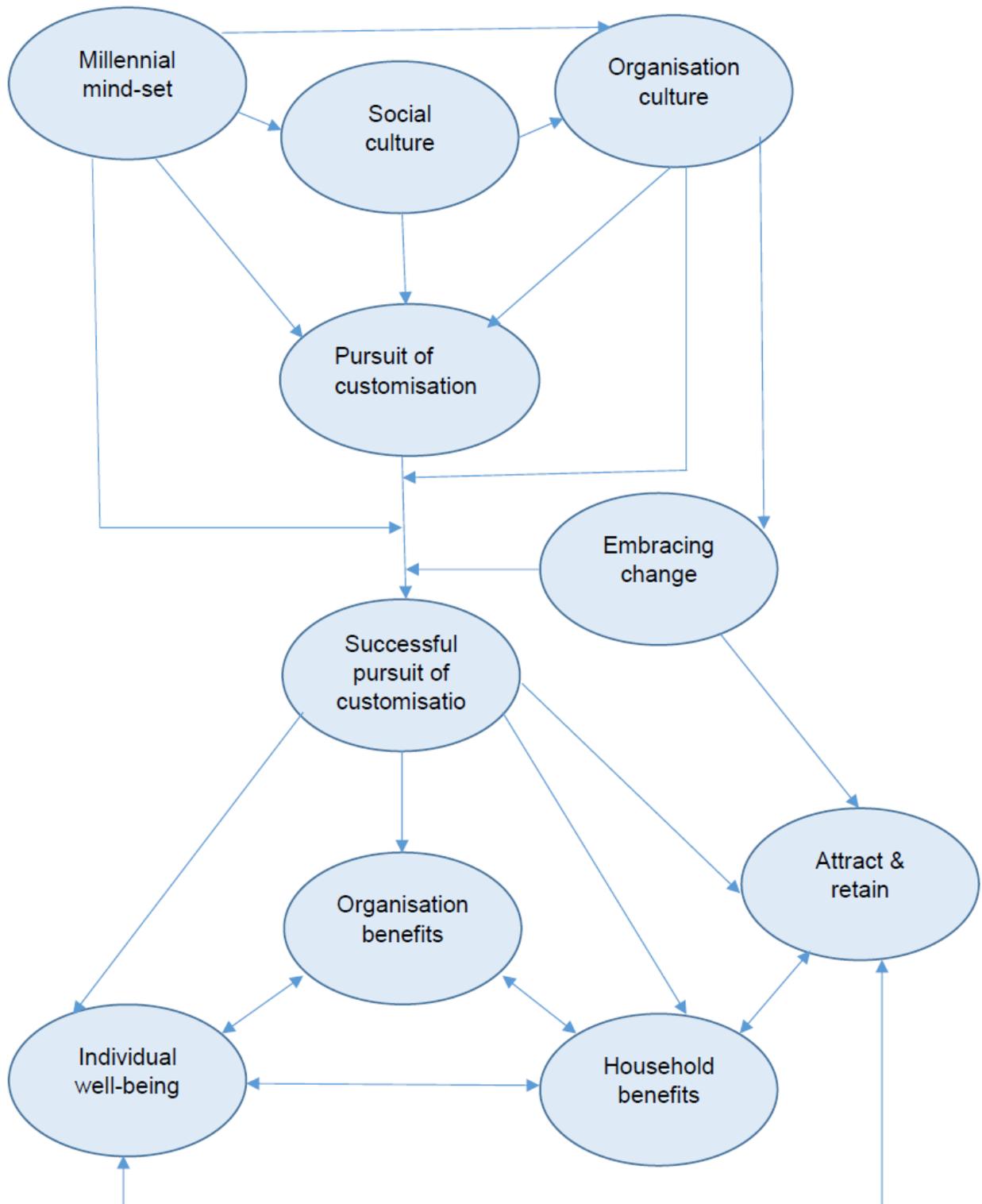


Figure 47. Structural model of antecedents and outcomes of customisation

From the structural model based on the analysed data the deduction is made that the millennial mind-set not only has an influence on social- and organisation culture, but that

together with social and organisation culture it has an influence on a millennial woman's decision to pursue customisation. In addition, the organisation culture has an effect on the organisation's likelihood to embrace change. The millennial mind-set, the organisation culture, as well as the organisation's attitude towards change all have a moderating effect on the successful negotiation of the customised contract within an institution.

Once customisation has successfully been negotiated, the outcomes include benefits to the well-being of the individual as well as the household with significant positive outcomes also for the organisation. Household and individual well-being affect each other mutually, in the same manner as the mutual influence between the individual and the organisation and the organisation and the household.

The level to which an organisation embraces change will influence the degree to which it will attract and retain talent. Furthermore, the benefits experienced by the individual and the positive outcomes for the household will positively influence whether the organisation attracts and retains its valuable employees. When they are retained in the organisation in the customised contract, there are in turn positive effects for the individual and their household.

Figure 47 displays the complicated nature of the interrelated factors influencing individual and organisation dynamics. When these factors and their impact are taken into account by both the individual and the organisation, a positive cycle could be started resulting in benefits not only to the organisation as a business entity, but to individual managers, individual employees, households, families and communities alike.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

Although it is believed that the study is valuable in several areas, some limitations are worth mentioning.

A huge amount of data was gathered which was found to be richly and deeply valuable, yet the data was gathered from only thirteen participants. This raises the question on whether generalisation of the findings is realistic, reiterating that the principle of transferability would be more applicable in this study than an attempt to generalise the findings or find external validity. The reader is thus urged to investigate thoroughly the population of their choice after perusing the study in order to make a judgement of the degree to which the findings will be transferable in their case.

Furthermore, even though the researcher attempted to stay aware at all times of her own views, perceptions and experiences during interviews and analysis of data, interviewer bias is still a possible and probable reality and the impact thereof on the study is acknowledged as an imaginable limitation to the value of the study.

A combination of snowball sampling and purposive sampling was used as the method of selecting participants for this study. While the method was found to be satisfactorily effective in terms of the availability of potential candidates, one limitation of the method was experienced. Candidates mostly offered names of potential candidates who were known to them, which is quite acceptable and the very reason why snowball sampling was chosen as method. However, these names were often of colleagues or friends whose occupations, industries and race groups were very similar to their own. Thus, even though a variety of race groups, industries and occupations were eventually included in the study, the findings cannot be seen to be broadly representative of millennial women in the country.

Lastly it is noteworthy to mention that considering the outcomes of customisation for organisations the findings were based upon the participants' views of such and not on actual data gathered from organisations on the subject. Even though this is not necessarily a limitation in view of the fact that the aim of the study was indeed to hear the views of millennial women, it is perhaps necessary to bring awareness to this fact.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for future research**

The structural model offered in Figure 47 could serve as summary to show the relationships and links of the interaction between various influencing factors motivating the pursuit of customisation for the participants and the outcomes thereof as a result. As stated, the conclusions were drawn from analysing the data from the in-depth interviews of only thirteen millennial women. Therefore it is recommended that these suggested relationships and the directions of relationships be tested in a quantitative study to further explore the degree to which these experiences could be applicable to a wider group of society.

In addition it could be useful to conduct a study in which the actual personal views of decision-makers in organisations are explored as to obstacles which are holding them back from offering customisation on a broader basis.

Furthermore there would be value in research which investigates what the actual benefits are to an organisation which offers customised options to millennial women as well as other individuals in terms of productivity, absence from work, sick leave and return on investment as well as the losses they suffer which the participants in the study were not aware of.

More specific research could include the impact of certain different types of customisation in different industries, exploring the viability of using options such as job-sharing as an example in both the health industry as well as in business industries in a comparative study.

## 5.5 Concluding remarks

Very often in general life, a status quo could be kept in place not because there are logical and sensible reasons for its maintenance, but simply because it is already in place and has been for some time.

When one looks back in history, one is reminded of examples of situations where the status quo was kept in place irrespective of reasons for it to be changed, adjusted or even abolished. One is sometimes very surprised when you are reminded that there was a time when across the world, some people opposed women who believed they should have a right to vote, when there were those who battled to keep the system of apartheid in place and when church fathers thought it best if Latin was kept as the only language the Bible was written in so that only the elite society who could read Latin, had access to it. In these situations, even though there were those who saw a better way, it took many years for change to develop.

*“Hier is nou ‘n meisie oorlede een oggend wat by XXX gewerk het. Sy het baie lank spoed gewerk en sy is die volgende oggend (.8) dood in ‘n karongeluk. En daar is nou van die jonger dokters en interns wat nou so ‘n hele ding het van Safer Working Hours op Facebook en alles om nou te probeer om ‘n verandering te bring in die ure wat gewerk word. Maar baie van die ander mense sê maar net, dit gaan nie verander nie. Net omdat daar nou een iemand dood is gaan dit nie maak dat dit verander nie want dit is hoe dit nog altyd was. Hulle hou aan sê, dit is nou maar net so, dokters werk sulke ure, almal het dit gedoen, so doen dit net. En daar is ook mense wat haar die skuld gee. Hulle sê maar sy het mos geweet sy is moeg, sy’s besig met internskap. Jy weet, so daar is SO ‘n groot houding van ... dis hoe dit is.”*

["There was a girl recently who worked at XXX and died one morning in a car accident after working an extremely long shift. Now there are some of the younger doctors and interns who have started a whole thing about Safer Working Hours on Facebook in order to try and bring about change regarding the hours that are worked. But a lot of other people are just saying that it is not going to change because that is how it has always been. Just because one person died doesn't mean it will change because that is the way it has always been. They keep on saying that's just the way it is, doctors work those kind of hours, everyone did it, so just do it. And then there are also people who blame her. They say she should have known that she was tired, she's busy with internship. So you know, there is SUCH a huge attitude of ... it's the way it is."]

- Participant 01817

When one reflects on the findings in this study and the apparent positive outcomes for all concerned, one could imagine people in some years' time stating in astonishment how there was a time when some decision-makers were consciously or unconsciously fighting to keep a system in place where people who wanted to earn a salary were compelled to congregate physically in certain buildings from 8h00 in the mornings and stay there until 5h00 in the afternoons from Monday to Friday in order to be deemed committed, productive and ambitious employees worthy of company rewards. As in the examples mentioned earlier, it seems peculiar that systems would be kept in place even though there is clear evidence that making adjustments could be advantageous to all.

However, just because something has been done in one way for a long time does not mean there is not a better way of doing it. Or, as stated in the motion picture *Australia* (Brown, Knapman & Luhrmann, 2008): "Just because it is, doesn't mean it should be."

Change is unavoidable and the shift in global factors influencing the workplace makes eventual movement in other directions inevitable - even if the process is sometimes slow.

From the study it was learnt how the female participants do indeed think differently about life and work than men and previous generations, as was stated in the literature. The millennial women did not see their roles as women in society from an *either-or* angle, but rather from a *both-and* angle. They did not believe it is necessary to have to choose between being a successful employee *and* a mother, or between the roles of respected expert *and* wife or a valued professional *and* a traveller. To them you could be quite comfortably successful at

both if certain adjustments could be made in how and when you work. They believed that the work-life conflict which developed in previously unsuccessful attempts at combining these roles were not caused by a lack of ambition, the female gender, or even overwhelming family demands, but rather in the unrealistic and unaccommodating system they had to function in. In their minds it is the structure of the system - the policies and the management of those policies - that created the misfit, not the gender or attitude of the individuals involved. Here the well-known quotation popularly credited to Albert Einstein unsurprisingly comes to mind: "Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid" (<http://quoteinvestigator.com>).

In Chapter 1 the statement was made that organisations who aim to survive and thrive in the changing world of work will have to make adjustments in the way they think about their human capital and what would make them most effective as employees. Employees who spent every waking moment at the office might have had the highest value to organisations in the past in that it was a good way to give an organisation a competitive edge. However, in the altered global work context in which organisations function today, seeing someone sitting at the office desk from dusk to dawn might have very little indication of his/her value to the organisation. In the new world of work the one who spends less time being office bound might even be the most valuable staff member. As so eloquently stated by one participant:

"Although I have halved the number of hours I work since the birth of my daughter, I am no less productive than I was before. I have not reduced the workload I've taken on; in fact, 2016 has probably been my busiest year since I started working for myself six years ago. The flexibility of my schedule has simply motivated me to make the most of the hours I have, and I'm more productive than ever as a result."

- Participant 10920

It thus seems that decision-makers should not be intimidated by these suggestions of flexibility as potentially harmful to their bottom line, but rather be encouraged by the opportunities for increased performance an altered environment could bring.

This confirms what many women are saying on the subject of gender equality in a work context: that appointing a highly qualified, brilliant woman with small children in a challenging work position without providing flexibility and self-management options and then calling it equality, would be the same as appointing a highly qualified, brilliant paraplegic executive, allocating him an office on the second floor in a building without a lift and calling it equality –

or asking a fish to climb a tree. In such an environment women (and society) could go their whole lives believing it is not possible to be a good mother *and* an intellectual contributor to society. Management might go their whole lives believing it is not possible to employ a millennial *and* have a committed, humble and grateful worker.

Yet what the millennial women are saying, is “we are done with tree climbing. We are getting into the water. And once we are in, you will be blown away by the value of our contribution.”

**REFERENCE LIST**

- Babbie, E. (2010). *The practice of social research* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Bassett, B. (2008). Working with Generation Y. *Office Pro*, 68(2), 16-19.
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative Case Study Methodology: study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2>
- Bellavia, G.M., & Frone, M.R. (2005). Work-family conflict. In J. Barling, J. Kelloway, & M.R. Frone (Eds.), *Handbook of work stress* (pp. 113-148). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.'
- Benko, C., & Weissberg, A. (2008). Mass career customisation: a new model built for how careers are built. *Ivey Business Journal*, May/June. Retrieved from <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication>
- Berg, B.L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 10(2), 141-163.
- Blain, A. (2008). The millennial tidal wave: Five elements that will change the workplace of tomorrow. *Journal of the Quality Assurance Institute* 22(2), 11-13.
- BSG Concours. (2007, May). Results Research Project YE: *Engaging today's young employees - strategies for the millennials*.
- Boeri, T., Del Boca, D., & Pissarides, C. (2007). *Women at work: An economic perspective*. Oxford: University Press.
- Bostock, J. (2014). *The meaning of success: insights from women at Cambridge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boyd, N. (2016, February). Ethnographic design: definition, advantages and disadvantages. Retrieved from <http://study.com/academy/lesson/ethnographic-design-definition-advantages-disadvantages.html>

- Brown, G.C., Knapman, C. & Luhrmann, B. (Producers), & Luhrmann, B. (Director). (2008). Australia [Motion Picture]. United States of America: Twentieth Century Fox.
- Busser, D. (2012, May). The evolving workplace: New (and re-emerging) trends. *American Society for Training and Development*, 66(5), 44-47.
- Cioffi, C. (2007). Finding and keeping the best and brightest – flexible policies in a small workplace. In M.A. Paludi & P.E. Neidermeyer (Eds.), *Work, life, and family imbalance: How to level the playing field* (pp. 79-87). Westport: Praeger.
- Coetzee, M., & Roythorne-Jacobs, H. (2012). *Career counselling and guidance in the workplace: a manual for career practitioners* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Claremont: Juta and Company Ltd.
- Cruz, C.S. (2007). Gen Y: How Boomer babies are changing the workplace. *Hawaii Business*, 52(11), 38.
- Cummings, T.G. & Worley, C.G. (2015). *Organization Development & Change* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Stamford: Cengage Learning.
- Dorsey, J. R. (2010). *Y-size your business: How gen Y employees can save you money and grow your business*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Dowdy, L. (2015, July). Will millennials change the workplace for the better? Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/07/07/will-millennials-change-the-workplace-for-the-better.html>
- Dziech, B. (2007). Juggling act: Parents and employers in the twenty-first century. In M.A. Paludi & P.E. Neidermeyer, (Eds.), *Work, life, and family imbalance: How to level the playing field* (pp. 1-20). Westport: Praeger.
- Erickson, T. (2008). *Plugged in: The generation Y guide to thriving at work*. United States: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Foxcroft, C. & Roodt, G. (2011). *Introduction to psychological assessment in the South African context* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Goodwood: Oxford University Press.
- Gallagher, D.G. (2005). Part-time and contingent employment. In J. Barling, J. Kelloway, & M.R. Frone (Eds.), *Handbook of work stress* (pp 517-542). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Garde, I.F. (2014). Attitudes to work of young high-skilled labour. *Universidad Publica de Navarra, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales: Pamplona-Iruña*, 1-39.
- Gottlieb, B.H., Kelloway, E.K. & Barham, E.J. (1998). *Flexible arrangements: Managing the work-family boundary*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Greenhaus, J.H. & Powell, G.N. (2006). When work and family are allies: a theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(1), 72 – 92.
- Guest, D.E., & Sturges, J. (2007). Living to work – working to live: Conceptualizations of careers among contemporary workers. In H. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook of career studies* (pp. 188-204). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Harris, M.M., & Hollman, K.D. (2016, February). Tip-topics – the top trends in I-O Psychology: a graduate student perspective. Retrieved from [http://www.siop.org/tip/Apr13/19\\_TipTopics.aspx](http://www.siop.org/tip/Apr13/19_TipTopics.aspx)
- Hammersley, M. (1990). *Reading ethnographic research: A critical guide*. London: Longman.
- Holloway, I. (1997). *Basic Concepts for Qualitative Research*. London: Blackwell Science.
- Karefalk, A., Pettersson, M., & Zhu Y. (2007). *How to motivate Generation Y with different cultural backgrounds: A cross-cultural comparison between China and Sweden*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Kristianstad University.
- Kline, A. (2016, May). Millennial slang dictionary: 2016 updates. Retrieved from <http://www.skidmorestudio.com/listen-to-the-kids-millennial-slang-dictionary/>
- Landy, F.J., & Conte, J.M. (2007). *Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: An introduction to Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lindquist, T. M. (2008). Recruiting the millennium generation: The new CPA. *The CPA Journal*, 78(8), 56-59.
- Lindzon, J. (2015, February). Ways work will change in 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.fastcompany.com/3052836/the-future-of-work/6-ways-work-will-change-in-2016>
- Lloyd, J. (2007). The truth about Gen Y. *Marketing Magazine*, 112(19), 12-22.

- Luthans, F. (2011). *Organizational behaviour: An evidence-based approach* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Mc Graw-Hill.
- Mainiero, L.A., & Sullivan, S.E. (2005). Kaleidoscope careers: an alternate explanation for the “opt-out” revolution. *Academy of Management Executive*, 19, 106-123.
- Marais, E., De Klerk, M., Nel, J.A., & De Beer, L. (2014). The antecedents and outcomes of work-family enrichment amongst female workers. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology/SA Tydskrif vir Bedryfsielkunde*, 40(1), 1-14. Retrieved from <http://dxdoi.org/10.4102/sajip.v40i1.1186>
- Martins N., & Martins, E. (2009) Organisational culture. In S.P. Robbins, T.A. Judge, A. Odendaal, & G. Roodt (Eds.), *Organizational Behaviour: Global and Southern African perspectives* (2nd ed.) pp 422 – 448. Cape Town: Pearson Education.
- Messenger, J. C. (2011). Working time trends and developments in Europe. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 35, 295–316. doi:10.1093/cje/beq022
- Myers, M.D. (2009). *Qualitative research in business & management*. London: Sage.
- Moerdyk, A. (2009). *The principles and practice of psychological assessment*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- NASA Insights. (2008). *Generation Y perspectives*. Retrieved on 1 February 2016 from <http://www.nasrecruitment.com/talenttips/NASinsights/GenerationY.pdf.html>
- Nigatu, T. (2009, March). Qualitative Data Analysis. Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/tilahunigatu/qualitative-data-analysis-11895136>
- Paludi, M.A., Vaccariello, R., Graham, T., Smith, M., Allen-Dicker, K., Kasprzak, H. & White, C. (2007). Work/life integration: Impact on women’s careers, employment and family. In M. A. Paludi & P. E. Neidermeyer (Eds.), *Work, life, and family imbalance: How to level the playing field* (pp. 21-36). Westport: Praeger.
- Paludi, M.A. & Neidermeyer, P.E. (2007). Introduction. In M. A. Paludi & P.E. Neidermeyer (Eds.), *Work, life, and family imbalance: How to level the playing field* (pp xv-xx). Westport: Praeger.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (2008). An agenda for the second generation of qualitative studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Wellbeing*, 1, 68-77.

- Poovan, N. (2005). *The impact of the social values of Ubuntu on team effectiveness*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.
- Quote Investigator: exploring the origins of quotations. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://quoteinvestigator.com>
- Richards, L. (2010). *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Robb, B. (2015, February) Millennials are changing the workplace. Retrieved from <https://powermore.dell.com/business/millennials-are-changing-the-workplace/>
- Salkind, N.J. (2012). *Exploring research* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Schreuder, A.M.G., & Coetzee, M. (2011). *Careers: An organisational perspective* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Claremont: Juta.
- Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information* (22), 63-75.
- Skilled. (2011). *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>
- Spector, P.E. (2001). Research methods in industrial and organizational psychology: data collection and data analysis with special consideration to international issues. In N. Anderson, D.S. Ones, H.K. Sinangil & C. Viswesvaran (Eds.). *Handbook on industrial, work, and organizational psychology*. London: Sage.
- Spiro, C. (2006). Generation Y in the workplace. *Defense AT&I*, 1, 16-19.
- Sullivan, S.E. & Mainiero, L.A. (2008). Using the Kaleidoscope career model to understand the changing patterns of women's careers: implementing Human Resources development programs to attract and retain women. *Advances in developing Human Resources*, 10(1), 32-49.
- Trunk, P. (2007, July). What Gen Y really wants: Young workers happily blend work and play, as long as every minute has meaning. *Time Magazine*, 5(1), 57.
- Valcour, M., Bailyn, L., & Quijada, M.A. (2007). Customized careers. In H. Gunz & M. Peiperl (Eds.), *Handbook of career studies* (pp. 188-204). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

- Waldron, R. (2012, April). Wisconsin State Senator says women are paid less because 'money is more important for men'. Retrieved from <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2012/04/09/460917>
- Waite, L.J., & Nielson, M. (2001) The rise of the dual-earner family, 1963 – 1997. In R. Hertz, & N. R. Marshall. *Working families: the transformation of the American home* (pp.78 - 89). London: University of California Press, Ltd.
- Woodfield, R. (2007). *What women want from work: Gender and occupational choice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zarya, V. (2016, February). Women do twice as much unpaid work as men – here's why that's not okay. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2016/02/23/melinda-gates-women-unpaid-work/>

**APPENDIX A – Invitation letter**

24 Barlinka Street  
Paarl  
7642  
20 April 2016

Dear potential participant

**Research study concerning millennial women in customised careers**

My name is Serina van Huyssteen and I am conducting this research study as part of my Master's degree in Industrial Psychology at the University of Stellenbosch.

Thank you for considering the invitation to become part of this study concerning millennial women in customised careers. Please keep in mind that the receipt of this letter puts you under no obligation to become a participant. Yet, if you do decide to accept the invitation, your participation would be greatly appreciated.

As the world of work evolves with more and more women entering the workplace, it is necessary for workplace policies and environments to evolve accordingly, to accommodate the different preferences and needs of the female working population of a new generation. Your participation in this study will make a difference in bringing a better understanding of what it is that millennial women prefer in terms of an ideal working environment, which hopefully will help organisations make informed decisions when making adjustments to policies and procedures to the benefit of all. Your participation could thus eventually bring about change for all working women and I thank you for it.

To be an ideal respondent for this study, you must be a woman of no older than 39 by January 2016, be a member of any race, and actively be functioning in a skilled occupation in which the amount, hours, location and/or continuity of career were customised by yourself to accommodate personal needs. This customisation could include flexitime, job sharing, telecommuting (working from home), a compressed work week, part time employment temporary exit and re-entry, agency employment or any other form of customisation of your career to better fit with your personal needs and preferences.

Confidentiality is assured at all times. At no point will it be necessary for me to identify any participant by name or organisation. In addition, you are requested to refrain from revealing the identities of organisations referred to during the interview as any such organisation would not be aware that information regarding their practices were revealed and would thus not have had the opportunity to consent to or refuse the use of any such information. Furthermore, any information gathered in the interview will only be used for the purposes of this particular study, and only with our consent.

Data collection will be done during an interview of approximately one hour at a time and location convenient to you. It will take the form of a semi-structured questionnaire around

which a conversation will be conducted. In addition, you are requested to bring along two articles or objects which in your mind symbolise you or your life prior to and after your pursuit of career customisation. The nature of these objects is entirely up to you.

For purposes of accuracy, an audio recording will be made of the entire interview. A full transcription will be made of every interview and yours will be made available to you. At that point you will be requested to read through the transcript to confirm that the views and experiences which were indicated by yourself during the interview were indeed what you meant and intended to say. Only after this confirmation will the information be used as part of the study.

I sincerely hope you will be willing to be part of the quest for better insights into this interesting and relevant subject. If so, or if you require more information, you are most welcome to contact me on the numbers and addresses provided. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Best regards

Serina van Huyssteen  
2 46 4032 (m)  
086 524 1390 (f)  
[serina@vhind.co.za](mailto:serina@vhind.co.za)

**APPENDIX B – Questionnaire****Central overarching questions:**

Please tell me about your career path and the choices you made to reach the space you are in now.

Please share with me the reason for your choice of articles symbolising you/your life prior to and after your pursuit of your customised career.

**Guiding questions in case specific information needed was not provided in the participant's answer of the central overarching question.**

1. Please explain in which way you customised your career.
2. Please tell me about the extent of work/life conflict and work/life enrichment you experienced when you were employed in a traditional career.
3. What were the circumstances which lead you to decide on career customisation in terms of the following:
  - Your personal needs and preferences?
  - Your household needs and preferences?
  - Organisational circumstances and demands?
4. How did the development of technology facilitate your choice to customise, if at all?
5. What were the outcomes of your decision to customise your career in terms of the gains and losses you experienced
  - as an individual?
  - in terms of your family?
  - in terms of your career?
6. Do you experience work-life conflict- and enrichment differently since you have customised your career? How?
7. Have the losses of crafting a customised career been worth the gains for you?
8. If you could choose again, would you choose differently? If so, why? If not, is there anything you would do differently in the process of crafting your customised career?
9. What do you think organisations could do differently to accommodate millennial women in the workplace?
10. What do you think are the losses for organisations who only have the traditional career model?
11. What obstacles could be holding decision-makers in organisations back from implementing customisation as a norm?

**APPENDIX C** – Adjusted list of low inference descriptors based on Silverman (2011, p. 465).  
To be adjusted if necessary.

<b>Sign</b>	<b>Convention</b>	<b>Use</b>
R	Researcher	To indicate when researcher is talking
P1	Participant 1	To indicate when participant 1(in this case) is talking
[	P1: [while R: [when?	Left brackets indicate the point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped by another's talk.
=	P1: that I am aware of =  R: = Yes. Would you confirm that?	Equal signs, one at the end of a line and one at the beginning, indicate no gap between the two lines.
(.4)	They (.4) forced me to	Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence in tenths of a second.
(.)	To get (.) treatment	A dot in parentheses indicates a tiny gap, probably no more than one-tenth of a second.
_____	I had no <u>choice</u>	Underscoring indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.
::	O::kay?	Colons indicate prolongation immediately prior to sound. Length of row of colons indicates length of prolongation.
CAPS	I've had ENOUGH	Capitals, except at the beginnings of lines, indicate emphasis.
.hhhh	Actually (.6) hhhh I don't like it	A row of h's prefixed by a dot indicates an inbreath; without a dot, an outbreath. The length of the row of h's indicates the length of the in- or outbreath.
( )	He didn't know ( ) or me	Empty parentheses indicate the transcriber's inability to hear what was said.
(word)	It was not to my (benefit)	Parenthesised words show possible words that were unclear.
(( ))	NEVER ((angry facial expression))	Double parentheses contain author's notes rather than transcriptions

**APPENDIX D – Informed consent**

UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

**ANTECEDENTS FOR AND OUTCOMES OF THE PURSUIT OF CUSTOMISED CAREERS  
FOR MILLENNIAL WOMEN IN SKILLED OCCUPATIONS**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Serina van Huyssteen (B Comm Honours), from the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of the study will contribute to the thesis of the degree Masters in Industrial Psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study as a millennial woman currently active in a customised career.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to provide a broad and general base of information on the antecedents as motivational forces for millennial women in skilled occupations to sacrifice the benefits offered by a conventional career in favour of the benefits of a customised career, with the inevitable consequences and challenges that choice brings. It will explore the outcomes - negative and positive - of a customised career on individual, family and career level as well as determine the value for them on a personal level.

**2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Take part in an interview of approximately one hour at a location convenient to you in which you will be asked to share your experiences in your pursuit of a customised career. In addition, you will be asked to bring to the interview two articles or symbols of which one represents you/your life prior to the pursuit of the customised career and the other you/your life after customisation, which will then be discussed. Later, the researcher will transcribe the interview verbatim and you will be asked to read the transcription and confirm it as accurate. You will be free to make any changes if you so wish.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

No risks, discomforts or inconveniences are reasonably foreseeable to you as participant. However, if you do experience the need for professional help as a result of your participation in the study, you are urged to make contact with a professional registered counsellor of your choice. You are also welcome to contact Mrs Christine Cuyler, Registered Counselling Psychologist on 021 872 1411.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There will not necessarily be any direct benefits which you as the participant could expect by taking part in the study. However, an indirect benefit could include satisfaction knowing that your experiences could contribute to the more effective employment of women in the formal business world in future.

The study as a whole could contribute to the field of Industrial Psychology by providing information which could serve as motivation for business to think differently about how to effectively employ and manage the new generation of women in this technology-driven workplace in which we all function.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment will be paid or received by the researcher or participant for their involvement in the study.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information obtained in this study in which you can be identified will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by using a numbering- and coding system and not naming participants and by safely storing all research material. In addition, you are requested to refrain from revealing the identities of organisations referred to during the interview as any such organisation would not be aware that information regarding their practices were revealed and would thus not have had the opportunity to consent to or refuse the use thereof.

For the sake of accuracy, all interviews will be audiotaped with your permission. As stated, you will have access to a verbatim transcription of the interview. If requested, the audiotape of your interview will be made available to you. Only the researcher and the study leader will have access to any raw material. Once the study has been completed, all audio-tapes will be deleted. Information gathered during the interviews will be published as part of the study.

However, no names will be published and in case of risk of your identification through specific detailed information, such information will be altered to protect your rights to privacy.

## 7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## 8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact any of the following:

Serina van Huyssteen (Researcher): 072 465 4037 (m) or [serina@vhind.co.za](mailto:serina@vhind.co.za)

Marietha de Wet (Study leader): 021 808 3019 (o) or [mdew@sun.ac.za](mailto:mdew@sun.ac.za)

## 9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT</b>
---------------------------------

The information above was described to me by Serina van Huyssteen in Afrikaans/English.

I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me.

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

**Name of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the participant).

She was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in (Afrikaans/English).

No translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E – Information sheet**

UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

**ANTECEDENTS FOR AND OUTCOMES OF THE PURSUIT OF CUSTOMISED CAREERS  
FOR MILLENNIAL WOMEN IN SKILLED OCCUPATIONS**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Serina van Huyssteen (B Comm Honours), from the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of the study will contribute to the thesis of the degree Masters in Industrial Psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study as a millennial woman currently active in a customised career.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to provide a broad and general base of information on the antecedents as motivational forces for millennial women in skilled occupations to sacrifice the benefits offered by a conventional career in favour of the benefits of a customised career, with the inevitable consequences and challenges that choice brings. It will explore the outcomes - negative and positive - of a customised career on individual, family and career level as well as determine the value for them on a personal level.

**2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Take part in an interview of approximately one hour at a location convenient to you in which you will be asked to share your experiences in your pursuit of a customised career. In addition, you will be asked to bring to the interview two articles or symbols of which one represents you/your life prior to the pursuit of the customised career and the other you/your life after customisation, which will then be discussed. Later, the researcher will transcribe the interview verbatim and you will be asked to read the transcription and confirm it as accurate. You will be free to make any changes if you so wish.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

No risks, discomforts or inconveniences are reasonably foreseeable to you as participant. However, if you do experience the need for professional help as a result of your participation in the study, you are urged to make contact with a professional registered counsellor of your choice. You are also welcome to contact Mrs Christine Cuyler, Registered Counselling Psychologist on 021 872 1411.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There will not necessarily be any direct benefits which you as the participant could expect by taking part in the study. However, an indirect benefit could include satisfaction knowing that your experiences could contribute to the more effective employment of women in the formal business world in future.

The study as a whole could contribute to the field of Industrial Psychology by providing information which could serve as motivation for business to think differently about how to effectively employ and manage the new generation of women in this technology-driven workplace in which we all function.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment will be paid or received by the researcher or participant for their involvement in the study.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information obtained in this study in which you can be identified will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by using a numbering- and coding system and not naming participants and by safely storing all research material. In addition, you are requested to refrain from revealing the identities of organisations referred to during the interview as any such organisation would not be aware that information regarding their practices were revealed and would thus not have had the opportunity to consent to or refuse the use thereof.

For the sake of accuracy, all interviews will be audiotaped with your permission. As stated, you will have access to a verbatim transcription of the interview. If requested, the audiotape of your interview will be made available to you. Only the researcher and the study leader will have access to any raw material. Once the study has been completed, all audio-tapes will be deleted. Information gathered during the interviews will be published as part of the study.

However, no names will be published and in case of risk of your identification through specific detailed information, such information will be altered to protect your rights to privacy.

## **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact any of the following:

Serina van Huyssteen (Researcher): 072 465 4037 (m) or [serina@vhinde.co.za](mailto:serina@vhinde.co.za)

Marietha de Wet (Study leader): 021 808 3019 (o) or [mdew@sun.ac.za](mailto:mdew@sun.ac.za)

## **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

**Appendix F - Example 1 of interview transcript**

Participant: 11921

Customisation type: Reduced hours, Job share

Industry: Health

Job: Medical doctor

Age range: 30-34

---

Start of interview

R: Firstly, thank you very much for taking part in this study, I really appreciate it. Let me start by getting some biographical information from you. If you could put yourself into an age range for me please, between 25-29, 30-34 or 35-29?

P11: I'm 31.

R: Alright. Then, I took it from our conversations that you are married and that you have a child?

P11: Yes, I have a boy of 11 months old.

R: Oh, sweet. He is going into the most beautiful phase now. And you're enjoying him?

P11: Very much. It's amazing. It changes your life. It's a different kind of love, a different experience.

R: Yes, and you cannot imagine that kind of love before you have them, isn't it?

P11: No, you can't.

R: So, tell me, you say that you have only recently customised your work circumstances. Tell me why and how you did it.

P11: Alright, so I'm going to give you a bit of context. I am a doctor and I work in Paediatrics at XXX hospital. Basically I am a general medical officer, but within a specific field. The baseline work hours is 40 hours daytime per week and 20 hours night-time per week.

R: Is that the standard working hours? Wow.

P11: Yes. That's the minimum. So it's quite ... and usually they don't have ANY room to give. Basically, if you're not prepared to do that, you're out. Because there are a lot of people who want to work in XXX and there's not a lot of jobs available in the province, so it's quite competitive.

R: Okay?

P11: So that was what I was doing before. But I had already been there for a while. I started working there in the beginning of 2014. There is another colleague also, same age, who

became a mom when I started working there. She is pregnant now and she's due ... actually she's having twins.

R: Mmm?

P11: So both of us were kind of in the same position where we both love our jobs but we're also moms ... or I was becoming a mom, so I had to start looking at, you know, what's the long term plan? And neither of us are really in a position now where we can specialise – which is what I would like to do long term – but because I'm now based here in XXX, (Researcher's note: smaller town about 1 hour's drive from workplace) in all reality I am not really going to be specialising any time soon, especially with a small baby.

R: Yes, I understand.

P11: But, I was VERY happy at the hospital – good team, everything. But my issue was the hours. It's just not sustainable for someone with a family. So we started talking to our Head of Department.

R: Did you do it together or separately?

P11: Actually, she had tried to do it before I was even pregnant. She tried with another colleague, but at that time it didn't work out. But then when I fell pregnant, she was also starting to plan for her current pregnancy and we both realised, but what are we going to do?

R: Because you're both in Paediatrics.

P11: Yes. In the same department, everything. Then we actually started chatting to our boss together about the options and what we could do. And he was VERY supportive and that is a BIG factor. He is actually pro-family big time. And he understands that women want to work, but also have family responsibilities, so he was very approachable and tried his best to accommodate us.

R: Wow, that's refreshing!

P11: It's quite remarkable and it made the BIGGEST difference to have such a supportive boss.

R: Yes, sure.

P11: So we've got three consultants, so three specialists. The one is Head and the other two ... but I mean, they all have families, so they all understand. The one is a women and the other two are men, but I think their wives have been in exactly the same position. Anyway, so he started talking to all the relevant parties: Human Resources, the Head of the hospital, blah, blah, blah and in the beginning it was mainly a budget issue. It was a constant issue.=

R: =Okay, but I want to understand. Why is it a budget issue? Or actually, tell me first, what is it that you wanted to have happen? What were you proposing?

P11: Okay. Basically, we were wanting to work (.8) LESS hours. Less hours in the day and less hours in the night. Obviously, your children sleep at night, so if you're only working during the day - ALL day - it's not really sensible. So actually, one of the benefits of the calls is that you can be at home in the day and work at night, which is easier on the family.

R: But not necessarily on you?

P11: Nooo, ag, you know, you get used to it. It's hard, but you get used to it. I've been a doctor for eight years now, so it's nothing new.

R: It comes with the territory.

P11: Yes. So what we were proposing is that we work half of the hours: half of the day and half of the night hours. So that involved into what they call (unclear). A fulltime post is 8/8<sup>th</sup>s, but you can't really make two 4/8<sup>th</sup>s, so you had to make two 6/8<sup>th</sup>s. So the 8 is eight hours per week.

R: Okay, but please just explain to me, because I don't have the background, why could it not be two 4/8<sup>th</sup>s?

P11: Because it won't cover all the hours that I needed. The thing is, we wanted a job share, but we both still wanted permanent posts and we both still wanted benefits, so that's where it became an issue.

R: Okay, sorry to keep on with this, but I really want to understand.

P11: No, it's fine!

R: You said you could split the hours and split the salary, but with the benefits, you both still wanted the full 'portion' of let's say the medical aid? But in return for that, you both do 6/8<sup>th</sup>?

P11: Ja, you see, that's where it became an issue, because obviously it's going to cost more to have two employees in two permanent posts with full benefits vs having just one split in half. So it wasn't a straight forward split. And then the government also has this very difficult thing where you can't ... to work commuted overtime, which is what our 20 hours is, you first have to work your full day hours, which is 40 hours.

R: Before you can go to the 20 extra.

P11: Yes, before it qualifies as overtime, and if you're in a 6/8<sup>th</sup>, you're already not working your full 40 day hours. So what we agreed to do is to both enter into a 6/8<sup>th</sup> post, which gives them the 60 hours of one doctor, because we both then work 20 hours in the day and 10 hours at night, but we had to agree that even though we're both working 10 hours in the night, the time it won't be counted as 10 NIGHT hours, meaning 20 hours, it will just be counted as 10 hours added to our total hours.

R: Okay, I understand.

P11: So I guess we do loose, because we're not being paid for overtime even though we are working at night, but I mean, if you look at the maths it is still worth it, actually. So that's how we managed to do it. So how it works out is basically that we both work 10 days a month each instead of 20 in four weeks.

R: Does that include Saturdays and Sundays also?

P11: No. It's Mondays to Fridays and then the nights. Over 8 weeks it really is much less, the load. It works out to much less calls than what we used to work. And it is VERY helpful.

R: Do you know beforehand when you will be working?

P11: Yes. Our rosters work in 8 week cycles, so we know everything in advance; that's great.

R: Okay. So it's not a 'less hours per day' kind of contract, it is a 'less days per month' contract.

P11: For me it wasn't viable time-wise, to drive all the way from XXX to XXX to go and work 4 hours a day. It had to be a full day split. So what we do is, I work every Monday and Tuesday and every alternate Friday and she will work Wednesdays and Thursdays and every other Friday. So that we know it is like set days. You can plan for example if you child needs to go for swimming lessons or whatever. It's really great.

R: Are you two also supportive of each other in crisis times, e.g. if you have a sick baby, would she stand in for you and vice versa?

P11: Oh ja, totally! There's definitely room for that. Obviously she's now going on maternity leave in December. But the nice thing is, there's 5 days in a week, so even when she's not there, if I had to miss a day because of a crisis on the Tuesday, for instance, I can always go in on the Wednesday or Thursday. It won't be great to cancel last minute, but I would be able to work the time back.

R: You can manage it.

P11: Yes, I can manage it.

R: Your husband, is he also in a full time demanding job?

P11: Mmm, very demanding. And all the nights that I'm not at home, or days, it was him. And it got to the point where he was spending more time (.8) with our baby than I was and I'm breastfeeding. I had to still pump at work – it was very demanding. It was CRAZY. But this, what I have now, is sustainable. I actually told them at one point, that if we cannot agree on some clear plan, I am going to resign.

R: Yes, that's what I wanted to ask you, actually. If there was no joy from your employer for negotiating an alternative contract – would you have felt that it leaves you with no option other than to resign? Or would you have kept on working and just tried to cope at home somehow?

P11: No, I actually would have HAD to resign if it didn't work out. The nice thing about being a doctor is that you don't NEED a full time job to have a salary. So I was going to resign and then do locums, which is not very nice, but, still. You know, it's so difficult to find a job that you like and a team that you're happy with. Also, I know Paediatrics is what I want to do long term. It would have been a HUGE loss for me career-wise and a huge compromise on my future career, but I just wasn't willing to compromise my family for career, and actually, it did get to that point. Essentially, we didn't need the money as a family.

R: Which is a big household factor enabling customisation.

P11: Yes. So I couldn't justify it financially. And at THIS point, I wasn't going to specialise, so it was a good space for me to be in to step away from career for a bit and work here and there, be a mom and then come back to it later. So I was quite clear (.8) with my boss that it's either something is worked out (.8) or I am going to leave. There was no in-between. And I think he realised ... from their side I think they really didn't want to lose us. The stability of knowing you have two people who WANT to be here long term, it stabilises the work situation. And I think they saw the benefits to them as much as the benefits to us, so it was a win-win situation.

R: Do you think the fact that they knew you and they knew your quality of work was leverage on your side to get them to listen to your needs and consider accommodating you in this alternative contract?

P11: Completely. So I came to a place where I think they viewed me as (.4) an asset in the team. I think if it was someone from outside, unknown, I don't think they would worked so hard to make it happen. Because the red tape in the government ...

R: I can imagine (both laugh).

P11: And this was something completely unheard of, this kind of situation. It has never been done. But it CAN be done.

R: I'm just so impressed and excited that it actually worked out.

P11: Yes, I know, it's amazing. Everyone is in SHOCK (both laugh).

R: You see, that's exactly what this study is about. At some point employers will have to start thinking differently and it will only happen if the employees stand up and say, hang on, it IS possible to work differently and still serve the needs of the employer AND my own needs.

P11: Ja, I agree.

R: And really, it's thanks to people like you who push it, that things start happening, even in government (both laugh). Tell me about productivity. I know yours is not a desk job where you can simply fit in more work, but do you think the fact that you work less hours has an effect on your focus or your engagement when you are at work?

P11: Emm, productivity, I don't know, because I am generally hardworking anyway. But the fact that I work less days I think helps me be more focussed in the sense that I know that I've

got only 2 days, so when I'm there, I can be fully THERE, 100%. My life now is more relaxed, so I am more willing to give more when I am at work, because I know that I will have rest time ... I suppose it does make me more productive when I am at work, ja.

R: And maybe also because you're not overwhelmed by either role, you have the energy to tend to your responsibilities at home and at work?

P11: Ja, totally. If you're not content in your life, it's difficult to give fully to your work and your family. And now, I am now so happy with life and the balance in my life. I am happy in my home, my baby's happy, my husband's happy, I'm happy, and my boss is happy, because everywhere I can now give them the best of me. So ja, it is much better now.

R: You said now that your husband is also happy. Would you say that if he could choose, he would choose it the way you have it now?

P11: (laughs) I think my husband would be happiest if I didn't go back to work at ALL to be honest (both laugh). I took an extended maternity leave, I took 6 months. I took my four months fully paid and then I took a month annual leave and then a month of unpaid leave. And I think for him that was the best time ever. If you're married to a doctor it's a huge thing. People don't realise how hectic the hours are. You know, if I'm at work at night and he has to be with the baby and tomorrow he has to still work in a demanding job of his own, it was quite hectic for him when I went back to work.

R: I can just imagine.

P11: So those six months were the first time ever since we started dating where I haven't had to work those crazy hours. All weekends free, all public holidays free, it's just not like that when you are a doctor working full time. And when he experienced that, he was like ... mmm, this is how life could be ALL the time (laughs). But at the same time he realises how important my job is to me and how much fulfilment I get from it. I think he knows that if I didn't work I wouldn't be as satisfied and it would eventually be a frustration in the long run. So although he might want to have me at home all the time, he knows it's not what's best for me and what's best for our family. So this is a big compromise for both of us for me having time at work and having time at home. It is the best of both worlds.

R: Mmm, I understand. Now, technology ... I know you are not in an office job at all, so this might not be as relevant in your case, but do you think the development of technology has in any way facilitated the fact that you could negotiate your customisation?

P11: I don't think it really played a role. My job is such that generally I really only work when I am there. I suppose if something wasn't clear in my notes or something, I could be contacted on my cell phone or Whatsapp or e-mail, so technology does make it more convenient in a way. Especially with me and the other doctor who are sharing. Communication between us is all done with technology, I suppose.

R: Okay, so it didn't make a difference in how you perform your work as such, but rather in terms of the support functions – administration and communication.

P11: Yes, I'd say so.

R: If you think of the outcomes of your customisation on a personal level, what do you think has been a result of this for you? Are you only more fulfilled and happy or do you have FOMO because you might be missing out on things when you're not there?

P11: I have ZERO FOMO! (both laugh). I've worked pretty hard basically all my life so I am quite content thus far. I mean, before, my mornings were HECTIC. You can imagine. My baby wakes up at around 6h, which means I have to wake up at 5h15, shower, dress, be ready to feed him when he wakes up, get all the meals are ready for the day, make sure the milk is out, drive to XXX=

R: = which is quite far away=

P11: Yes, work, work, work drive all the way back ... so NOT having that a few times a week is a GREAT joy!

R: So you're not missing a thing!

P11: No, not now. I am very at peace with the decision. I know it's the right thing and I know it's for now, it's not forever. So from that perspective I am very happy. And the free time that I now have ... time to catch up on administration and time to spend doing activities with my boy, visiting family, visiting friends, and just resting, ja.

R: Some people have said to have the time to just plan and prepare a proper meal at night is a luxury you don't even know you're missing out on when you work such hectic hours. Something as small as that can enrich your life.

P11: Yes, completely.

R: Would you say there was an effect on your household in terms of finances because of the fact that you earn less now than you did before?

P11: We do have less of a salary now, but our finances ... I could have not worked at all and we would have been fine. So the financial loss is not a huge factor, because the benefit of having me at home outweighs that by far. It is interesting that most people when I've mentioned this have asked me that, you know, 'but what about the money?'. But I have never ... when you do medicine ... it's not the kind of career you go into for the money to begin with. If you did, you're in the wrong field. So that was never a huge drive for me. Obviously I couldn't say this if I didn't have a husband who's got a good income. Then I probably would have had to work full time to have a house and have a car, have a baby and a carer, blah, blah, blah. I couldn't have afforded those things on my own working part time. But because we are a team, it's fine.

R: I understand.

P11: But also, you know, you have to decide what is really important in life, for you. We have had to look at it, because I mean obviously when you have more money you can do more things, travel more, you can have more things, bigger house, bigger whatever, whatever, but

we are not fancy people. I think that helps. We are who we are, we're very laid back. There ARE certain things that we are now not able to do that we could do before, but it's ... life goes on and we are definitely not suffering for it, you just adjust. And having a baby you are already restricted in what you can do, big time, so ... (both laugh).

R: Do you think you have more control over the management of the household than you had before?

P1: Yes I think so. My husband and I are not very traditional in how we do marriage. We're a team, but obviously because we we're both very busy, it was sometimes difficult to always keep a handle on things. So this morning I actually had time to look through the kitchen cupboards, make a list ... it sounds like something so mundane, but I could walk through the house thinking what needs to be cleaned, like my son's toys, you know? Just those little things. It does make me feel good to know that I have things more under control in my home now, because, as I say, I do like to be in control (laughs) and my home is important to me. I don't think that it has to be ME, but it's just easier if one person has more time to manage everything.

R: Yes. If both have highly demanding jobs, it's easier for things to fall through the cracks.

P11: It's interesting that when I was on maternity leave our cleaning lady used to talk to me more openly, but as soon as I went back to work it was just like ... chk, nothing! (Both laugh) I think she thought I was too busy to be bothered. And now, it does make me feel good to know that I have things more under control in my home now, because, as I say, I do like to be in control (laughs) and my home is important to me. So I am happy now.

R: Allright. Now, what do you think was the impact on your career because of making this decision to customise?

P11: One of the main reasons why it was so easy for me to make the decision was that I am not in a position now where I can specialise anyway, because we live so far away from any kind of hospital where I could go and specialise, so that was off the cards. That made me very relaxed, because we are here in XXX for the foreseeable future. Probably in five years or whatever, we'll move back to the city and then I might be in a position where I can work in a hospital and I can specialise, and my husband will then sort of take a back seat career-wise. So because we've got that plan, I'm very relaxed, which is quite a big thing for me, because I've always been very work, work, work and driven. But I've obviously had to review life and it's good for me to know I don't have to be under pressure now to study and be a career force – there'll be time for that later and then my husband can support me.

R: Yes.

P11: From that perspective it's fine. But sometimes it is quite hard when you see all your peers specialising and moving up, but then I have to just remind myself that that is simply not the season I'm in right now. It wouldn't be feasible. And you see, we're just so happy here and now. It's an amazing town. XXX is very small, everyone knows everyone, it's safe and it's beautiful. And we have the opportunity to live on a farm, we know all our neighbours, it is SO special. We're content here.

R: Sounds wonderful.

P11: Yes. The first time I heard of this place, I thought ... oh, emm ... I had to google (both laugh). But now I just think it's such an amazing space to be in. The country lifestyle is so relaxing. When we have to go to Cape Town, even for a weekend ... by Sunday we are just so happy to be coming home. We just see it as a privilege that we CAN live here at this stage of our lives. Most people work their whole lives and retire to get here.

R: And for your kids to grow up here.

P11: Ja. Exactly.

R: So what you are saying is that the definition, or what it means to be successful at this stage of your life, has changed, or is different to the traditional view.

P11: Mmm! Yes! I think also when you're very young, your definition of what it is to be successful is a bit (.8) limited ... almost immature to some extent. Now that life is different and there are other factors ... for me career success has never been just about career and money in general. Obviously I want to do something that's meaningful and adding value to society and because I wanted to do that, I wanted to be the best in that field, but not for accolades, do you know what I mean?

R: For the contribution you're making?

P11: Yes. And it is important for me to grow to give more. But obviously now that I have a family I have to take that into consideration. It's a big thing to be a mom and a wife and do well at that. It's HUGE. It's a huge part of what I define as being a success. If I could raise a good human I would have done well. That's enough actually (laughs).

R: It's first prize, isn't it?

P11: It is.

R: If you think of the health environment, what do you think could the decision-makers in this industry do differently to accommodate millennial women?

R: I think they need to stop having this very FIXED way of doing things. They have these STANDARD protocols and STANDARD job descriptions which don't consider people's lives. We are in a setting now, where there are way, way more women in health than men. And that's partly why they are struggling so much to get enough doctors, because they are not very accommodating, especially in the government sector. So a lot of women end up in private, for that reason, because there you can to a certain extent negotiate hours, it is more flexible. And it's a shame, because obviously the government sector is losing out. So I think to KEEP more women, they need to re-evaluate job structure. In other countries it is already happening.

R: Do you know of specific cases?

P11: I've got some friends who are doctors in England ... ok, in the States it's horrendous, I wouldn't want to go there (laughs) but in the UK, Sweden and Germany career-wise there is so much accommodation. Actually the one person who really drove me to keep pushing for this is my gynae. When she had her first child she was in the UK and she was specialising. She managed to do a job share with another doctor who was also specialising, but they just had to specialise over a longer period of time. So I think it was four years and because they shared, they ended up doing it over six years. And she said, look, this is totally doable, so push and keep pushing. She was gynae to both of us, both me and the colleague I'm job-sharing with now. So she kept on encouraging us.

R: Okay, that's interesting.

P11: And also, my best friend is a doctor in Sweden. It's amazing. She's been on maternity leave almost more than she's worked, because they get so much time and then the husband also gets time, it's amazing. And now she's gone back to work and it's AMAZING how accommodating the job is there. She works half days and she doesn't even have to work overtime. So just knowing that this whole thing is not impossible... Obviously those countries have better economies than us and better budgets, I understand that. But if you just look at how grossly our budget is misused in the government anyway... The reality is, there IS [money].

R: [There is.

P11: [Because you know, for this job share of ours to happen it only costs them an extra R21 000 per year, which is NOTHING! I mean, we spend more on NAPPIES a year in our department. So seriously, to have two good quality members of staff who are reliable, hard-working, trusted and content in your team – isn't that better in the long run?]

R: =Well, exactly.

P11: So I think they NEED to become more flexible. Because now that this has happened to us, so many other women at work want to know from us, how did you do it? How did this happen? More and more they are going to be put under pressure to present different options to women. I think it will happen. It will HAVE to happen.

R: Yes. To me, that would be the ideal. And not even only specifically for women. I'm thinking, how could we better employ PEOPLE?

P11: Mmm! Ja, totally! I'm with you. Because there are so many men who also don't want to work such hectic hours. That's actually how it started. The first time this was reviewed in our department, it was the same woman I'm sharing with now and another doctor. His wife was pregnant at the time. He was very happy at the hospital, but he just didn't want to work the same hours; he wanted to spend more time with his family. And at the time they were not willing to budge, so he resigned, actually. And we lost a REALLY GREAT team member. Often, we would think back and say, 'Oh! We miss him so much! I wish they could have done more to keep him.' And it's sad. I mean, this way is not for everyone. Obviously there are people who DON'T want to do it this way and that's fine. But ja, there are others like me.

R: Yes, exactly. That's actually why this subject is so important to me, because I do believe that if management and employees talk to each other with open minds, we will get to a point where we will find out what works for both sides and marry the two – to the benefit of management AND employees, not only one or the other.

P11: Totally. That's why, when I saw about this study, I thought yes. Definitely. This is important! I would LOVE to contribute!

R: And I am so grateful, thank you! Okay, next question, it seems to me that the gains for you on all three levels – individually, household and career-wise - far outweigh the losses. Would you say that's true?

P11: I'm trying to think what losses... I can't even think of ONE loss, to be honest. Apart from the financial loss, which is not that important, we've not had any other losses. I gain from this, my family gains from this and so does the hospital.

R: Mmm, that's great to hear. Alright, last question, to what degree do you think there has been work-life conflict and work-life enrichment in your life before and since you've customised, where experiences in one role positively or negatively influence your functioning in the other role?

P11: Well, I've had both. I was not even back at work for a month when my son was with my nanny, sick with a very high fever and I was on call in XXX, so there was no way for me to leave work - I had responsibilities. My husband was in Cape Town in a meeting, so it was a bit of a disaster. So he had to leave his meeting and drive all the way back to XXX. And it being a small town, there's not a lot of trusted doctors so if my baby is to be ill, I am actually first prize (laughs). So that was really challenging for me, because I really had to think. Here I was on call for MANY babies. If I left work and there is a gap, the loss is bigger vs my one baby. And my husband COULD actually drive home and there WERE other doctors in Cape Town that he could take him to and it's most probably not even major. So, that was huge for me to not be there for my baby the first time he was sick. In the end he wasn't majorly ill so it was okay. But it was really, really tough. And the next day I had to observe him, which meant I didn't go in to work, so it worked both ways.

R: Okay, yes.

P11: And then I've seen the enrichment since becoming a mom, because obviously I work in Paediatrics, so it's directly beneficial. It's completely changed my perspective as a doctor - hugely. Because now you've been there, you've had a baby. You know what it's like to breastfeed or to struggle with breastfeeding or whatever, the nights. I'm much more compassionate, more understanding of my patients and I have experience now so I can give informed input. Whereas before, I had textbook input. Actually it's amazing, I was so excited to go back to work since I've become a mom, because I know now there's much more that I can give. I've seen a huge change in how I relate to my patients and to the parents, so it's been a big benefit. And working has also made being a mom easier, having all the knowledge being a doctor. There's not a lot that makes me panic, because I know what's minor and I know what's major, so it's made me a very chilled mom. I think a lot of moms struggle with the paranoia and the fear when a baby is sick or whatever.

R: Yes, because you don't know what's going on?

P11: Ja, and it's reasonable. I often think, wow, imagine not knowing (laughs) when something happens.

R: Mmm. I'm thinking now, imagine the loss for your patients and the hospital if you didn't have a baby and all that experience being a mom brings and also imagine the loss for the hospital if you felt you had resigned if they couldn't accommodate you. Then on the other hand, imagine the loss for you and your family if you resigned and didn't have all the gains and benefits of still working. I would be so sad. And it IS sad if you think of so many women who don't have a choice and have to choose only one or the other role. There's so much wastage.

P11: Yes. It's interesting, one of the consultants actually said to me, 'you are a MUCH better doctor now than you were before and we wanted to keep you before, but now even more, because you get it now'. You know, it's so easy to come from an academic perspective. And one of them said to me at one point 'you know, with some things, you're quite like a brick wall (laughs) - there's not much give'. If I believed that something was the best way, then that is how it was done. And I think post becoming a mom, the brick wall started to fall away. You're just more understanding, less judgemental, which is necessary. That experience changes your perspective on so many things.

R: That's the irony, isn't it? You actually now have a more informed opinion, yet you're less opinionated.

P11: Yes. And you become part of a different village. Before, I was in one camp and my patients and their parents we're in another camp. And now it's like 'we're all in this one camp, I get you. How can we work together to help you in your situation'. So now I am much more willing to cater my care to suit the specific needs of a certain mom.

R: I understand what you're saying, wow. That makes so much sense. [Pause]

R: We've actually come to the end of the interview. XXX, thank you so much for talking to me. You have so many valuable views which I would definitely want to use in the study. Thanks so much.

P11: No, thank you. I enjoyed it!

End of interview.

**Appendix G** - Example 2 of interview transcript

Participant: 10920

Customisation type: Own business, same industry, reduced hours, flexible hours

Industry: Publishing

Job: Editor and writer

Age range: 30-34

---

## Start of interview

R: Firstly, thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this study. I am going to start off by asking for a bit of biographical information. Please tell me in which age range you fall – that is 25-29. 30-34 or 35-39?

P10: I am 32, so the 30-34 range.

R: Okay, and secondly, whether you are married or single and whether you have children.

P10: I am married and I have one daughter of 22 months.

R: Alright, now, please tell me in which way you have customised your career. In other words, how is your work hours or location different from a conventional 8h-5h arrangement?

P10: Okay. I am self-employed. So I am very fortunate in that my husband and I work together in our own business and that I'm able to kind of tailor make my hours to suit my daughter's schedule. Especially at the moment, because she is not in school. My mom looks after her half day and I work half day. But it's not a set morning or afternoon, it really depends, you know, on the situation on the day. I will take her half day and my mom will take her the other half of the day when I work.

R: So your mom is flexible in the sense that she can take her either half of the day depending on how she's needed?

P10: Yes. She's retired and she lives with us. She lives in a granny-flat attached to our home, so ja, she is able to ... be 'on tap'- a granny-nanny, basically (both laugh).

R: What a support system!

P10: Absolutely, yes. It's been fantastic to have her. She lived in Johburg when my daughter was born and moved to Somerset West a few months later. And then in February this year we moved house to a big place with a granny flat and she moved in with us.

R: I see.

P10: So that's when I sort of properly returned to work. Before that I was (.4) working .hhhh as needed – not quite so regularly, which was difficult, because, you know, you still have

deadlines and that kind of thing, but I didn't have that kind of (.8) assured time to work. So she would come up and look after my daughter for a couple of hours or my husband would look after her while I worked, but it's more regular now.

R: Okay. Now, tell me about your previous set-up. Did you work in a different environment then? Were there set hours there?

P10: We lived in London for a couple of years. We moved back in 2010. I started my PhD in 2011 and was working part time in conjunction with doing my PhD. So I worked from home and basically just fit my studies and work around each other. Then when my daughter was born, my office became her (laughs) bedroom. So I then basically moved into my husband's office. We live on the farm, and we have an office on the farm, so it is very convenient.

R: Here on the farm? {R note: Big commercial farm with various business activities combining interconnected industries.}

P10: Yes. I preferred working from home before, but now working in the office is actually working a lot better, because I am able to get away from home. If I tried to work from home it obviously wouldn't work, because she would harass me constantly (laughs).

R: Oh, I know exactly what you're saying. They're a distraction, aren't they? Not because they're doing anything wrong, they just demand your time when they see you, that's all (both laugh).

P10: Exactly, ja. So now I am working in the office.

R: You're now working in the office, but your hours are less than in a conventional position?

P10: Yes, because of only working half-day.

R: Are those half-day hours normally more or less set? For example, if you work in the mornings, do you normally start at a certain time and finish at a certain time? And the same with the afternoons?

P10: It's pretty much dictated by her schedules. So at the moment on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesday mornings I take her to little playgroups or little classes, but it's a mom and baby thing, so it's not something I drop her off at. On those days I then work in the afternoons. I'd generally go into the office at round about half past one after I've put her down for a nap and then will go home at 5h when it's time for her dinner. And then on Thursdays and Fridays I'll generally work in the mornings, so I'll start at around 8h15 and work until about 12h.

R: It's fantastic that you can fit your work schedule around her needs.

P10: Yes and then also occasionally if my work schedule is more hectic than my husband's - because we work together - then I can work full days on Thursdays and Fridays and he will take her in the afternoon. Then my mom still only looks after her for the half day, but I can get a full day's work in.

R: O:kay, so you also try to accommodate your mom to only ask for her help for half of the day?

P10: Yes, I try to, because I don't want to (.4) exhaust her ... or abuse her (laughs). You know, just for HER sake. Because it can be tiring looking after a toddler.

R: Yes, for her to also have her time. Just as a matter of interest, I suppose it is good for her to have your daughter to look after in terms of having purpose?

R: Oh, absolutely. My dad passed away about 12 years ago, so she's been on her own for a very long time. She lived on her own in Johburg for that entire period and she was looking after her elderly mother as well, so I think that took a very big toll on her. I wouldn't have said she was depressed, but she was ...

R: Not happy.

P10: Yes. And we've all noticed ... my sister as well and my husband ... a very big change in her. She's now got purpose. She loves kids and obviously she loves her grandchild, so it's made a big difference in her life.

R: That's wonderful. Good to hear.

P10: I feel guilty kind of (.4) dumping my child on my mom sometimes (laughs).

R: Tell me about that. What makes you feel guilty? Do you feel guilty towards your mom or towards your daughter?

P10: Both. Both. More my mom. I don't want to put unnecessary stress on her or ... tire her out or .hhhh ... but this is my own (.8) guilt, really. I know she would tell me if she felt under strain or under pressure. So she is certainly not MAKING me feel guilty in any way, but ja.

R: So do you think you are putting it on yourself?

P10: It's what the women in my family do, we feel guilty (both laugh). But my daughter has such a special relationship with her and she is very lucky to have that, because a lot of kids don't have their grandparents nearby and she's got all three of her grandparents nearby. And I think with a grandparent it's different to a parent, because the parents have to do all the discipline and that kind of stuff whereas the grandparent can be there just for enjoyment.

R: It's fantastic for you to have quality childcare and for her to have that loving relationship with your mom.

P10: I feel very lucky that we didn't have to put her in day-care or nursery before either of us was ready. Most of my friends have had to leave their kids from as young as four months old, in day-care full time, which I would have found incredibly difficult. And also, .hhhh she's quite clingy and she likes to be at home so I think it's better for her. We are doing the classes three times a week, so she's getting some stimulation and she's getting a chance to socialise, so I just think it's a good balance and I'm glad that we've been in a position to do it that way.

R: Alright. So on three different levels – individually, household and family and also organisation – on those three levels, what factors have motivated you to customise your career in this way? In other words, on those three levels, what made you decide not to keep working full time OR to exit the work environment entirely?

P10: I definitely would not have decided to exit the work environment entirely. I would have liked to have taken at least a year off to just see her through the first year, but I would definitely have returned to work. Personally, I need the stimulation. I don't think ... some people might be embarrassed to admit this, but it can be very boring to be at home all day looking after a child (laughs). I am quite used to being mentally very stimulated and I enjoy that and I thrive on that so I need time to work on (.8) my own personal growth and being stimulated in that way. And then also – my husband and I are building this business and my particular skill set ... to have taken that skill set out of the equation completely would have DRASTICALLY hurt the business. Can I tell you in short what we do?

R: Please do.

P10: We worked separately for quite a while and then, when I finished my PhD, we sort of formally joint forces. I am an editor and a writer so I help novelist complete their novels and I do assessments on novels. I do copy editing and proof reading as well. I also write text books for the IB English syllabus. My husband does typesetting, graphic design, layout and that kind of thing, so our business is basically offering a one-stop-shop for self-publishers. So I help with the editorial side you know, get the novel to the best kind of level it can be. And then my husband helps with production, layout, cover design, e-book conversion and that kind of thing. So if I had stopped working altogether that would have been half the services (.8) kind of (.8) lost.

R: I understand, yes. So on a personal level you said you work because you like working, you enjoy the stimulation and that you are making a contribution to the business.

P10: Yes. And also, financially we couldn't afford to be a one income household, so it was necessary for me to be bringing in money in as well. So that was also a very big factor.

R: Yes, I understand that well. Also, you said your support system with your mom being here made it an easy decision to go back to work?

P10: Yes, it made that choice much easier. It made me feel less (.6) hesitant about that choice.

R: In the way that you said it was good for you NOT to be with your daughter all day long – do you think it might also be good for your daughter not to be with you all day long?

P10: I think so, yes. My mom had a small operation on her back a few weeks ago and it luckily coincided with a period when I was quite quiet at work. So I stayed home with her for two solid weeks and I noticed a big change in the sense that she became a lot clingier and a lot more emotional. So I don't think, to be honest with you, it's good for either of us to be in each other's' company 24/7. And I feel as well that when I am with her for that half a day I

am more present and I kind of make more of an effort than I would have if I was with her all day. It feels like a terrible thing to say! But I appreciate that time that I have with her more.

R: And you have the energy to engage with her.

P10: It also gets (.8) too much looking after a toddler all day and try to keep them entertained all day. You run out of ideas and motivation.

R: That's the reality. Now, on the other hand, what would you say were the factors that would have kept you from going back to work full time in a conventional 8h-5h type of set up.

P10: It's difficult to say. You know, before you have a child you have certain ideas about what it will be like. And everyone tells you, ja no, your life is going to change and you say, yes I know. Well, you don't.

R: You have no idea.

P10: No, you really don't. You don't know what it means to be on call 24/7. You don't know what it means to have a little person whose life is completely, completely dependent on your own and your organisation of it. And as great a husband or partner that you might have – and mine is FANTASTIC – the reality of it is ... and it burns me to admit this, because I am a self-declared feminist ... (both laugh) [but

R: [I can relate to so many things you are saying ... (both laugh)

P10: My idea before I had the baby is, oh, it can be 50/50, it's possible. But the reality of it is ... the biological reality of it is that she is more dependent on me that she is on my husband. I end up doing a lot more for her than he does. And he does contribute massively. I am not taking that away at all, but at the end of the day his work life hasn't changed all that much whereas mine HAS - completely. And my LIFE has changed completely. From the fact that I can't even brush my teeth or take a shower without negotiating what's happening=

R: =Or have a sandwich.

P10: Ja. Exactly. And you don't really understand what that lack of freedom to tend to your own needs MEANS – personal needs and work needs – until you have a child. So on top of that to have the demands of a completely inflexible work schedule... I don't imagine that would be tenable at all. I have friends, mainly in the UK, who had babies round about the same time as I did, who were in more traditional 9h-5h environments and who have now either ... three in fact who have had babies at roughly the same time ... one has quit her job entirely. She hadn't planned to, but the mere reality of trying to juggle work and baby - she's had to quit her job. And the other two have luckily had quite understanding workplaces who have allowed them to cut down on the number of days that they work and have allowed them to telecommute, which has made it easier. The one e.g. only has to work three days and she only has to go in to the office on two of those days. My one friend in particular, who had quite a high-powered job in publishing, is constantly having doubts because she thinks she's not doing the mom-thing good enough and she's not doing the work-thing good-enough. I think

most women will actually fall into this category where you are never going to feel like what you are doing is good enough.

R: Because we want to be the best mom and the best worker.

P10: My studies were in Feminist Literature and I am very immersed in the feminist movement especially in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and this idea that women CAN have it all and (.8) faced with the reality of it (1.0) it's actually difficult to reconcile with your own experience with this idea of being able to do everything to the best of your ability, because it is ... just ... humanly IMPOSSIBLE ... to give yourself 100% to two such demanding areas as work and child rearing. And it's something that women more than men have to try and make sense of.

R: That is one of the reasons why I chose this subject. If we look at all of this, we know with all the women entering the workforce now, that the work environment WILL HAVE to change and become more accommodating towards women and their need for flexibility in order for them to cope with both roles.

P10: Well, exactly. But for the work environment to adapt and bring in more flexibility to accommodate women, the general mind-set has to change. The cultural mind-set in terms of traditional gender roles is key. And that is something that's going to take a lot longer to shift, because it is more deeply engrained. While the workplace has shifted in terms of women becoming more (.8) prominent, we haven't achieved equality by any means, still less change has taken place within the general mind-set of gender roles. I go to these little playgroups and it's all the mummies. There's been one where there was a dad who stayed at home and the mom worked. And that was weird. And why is that weird? That is the kind of mind-set we all still have. So I think until the cultural mind-set shifts to a place where men are equally responsible for child rearing as women, the workplace shift in terms of promotions and senior positions is going to be meaningless, because then the juggling will continue.

R: And intensify. But there ARE women in professions and in highly skilled jobs who do customise their hours and location to better accommodate the demands in both roles – you are an example. But you have created this customisation for yourself. Do you think this is at all possible in corporate organisations?

P10: I am very lucky in the sense that I am self-employed and I could call the shots, basically, but I imagine in larger organisations it is much more difficult for women to fulfil a work role and at the same time be customising her hours and still fit into that pyramid and structure of the organisation.

R: Allright, well, on that note – one of the things that facilitates customisation is technology. How would you say does technology help you make a success of your customisation?

P10: Oh yes, absolutely. We have very few local clients. I'd say 95% of our clients are based overseas – mainly Australia and the US and the UK occasionally. We very rarely, if ever, meet our clients face to face. So everything is done via e-mail, via Skype. So obviously technology plays a huge role in the way we do business. It wouldn't have been possible even 10, 15 years ago to do it the way we do it now.

R: Do you Skype ... I'm thinking Australia ... how many hours are they ahead of us?

P10: Depending on where they are. At the moment the client I'm working with in Brisbane, she's eight hours ahead of us. It ACTUALLY works quite well to my schedule, I must admit. The US clients I'll do the calls round about 8 pm at night, so I get my daughter to bed and then I'll speak to them. And then the current client in Australia, I'll speak to at around 9 am our time, which is about 5pm her time. So the time difference actually works in my favour!

R: Yes! So technology and the fact that you have international clients, makes it ideal for you to work this way.

P10: Absolutely, yes. And of course also the fact that I am not expected to sit behind a desk or to be available on the phone for eight continuous hours every day. Also, e-mail makes it possible to communicate from anywhere, because I can shoot off a quick e-mail while I'm bouncing my daughter on my leg (both laugh). So yes, technology is entirely what makes it possible to do my work in the way that I do. We wouldn't even have had the business we have if it wasn't for technology. Also, my friends overseas, the friends in England, on those days that they are working from home, they're telecommuting, so they are available and working from 9h to 5h behind their computer, via e-mail and cell phone. So it's not as though they have an 'off' day, even though they might have missed the traffic and are sitting at the dining room table in their pyjamas. They are as productive, if not more, as if they were physically at the office.

R: Yes. The client who phones her is on no level receiving a lower quality service because she is wearing her pyjamas instead of high heels.

P10: Exactly.

R: Okay, now let's look at outcomes for you personally, for your household and then career-wise – what would you say were the outcomes of customisation for you?

P10: I think I have managed now to find the balance between being a grown-up and having the adult stimulation and feeling that I'm contributing and that I am doing something worthwhile in the workplace, while at the same time being at home with my daughter for longer than I would be if I had to work full day. I know I'm in a very privileged position that I actually get to spend half the day with her. So I'm feeling ... obviously there are times when there's guilt and pressure when there is a pressure deadline and she needs me or whatever, but I'm happy with the balance that we've managed to strike, because I feel fulfilled in both those roles.

R: Okay, so there definitely is fulfilment in both roles.

P10: Yes. I am not saying it's easy, I would rather say I am doing okay in both.

R: Would you say your mom-role and your work-role are only in conflict or would you say there is enrichment from your mom-role to your work-role and vice versa?

P10: I definitely think my work-role enriches the mom-role, because it makes me feel that I still have a life of my own, that I am actually still a person outside of being someone's mom.

And also, just looking down the line, I want to provide that example for my daughter that I am working and that I've got goals of my own that I am going out there to achieve. As far as vice versa ... it is difficult sometimes when she's (.8) having a difficult period, which they do, to then have to have an 8h phone call with a client at night, you know. When you've had a difficult day with her and I'm tired, to then have to give myself to the client and fully engage with them. So yes, there are challenges, but overall it's been a question of just planning and managing that very full schedule. You know, you think you're busy before you become a parent (both laugh).

R: And then you have children and you think 'what on earth did I do with my time?'

P10: Ja, EXACTLY. And you start thinking, mmm, I was watching rubbish TV. So yes, I think the main thing is that you manage adapting to both the work role and the mother role, but then end up having very little time for yourself.

R: Yes, that is what happens, isn't it. One has a certain amount of time and energy and you make sure that the work demands and family demands are met first and then you end up having nothing left for YOU.

P10: I know. And also for my husband, which is difficult. In one way it's actually great that we work together because we do see a lot more of each other than we would otherwise.

R: Would you say it is at all true that your role as a mother has given you life experience which has enriched how you understand and relate to the material you work with? In other words, what I am asking is, has becoming a mother made you a better worker?

P10: Definitely, definitely. As I say, you have preconceived ideas of what motherhood is. My sister has two kids and I was involved in their lives from the get go and so you think you know what being a parent is. But the reality of it is something completely different. And doing the work that I do and advising authors on their novels and helping them develop their stories ... my own understanding was DEFINITELY informed by becoming a mother and having that life experience. It's made me more (.8) empathetic. It's made me ... it's made me softer. It makes your emotions a lot (.6) rawer, I think. And in the line of work that I'm in I suppose that's a good thing. So ja, it's valuable.

R: Ja, look, it's made ME much less opinionated and much less judgemental (both laugh).

P10: Yes! Because of course you were just the BEST parent before you had a child.

R: Of course. You were saying earlier that your household would not have coped financially if you didn't work at all. But the fact that you now only work half of your hours, doesn't that make a big difference financially?

P10: Well, I actually still contribute half of the business and my husband the other half. In terms of productivity I find that even though I'm working probably half the hours that I've worked before, I'm getting through as much work as I have before. But we do try to keep things lean. We are in a very lucky position that we are not paying off a home loan or pay

rent. We are trying not to pull too much out of the business, because we are trying to build the business.

R: Alright. Do you think the fact that you customised your hours and location of work hurt your career and your career trajectory?

P10: In a way it is difficult to judge. I worked for two years in publishing company in London in-between doing my Masters and PhD. I worked for a very big corporate publisher, a very entry level position, you know, very low down. And just judging from sort of the level advancement in that corporate structure, I don't think if I had stayed there I would have done the same level of work than I am doing now.

R: Do you think you are doing a higher level of work now?

P10: Definitely. Again, it's difficult to judge. You see, becoming a mother has distracted me from the 'bigger picture' thinking that my husband is still very much entrenched in. I know it's difficult for him, because he still has a lot of plans that he still wants to discuss with me and implement, but some days it's all I can do to just get through my day with my own deadlines and looking after my daughter. So sometimes I just can't wrap my head around the things that he's talking about and thinking about and planning. I do get the same amount of actual work done, but it's more the blue sky type of thinking and planning that I am not as involved in, which is unfortunate. Luckily I am working with my husband, so I am able to trust him.

R: Yes and also, your life will go through different phases and there will come a time that your daughter doesn't need you as much as she does now.

P10: Yes, absolutely. So no, I don't feel that I've been left behind in my career by any means. You know if you work in a traditional corporate structure it takes a very long time for you to reach the position where you feel 'this is what I really want to be doing', you know, your dream job. And as silly as it sounds I can genuinely say that I AM doing my dream job.

R: Already.

P10: Already. And I would NEVER have been in that position there. You know, I studied English and all these little English graduates who have this dream of working for a publisher and being the one who reads the manuscripts and putting them out there ... the reality is that that is NOT what you are going to be doing if you're working for a big publisher. But that's what I AM doing. So I am very, very fortunate and grateful.

R: Okay. So you have told me that you have made some sacrifices in the sense that you are not in a position full time, you do have the stress of setting up a new business, you do have the stress of having all your eggs in one basket with you and your husband being in the business together. But there were gains as well. And it sounds like the biggest gain is the flexibility you have to spend time at home with your daughter as well, which maybe would not have worked out that way in a full time position. Would you say that the sacrifices you are making, are worth the gains?

P10: Absolutely. Absolutely, without any hesitation. You now, as you say, it is a scary thing, especially now that we have a child, that both of our incomes are dependent on the success of one business, but it is also a motivator as well. And I think having that flexibility is ... you know, my husband has always been self-employed, even when we were in London. We had decided to go over and then we arrived just as the recession hit in January 2009 and there were no jobs.

R: No!

P10: So I was lucky enough to get a temp position through a friend, which then turned into a permanent position. But my husband had NO luck finding work. We were fresh out of university, had no experience. And you know, five or ten years before, we wouldn't have had a problem. But because of WHEN we went, he couldn't find work, so he became self-employed out of necessity. But we agree that neither of us could actually slot back into that 9h-5h work environment anymore. It IS different in the sense that, when I left at 5h, I LEFT my work behind. And I had my evenings and I had my weekends, and I wouldn't have to worry about money at the end of the month, because I know there would be a salary. There was a certainty. But there was also a kind of drudgery about it as well. So it became very demotivating. I didn't enjoy working in that environment at all. While now, here, there's stress, but I am also more motivated? There's also more perks in terms of autonomy on how I manage my time. If I want to go grocery shopping on a Wednesday morning, I CAN. If I want to spend the afternoon with my daughter, I CAN. That flexibility is COMPLETELY invaluable.

R: SO now you can manage your time more sensibly?

P10: Absolutely. You know, as I said, I thought I was busy before, but now I still manage to get all my work done, but just in half the time.

R: Okay, now, what would you say could organisations do to help people work more flexibly? What do you think could work?

P10: Well, obviously it would differ from industry to industry, but having seen how it is working for friends of mine overseas I would say to telecommute on certain days, especially if you have a long commutes. Or to maybe have that option of reducing hours also. You know, as I say, you can be just as productive in a shorter period of time if you know that THAT is all the time you have. So I don't think it is necessarily a question of lightening workloads, but rather giving women the option to do their work in timeframes and in locations that will help them be more productive than they would be in a traditional set up.

R: That was beautifully put now. 'Time frames that help women be more productive'. I like that. Because depending on your household routine, there might be different time frames in which different women would be more productive. Someone who has to drop children at school could perhaps only arrive at the office at 9h, but someone else whose children are cared for at home by a nanny might want to start at 7h30, yet leave the office earlier in the afternoon. Also if you take into account how a different time frame could reduce travelling time to and from the office, then not only will it be to the benefit of the individuals, but also to the benefit of the organisations.

P10: My sister in law worked for a very well know financial institution at the Waterfront. She doesn't have kids, but she was also in a situation where she had to sit in traffic every afternoon for an hour and a half to two hours. And even though she had very good prospects there, she actually left that job eventually. She said the waste of time because of the traffic was probably THE biggest reason for her resigning there. She said on the day she quit, they sat her down and said, you know, please stay, write your own check, we're desperate to keep you. And she was thinking about it until she was driving home that night and got stuck in a traffic jam for two hours and on that spot just decided, NO.

R: I can understand that.

P10: Our accountant also has two little kids, so she starts earlier in the mornings and then leaves early. Sometimes it's a little thing like that – not even working less hours, but just allowing flexitime so that you can be there when it works better for you, especially if you still get all your work done.

R: Well exactly, you see, and that is my question really – shouldn't it be the norm for people to work when and where they can be most productive?

P10: Absolutely. And I think it would obviously solve a lot of problems for women who are trying to juggle home life and work life, but it would also make practical sense in terms of lightening traffic. And I DO appreciate that it is not practical in all industries, but if you look – so many people do their work behind a desk, on the computer, which you can do from anywhere. And if you look at how many companies work with international clients these days, it almost makes more sense for them to work flexi-hours.

R: Because in that case, what is the sense in working when it is 8h-5h in South Africa but not in the country where your clients live.

P10: But you see, it should not just be for women. Men should also be allowed to have flexibility, and in that way they will also be in a position to help lighten the household load on their wives.

R: Yes. It makes sense that PEOPLE should be allowed to work when and where they can, not only women.

P10: Yes. You don't have to be face to face with someone to work with them these days.

R: Exactly. Okay, last question: what do you think is holding organisations back from allowing more flexibility?

P10: I think it's difficult to generalise because in certain industries and with certain jobs it will be necessary to work face to face and to work certain hours if you are e.g. operating machinery or something like that. But I think it's just that 9h-5h Monday to Friday mind-set that we are still adhering to. To be honest, it's not something that I've ever really thought about. I imagine it's just that kind of culture that's been in place for so long that no one has really tackled or challenged it in a very serious way. But it is changing, I think. I mean the company I worked for in London, when I was leaving they were making noises ... I don't

know if anything has actually happened ... but they were making noises about allowing workers to telecommute one day a week or two days a week to save on things like transportation costs to the point where they were talking about downsizing on office space and having hot desks where people would work from the same desk but at different times and that sort of thing. So I think some companies are leaning that way, but other companies are just being held back by the fact that, like gender roles, it's been so deeply entrenched that it's going to take a long time to shift. And perhaps it IS a generational thing. Maybe in 30 years' time when millennials are calling the shots it will be very different scenario.

R: Do you think fear of losing control over the employees' input has anything to do with it?

P10: Yes, I think that is a big part of it. I think if they don't see the employee sitting behind on the computer they wonder what you are doing. But to be honest with you, with my job in London I .hhhh I didn't have enough to do. A lot of my hours were spent looking busy ...

R: And that is actually very hard and stressful!

P10: Yes! I was 22 or 23, so I was very young. And I was too scared to speak up, because I thought if I go and tell my boss that I don't have enough work to do they are either going to think I am not doing what I am supposed to be doing well enough, or I'm going to lose my job. So sometimes I finished my work for the day in an hour and then I'd spend the rest of the day wanting to jump out of the window, because I was bored to tears. Not every day, of course. And then on the odd days that I did have to work from home because of tube strikes or swine flu or whatever, I was just as productive, if not more so, because they entrusted me with that. I had a very good relationship with my boss and because he entrusted me to work from home I felt that responsibility, so I believed that I must be.

R: So he created a reality for you that you are to be trusted and then it was natural for you to confirm that created reality.

P10: Yes. I wasn't going to do less because he couldn't see me. I mean, most of the time I did very little when he COULD see me. I always got my work done, but there was simply not enough to do. Anyway, maybe being a woman and being efficient and on top of things was why this was the case. And that is purely sexist, actually. But my husband always says if we do reach the point where we have to appoint more employees, he will only appoint women, because there is this mind-set that women are more trouble and they are going to go off and have babies and whatnot, be he says in his experience women have always been more dedicated to the job and more efficient.

R: XXX, thank you so much for talking to me like this today. I really enjoyed it and I enjoyed your insights and the way you so eloquently put things. It is obvious that you are in the publishing industry!

End of interview.

**Appendix H – Example of Codebook sheet**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Quoted text</b>
1d	01817	Daar is belangriker goed as net werk
1d	11921	Obviously I want to do something that's meaningful and adding value to society and because I wanted to do that, I wanted to be the best in that field, but not for accolades, do you know what I mean?
1d	11921	There ARE certain things that we are now not able to do that we could do before, but it's ... life goes on and we are definitely not suffering for it, you just adjust.
1d	11921	Yes! I think also when you're very young, your definition of what it is to be successful is a bit (.8) limited ... almost immature to some extent. Now that life is different and there are other factors ... for me career success has never been just about career and money in general.
1d	07907	... I mean, my life now ... the highway runs right past where I train in the mornings and I watch this lot stuck in their cars in bumper-to-bumper traffic, trying to get into town, while I am jumping and hanging off things and swinging around and skipping and carrying on like a two-year old.
1d	131014	a lot of the perception of success is built around the amount of work that now gets referred to you because of your experience and also how your colleagues perceive you. If they think you're great they end up giving you work.
1d	06901	Actually, I'd rather be an adventurer and travelling and that. I'm doing it this way because I really truly believe that this is what I'm supposed to be doing. And do I know where I'm going? No freaking clue.
1d	131014	Also, it's an individual thing for me. I want to feel satisfied at the end of the day knowing that I've done well and that I've learnt from it
1d	131014	And I think in a (.8) funny way it makes sense that we DO think that way, because if we both ... if women were to think, 'well, I'm just going to give you the money', then ultimately, who is going to nurture the kids?
1d	05019	As ek moet bedank en by 'n ander plek gaan werk ... die oomblik as ek 5 uur eers gaan ry by die werk ... ek bedoel my gesinslewe gaan depleted raak, tyd saam met my kind ...
1d	11921	But also, you know, you have to decide what is really important in

- life, for you.
- 1d 09920 But if I ever get to the point where I feel like I'm getting boxed in, I would probably look for an opportunity elsewhere ... or CREATE an opportunity elsewhere that would facilitate what I want.
- 1d 10920 But there was also a kind of drudgery about it as well. So it became very demotivating. I didn't enjoy working in that environment at all.
- 1d 03818 Dat werk en huis moet deel wees van mekaar. Jy weet, jy staan op, jy maak ontbyt, jy gaan na die lande toe, jy kom terug, jy eet, jy connect met jou mense, vanmiddag gaan werk jy weer ... jy weet?
- 1d 02818 Die gains outweigh die loss
- 1d 04824 Die oomblik wat iemand kan sien dat jy iets kan doen in die akademie dan betrek hulle jou by nog goed? Wel, dis vir my goed, dis vir my 'n lekker gevoel.
- 1d 03818 Dis voel vir my dis baie meer natuurlik, dit voel vir my reg. Dit voel nie vir my reg dat die twee so geskei moet wees van mekaar nie, nee.
- 1d 02818 Dit voel vir my ek het 'n ander loopbaan
- 1d 02818 Ek dink ek sou 'n paar goeters vroeër in plek gesit het as ek geweet het, maar ek dink nie die proses se rigting sou anders gewees het nie.
- 1d 01817 Ek dink nie 'n vrou hoef noodwendig altyd 'n halfdagpos te hê nie as jy kinders het nie. My ma het haar hele lewe voldag gewerk,
- 1d 02818 Ek dink nie ek kan heeltewel wegtree nie. En veral omdat ek ... op die vlak waar ek betrokke was, en omdat ek navorsing gedoen het, ek wil nie 'n trappie verloor nie,
- 1d 03818 ek dink overall ... my gevoel is net, wat ek nou doen is eintlik baie meer soos dinge VERONDERSTEL was ... soos (.8) ek wil amper sê, soos die Here amper wou gehad het dit moet wees.
- 1d 04824 Ek dra meer by tot my omgewing, tot my huishouding, ja, dis net all over positive.
- 1d 02818 Ek geen nie om om baie minder te werk nie, intendeel, ek kry eintlik meer werksbevrediging deur minder pasiënte te sien op hierdie stadium te sien. Maar ek wil dit nie net los nie. Ek wil nie laat gaan nie. En ek dink, tot 'n mate, is dit seker maar mens se kompeterende natuur of iets wat jy het in jou om te wil DAAR wees.

- 1d 03818 Ek het gevoel (.8) asof ... dit het letterlik gevoel op die dae wat ek by die werk aankom of daar 'n tydmasjien is wat my .hhhh inslurp. Heeldag gaan jy in en dan word jy (.6) uitgespoeg aan die ander kant. Dit was vir my ... dis amazing. Dis thrilling en dis addictive,
- 1d 04824 Ek hou daarvan as iemand vir my sê ...  
R: Erkenning gee.  
P4: Ja, nie enige iemand nie, maar iemand wat ek nou sien as 'n opinie-leier of 'n verwysing of so. So dit is nogal belangrik vir my.
- 1d 02818 ek is verskriklik lief vir wat ek doen
- 1d 05019 Ek soek dit, ek soek dit ... dis iets wat jy negotiate ... dis nie negatiewe kant van dit. Dit maak half vir my 'n vrees om uit te beweeg en om my potensiaal te gaan bereik op ander plekke en om myself te bevorder
- 1d 08916 Ek sou so vervalde geword het in hiedie KLEIN wêreld en dan begin jy net interact met mense wat in dieselfde situasie as jy is, wat DIESELFDE omgewing as jy is. En ek kan meer beteken as dit.
- 1d 04824 Ek sou tien teen een as ek gebly het waar ek was, in die industrie, sou ek tien teen een nou op 'n heeltemal ander loopbaanpad gewees het. Ek sou tien teen een 'n besigheidsvrou gewees het. Ek sou tien teen een baie gereis het
- 1d 08916 Ek voel net, jy gaan so verskriklik vinning in die KIND se lewe in amper (.8) gedissolve word en dit gaan alles later net oor die kind gaan en oor die skool en oor die huis.
- 1d 04824 Ek weet ook dat my finansiële bydra nie so erg gaan wees nie, maar dis nie vir my so belangrik nie.
- 1d 02818 Ek wil nie net (.6) ek wil nie net 'n job hê nie. Ek wil 'n career hê.
- 1d 01817 En dan is daar ook dokters wat half floreer op die feit dat hulle so werk en kan sê, oe, jy weet, ek het nou weer 100 uur gespoed.
- 1d 04824 En die gebrek aan status of die verlies aan status oor jy nie in die privaat-sektor is nie ...  
P4: Ook nie. Nee.  
R: Dit weeg ook nie vir jou so swaar soos die ander kant nie.  
P4: Die buigsaamheid nie, die tyd nie.
- 1d 01817 En dis iets waarvoor 'n ou die passie het, maar omdat jy net nie meer die kapasiteit het nie, is jy nou net moeg en wil jy dit nie meer doen nie.

- 1d 05019 En nou maak dit dit vir my moeilik want ek is in 'n sin bederf met my flexibility. Die oomblik wat ek nou na 'n nuwe werk gaan kyk, gaan ek nie kan vereis ek soek soveel dae by die huis
- 1d 02818 EN om in die game te bly. Om nie te verloor wat ek het nie.
- 1d 131014 Every day that you make through, every month – that alone is like a success.
- 1d 121012 For me those little rewards at the end of the day have meaning.
- 1d 07907 I am learning so much at the moment and it is just SO AMAZing to be able to help people and to add value to people's lives.
- 1d 10920 I don't think if I had stayed there I would have done the same level of work than I am doing now.  
R: Do you think you are doing a higher level of work now?  
P10: Definitely.
- 1d 131014 I see it as a success that every day that I am still able to come to these chambers and I'm getting through and I'm doing well.
- 1d 10920 I think I have managed now to find the balance between being a grown-up and having the adult stimulation and feeling that I'm contributing and that I am doing something worthwhile in the workplace, while at the same time being at home with my daughter for longer than I would be if I had to work full day.
- 1d 131014 I wouldn't want to be seen as less capable because I am taking time off to take care of my kids or take care of my family
- 1d 121012 I've got time to spend with my family, but work is still important.
- 1d 11921 If I could raise a good human I would have done well. That's enough actually.
- 1d 04824 In plaas van dat mense vir jou sal sê well done, sal hulle jou eerder betrek by nog goed (albei lag). Verstaan jy?  
R: Hulle gee eerder vir jou nog werk.  
P4: Presies, hulle gee eerder vir jou nog werk omdat hulle sien jy kan dit doen.
- 1d 121012 It also depends on you as a person – what's important to you.
- 1d 131014 It is great if others think you did a great job aswell, but ultimately it's about how YOU feel about it.
- 1d 11921 It's a big thing to be a mom and a wife and do well at that. It's HUGE. It's a huge part of what I define as being a success.

- 1d 131014 It's not really so much about how the other person receives it. So here I am able to really look at myself and say, 'you've done well'.
- 1d 131014 It's very difficult. It's a very male dominated area, so if you are able to achieve the little successes, it's worth it.
- 1d 04824 Ja, dis 'n lekker gevoel om capable te voel in jou omgewing. Ja, dis vir my belangrik
- 1d 01817 Ja, en ek dink dit raak soos 'n verslawing, of jy weet, wat met my gebeur het is mens raak gewoon daaraan om op 'n sekere vlak van spanning te funksioneer en as dit nie daar is nie weet mens nie eintlik (.8) wat om met jouself te doen nie
- 1d 08916 Ja, salaris is nou 'n negatiewe ding, maar dis nog steeds die moeite werd.
- 1d 05019 Ja, so ek hou terug, want ek sal nie nou kan cope daarmee om 8 tot 5 te werk nie. Dit beteken ek gaan 6 uur in die oggende moet ry, dit beteken ek sien my kind 'n uur 'n dag.
- 1d 04824 Kyk soms is dit moeilik uit 'n finansiële hoek uit, want ek WEET ek verdien minder as wat ek in industrie sou verdien het, ek weet dit, so SOMS dan sal ek dink, jitte maar, die finansiële komponent is nogal iets wat ek bietjie my kop om moet kry, soms, maar dan, aan die ander kant dan dink ek weer, nee ... dit wat ek in ruil kry, oortref dit.
- 1d 01817 Maar dan het mens nou die teenkant van nou is ek die hele dag by die huis, ek was wasgoed en ek maak huis skoon, en ek gaan van my KOP af, want ek voel, ek is (.8) 'n geleerde mens ...en nou sit ek by die huis en ek STRYK. Ek gaan 'n aar bars, ek kan nie! Ek was so depressief, ek het op daai bank gaan sit en ek bel my pa en ek huil en ek sê "Pappa... ek het nie 'n doel in die lewe nie ... boo hoo hoo!"
- 1d 04824 Maar dit hang ook af van jou prestasie, as jy jou nagraadse kwalifikasies goed doen ... so WEER kom dit neer daarop, jy bestuur jouself. Hier is eintlik net soveel meer druk. Jy weet, as jy jou Ph.D. nie het nie, kan jy nie vorentoe beweeg nie, jy kan nie bevordering kry nie. As jy nie publiseer nie, jy weet, daai tipe goed.
- 1d 04824 OmMIDdelik, omdat ek myself geposisioneer het as 'n sekere beroepsvrou in my huwelik, in my verhoudings met ander mense, is daar nou 'n sekere verwagting, daai is 'n sekere inkomste-verwagting
- 1d 121012 One day I got a Chomp (laughs). So whether it's the Chomp or the olives or the bottle of wine, it's just the thank you, that someone took the time to thank me - that makes a difference.

- 1d 121012 She asked if I would ever go back, would I ever consider it. And I felt flattered, but then I said to her, no. She said, 'but that was just a flat out no?' And I said, 'no, I can honestly not see myself in that environment anymore'
- 1d 11921 So I guess we do lose, because we're not being paid for overtime even though we are working at night, but I mean, if you look at the maths it is still worth it, actually.
- 1d 10920 So I'm feeling ... obviously there are times when there's guilt and pressure when there is a pressure deadline and she needs me or whatever, but I'm happy with the balance that we've managed to strike, because I feel fulfilled in both those roles.
- 1d 04824 So ja, daar is goed wat my partykeer 'n bietjie laat dink, maar oor die algemeen, sal ek NIKS verander nie
- 1d 10920 So no, I don't feel that I've been left behind in my career by any means. You know if you work in a traditional corporate structure it takes a very long time for you to reach the position where you feel 'this is what I really want to be doing', you know, your dream job. And as silly as it sounds I can genuinely say that I AM doing my dream job.
- 1d 01817 So om te werk is goed. Dis as mens OORwerk is, dan is mens nie 'n lekker mens nie.
- 1d 131014 so that is why I stick to my individual assessments of my performance and my measurements of success and if I feel that I've learnt from my experience, then it's success for me.
- 1d 11921 So this is a big compromise for both of us for me having time at work and having time at home. It is the best of both worlds.
- 1d 131014 So we tend to then look at each other and give a value or 'promote' people to where you would place this particular advocate or that one. That to me is not even a driving force, because I just want to be happy with my own work.
- 1d 04824 So, in terme van my loopbaan dink ek ek sou tien teen een verder gewees het ... miskien al in 'n bestuurspos gewees het in die industrie, waar hier, jy weet, ek is nou maar net ... ek is nou hier waar ek is.
- 1d 04824 Soos ek nou-nou genoem het, beloning is belangrik, maar ek sien nie beloning net as bevordering of finansieel nie.
- 1d 121012 Success for me is making a difference, plain and simple. Have I added value at the end of the day or am I just a hamster running this

wheel.

- 1d 04824 Sukses word totaal anders gemeet hier. Sukses is hier 'n gevoel, dis 'n selfverwesenlikheid. Terwyl in die industrie is sukses materieel.
- 1d 01817 Vir my persoonlik sal ek minder geld kry en eerder die tyd vat, maar dan net genoeg werk om darem die pot aan die kook te hou.
- 1d 04824 Waarteenoor, in die industrie of privatektor, as jy jou daaglikse werk goed doen, goed doen, goed doen, dan GAAN jy bevorder word.
- 1d 01817 Want dit is nou nie meer vir my lekker om 'n dokter te wees nie, is dit nogal (.8) sleg as jy nou op 'n punt voel vir die eerste keer in jou lewe, jissie, het ek nou die regte keuse gemaak om hierdie te doen?
- 1d 11921 We have had to look at it, because I mean obviously when you have more money you can do more things, travel more, you can have more things, bigger house, bigger whatever whatever, but we are not fancy people. I think that helps. We are who we are, we're very laid back.
- 1d 07907 Well, yes. So no, definitely, I would rather be on my own and suffer financially, but know that I am true to myself and I have the freedom to spend time on things that are important to me.
- 1d 10920 While now, here, there's stress, but I am also more motivated? There's also more perks in terms of autonomy on how I manage my time. If I want to go grocery shopping on a Wednesday morning, I CAN. If I want to spend the afternoon with my daughter, I CAN. That flexibility is COMPLETELY invaluable.
- 1d 121012 Yes, that's amazing, because it isn't quantified in terms of money. It's really in, I think, once again, the value of what you do. So if you want to do it for the money, you will quickly be weeded out of the system. So the people who are here, want to be here and they enjoy what they do.
- 1d 11921 Yes. I want to make a contribution. And it is important for me to grow to give more.
- 1d 121012 Yes. It's never going to be the money.
-