

**Exploring Teacher Experiences of Subjective Well-Being During a
Pandemic**

by

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SUPERVISOR: Dr Sarina De Jager

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation submitted for the Master's in Education (Humanities) degree at the University of Pretoria is my own work. I have not previously submitted work for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



Jamie Spies

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of subjective well-being held by South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teacher well-being during the pandemic is a growing priority in educational research. While South African studies primarily focus on teacher well-being in public schools, the research does not adequately represent private school teachers' experiences in the evidence base of prior and recent studies. This qualitative study employed an interpretative phenomenological research design, photovoice data, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interviews analysed through a systematic visuo-textual analysis and interpretive phenomenological analysis frameworks to conceptualise the experiences of eight teachers employed at private schools. The findings indicated that teachers experienced both a longing for connection and increased job demands. The teachers used various protective factors to cope with feelings of anxiety, frustration, and loneliness, such as quality time with family, gratitude, mindfulness, religious activities, and exercise. The study generated new insights into teacher well-being by utilising various creative research methods and providing a voice to an under-represented group. Recommendations include further research into the influence of teaching during a crisis and the integration of technology on teacher well-being.

Keywords: Lived experiences, photovoice, phenomenology, teacher, well-being

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

COVID-19	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DL	Distance learning
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IPA	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
ODL	Online and distance learning
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMT	School Management Team
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHO	World Health Organization

Table of Contents

Exploring Teacher Experiences of Subjective Well-Being During a Pandemic	i
Acknowledgements.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Certificate of Editing.....	vii
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	viii
Table of Contents.....	ix
List of Figures.....	xv
List of Tables	xvii
Chapter 1: Overview and Introduction of the Study	1
1.1 Introduction, Background, and Context	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	2
1.3 Rational and Motivation of the Study	4
1.3.1 Personal Motivation.....	4
1.3.2 Professional Motivation.....	5
1.3.3 Conceptual and Scholarly Motivation	6
1.3.4 Focus and Purpose of the Study	7
1.4 Research Question	7
1.5 Concept Clarification.....	7
1.6 Preliminary Review of the Literature	8
1.6.1 The COVID-19 Pandemic	8
1.6.2 Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	9
1.6.3 Teachers’ Subjective Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	12
1.7 Theoretical Framework	14
1.7.1 The PERMA+ model of flourish: Core theories and concepts.....	15
1.8 Methodological Overview.....	17
1.9 Research Paradigm.....	17

1.9.1 Relativist Ontological Stance	17
1.9.2 Subjectivist Epistemological Stance.....	18
1.10 Phenomenological Research Design	18
1.11 Research Methods	18
1.11.1 Research Sampling	19
1.11.2 Sampling Criteria.....	19
1.11.3 Sample Recruitment Process	19
1.12 Data Gathering Methods	20
1.12.1 Phase 1: Preparation – Training and Consent.....	20
1.12.2 Phase 2: Photovoice Data Gathering – Capture and Reflect	21
1.12.3 Phase 3: Semi-Structured Interviews.....	22
1.13 Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	24
1.13.1 Data Analysis Set 1 (Pictures and Narrative Reflections).....	24
1.13.2 Data Analysis Set 2 (Semi-Structured Interviews).....	25
1.13.3 Thematic Analysis of Data Sets 1 and 2.....	26
1.14 Conclusion.....	27
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	29
2.1 Introduction.....	29
2.2 Social Context.....	31
2.2.1 The global context created by the COVID-19 pandemic	31
2.2.2 South African Context Created by the COVID-19 Pandemic	33
2.2.3 The Socio-Economic Context Created by the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	35
2.2.4 Global Perspectives of Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic	38
2.3 Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	41
2.3.1 Global Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic	41
2.3.2 Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa	43
2.4 Teaching During a Pandemic	46

2.4.1 Changed Teacher Roles and Responsibilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic....	46
2.4.2 South African Teacher Roles and Responsibilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic	49
2.5 Teacher Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic	50
2.5.1 Teacher Burnout and Stress	50
2.5.2 Teacher Attrition.....	52
2.5.3 Teacher Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	53
2.6 Studying Teacher Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	56
2.7 Theoretical Framework	58
2.7.1 The PERMA+ Model of Flourish: Core Theories and Concepts	58
2.7.2 Theoretical Perspective.....	60
2.8 Conclusion.....	60
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	61
3.1 Introduction.....	61
3.2 Research Approach	61
3.3 Research Paradigm.....	63
3.3.1 The Nature and Use of a Research Paradigm	63
3.3.2 Applying the Social Constructivist Paradigm to This Study.....	63
3.4 Phenomenological Research Design	66
3.5 Research Methods	68
3.5.1 Data Gathering Methods.....	68
3.5.2 Research Sampling	73
3.6 Data Gathering Process	78
3.6.1 Phase 1: Preparation - Training and Consent	79
3.6.2 Phase 2: Photovoice Data Gathering – Capture and Reflect.....	81
3.6.3 Phase 3: Semi-structured Interviews	82
3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation.....	83

3.7.1 Data Set 1: Pictures and Narrative Reflections	84
3.7.2 Reflection Analysis (Textual Data)	93
3.7.2.1 Combining Visual and Textual Data.	93
3.7.2.2 Thematic Analysis of the Visual–Textual Analysis Findings of Each Participant.	93
3.7.3 Data Set 2: Semi-structured Interview Transcripts.....	94
3.7.4 Data Analysis Strategy	99
3.8 Quality Criteria	100
3.8.1 Trustworthiness	100
3.8.2 Credibility.....	101
3.8.3 Dependability.....	101
3.8.4 Confirmability	101
3.8.5 Transferability	102
3.9 Ethical considerations	102
3.9.1 Informed Consent	102
3.9.2 Voluntary Participation.....	103
3.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity	103
3.10 Anticipated Limitations	104
3.11 Conclusion	105
Chapter 4: Presentation Of Analysis Of Data Set 1	106
4.1 Introduction	106
4.2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis	107
4.2.1 Participant 1	107
4.2.2 Participant 2.....	121
4.2.3 Participant 3.....	131
4.2.4 Participant 4.....	144
4.2.5 Participant 5.....	153

4.2.6 Participant 6.....	163
4.2.7 Participant 7.....	172
4.2.8 Participant 8.....	182
4.3 Thematic Analysis of Visuo-Textual Analysis Findings of Each Participant.....	191
4.3.1 Participant 1.....	191
4.3.2 Participant 2.....	193
4.3.3 Participant 3.....	194
4.3.4 Participant 4.....	198
4.3.5 Participant 5.....	200
4.3.6 Participant 6.....	203
4.3.7 Participant 7.....	204
4.3.8 Participant 8.....	205
4.4 Findings of data set 1.....	206
4.4.1 Theme 1: Isolation and Uncertainty.....	207
4.4.2 Theme 2: Teaching During the Pandemic.....	209
4.4.3 Theme 3: Sources of Improved Well-Being.....	211
4.5 Conclusion.....	211
Chapter 5: Presentation Of Analysis Data Set 2.....	212
5.1 Introduction.....	212
5.2 Findings of Data Set 2.....	212
5.2.1. Theme 1: Longing for Connection.....	212
5.2.2 Theme 2: Increased Job Demands.....	214
5.2.3 Theme 3: Work Overload, Stress and Burnout.....	221
5.2.4 Theme 4: Factors That Improved Well-Being During the Pandemic.....	222
5.5 Conclusion.....	226
Chapter 6: Findings.....	227
6.1 Introduction.....	227

6.2 Discussion of the Findings	229
6.2.1 Theme 1: Longing for Connection	229
6.2.2 Theme 2: Increased Job Demands	238
6.2.3 Theme 3: Resilience and Protective Factors.....	247
6.3 Conclusion.....	249
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	252
7.1 Introduction	252
7.2 Review of the Study	253
7.3 Research Question Conclusion.....	254
7.3.1 Longing for Connection.....	256
7.3.2 Increased Job Demands	256
7.3.3 Resilience and Protective Factors.....	257
7.4 Methodological Reflections	258
7.4.1 Data Gathering Strategy	258
7.4.2 Data Analysis Strategy	258
7.4.3 Limitations.....	259
7.5 Recommendations, Improvements, and Implications	259
7.5.1 Educational Policy and Practice	259
7.5.2 Recommendation for Future Research	262
7.6 Personal and Professional Reflections on the Study	263
7.7 Contribution of the Study	264
7.8 Conclusion.....	266
References.....	267
Appendices.....	323

List of Figures

Figure 1. 1: Outline of the study	28
Figure 2. 1: PERMA+ model of flourish	59
Figure 3. 1: Sample recruitment process.....	77
Figure 3. 2: Picture and reflection example for participant	80
Figure 3. 3: Three-step systematic framework of noticing and describing pictures	90
Figure 3. 4: Data analysis strategy	99
Figure 4. 1: Analysis of data set 1.....	106
Figure 4. 2: Data set 1 analysis phases	107
Figure 4. 3: Art piece	107
Figure 4. 4: Portrait of wife.....	112
Figure 4. 5: Man’s search for meaning	115
Figure 4. 6: Working in the garden.....	118
Figure 4. 7: Birth of a baby.....	121
Figure 4. 8: Teaching from home	123
Figure 4. 9: Kahoot	126
Figure 4. 10: Picture of shoes	129
Figure 4. 11: Benefits of setting boundaries	131
Figure 4. 12: Family.....	135
Figure 4. 13: Netflix.....	137
Figure 4. 14: Picture of two figures where one is talking.....	140
Figure 4. 15: Current balance.....	142
Figure 4. 16: Be still and know I am God.....	144
Figure 4. 17: Blessings during the lockdown.....	147
Figure 4. 18: Berry and Rosie	149
Figure 4. 19: He is risen.....	151
Figure 4. 20: Minions.....	153
Figure 4. 21: Comfortable working environment	156
Figure 4. 22: Science week	159
Figure 4. 23: The integrated classroom.....	161
Figure 4. 24: Running on empty	163

Figure 4. 25: Absurd times call for absurd amounts of love.....	165
Figure 4. 26: Lockdown life.....	168
Figure 4. 27: My everything	170
Figure 4. 28: Personal growth.....	172
Figure 4. 29: The stables.....	174
Figure 4. 30: Family helping us heal	177
Figure 4. 31: Married just before COVID-19	179
Figure 4. 32: The world was suddenly cold.....	182
Figure 4. 33: Work was never-ending.....	184
Figure 4. 34: Dominoes.....	186
Figure 4. 35: The world was empty	188
Figure 5. 1: The private school teachers' experiences of subjective well-being	255

List of Tables

Table 1. 1: Systematic visuo-textual analysis framework (Brown & Collins, 2021)	24
Table 3. 1: Sample criteria	75
Table 3. 2: Systematic visuo-textual analysis framework (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	85
Table 3. 3: Adapted systematic visuo-textual analysis framework (from Brown & Collins, 2021)	86
Table 4. 1: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	108
Table 4. 2: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	112
Table 4. 3: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	115
Table 4. 4: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	118
Table 4. 5: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	121
Table 4. 6: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	124
Table 4. 7: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	126
Table 4. 8: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	129
Table 4. 9: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	131
Table 4. 10: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	135
Table 4. 11: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	138
Table 4. 12: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	140
Table 4. 13: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 5	143
Table 4. 14: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	145
Table 4. 15: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	147
Table 4. 16: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	149
Table 4. 17: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	152
Table 4. 18: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	154
Table 4. 19: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	156
Table 4. 20: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	159
Table 4. 21: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	161
Table 4. 22: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	163
Table 4. 23: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	166
Table 4. 24: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	168
Table 4. 25: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	171
Table 4. 26: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	173

Table 4. 27: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	175
Table 4. 28: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	177
Table 4. 29: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	180
Table 4. 30: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1	182
Table 4. 31: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2	185
Table 4. 32: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3	186
Table 4. 33: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4	188
Table 4. 34: Participant 1 – Figures 4. 3 to 4. 6.....	192
Table 4. 35: Participant 2 – Figures 4. 7 to 4. 10.....	194
Table 4. 36: Participant 3 – Figures 4. 11 to 4. 15.....	195
Table 4. 37: Participant 4 – Figures 4. 16 to 4. 19.....	199
Table 4. 38: Participant 5 – Figures 4. 20 to 4. 23.....	201
Table 4. 39: Participant 6 – Figures 4. 24 to 4. 27.....	203
Table 4. 40: Participant 7 – Figures 4. 28 to 4. 31.....	204
Table 4. 41: Participant 8 – Figures 4. 32 to 4. 35.....	206
Table 6. 1: Themes.....	228
Table 7. 1: Study Outline.....	252

Chapter 1: Overview and Introduction of the Study

1.1 Introduction, Background, and Context

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2, COVID-19, a global pandemic (Armstrong et al., 2018; Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020; Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2020). Since the unexpected outbreak, humanity's efforts to contain the spread has affected various dimensions of the economy and society, leaving global enterprises, labour markets, and educational sectors in a state of disaster (Keevy et al., 2021). Since 2020, nearly 6 451 016 people worldwide, including over 102 066 South African citizens, have died from the virus (World Health Organization, 2022).

Over the next three years (2020–2022), the pandemic and the situational context created by restrictions and the availability of vaccines led to the birth of various movements such as the “anti-vaxx” and “anti-mask” movements (Iwai et al., 2021). The economy also suffered due to the “great resignation”, in which many individuals resigned from their jobs (Ellerbeck, 2022). The mental health of individuals across the globe took strain as isolation periods known as “lockdowns” forced many citizens to stay at home. Along with other sectors across the globe, the education sector faced significant challenges such as loss of learning time, up-skilling employees, and accommodating pupils as a result of the lockdown periods.

As aligned with Goal 4 on quality education of the Sustainability Development Goals for Education 2030, educational systems should engage and respond to changing labour markets and technological advances to ensure peace and safety in times of distress (Agbedahin, 2019). In March 2020, the South African government implemented a national lockdown which lasted until 28 June 2020. This lockdown formed part of South Africa's approach to combatting the spread of the virus and had a tremendous impact on the South African schooling system (Mahaye, 2020). From the start of the level approach of March 2020, schools had to change their didactical strategies on multiple occasions depending on the national restrictions implemented at the time (Keevy et al., 2021). The guideline that had the most dramatic effect on the schooling system was the implementation of the restriction on individuals, including teachers, learners, and other staff, being allowed into the physical school environment (Keevy et al., 2021). To reduce contact between individuals, learners and teachers had to stay home for periods during the pandemic. Depending on each school's resources and socio-economic status, efforts to continue teaching and learning during this challenging time varied. Some schools addressed the barrier of restricted contact teaching by implementing online and distance

learning (ODL). In South Africa, some private schools were more likely to integrate these strategies as they had resources and school communities with access to technology (Pillay, 2019; Mahaye, 2020; Keevy et al., 2021). While these strategies reduced learning loss, they also meant that the teachers working at private schools faced more responsibilities (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020).

Consequently, private school teachers pivoted to online teaching, while public schools experienced a lack of resources to swiftly implement online learning, such as devices and training to implement online learning practices. Private school teachers were more pressured to implement online learning as their school communities are privately funded and have more digital resources. These interventions affected teachers' operational functioning, job roles, and professional responsibilities (Asburya & Kim, 2020).

Globally, many workforces experienced a similar change in their professional identities as a result of the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, and much research exists to suggest that the pandemic had a definite impact on the well-being of employees (Allen, Jerrim & Sims, 2020; Fancourt et al., 2020). Within this body of data, Dabrowski (2021) argues that few studies have focused on exploring teachers' experiences, perspectives, and meanings regarding their subjective well-being and mental health while experiencing changed job roles during the pandemic.

While scholars such as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), Soudien et al. (2021), and Collie et al. (2020) focused on teachers' subjective well-being in the international arena, scholars such as Mdluli et al. (2020) investigated the topic in South Africa by focusing on teachers who were employed at South African public schools. Research regarding the population of South African private school teachers' experiences of subjective well-being is under-represented in studies focusing on this topic during the pandemic. Therefore, this phenomenological study used creative research methods to explore the lived experiences of well-being of South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 Problem Statement

At the outbreak of COVID-19, the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) implemented health and safety protocols to minimise the spread of the virus in schools (Keevy et al., 2021). The first of many protocols included the temporary closure of South African schools on 18 March 2020 (Independent School Association of Southern Africa, 2022; South

African Government, 2022a). School closures led to a tremendous loss of contact teaching time as learners and teachers could not attend the physical school environment until 1 June 2020 (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). In response to this crisis, South African schools developed strategies to continue teaching and learning while facing various context-specific obstacles (Keevy et al., 2021; Le Grange, 2020). In the early stages of the pandemic, private schools followed the same strategy as education sectors across the globe by implementing ODL to solve the issue of learning loss (Sari & Nayir, 2020).

During March and April 2020, private school teachers were responsible for learning about, developing, and readying to implement information communication technologies (ICT) and ODL pedagogies in May 2020. Schools had to consider learner needs, curriculum adjustments, and school calendars (Keevy et al., 2021). Implementing these technologies meant that teachers had to learn how to develop digital resources and use online platforms such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom to teach from home (Sari & Nayir, 2020; Bergdahl & Nouri, 2021; Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020). As a result, private school teachers began teaching online in May 2020 through video calls, which required technical skills, a stable internet connection, and other resources such as power, headphones, and digital cameras. Adapting to this new teaching and learning mode posed a tremendous challenge considering the digital divide in South African schools. As is evident in past literature, not all private school stakeholders had access to ICT resources to enable ODL (Furuholt & Kristiansen, 2007; Brown & Czerniewicz, 2010; Li & Ranieri, 2013).

In June 2020, teachers gradually returned to the physical school environment but faced new challenges. Among many other tasks, teachers had to warrant the safety of their learners by enforcing new social distancing rules, mask-wearing, and sanitisation protocols to prohibit the spread of the airborne virus in the school environment (Dano, 2021). Returning to school meant that teachers had to adapt their teaching pedagogies to conduct lessons simultaneously online and, in the classroom, (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020; Mahaye, 2020). As frontline workers, teachers also faced pressure from the public and school management teams (SMTs) to get vaccinated (Dube, 2020), and they might have faced other personal stressors at home, such as income shock (Donnelly & Farina, 2021). Their social environments changed entirely as their job demands, social interactions with colleagues, new requirements to function in the classroom safely, and adapted pedagogies changed (Williamson et al., 2020).

While scholars such as Sokal et al. (2020) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) have questioned the consequences of the challenges of the pandemic on teachers, minimal research has addressed this topic by looking at the lived experiences of South African teachers. This gap in research is alarming considering that various researchers found that teachers work in a profession where they already experienced high levels of occupational burnout, stress, and emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion prior to the pandemic (Hattie & Yates, 2013; Kim et al., 2020; Lazarević, 2019). While there is a need for further exploration into the consequences of the pandemic on teacher well-being, some small survey studies such as that conducted by Hess (2021) found that one out of four teachers in a Facebook group named “Teaching during COVID-19”, which had over 134 500 members, considered leaving the profession during the pandemic (Hess, 2021). Teachers’ dissatisfaction with their profession could not have surged at a worse time as a looming teacher shortage was evident in schools across the globe long before the pandemic. A report published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) showed that the world will need 69 million newly employed teachers by 2030 (Rose & Alcott, 2016). Exploration into the experiences of teachers’ subjective well-being during the pandemic may reveal a more profound understanding of new factors that may have influenced teachers’ motivations to consider either leaving the profession or remaining resilient in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak amid new working circumstances (Dabrowski, 2021; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021; Lemov, 2020).

Regardless, a gap in research that focused on South African teachers’ lived experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic exists. This gap limits our understanding of the contribution of new experiences influencing teachers’ satisfaction in their profession. Hence, this study explored the perceptions and perspectives held by South African teachers of their lived experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 Rational and Motivation of the Study

1.3.1 Personal Motivation

I am a teacher working at a private school in South Africa. During the pandemic, I lived through the implementation of ODL and a changing educational environment with its new safety protocols such as temperature scanning, mask-wearing, social distancing, and sanitisation of the school environment. As a result of the pandemic, I learnt new skills to function in my profession, such as online teaching and assessing with new technologies. I faced various

stressors, such as adapting the curriculum to catch up on lost learning time and helping colleagues, learners, and parents to use ICT.

Consequently, I noticed that the roles and responsibilities of the other teachers and I shifted dramatically. While some of my colleagues remained resilient in adapting to this new context, others faced burnout, decided to resign, or experienced increased nervousness as a result of the tremendous pressure from parents, learners, colleagues, and management teams to perform as a teacher in the face of a pandemic outbreak. As with many of my colleagues, I found that teaching during the pandemic increased my anxiety and stress levels, significantly influencing my physical and mental health. Furthermore, I felt alone in my experience. With few studies investigating teachers' subjective well-being during the pandemic generally, I found that there was minimal understanding of how the pandemic shaped the experienced of others working in the profession, and I could not find studies exploring the well-being of South African private school teachers while adapting to this challenging time.

I was curious to understand if my experiences of struggling to adapt to the circumstances were subjective or if a more significant issue regarding the experiences of other private school teachers existed. I also wanted to fill a research gap by providing a voice to private school teachers whose perspectives are under-represented in recent literature. Hence, this study explored the subjective well-being of teachers to understand the essence of their experiences. I addressed this research gap through the lens of a phenomenological research design by looking at teachers' lived experiences through pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interview data.

1.3.2 Professional Motivation

I worked as a teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic and noted the dramatic influence of the pandemic on teachers' daily functioning during this time. As a teacher, I believe that the health and safety protocols that protected individuals in the schooling system have affected teacher roles and responsibilities. Professionally, I was curious to understand what experiences teachers may have gained whilst teaching during the pandemic in terms of well-being. Scholars such as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) investigated teachers' perspectives on their new job demands during the pandemic and their influence on the well-being of 262 Norwegian high school teachers. Their study found that the teachers experienced emotional exhaustion and depleted motivation owing to their changed professional functioning (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). Professionally, I wondered what South African teachers experienced concerning aspects

such as new job demands and well-being in the South African context. Data based on their experiences may reveal new insights into new job roles, responsibilities, and the identities of teachers while revealing strategies that teachers used to adapt to teaching requirements during this challenging time. Exploration of this topic may also identify necessary skills and occupational competencies needed by the next generation of teachers, hence, identifying the skills and development opportunities that teachers need to engage in to be ready for the future of education in South Africa.

1.3.3 Conceptual and Scholarly Motivation

During the lockdown, I noticed the emergence of new international data regarding teachers' stress, burnout, and attrition after the pandemic's latter effects (Diliberti et al., 2021). Before the pandemic, I believed that teacher resilience had been an understudied issue of great concern in the international context. Scholars had addressed this topic by perceiving teacher resilience in two postcolonial countries in the southern hemisphere, that is, South Africa and Australia (Wosnitza et al., 2018). In their study, Mansfield et al. (2018) found that teacher resilience is a state which develops through the presence of adaptive strategies sourced through the utilisation of (1) personal resources such as optimism, perseverance, and motivation; and (2) professional resources such as relational support and problem-solving (Mansfield et al., 2018; Wosnitza et al., 2018). Regardless of the economic context, the study found that these protective resources buffer against the high risks affecting teachers (Mansfield et al., 2018). Identifying and exploring these protective resources that help teachers thrive rather than survive in their profession was imperative, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Flores (2018), there is a scarcity of studies investigating teacher resilience. Therefore, research needs more perspectives to understand how teachers remain effective and sustain their motivation and commitment to the profession in times of change (Flores, 2018).

As a qualitative scholar interested in teachers' experiences, exploring teachers' subjective well-being is imperative. With the altered educational context of the pandemic, exploring experiences and meanings held by teachers who remained in the profession regardless of the circumstances posed by the pandemic was necessary. By establishing an in-depth understanding of these perspectives and perceptions, I believed that further research could add to the literature on the topic from a positive perspective. There is a formidable gap in the literature regarding South African teachers' well-being as influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. With research focusing primarily on the teaching and learning routine, online

teaching and learning curriculum technologies, learner and parent experiences of learning at home, access to education, and virtual learning, there is minimal focus on the impact of the pandemic on teachers' subjective well-being (Keevy et al., 2021). Hence, exploring this topic was important to me.

1.3.4 Focus and Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study explored the subjective well-being experiences of South African private school teachers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic using a phenomenological research design incorporating photovoice research methods, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interview data sources. I perceived this topic through the theoretical lens of Seligman's PERMA+ model of flourish. It was imperative to explore teacher experiences of subjective well-being as there was a gap in the research focusing on the perspectives of the under-represented population of South African private school teachers. Exploring this topic revealed deeper insight into the lived experiences of these teachers.

1.4 Research Question

Designing an appropriate research question was critical to exploring the lived experiences of subjective well-being of South African private school teachers. This study followed an inductive approach. Hence, I found it appropriate to develop one research question.

What were private school teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.5 Concept Clarification

The study used the following concepts which are relevant in the South African educational research sphere.

- (1) **Subjective well-being.** I believe that subjective well-being is a holistic concept that encompasses happiness in various deferring dimensions of the self. In this study, I used Seligman's adapted PERMA+ model of flourish as it provides an almost identical definition of subjective well-being as I perceive it. The PERMA+ model of flourish consists of the interpretations of one's subjective well-being relating to the dimensions of one's positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, optimism, physical activity, sleep, and nutrition (Kern et al., 2015; Seligman, 2018; Iasiello et al., 2017). The assumptions of this positive psychology model represent the

idea that strengthening “positive” attributes in an individual contributes to their subjective well-being (Seligman, 2013). I do not recognise PERMA+ as forced optimistic thinking, as critiqued by many others (Bury et al., 2019), but more as a theoretical lens through which I perceived well-being while conducting this study.

- (2) **COVID-19.** According to the WHO (2020), COVID-19 is an infectious respiratory disease spread by human contact. People infected with the virus experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and mostly recover without special treatment. Older people and individuals with underlying medical challenges like “cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer” are more likely to develop severe illnesses (Himmelfarb, 2020, p. 1; Bansal, 2020; Elkind et al., 2020).
- (3) **Pandemic.** A pandemic is an “epidemic occurring worldwide crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people” (Feinleib, 2001, p. 93).
- (4) **Experiences.** Lived experience represents an individual’s experiences and choices from which they gain knowledge in situations encompassing their lived experiences (Given, 2008).

1.6 Preliminary Review of the Literature

According to Cronin et al. (2008, p. 38), a literature review is an “objective, thorough summary and critical analysis” of the literature on a research topic. This qualitative study explored South African teachers’ experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the following literature review will discuss a subset of the literature around the themes of the COVID-19 pandemic, subjective well-being, and teacher well-being by presenting insightful readings, discourses, and trends in the field.

1.6.1 The COVID-19 Pandemic

On 11 March 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak to be a global pandemic (Lone & Ahmad, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020). COVID-19, otherwise known as severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-COV-2), originated in December 2019 in Wuhan in China’s Hubei province (Armstrong et al., 2018; Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2020). The WHO classifies COVID-19 as zoonotic, meaning that the virus originated within animals and spread through human-to-human transmission (Morawska & Milton, 2020). COVID-19 and its variants are transmitted through respiratory microdroplets produced by a cough, sneeze, or

exhale at a short distance of 1,5 metres (Morawska & Milton, 2020). Since the outbreak in 2020, eight notable COVID-19 variants have made their rounds globally. While humanity made many efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, the characteristics of the virus and the social nature of human interaction allowed the virus to spread to every country across the globe.

Governmental systems implemented emergency strategies in 2020, 2021, and 2022 to diminish the impact of the pandemic. Mainly these strategies consisted of the worldwide implementation of health and safety measures developed by the WHO in March 2020, including the compulsory wearing of face masks, adherence to social distancing guidelines, and compulsory sanitisation of hands and surfaces by the public (Jee, 2020). Among these regulations, isolation upon possible infection or contact with infected individuals caused the most significant disruptions globally. Each nation determined its strategy to implement these regulations and later, from 2020 onwards, made COVID-19 vaccines such as the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Oxford-AstraZeneca, and Janssen available to their citizens (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). Regardless of the availability of vaccines, the pandemic led to many fatalities across the globe. By May 2021, nearly 3,27 million people had died from the COVID-19 novel coronavirus (World Health Organization, 2022).

While the rate of fatalities influenced many societies globally, the pandemic also had socio-economic consequences. Internationally, the outbreak of COVID-19 and the implementation of restrictions caused a global recession in 2020 (Sulkowski, 2019). At the start of the pandemic, the economy suffered due to decreased spending, which led to businesses closing down and job losses (Mankiw, 2020; McKibbin & Fernando, 2021). The primary health and safety restrictions that led to this economic catastrophe was the implementation of community isolation periods, otherwise known as lockdowns, which referred to the process by which a government forced its citizens to stay in their homes for a particular duration to avoid human-to-human contact which leads to COVID-19 infection (Mankiw, 2020; McKibbin & Fernando, 2021). Governments implemented lockdowns at the start of the pandemic and continued to do so when there were high infection levels in particular areas. While isolation periods helped lower infection rates, implementing lockdowns led to disruptions in various sectors of society, such as education.

1.6.2 Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Isolation periods led to the temporary closure of universities and schools, among other educational institutions. Consequently, 102 countries temporarily closed their schools at the

start of 2020 (Schleicher, 2020). School closures affected nearly 63 million secondary and primary school teachers, 1,5 billion students, and 70 per cent of the global student population in 2020 (Hatefi et al., 2020). Temporary school closures led to a tremendous loss of learning, as learners and teachers, among other school and university stakeholders, could not operate the physical school environment. In response, education sectors had to adapt their calendars and curriculum planning to find new strategies to solve the issue of learning loss (Dube, 2020).

Evidence suggests that most higher learning institutions implemented remote and online learning during the pandemic. According to a survey focusing on 109 higher learning institutions conducted by Marinoni et al. (2020), two-thirds of higher education institutions resorted to ODL at the start of the pandemic. While not all countries had the resources or infrastructure to implement ODL, many schools across the globe did implement this strategy (Asburya & Kim, 2020; Keevy et al., 2021), which helped them to continue with teaching and learning. It also highlighted the existence of a digital divide and inequality in education among countries, as schools in more vulnerable countries did not necessarily have access to digital resources (Palmer et al., 2021). These inequalities also existed in country-specific education sectors due to socio-economic differences in communities and the different types of schools.

In South Africa, ODL implementation highlighted inequalities in the country's education system. The South African schooling system consists of three types of schools, namely (1) public or government schools; (2) independent or private schools; and (3) ex-model C schools (Booyse, 2011). Public schools are usually situated in quintiles one or two, representing the schools that cater to economically disadvantaged learners (White & Van Dyk, 2019). Public schools are primarily situated in rural areas and lack resources in the surrounding schooling community (Hoadley, 2017). This means that the families of learners in the community may or may not have had access to resources such as technology, electricity, internet connectivity, or transport (World Bank Group, 2018). Ex-model C schools are schools that receive a subsidy from the government (Booyse, 2011). Ex-model C schools fall into quintiles two and three (White & Van Dyk, 2019). The communities surrounding ex-model C schools have access to a range of resources depending on their differing economic statuses. Independent schools, otherwise known as private schools, are owned and managed by trusts or non-profit organisations (Adewusi, 2021). Private schools range from having fundamental to excellent facilities. These schools' are usually located in wealthy communities and are allocated as quintile four or five schools (White & Van Dyk, 2019). In March 2020, all South African

schools had to close temporarily. Each type of school followed a different strategy regarding curriculum adaptation, pedagogy change, and how they provided lessons to their learners during this time of temporary closure.

Education could continue in those schools with sufficient resources but had to halt in the majority of schools based in rural areas, leading to inequalities in learning disruption, funding, job losses, learning facilities, and opportunities, among other things (Alsayed et al., 2020). Public schools based in rural areas were less likely to continue ODL due to a lack or unavailability of infrastructure, electricity, electronic tools, and qualified teachers (Dube, 2020). By contrast, most private schools had the electronic resources to continue ODL (Pillay, 2019; Mahaye, 2020; Keevy et al., 2021). Consequently, the teachers employed at private schools faced various new responsibilities and job demands.

During the temporary closure, teachers faced different challenges depending on the type of school at which they had been employed (Le Grange, 2020). Teachers at private schools faced the challenge of having to quickly develop online learning systems in a matter of weeks, which meant that these teachers had to learn technology-based skills, design online resources and curriculums, and adapt to new ways of teaching (Mhlanga & Moloji, 2020). Private school teachers had to learn new skills to use technology to teach regardless of their background and training, which consequently influenced their job roles and responsibilities (Almetwazi et al., 2020). Implementing ODL included integrating ICT to conduct online lessons by integrating apps into their teaching (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2021). Implementing ODL was the first significant responsibility faced by private school teachers at the start of the pandemic. As they were forced to isolate at home, private school teachers had to quickly learn how to use digital platforms such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams, and they needed resources such as a stable internet connection, headphones, and a laptop or computer that could run live video. While implementing ODL had the most significant impact on the job demands of these teachers at the beginning of the pandemic, they also experienced changed responsibilities when returning to school. Returning to school in June 2020 meant that teachers had to adjust to a new teaching environment, including mask-wearing while teaching, sanitisation procedures, screening protocols, and adaptation to a COVID-19-friendly educational environment. Adjusting to new job demands may have influenced the well-being of these private school teachers, considering that they were already situated in a profession with high levels of burnout and stress before the pandemic (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

1.6.3 Teachers' Subjective Well-Being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Various scholars have looked at how factors such as changed job function, societal norms, or the threat of the health crisis caused by the pandemic may have influenced the well-being of individuals across the globe (Allen, Jerrim & Sims, 2020; Fancourt et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2020). Globally, a leading perspective is that the threat of a natural disaster has harmed the subjective mental well-being of individuals (Paredes et al., 2021; Ford et al., 2020). Some researchers believe this results from a change in the interconnectedness of societies (Mazzocchi, 2021). The psychological reaction to this change is characterised by its duality (Valentyn et al., 2020). First, the pandemic may have caused a possible threat of danger and destruction to the individual's identity and their functional role in society (Valentyn et al., 2020). Secondly, members of the public may have reverted to being brave and resilient to combat the threat of the situation, resulting in the development of skills related to stress management (Valentyn et al., 2020). Understanding how individuals in different professions reacted to the pandemic provides clarity regarding its influence on their well-being.

Globally, many schools and scholars prioritised how adapting to new job demands influenced the well-being of teachers during the pandemic. The Global Education Initiative, Harvard University, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducted a study titled, "Education priorities in response to a crisis". They gathered responses from 98 countries and found that teacher well-being ranked as the third most important priority to consider during a crisis such as COVID-19 (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). While schools and scholars considered the understanding of teacher well-being to be a priority during the pandemic, the study of well-being is a topic that can be perceived from different theoretical perspectives, as evidenced in past studies.

Before the pandemic, research on teacher well-being focused on different subtopics. In past literature, scholars prioritised teacher well-being by considering the impact of numerous job demands and resources. Scholars focused on teacher well-being by studying the impact of workload and other cognitive demands (Philipp & Kunter, 2013), organisational change (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007), behavioural problems of learners (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007), distributions in class and emotional demands (Philipp & Kunter, 2013), class size (Rudow, 1999), and physical work environment, burnout and stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Past studies also focused on resources that improved teacher well-being, including instructional leadership (Seobi & Wood, 2016); social support, autonomy, supervisory coaching, optimism,

and self-efficiency (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007); coping strategies (Aulén et al., 2021); beliefs about social and emotional learning (Collie et al., 2015); and teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and educational governance (Hascher & Waber, 2021; Duckworth et al., 2009; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

Various scholars focused on studying how the situational context affected teacher well-being during the pandemic. Scholars such as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), Soudien et al. (2021), and Trinidad (2021) studied the adverse effects of the pandemic on teacher mental health by exploring topics such as teacher burnout, stress, attrition, and turnover. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) found that Norwegian teachers felt emotionally exhausted, overwhelmed due to increased job demands, and had lowered motivation. Soudien et al. (2021) found that teacher attrition may have increased during the pandemic, while Trinidad (2021) argued that researchers need to investigate teacher attrition concerning increased stress and burnout caused by the pandemic. By contrast, other scholars such as Dabrowski (2021) focused on understanding if teachers thrived or survived during the pandemic, leading the way to understanding factors contributing to teacher resilience.

Scholars such as Collie et al. (2020) focused on understanding the factors that motivated teachers during the pandemic. They conducted a study focusing on the perspectives of 6 411 teachers from 369 schools in Australia and 2 400 teachers from 154 schools in England (Collie et al., 2020). They found that higher levels of job satisfaction and occupational commitment were associated with teacher collaboration, input and decision-making, and self-efficacy during the pandemic (Collie et al., 2020). Strategies to sustain teacher well-being during the pandemic included social support, detaching from work, and engaging in mindfulness activities (Collie et al., 2020). Another study focusing on 12 955 teachers from 827 schools in Australia, Canada, England, and the United States found empowerment and autonomy opportunities such as helpful feedback and decision-making beneficial (Collie, 2021b). Collie (2021b) also found that disruptive student behaviour is associated with decreased commitment to their occupation. When considering the impact of the pandemic on teachers internationally, it is also imperative to consider the studies conducted in the South African context regarding teacher well-being before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before COVID-19, it was apparent that South African teachers were in a profession with high levels of occupational stress and exhaustion (Hattie & Yates, 2013; Kim et al., 2020; Lazarević, 2019). In a systematic review focused on understanding the causes of teacher burnout, the

findings indicated that aspects such as interactions with stakeholders in the educational environment, work overload, and the upkeep of professional skill development generated a build-up of stress and tension that often led to the likelihood of burnout syndrome (González-Valero et al., 2020). According to Mdluli et al. (2020), South African teachers also experienced an increased workload and emotional distress due to more responsibilities as teachers during the pandemic resulting in a compromised work ethic. Hence, research into teacher well-being as influenced by the pandemic may reveal insightful data which could add to a more current understanding of teacher well-being in South Africa.

When examining the literature on teacher well-being during the pandemic in South Africa, it is imperative to consider that teachers functioning in public schools had experiences at the start of the pandemic that were different from those of private school teachers who had to commence online learning. Mdluli et al. (2020, p. 1) found that primary school teachers in Eswatini, South Africa, exhibited occupational stress and emotional strain through absenteeism, headaches, anger, and aggression directed towards learners and other stakeholders.

By contrast, minimal research has focused on the well-being of South African private school teachers, which leaves a formidable gap in research. While private schools had more resources to continue with online learning, the teachers employed at these schools faced similar challenges to those in public schools in adapting to the new safety regulations such as mask-wearing and sanitisation. What made the responsibilities of private school teachers different was the integration of ODL. Despite the tremendous amount of work involved, private school teachers had to implement ODL and minimal studies have focused on their well-being. Hence, their experiences of subjective well-being are under-represented in educational research. Therefore, this research study fills this gap by exploring the lived experiences of subjective well-being of South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework delivers a lens through which one may comprehend a phenomenon through the in-depth discussion of the pertinent concepts, assumptions, discourses, and theories connected to the research question and field (Cohen et al., 2018). The PERMA+ model of flourish is a relevant theory that addresses subjective well-being using a comprehensive approach. I used this model as the theoretical lens to define teacher well-being in this study. Several studies have applied the model in well-being research, especially those in the field of positive education. According to the South Australian Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)

(2017), the PERMA+ model of flourish, which links to the field of positive psychology, provides a practical approach to understanding and developing the well-being of individuals (Iasiello et al., 2017). This model's assumptions signify that the strengthening of "positive" attributes in an individual contributes to their subjective well-being (Seligman, 2013). The original PERMA model of flourish was adapted by SAHMRI in 2017 and renamed the PERMA+ model of flourish (Iasiello et al., 2017). Researchers have applied the original PERMA model to various phenomena and contexts globally, especially in the South African sphere (Redelinghuys, 2016; Turner & Theilking, 2019; Wessels & Wood, 2019). The application of this model has been quite successful in numerous studies due to the multidimensional perspective that the model provides to researchers investigating and defining subjective well-being in the educational context (Lai et al., 2018). Hence, SAHMRI adapted the model in 2017 by adding additional dimensions to utilise these benefits while perceiving subjective well-being from a holistic perspective.

1.7.1 The PERMA+ model of flourish: Core theories and concepts

Seligman's original PERMA model of flourish defines the concept of subjective well-being by considering an individual's experience of: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Lyubomirsky, 2011; Seligman, 2018). These dimensions may contribute to one's well-being, defined exclusively and measured subjectively (Seligman, 2013). SAHMRI (2017) built on Seligman's theory by adding the following components: optimism, physical activity, nutrition, and sleep (Iasiello et al., 2017). Positive emotion is a concept that considers the hedonistic feelings of happiness in the individual (Seligman, 2013). One identifies positive emotions when an individual feels positive emotions such as joy, cheer, or content (Kern et al., 2015). Optimism integrates with the concept of positive emotions. It is the acceptance that one will experience virtuous results in different situations in life (Scheier & Carver, 1992). Optimistic individuals tend to be more resilient to stressful life events (Carver et al., 2010).

Engagement refers to an individual's psychological connection to an exact aspect of their life (Seligman, 2013). This concept refers to being in a state of flow (Seligman, 2013). One may experience flow when matching one's most significant life or job-related challenge to one's highest strengths. Feelings such as interest in activities may be an appropriate example of this dimension (Kern et al., 2015). Positive relationships refer to one's subjective experience of social relationships as affected by social connectedness, such as the extent to which an

individual may feel accepted, appreciated, cared for, or supported by others in their social group (Kern et al., 2015; Seligman, 2013). Meaning refers to one's feeling of worth in the context of life and one's connection to a higher power (Kern et al., 2015). The concept of accomplishment is another dimension that emphasises the subjective experience of achieving the goals in one's life (Kern et al., 2015). SAHMRI (2017) added the physical activity component due to the belief held by the institute that one cannot have adequate mental health lacking physical health (Iasiello et al., 2017). SAHMRI (2017) also added nutrition and sleep to the original PERMA model due to the importance of these aspects in an individual's holistic health (Iasiello et al., 2017).

Although applying the PERMA+ model of flourish is deemed practical and effective, there has been some critique of the theory. Some scholars recognise the PERMA+ model of flourish as a stance of forced optimistic thinking (Bury et al., 2019). I kept this critique in mind while conducting the study and used the model as a theoretical lens through which the data gathered in the study was perceived.

According to Patten and Newhart (2017), inductive reasoning, otherwise understood as taking the inductive direction in research, may be understood as a “bottom-up” strategy where general topics are redefined in more precise terms through the research process (Patten & Newhart, 2017). The philosophical assumptions of the interpretivism paradigm led the thinking in this qualitative study. In applying the PERMA+ model of flourish, this study explored teachers' experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic. The research question did not aim to measure or test a theory as in quantitative studies. Instead, it set out to explore the insights and meaning made by teachers concerning their experiences of functioning as teachers during the pandemic. Therefore, inductive reasoning was an appropriate approach in this qualitative study. Owing to the interpretive nature of this research, I regard understanding the experiences and meaning made by teachers as a source of thematic concepts. Therefore, a qualitative approach used a phenomenological research design consisting of multiple data gathering sources. This study focused on multiple data gathering methods and consistent reflection on the data to achieve methodological triangulation. Hence, I inductively explored teachers' experiences of subjective well-being through the PERMA+ model of flourish as a theoretical framework by gathering and analysing pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interview data.

1.8 Methodological Overview

A qualitative approach emphasises studying a phenomenon and its complexities in a natural setting (Leedy et al., 2021; Maree, 2016). Qualitative research focuses on understanding such phenomena by studying perspectives, meaning, and experiences (Leedy et al., 2021). Exploring and developing theories and interpreting the world in behavioural, mental, and social contexts is at the centre of this approach (Christensen et al., 2014). The research objectives of studies following this approach focus on exploring a specific understanding of the social construction of reality (Christensen et al., 2014). Data gathered in qualitative studies are primarily narrative, and the findings of these studies tend to exhibit specific findings with detailed contextual descriptions (Christensen et al., 2014), hence making the qualitative approach suitable for this study. I followed an inductive approach throughout the research process while applying a phenomenological research design that incorporated photovoice research methodology focused on gathering pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interview data.

1.9 Research Paradigm

I considered using the underlying principles of the social constructivist paradigm variation of interpretivism as a result of the emphasis the study placed on identifying and understanding teachers' subjective experiences and meanings applicable to their social realities. Social constructivism assumes that individuals shape their subjective interpretations of multiple socially constructed realities (Maree, 2016). Individuals negotiate their experiences through time, context, and cultural values to generate meaning (Pfadenhauer & Knoblauch, 2018; Crotty, 1998). The social constructivist assumes that social contact between individuals socially constructs knowledge (Leedy et al., 2019). Therefore, individuals have their subjective interpretations of reality, which may, as interpreted, construct knowledge.

1.9.1 Relativist Ontological Stance

Ontology is the philosophical study of one's perception of reality (Sefotho, 2018). I took a relativist ontological stance in this research as it viewed reality as inseparable from the individual, and because humans consciously construct their interpretations of reality through interaction with a social context (Bell et al., 2019). Relativism allowed me to perceive teachers as social actors in their socially constructed realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Sexton & Griffen, 1997; Sefotho, 2018). Hence, the paradigm was suitable for exploring teachers' subjective well-being experiences through a phenomenological research design focused on capturing the essence of lived experience.

1.9.2 Subjectivist Epistemological Stance

Epistemology is the philosophical study of how one acquires knowledge (Sefotho, 2018). I adopted a subjectivist epistemological stance whilst conducting this research study. Subjectivism supports the assumption that one must consider an individual's perception of reality to create meaning (Sefotho, 2018; Crotty, 1998). In understanding an individual's interpretation of reality, relativists consider factors such as socio-cultural background, perception, historical background, and hierarchy in the perceivers' social setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Levers, 2013).

Limitations associated with social constructivism, relativist ontology, and a subjectivist epistemological stance are mainly associated with the likelihood of bias on behalf of the researcher (Leedy et al., 2019). I safeguarded the ideals of the participants and their subjective viewpoints and I remained objective during the data gathering and by "member checking" after data was gathered (Birt et al., 2016). Furthermore, incorporating these stances into the research helped me explore the world views and lived subjective experiences of well-being of South African private school teachers (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

1.10 Phenomenological Research Design

This qualitative study made use of a phenomenological research design. According to Leedy et al. (2019), phenomenology is an individual's insight of an event external to the individual. I used a phenomenological research design to interpret situations where perspectives of experiences existed (Leedy et al., 2019). There are three main phenomenological approaches: Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990), Husserl's transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), and Merleau-Ponty's idea of perception. I decided to use Husserl's transcendental phenomenology for this study as it focuses on the study of lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

To understand the subjective well-being experiences of teachers during the pandemic, I used multiple data sources, such as pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interviews. Hence, I interpreted the experiences of teachers to identify the meanings they associated with subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.11 Research Methods

The following section focuses on the appropriate research sampling, data gathering, and analysis methods used in this study.

1.11.1 Research Sampling

According to Christensen et al. (2014), a sample is a population subgroup. For this research, I used purposive sampling. According to Maree (2016), a researcher uses purposive sampling when choosing a specific group or individual from a population with a specific purpose. The applicable sample contains precise criteria or characteristics (Leedy et al., 2019; Maree, 2016). This study focused on teachers working in South African private schools during the pandemic. I sourced the sample from two private schools to ensure diversity. While I initially generated interest from 26 teachers from both schools to take part in the study, I only used a sample of four teachers from each school to participate in the study.

1.11.2 Sampling Criteria

The total number of teachers who participated in this study was eight. Each participant had to have worked in the private school sector during the pandemic. During the data gathering stage of this study, each teacher submitted four pictures and short narrative reflections representing their experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. While each participant could submit downloaded internet pictures or manually captured photographs, each had to have access to a smartphone with a functioning camera to take photographs representing their experiences to participate in the study. In the context of this study, “pictures” refers to both downloaded internet pictures and photographs captured by participants. The participants forwarded these pictures to me via email. I then uploaded the pictures to a Google Drive folder. If the participants could not send the pictures digitally due to mobile data constraints, I met with them and digitally transferred the pictures using a USB cable from the participants’ phones or computers to my computer. In this way, I collected a total of 32 pictures and narrative reflections. Semi-structured interviews followed the gathering of the pictures and narrative reflections. I displayed the collected pictures on my laptop screen during the semi-structured interview.

1.11.3 Sample Recruitment Process

Eight teachers from two private schools voluntarily participated in the study through the following recruitment process. I approached two private school principals and explained the purpose and goal of the study. I requested permission from the school principals to approach the teachers in the schooling environment to ask if they would be willing to voluntarily join a virtual information session focusing on the research study. I then consulted with the principal to establish a convenient method to invite the teachers, for example, through a group email

invitation to all staff from the principal or in person. Both school principals agreed to send a group email to their staff members. The interested teachers responded to me via email. After many teachers had shown interest in participating in the study, I emailed them the consent form with a detailed description of what the study aimed to achieve. This document described the research problem, rationale, purpose, question, design, methodologies, and ethical considerations (see Appendix B). I then phoned the interested participants or approached them in their school environment to explain the ethical aspects and research process. The interested participants signed the consent form indicating that they understood all the relevant ethical guidelines (see Appendix B). Six of the eight participants preferred signing the consent form and emailing it to me.

1.12 Data Gathering Methods

Data gathering refers to the methods used by researchers to collect data to answer their research questions (Maree, 2016). I used multiple data sources to answer the research question for this study. These sources included pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interview transcripts. The data gathering process of this study consisted of three phases. These phases took place for six months, as each participant submitted their pictures and narrative reflections and held interviews with me at different times.

1.12.1 Phase 1: Preparation – Training and Consent

During this phase of the data gathering process, the participants attended a brief introductory training session where I explained the ethical use of cameras and photography. Out of the sample of eight, four teachers preferred that I phone them to discuss the ethical guidelines of the study instead of meeting in person. Two teachers attended a Google Meet meeting, and two preferred to meet in person. I focused on providing an introductory overview of the study during this session. I then focused on informing the participants of the ethical considerations of photovoice by providing an example of an ideal submission of pictures and narrative reflections for the study. Next, I explained how the teachers could capture and send pictures using their cameras on their mobile phones. Lastly, I provided information about the ethical aspects associated with photovoice research by touching on ethical guidelines related to safety, respect, and justice to ensure that they did not violate the privacy of others while collecting data.

1.12.2 Phase 2: Photovoice Data Gathering – Capture and Reflect

According to Brown and Collins (2021, p. 4), “words often elude those trying to describe their emotions and feelings”. I decided to use a visual data gathering method to understand the essence of the participants’ experiences to capture the meaning that words cannot describe. The participants captured pictures and wrote narrative reflection in the second phase of the data gathering process. Visual data gathering empowered me to analyse multifaceted information that may not have been as easy to gather through other data gathering methods such as questionnaires (Daba-Buzoianu et al., 2017; Frith et al., 2006).

Wang and Burris (1994) established photovoice as a data gathering method focused on recording the experiences of their research participants. The theoretical frameworks that underpin the use of photovoice are (1) the theory of critical consciousness established by Paulo Freire (1970), which focuses on the empowerment of beings through critical dialogue and education; (2) feminist theory, which emphasises the acknowledgement of the female experience; and (3) document photography, whereby individuals capture their existed realities and individual experiences (Wang & Burris, 1994). Photovoice visually embodies the “voice” of the individual’s experience with these underlying philosophical principles (Wang & Burris, 1994). VOICE is an acronym for voicing our individual and collective experience (Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001).

As previously discussed, the eight participants in this study each submitted four pictures representing their lived experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic. Two of the eight participants sent their pictures via WhatsApp, while one requested that I collect the pictures with a USB stick. The rest of the participants sent their pictures to me via email. Some participants used their mobile cell phones to take the four photographs, while others preferred downloading pictures from the internet that represented their experiences. Limitations related to the use of photovoice data include concerns related to the interpretation, so the participants submitted a short narrative reflection with each submitted picture. I read and interpreted the reflections before commencing the next phase of the data gathering process. With photovoice, the teachers had to reflect on their submitted pictures (Daba-Buzoianu et al., 2017). Although reflection on data may be time-consuming, adequate reflection on visual data provides a complete analysis of the participant’s experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I then created a Google Drive folder and uploaded the 32 pictures and reflections. During the semi-structured

interviews, I used my laptop screen to display the relevant pictures. Hence, I did not need to print any pictures.

1.12.3 Phase 3: Semi-Structured Interviews

Given the nature of visual data gathering, the interpretation of this data played a prominent role in understanding the experiences of these teachers. According to Daba-Buzoianu et al. (2017), visual data allows for multiple interpretations. Therefore, I collected a narrative reflection on the pictures from the participants. The participants also took part in semi-structured interviews that used open-ended questions guided by the acronym SHOWED. A semi-structured interview is a data gathering method which provided me with the opportunity to (1) ask standardised questions; (2) ask follow-up questions tailored to the situational context or discussion; and (3) probe the reasoning of a research participant (Leedy et al., 2019). Conducting this type of interview enabled me to probe deeper into the created meanings of the participants. As recommended by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), I perceived the interviews as interactions between me and the participant, hence being more conversational and allowing for deviations. SHOWED is a questioning technique developed by Wang and Burris (1994) that attempts to achieve a deeper understanding of situations and experiences expressed by research participants by providing visual data such as photographs (Liebenberg, 2018).

The acronym SHOWED represents the following questions:

- S** “What do you see here?”
- H** “What is happening here?”
- O** “How does it relate to our lives?”
- W** “How w does this concern, situation, or strength exist?”
- E** “How can we become empowered through our new understanding?”
- D** “What can we do?”

I did not use the precise questions asked in the acronym SHOWED. I tailored these questions and integrated them into the semi-structured interview with a few changes in structure and wording. First, I changed the wording in the ‘W’ question (“How does this concern, situation, or strength exist?”). As a result of the study’s focus on interpretation, I rephrased the question

to: "How does this make you feel?" Furthermore, I excluded the "E" and "D" questions ("How can we become empowered through our new understanding?" and "What can we do?") (Wang & Burris, 1994). This study aimed to investigate the experiences of teachers regarding their subjective well-being. Therefore, it explored these experiences from an interpretive perspective

The semi-structured interviews consisted of the following process:

- (i) The research participant elaborated on their subjective definition of well-being.
- (ii) I displayed the pictures submitted by the participant on my laptop screen.
- (iii) The participant then rated their pictures from most to least as representative of their experiences according to their subjective definition of well-being.
- (iv) I then displayed the participant's most representative picture.
- (v) Thereafter the participant elaborated on the picture that they had selected as being most representative of their experiences of subjective well-being while teaching during the pandemic by answering the following interview questions about each picture (see Appendix C):

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1) | What do you see in your image? |
| 2) | What is happening in your image? |
| 3) | How does this situation relate to your life? |
| 4) | How does this image make you feel? |

- (vi) I repeated the steps discussed in (iv) and (v) until all pictures had been subjected to questioning. As I had used semi-structured interviews, there was an opportunity for follow-up questions. Using reflexivity and the questionnaire, the teachers had the opportunity to explain the context in which the picture was perceived, providing deeper layers of interpretation to the research process (Daba-Buzoianu et al., 2017). The questions in the semi-structured interview also allowed me to probe the participant to reveal more profound feedback regarding their orientation and experiences.

1.13 Data Analysis and Interpretation

According to Noon (2018, p. 1), phenomenological research focuses on uncovering individuals' meaning and inner life worlds by exploring their "thoughts, feelings and memories" and how they make sense of their social worlds (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Noon, 2018). The participants of this study used three different types of data to express their experiences of subjective well-being. Owing to the phased gathering of these different data sources, I perceived the visual data (pictures) and textual data (narrative reflections) as one data set and the semi-structured interview transcripts as a second data set during the data analysis process. In doing so, I could identify the best strategy to analyse the respective data sets rather than perceiving them as a single unit. This process allowed me to identify rich and specific findings that thoroughly captured the essence of the experiences of the teachers; it also enabled me to compare and identify similarities between the two data sets' findings.

1.13.1 Data Analysis Set 1 (Pictures and Narrative Reflections)

I used Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis framework to analyse the pictures and reflections collected in Phase 2: Photovoice data gathering – capture and reflect. The framework focuses on analysing visual and textual data in a manner that weaves them together. The analysis framework includes two levels of analysis, each consisting of three elements.

Table 1. 1: Systematic visuo-textual analysis framework (Brown & Collins, 2021)

Analysis	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	"artistic in visual work (use of perspective, colour, space, form, tone, light, composition)" (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	"linguistic in textual work (use of language, words, phrases, structure)" (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	"connecting the visual and the textual (structure, meanings, expressions)" (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)
Level 2: Conceptualise	"essential elements that unite artefacts" (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	"words/phrases that capture patterns/themes" (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	"connections between artefacts and themes" (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)

Level 1 focused on noticing and describing, while level 2 focused on conceptualising. I used both levels of interpretation to analyse the pictures and reflections submitted by the participants. After repeating this process for each participant's pictures and reflections, I combined the visual and textual data and made connections between the themes found for each individual. I then sent these interpretations to the participants for member checking. Once the participants confirmed my interpretations, I wrote up the findings. I present the table analysis and participant-linked themes in Chapter 4.

After combining the themes, I conducted a thematic analysis of all the participant's coherent narratives. In doing so, I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework which consisted of the following phases:

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Phase 3: Searching for themes

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

Phase 6: Producing the report

Before conducting the thematic analysis, I imported the visuo-textual analysis findings into the qualitative analysis software, ATLAS.ti. I first read and re-read the themes identified for each participant in the visuo-textual analysis. Thereafter, I identified codes within the data and searched for themes, which I reviewed and named. I then connected the identified themes and formed a coherent narrative. After completing this analysis, I presented a coherent narrative in Chapter 4 and discussed the themes across all pictures and narrative reflections.

1.13.2 Data Analysis Set 2 (Semi-Structured Interviews)

I used an interpretive phenomenological analysis framework, Smith et al.'s (2009) seven steps of the interpretive phenomenological analysis, to analyse the semi-structured interview transcripts.

The seven steps of interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009) are:

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the interview transcript

Step 2: Initial noting of ideas

Step 3: Identifying emergent themes

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

Step 5: Continuing with the following case

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases

Step 7: Taking interpretation to a deeper level

In Step 1, I printed out the semi-structured interview transcripts and read them while listening to the recordings of the interviews. I noted any ideas that I had while reading the transcript in step 2. I then imported the transcripts into ATLAS.ti. I maintained a stringent naming strategy. I named the transcripts “S1 I1 P1”, which represented “School 1”, “Interview 1”, and “Participant 1”. I changed the numerical number in the file names following the participant school, interview and learner number. In step 3, I focused on coding the transcripts in ATLAS.ti using Saldaña’s (2016) coding methods to analyse each transcript individually. I used two cycles of coding. During cycle one, I used eclectic coding, which refers to using two coding methods (Saldaña, 2016). I first used structural coding to code large segments within the transcript, then I used subcoding to identify more detailed subcodes within the structural codes (Saldaña, 2016). I repeated this process several times for each transcript. In step 4, I made use of axial coding to identify codes in the research that were more prevalent than others (Saldaña, 2016). In step 5, I repeated steps 1-4. Then I looked for patterns across each transcript and grouped common themes. In this way, I developed a thematic narrative for each participant (see Appendix D). I then took my interpretation deeper and identified themes across the data by looking at the themes identified from each transcript. In doing so, I conducted a thematic analysis in cycle two using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis framework. I present the findings of the thematic analysis in Chapter 5.

1.13.3 Thematic Analysis of Data Sets 1 and 2

I then concluded the findings of this study by conducting a thematic analysis of data sets one and two in Chapter 6. I used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis framework to conduct this final analysis. Hence, I created a thematic narrative of the findings. I present this narrative in Chapter 6, including the discussion of the study’s findings.

1.14 Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of the research study; it focused on exploring the experiences of subjective well-being of South African teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. I first introduced the study, stated my motivations and clarified the focus and purpose of this study. I then discussed relevant literature surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and teacher well-being. After that, I discussed the PERMA+ model of flourish as a theoretical framework appropriate for this study, after which I discussed the data collection and analysis methods and clarified the ethical considerations.

I discuss the literature review and theoretical framework in Chapter 2. I further discuss the research methodology in Chapter 3. I present the findings of data set 1 and 2 in Chapters 5 and 6 and discuss the study's findings in Chapter 6, whereafter I conclude the study in Chapter 7. The study will follow the outline of the chapters as described in Figure 1. 1.

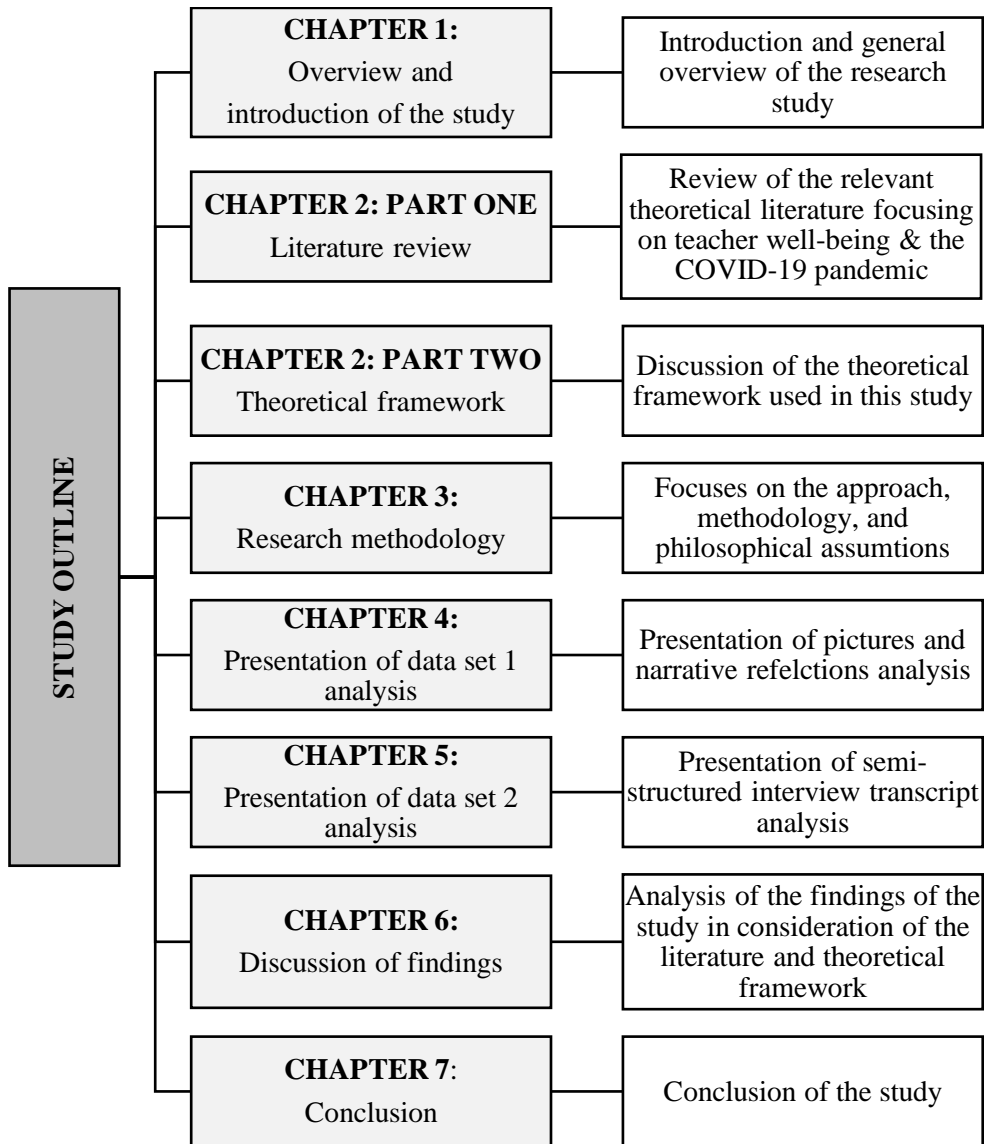


Figure 1. 1: Outline of the study

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I provided a general introduction and overview of this phenomenological study's purpose, background, and research approach to answer the following research question: "What were teachers' experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic?" Chapter 2 is my review of the literature and a discussion about the theoretical framework selected for this study. This chapter begins with the review of the literature.

According to Fry et al. (2017), a literature review aims to identify why there is an academic need to answer the research question. As a general approach, the literature review identifies the trending thematic discourses associated with the discussion by finding the leading thinkers in the field and presenting insightful readings that lead to the relevant discourses and perspectives. In my preliminary literature review in Chapter 1, I identified concepts and points of discussion related to the current findings and perspectives surrounding the topics included in the research question. These topics include: (1) the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) teachers' lived experiences and (3) subjective well-being.

Chapter 2 further explores these topics through an in-depth review of the literature. My discussion involves the identification of previous researchers' main theoretical and methodological ideologies and establishes my view by considering the intellectual traditions in the field. Hence, the literature review determines the relevant research gap and how the findings of this study might contribute to the research field of teacher subjective well-being. I then discuss the theoretical framework used in this study. Since the study focuses on teachers' experiences of well-being, the PERMA+ model of flourish provided an appropriate lens through which I could perceive well-being in the context of this study.

According to Eloff and Dittrich (2021, p. 1), teachers are "pivotal change agents providing education for sustainable development". In this regard, optimal teacher well-being plays an imperative role in education and promotes the quality and effectiveness of schooling (Ferguson, 2008; Eloff & Dittrich, 2021). In alignment with the United Nations' SDGs, teachers' well-being is critical in achieving a global society that promotes "inclusive and equitable quality education" and "lifelong learning opportunities" (SDG3; United Nations, 2020, p. 1). Owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the roles and responsibilities of teachers have changed dramatically. The WHO (2020) implemented health and safety guidelines that created

a situational context in education that, at certain times, restricted learners and teachers from attending school physically due to the possible risk of infection. While restrictions were not permanent and only applied to countries at times of high infection rates, schools had to adapt to the circumstances to avoid the loss of learning time (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021). Teachers faced the challenge of developing and adapting to new modes of teaching, such as implementing ODL, synchronous online classes, and asynchronous learning interventions (Asburya & Kim, 2020). While this shift helped to progress the integration of digital learning into society, it required tremendous amounts of work and adaptation from teachers. This adaptation may have influenced teachers' experiences of subjective well-being.

The nature of this phenomenological study required an exploration of teachers' experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. I believe it is imperative to understand the contextual or social perspective that may have influenced the perceptions of South African teachers during the pandemic in terms of subjective well-being.

Therefore, this phenomenological study's nature required exploring teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation in which teachers found themselves provided an opportunity to examine the relationship between the teachers and their physical, cognitive, and social worlds. As aligned with the interpretive, social constructivist, paradigmatic assumptions underpinning this study, Vygotsky (1978) argued that the mind does not think in isolation. Social interactions help us interpret reality (Wertsch & Sohmer, 1995). Understanding the context and social situation in which teachers found themselves requires considering the relationship between teachers and their physical, cognitive, and social worlds (Vygotsky, 1978; Kozulin, 1990). The South African government's action in combatting the spread of COVID-19 caused events to transpire which may have contributed to teachers' social and contextual perspectives. Socio-economic factors may have affected the way in which teachers associated their experiences with their social realities.

In Chapter 1, I briefly introduced the COVID-19 pandemic by discussing the outbreak origin, characteristics, and impact in the global and South African context. This brief discussion has set the scene to enable an understanding of the context created by COVID-19 globally and in South Africa. I also discussed the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on South African society, which links to a discussion on how the situational context may have affected the mental health of South Africans, including teachers. In this chapter, I discuss the social and contextual

perspectives that might have affected South African teachers' experiences of subjective well-being.

2.2 Social Context

2.2.1 The global context created by the COVID-19 pandemic

On 11 March 2020, the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic (Lone & Ahmad, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020). In 2020, 2021, and 2022, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak dramatically impacted human life globally (Van Barneveld et al., 2020). While the virus outbreak caused a global health crisis, it also resulted in severe economic and social disruptions that shaped many individuals' perspectives and standpoints during this historic time. Social media played an imperative role in the pandemic as it created a platform for individuals to share their experiences and opinions on changes such as mask-wearing and vaccines, among others (González-Padilla & Tortolero-Blanco, 2020). Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, WhatsApp, and Instagram helped humanity document its experiences and communicate during the global crisis (Goel & Gupta, 2020). While social media allows users across the globe to share opinions and information, this information is not always factual (Benoit & Mauldin, 2021; Marin, 2021), and social media platforms have also fuelled the spread of misinformation about topics such as the origin of COVID-19 (Tsao et al., 2021). At the beginning of the pandemic, speculation about the origin of COVID-19 trended on social media (Himelein-Wachowiak et al., 2021). While some believed that the virus originated from a wet market in China, others believed that an organisation or individuals created the virus in a laboratory (Shahsavari et al., 2020). A social network analysis of Twitter data showed that some users even speculated that 5G cell phone towers triggered the outbreak of COVID-19 and caused the symptoms of the virus (Ahmed et al., 2020). Regardless of speculations about its origin, COVID-19 spread across the globe.

The original virus (SARS-COV-2/COVID-19) later mutated and formed eight notable variants (Mahase, 2021), amongst which the Delta and Omicron variants gained the most public attention (Karim et al., 2021). As a result, scientists across the globe developed vaccines. While solutions such as vaccines showed promise in solving the global crisis, they created a divide in perspective in some sectors of society and increased the prevalence of social movements such as the anti-vax and anti-mask movements (Iwai et al., 2021).

In a qualitative analysis by Benoit and Mauldin (2021), social media played a role in developing the anti-vax movement. Various online communities supported perspectives centred around

vaccine denial and conspiracy (Benoit & Mauldin, 2021). In a report published by the Centre for Countering Digital Hate (2021), researchers noted that anti-vaxxer networks generated an estimate of 58 million followers until January 2021 (Armitage, 2021). This psychological phenomenon echoed globally, thereby socially influencing the perspectives of many individuals across the globe, including teachers in a phenomenon known as an “infodemic” (Cinelli et al., 2020). Solomon et al. (2020) define an infodemic as a contagious disease infecting our information culture (Solomon et al., 2020).

In South Africa, a national vaccine rollout commenced on 17 February 2021 (South African National Department of Health, 2021b). In 2021, South Africans, including frontline workers, healthcare workers, and citizens over 60 years of age, had the opportunity to get the COVID-19 vaccines voluntarily. Janssen (otherwise known as Johnson and Johnson), Pfizer-BioTech, and Oxford-AstraZeneca voluntarily administered vaccines to South Africans (South African National Department of Health, 2021b). Later, more South Africans in other age groups were allowed to get the vaccine and its respective booster doses (South African National Department of Health, 2021b). While some South Africans accepted the COVID-19 vaccine as a part of an initiative focused on promoting personal and population health that could provide safety through immunity and later led to the reopening of socio-economic life, others resorted to vaccine hesitancy (Murphy et al., 2021).

The South African Social Attitudes Survey, a survey conducted by Cooper et al. (2021), found that a third of the South African public believed that getting the COVID-19 vaccine could lead to adverse health side effects and that it was too new or ineffective. Among other factors, Cooper et al. (2021) found that various factors influenced South Africans’ acceptance of the vaccine in 2020 and 2021, including attitudes, urbanicity, geographical location, political factors, age, and gender. These concerns were also present in other settings and increased throughout the pandemic (Lin et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2020). Furthermore, many researchers looked at the topic of mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations (Turbat et al., 2021; Flood et al., 2021; Frati et al., 2021; Wise, 2021; Qattan et al., 2021).

As a result of the trending policy focusing on mandatory vaccinations for individuals based on their occupations, researchers such as Turbat et al. (2021) investigated the concept of compulsory COVID-19 vaccinations in the health care sector. Turbat et al.’s (2021) survey conducted in Mongolia focused on citizen attitudes to mandatory vaccinations and found that those working in the health sector were more likely to agree with compulsory vaccinations.

While various researchers have documented the perspectives of health sector workers on mandatory vaccinations in countries such as Canada (Flood et al., 2021), Italy (Fрати et al., 2021), the United Kingdom (Wise, 2021), and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Qattan et al., 2021), there has been minimal focus on the opinions of workers in other professions, such as teachers working in the education sector (Schleicher, 2020).

Few studies have explored teachers' views regarding vaccines and the possible influence that social media platforms have had on their perspectives. Data on teacher perceptions of taking the vaccine is scarce in South Africa. While the South African Department of Education has not implemented mandatory vaccines for teachers, it is important to note that there are no qualitative or quantitative studies focusing specifically on South African teachers' opinions or the social dynamics, dilemmas, or imperatives created amongst school staff by the availability of the vaccine. As at March 2022, there were no statistics on how many South African teachers were anti-vaxxers nor any data on schools that had introduced mandatory vaccinations into their policies. Hence, this population is under-represented in global research as teachers' opinions are understudied.

To address this research gap, it is important to consider social media and its role in exploring the opinions of South African teachers. Researchers such as Cooper et al. (2021), who investigated this topic on a large scale through surveys with the general public and a systematic review of the surveys they conducted, identified the timeline of the pandemic as a critical factor to consider while investigating South African perceptions in terms of accepting the vaccine. Understanding the social context at different times of the pandemic may assist in providing deeper insight into individuals' perspectives and lived experiences during the pandemic. Hence the following section focuses on the outbreak of COVID-19 in the South African context while considering the timeline of relevant events.

2.2.2 South African Context Created by the COVID-19 Pandemic

At the beginning of March 2020, the South African government, led by President Cyril Ramaphosa, implemented various strategies to manage the spread of the pandemic in South Africa (De Villiers et al., 2020). According to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (2020), South Africa recorded its first case of COVID-19 on 5 March 2020 (South African Government, 2022a). Following the first reported case, the government declared a national state of disaster in South Africa on 15 March 2020 (Staunton et al., 2020). After this declaration, the government negotiated its response to the crisis by implementing public-based

measures, regulations, and restrictions prohibiting social contact between citizens. The WHO recommended health and safety regulations that primarily consisted of the global enforcement of mask-wearing, social distancing, isolation in the case of infection, and sanitisation of hands and surfaces to reduce the spread of the airborne virus (Jee, 2020). Country-level organisation, forecasting, and monitoring influenced how governments across the globe implemented these restrictions (Mendolia et al., 2021).

At the beginning of March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa implemented some restrictions in South Africa, such as the banning of gatherings of more than 100 people, discouraging public transport, and implementing travel bans (South African Government, 2022a). A few days later, the South African Government implemented a heavily restricted 21-day national lockdown from the 23 March 2020 to 16 April 2020 (De Villiers et al., 2020). Eventually, this lockdown was extended by 14 days and paved the way for an alert level system approach to managing the spread of the pandemic in south Africa (South African Government, 2022a). These imposed restrictions resulted in the closures of all schools, higher learning institutions, and non-essential sectors in the South African education sector (Nicola et al., 2020). This sudden restriction of movement caused disruptions in the operational functioning of schools, affecting the lives of many South African teachers, parents, and learners in the schooling districts.

While the sudden halt of the lockdown created a temporary pause in non-essential sectors of South African society, the government followed an emergency response strategy that led to the appointment of the National Coronavirus Command Council, which developed an alert level approach to managing the spread of the pandemic (South African Government, 2022a). The alert level system provided the National Coronavirus Command Council with an emergency response framework to support transparent decision-making and improve public accountability and communication to promote healthy behaviour in South Africans (Prevent Epidemics, 2021). The council followed a similar strategy to other nations by implementing a system with different health and safety restrictions to decrease the number of hospital cases when the country experienced a wave of increased positive cases of COVID-19 infections (South African Government, 2022b). The emergency response framework included five alert levels, with alert level five being the most extreme (having many restrictions) and alert level one being the least impactful on the daily life of South Africans (Prevent Epidemics, 2021). These alert levels integrated restrictions recommended by the WHO (2020) to tackle the spread of COVID-19

across economic sectors, such as building capacity, curfew, transportation, and restrictions on the movement of individuals (Jee, 2020; Prevent Epidemics, 2021).

While implementing the alert level framework meant that the health system would be under less strain, the system also restricted individual movement with physical distancing dramatically impacting the labour market (South African Government, 2022a). While the restrictions kept South Africans safe, implementing higher alert levels meant that some non-essential workers, including South African teachers, had to work from home. These restrictions affected the socio-economic stability of many South African households. As a result of health and safety restrictions, there was a socio-economic impact on the South African economy which resulted in an increased prevalence of mental health issues in its citizens (Subramaney et al., 2020; Shah et al., 2021; Kasozi et al., 2020).

2.2.3 The Socio-Economic Context Created by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Globally, COVID-19 showed social and economic disruptions. The pandemic and the health and safety restrictions caused individuals across the globe to reduce their economic output (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). As a result, the circumstances created by the pandemic caused the worst economic recession since the global depression of 2007, which impacted the global supply of economies such as financial input, capital, labour, and productivity (Sulkowski, 2019). While economists like Gregory et al. (2020) argue that one can attribute this recession to the implementation of lockdowns and the health impact, which led to deaths and large numbers of individuals having to isolate, others such as Mankiw (2020) argue that fear of being infected meant that “people avoided many businesses” which “reduced the velocity of money” (Mankiw, 2020, p. 2). Countries whose citizens felt safe participating in economic expenditure due to strict health and safety guidelines were more likely to spend and support the market (Mankiw, 2020). Regardless, the pandemic economically affected the global flow of many goods and services, resulting in job losses and increased poverty, particularly in vulnerable countries such as South Africa (Arndt et al., 2020; McKibbin & Fernando, 2020).

According to Hanspal et al. (2020), the pandemic created income shock, otherwise known as financial shock, in the global economy. Income shock refers to an unexpected change in circumstances leading to a drastic drop in income (Donnelly & Farina, 2021). Depending on the industry-specific impact of the pandemic, most households across the globe experienced job losses, retrenchment, or pay cuts (McKibbin & Fernando, 2021). In South Africa, as a result of the restrictions, households with lower levels of education and high dependence on labour

income suffered (Arndt et al., 2020). The factor distribution of income was drastically harmed which led to an abrupt drop in the income levels of low-income and food-insecure households, severely impacting them. Furthermore, these households depended primarily on government transfer payments, so a lack of policies to assist them meant that many experienced a dramatic income shock (Arndt et al., 2020).

While South African society was affected in various ways by health and safety restrictions, those with low socio-economic status were most affected due to “structural poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to quality health care” prevalent in the country (Nguse & Wassenaar, 2021, p. 1). In March 2020, early lockdown restrictions falling under alert level 5 prevented individuals from leaving their homes to work and earn an income (Chitiga-Mabugu et al., 2020). When non-essential industries closed, this caused a decline in production, reduced access to services, and led to employers retrenching many workers (Chitiga-Mabugu et al., 2020; Adebisi et al., 2021). According to the socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 conducted by the United Nations in South Africa in 2021, pandemic restrictions pushed 54 per cent of South African households from permanent to temporary or contract jobs; and 34 per cent of middle-class households into financial vulnerability. These statistics reflect the socio-economic impact on the general public, but the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 was also industry-specific.

The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the education sector was caused by learning losses as a result of school closures, resulting in many issues affecting all stakeholders in education, including learners, parents, and teachers (Azevedo et al., 2021b). Learning loss posed a huge challenge to the education sector. Azevedo et al. (2021a) estimate that learners are at risk of losing approximately 10 trillion dollars in lifetime labour earnings as a result of the learning losses resulting from school closures. Eloff and Dittrich (2021, p. 2) argue that the pandemic may “exacerbate existing inequities and increase learning losses for vulnerable students”, which may potentially impact the progress of the following SDGs: SDG 1– no poverty; SDG 3 – good health and well-being; SDG 4 – quality education; SDG 8 – decent work and economic growth; SDG 10 – reduced inequalities; and SDG 17 – the partnership of goals (Eloff & Dittrich, 2021, p. 2). Hence, learning loss and other associated consequences posed a direct threat to the United Nations reaching its SDGs (Hörisch, 2021). To avoid the devastating impact that learning loss may have had on future generations, schools and institutions across the globe had to work extensively to adapt to the situation which they did

by implementing ODL and ICT strategies, which some refer to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the education sector (Oke & Fernandes, 2020). However, these implementations may have placed a further economic strain on schools and institutions across the globe.

Two events that may have affected the South African socio-economic context were the looting of businesses in July 2021 and the rise of gender-based violence in the country during the pandemic. The first event was in July 2021 when a nationwide panic affected South Africa. A group of South Africans engaged in mass looting in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, where rioters destroyed and stole property adding up to 15 billion rand and affected 40 000 businesses (Makoni, 2021; Bhattacharya & Rach, 2021). Looters damaged 121 retail centres and contributed to the weakening of the rand by two per cent (Makoni, 2021). The rioting also resulted in a shortage of food, fuel, and medical supplies (Bhattacharya & Rach, 2021). Bhattacharya and Rach (2021) argue that the cause of this rioting was “unemployment, poverty, wage stagnation, income inequality, unaffordable education or inflation” (p. 38). According to Singh (2021), who serves as the Principal Investigator of the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies, which operates under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences of South Africa, the crisis led to severe strain on the South African medical system due to looted medication and pharmaceuticals destruction. Looting increased the unemployment of those employed at vandalised and looted businesses (Singh, 2021; Makoni, 2021). According to a meeting held by the DBE on 3 August 2021, the unrest damaged Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal schools and affected the reopening and readiness of schools in these areas. (Mbinqo-Gigaba, 2021). The unrest led to the vandalism of 32 schools in KwaZulu-Natal (McCain, 2021). Hence, it also affected the teachers' functioning due to service interruptions and temporary budget cuts (Mbinqo-Gigaba, 2021).

While the lockdown and implementation of restrictions caused economic distress for many during 2020 and 2021, other indications of social unrest arose in the South African population during the pandemic. The second event was in 2020 when there was a rise in gender-based domestic violence cases globally and in South Africa (Campbell, 2020; John et al., 2020). While domestic violence in South African households has been a long-standing issue, the Department of Statistics South Africa (2020) noted that 51,5 per cent of the South African population, that is, 30,5 million people are women and one in five women experienced physical violence by a partner during the pandemic (Department of Statistics South Africa, 2020). In 2021 President Cyril Ramaphosa noted in a public announcement that 9 556 people, mostly

female victims, were sexually assaulted between July and September 2021 (Dlamini, 2021). This was seven per cent higher than reported in the previous period. Research has linked the pandemic to the rise of violence against women due to alcoholism and emotional distress (Mittal & Singh, 2020). Some researchers link the prevalence of gender-based violence against women to the isolation and quarantine regulations associated with the pandemic (Bettinger-Lopez & Bro, 2020; Mbunge, 2020). The prevalence of gender-based violence against women led to the second pandemic in South Africa in 2020, namely, the gender-based violence pandemic (Dlamini, 2021). While causes of gender-based violence in South Africa were well-documented before the pandemic, further research may reveal a possible link between the prevalence of violence and the economic and psychological consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless, a rise in violence towards women in South Africa during the pandemic is a critical aspect to consider when exploring the experiences of individuals, such as teachers employed in a primarily female-dominated profession.

Looting and increased gender-based violence socio-economic issues resulted from the pandemic in South Africa (Mbunge, 2020). These events indicate teachers' societal context as citizens and reflect the current socio-economic issues in South Africa. It is important to consider this context when exploring the lived experiences of South African teachers during the pandemic.

2.2.4 Global Perspectives of Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

When considering the prevalence of economic strain and social unrest in South Africa and across the globe, it is important to consider the toll that these factors had on the mental health of individuals functioning in societies during this challenging time. Various scholars, such as Klotz (2022), argue that the global workforce's behaviour during the pandemic reflects the mental health impact of working under the circumstances posed by restrictions and regulations. Klotz (2022) noted psychological phenomena caused by the changing economic landscape and a global economic phenomenon known as the "great resignation" or the "big quit" (Ellerbeck, 2022, p. 1). Economists describe the "great resignation" as the voluntary mass resignation of professionals across the globe (Ellerbeck, 2022, p. 1). Klotz (2022) coined the term after noticing that 4,3 million American professionals had resigned from their jobs in August 2021 (Ellerbeck, 2022). Notably, Klotz (2022) argues that the pandemic caused increased levels of burnout due to professionals working too hard and for too long during the pandemic (Ellerbeck, 2021). Many studies based in the field of psychology and psychiatry have globally and in South

Africa linked the economic crisis of the pandemic to psychological responses such as increased anxiety (Subramaney et al., 2020), depression, stress (Shah et al., 2021), and panic (Kasozi et al., 2020).

Much international research during the pandemic focused on the lack of psychological well-being resulting either from contracting COVID-19 or functioning in the circumstances created by COVID-19. In a systematic review conducted by Gul et al. (2020), it was found that most studies focusing on mental health during the pandemic explored the topic in medicine and psychology. The United States, Brazil, and China have the majority of papers published by their researchers in these fields, such as those in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (Gul et al., 2020). While studies such as those conducted by Posel et al. (2021) and Kotera et al. (2021) focus on the mental health of South Africans affected by the pandemic, South Africa has not yet published many studies focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health in this journal.

While the WHO led the world through the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it was found that the group did not fund publications focusing on mental health during that time, which was coincidentally the same time when the WHO developed its COVID-19 safety protocol recommendations (Gul et al., 2020). Although it is not the sole responsibility of the WHO to fund these studies, the lack of funding in this field reflects the minimal attention paid to well-being during the pandemic by the group that developed the recommendations of restrictions and safety regulations that changed the functioning of societies across the globe (Gul et al., 2020). With the WHO unengaged in contributing to mental health funding, organisations such as the National Natural Science Foundation of China, the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development Brazil, and the National Institutes of Health United States of America have led research funding in this field (Gul et al., 2020). While these countries are among the top 10 funding mental health research, scholars such as Nguse and Wassenaar (2021) argue that South Africa needs a sustainable funding model for mental health research, services, policies, and plans. Funding for mental health research during the COVID-19 pandemic was needed in South Africa, but policies on mental health needs also need interventions. In 2020, in a systematic review conducted by the Psychological Society of South Africa, Kleintjes et al. (2020) noted that the National Health Insurance system should strengthen its efforts to integrate mental health more effectively into the National Health Insurance Bill (Kleintjes et al., 2020). The Psychological Society of South Africa (2020) noted

that more focus needs to be placed on equitable access to health services; improving human resources for mental health; clarification into accreditation standards and contractual conditions of mental health service providers; integration of private practitioners in the health systems; and the improvement of mental health advisory, accountability and indicators in the National Mental Health Insurance Bill (Kleintjes et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Nguse and Wassenaar (2021) also note that there was a decrease in South African individuals seeking mental health services during the pandemic. With individuals told to stay indoors and avoid social contact, more South Africans became reluctant to leave the house to seek mental health practitioners due to the fear of being infected by the virus, transportation difficulties, financial strain, or unemployment (Nguse & Wassenaar, 2021). This situation meant that those in stressful professions affected by COVID-19 restrictions, such as teachers, might have been reluctant to seek mental health services. According to Nguse and Wassenaar (2021), the pandemic arrived when South Africa's mental health care system was already ailing. With minimal governmental contribution to mental health care services over the past 10 years, researchers such as Burns (2011) and Pillay (2019) argue that South Africa treats mental health as peripheral and insignificant. Although the government has made tremendous efforts to develop policies favouring mental health, such as the Mental Health Care Act of 2002 and the National Mental Health Policy and Strategic Plan (2013–2020), a gap still exists in policy development and implementation (De Wee & Asmah-Andoh, 2021). A few months before the pandemic outbreak in January 2020, Marais et al. (2020) conducted a case study which identified that the inadequacy of South African mental health services reflected the exclusion of mental health practitioners from the consultative progression leading to the growth of policies and limits in applying experiential knowledge-informed policies. Hence, a gap in the research exists in understanding how the situational context of the pandemic influenced the transference of policy or influenced the reluctance of South Africans to seek mental health services during the pandemic.

Furthermore, issues on policy and lack of publishing or funding have resulted in minimal literature focusing on the mental health of South Africans during the COVID-19 pandemic. To gauge the impact of COVID-19 on South African mental health, researchers such as Kim et al. (2020) and Nguse and Wassenaar (2021) studied the phenomenon by taking the biological, psychological and socio-economic predispositions of South Africans into account. Kim et al. (2020) identified that the risk of developing depressive symptoms while anticipating the

perceived risk of being infected with COVID-19 was more prevalent among those who had experienced childhood trauma. COVID-19 increases the likelihood that an individual may present symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder, mood disorder, anxiety disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorders (Nguse & Wassenaar, 2021). Hence, researchers in the psychology and behavioural science fields have noted a negative impact on the public mental health of South Africans (Nguse & Wassenaar, 2021).

Nguse and Wassenaar (2021), and Kim et al. (2020) identified that the COVID-19 pandemic had a definite impact on the mental health of South Africans. More research is needed in the field to understand the possible causes and consequences of the pandemic and explicitly focusing on teacher mental health and well-being. As a result of the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on South Africans and the evident public unrest displayed through incidents such as looting and the rise of gender-based violence, this gap in the literature is concerning. While these factors provide a general overview of the impact of COVID-19 globally and in South Africa in terms of mental health and socio-economic impacts, it is important to note that different sectors of society, such as the education sector, also had various factors that shaped their experiences and research response to the pandemic.

2.3 Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The following section focuses on the literature surrounding global education and the South African sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3.1 Global Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Almost all education systems across the globe have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, COVID-19 and its health and safety regulations affected nearly 63 million secondary and primary school teachers, 1,5 billion students, and 70 per cent of the global student population (Hatefi et al., 2020). In 2020, the OECD found that 102 countries had closed all schools, leaving 900 million learners away from school (Schleicher, 2020). According to a joint report conducted by the World Bank Group, UNESCO, and United Nations Children's Fund (2021), implementing strategies such as distance learning assisted many schools and institutions in adapting to school closures that affected learning time and the curriculum by implementing and utilising digital resources. Education sectors across the globe embarked on integrating distance education that focused on digital teaching and learning in their communities (Sari & Nayır, 2020). Countries with a disadvantaged distance education infrastructure, such as Turkey, introduced ODL by implementing six television channels for

education; others, such as South Africa, found solutions by utilising online learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams and Zoom (Sari & Nayır, 2020). Hence, countries tailored their strategies to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tertiary institutions and schools (Sari & Nayır, 2020).

Tertiary institutions had to adapt their operations in higher education by following country-specific national regulations (Eloff & Dittrich, 2021; Fish, 2020). In 2020, Marinoni et al. surveyed higher education institutions in 109 countries and found that almost all the institutions indicated that COVID-19 had impacted them. From these countries, 59 per cent of the institutions indicated that all campus activities had stopped, and the institutions had temporarily closed during the pandemic (Marinoni et al., 2020). A subgroup of 77 per cent of African institutions (59 per cent of the 109 countries studied) experienced temporary closures and halted academic activity on campuses (Marinoni et al., 2020). Primarily, adjusting to the situational context of the pandemic meant that most universities had to make tectonic adjustments to the learning environments, such as the integration of “HyFlex learning”, which refers to a learning environment in which students can adapt mode and time of participation during the learning process (Eloff & Dittrich, 2021; Budiman, 2020; Domina et al., 2021; Faize & Nawaz, 2020; Hussein et al., 2020). Hence, two-thirds of the higher learning institutions indicated that classroom teaching was replaced by distance teaching and learning, with 60 per cent reporting improved virtual mobility and collaborative online learning (Marinoni et al., 2020). While most higher education institutions across the globe found mobility in implementing a shift in functioning, schools followed similar strategies in adapting to the pandemic’s restrictions. According to Daniel (2020), schools had to consider preparations, student needs, reassurance of school stakeholders, approaches to distance education, curriculum, assessments, resources, and the impact of all the above-mentioned elements on the school during the COVID-19 pandemic (Daniel, 2020).

Schools had to adapt their calendars and curriculums to closures, social distancing requirements, and reduced teaching and learning time (Azevedo et al., 2021b). Primarily, the issue of limited on-site learning meant that most schools had to implement measures such as ODL to prevent learning losses (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Distance education during school closures meant that digital resources became the lifeline for education and pushed teachers and students to adapt to teach and learn online rapidly (Azevedo et al., 2021). Most schools had to create measures to deal with lockdown-related school closures, social distancing regulations,

contact tracing, isolation of school stakeholders, integration of ODL, teacher training, learner support, and technological resources (Keevy et al., 2021). While the implementation of digital learning seems simplistic to execute globally, digital and distance learning strategies had dramatic consequences on school stakeholders, including income loss due to lost learning time and the further amplification of social inequality in learning opportunities, especially in vulnerable countries such as South Africa (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020).

2.3.2 Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the “digital divide” in South African schools. “Digital divide” refers to inequalities in access to ICT (Furuholt & Kristiansen, 2007; Brown & Czerniewicz, 2010) or digital exclusion and lack of material resources (Liebenberg, 2018; Li & Ranieri, 2013). While digital and distance learning provides a solution for schools in combatting the loss of learning caused by the pandemic, it is important to note that developing countries such as South Africa faced various challenges in implementing ODL during the pandemic. Multiple perspectives on this phenomenon exist. While some researchers attribute the lack of digital resources to poverty, others argue that the types of schools in South Africa divide populations in terms of class (Soudien et al., 2021; Straubhaar et al., 2012; Dube, 2020).

As South Africa is a democracy, South African citizens have been able to establish companies that can provide education in the form of private schools, colleges, and universities (Waghid & Waghid, 2017). Citizens are also entitled to freedom of association, meaning parents can enrol their children at private schools, ex-model C schools, or public schools. Various scholars argue that these different schools exacerbate education inequality in South Africa (Parker et al., 2020). The South African educational system consists of public or government schools, independent or private schools, and ex-model C schools (Booyse, 2011).

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit South Africa, the situational context impacted stakeholders such as teachers, learners, and parents associated with public, ex-model C, and private schools (Keevy et al., 2021). South African schools closed in March 2020 (South African Government, 2022a). Teachers experienced various obstacles during the shutdown, depending on the type of school where they worked (Le Grange, 2020). While private, independent school stakeholders could adopt ODL in a matter of days, public state-owned schools could not adopt ODL at the same rate (Mahaye, 2020). Many communities surrounding these schools did not have access to the technology that would have allowed them to participate in online or remote learning

(Keevy et al., 2021). Those schools based in rural areas were more likely to be excluded from education for some time during the pandemic (Pillay, 2019). This scenario led to learning loss.

The consequence of learning loss during the pandemic is an alarming issue when considering the socio-political history of South African education. This issue is evident in the vast amount of research depicting widespread South African schooling system problems since 1996. Since the enforcement of the South African Schools Act in 1996, the flawed South African schooling system has been subject to investigation by researchers such as Bloch (2009), who found in 2009 that 60 to 80 per cent of schools at the time were dysfunctional. Bloch (2009, p. 1) warned of a looming education crisis caused by a “toxic mix” of factors, including the marginalisation between schools based on race and economic stability. Bloch (2009) argued that divisions existed between different schools, noting sharp divisions between schools in terms of the economic status of the surrounding community. Bloch (2009) reasoned that learners enrolled in elite schools, such as formerly suburban schools, were more likely to receive a higher quality of education, while learners in poor communities were disadvantaged and received the least adequate schooling, making it extremely difficult to escape poverty. Bloch (2009) argued that as a result of the lower quality of education, schools based in rural areas struggled to produce learners who developed the skills to compete in a global economy. Hence, it was the schools’ responsibility to create clear organisational structures where principals and teachers focused on providing quality education through a good work ethic and creative problem-solving (Bloch, 2009).

Since 2009, the DBE has made numerous efforts to progress transformation in schools to improve low learner achievement by integrating home language instruction at schools and providing resources to less advantaged communities. However, the divisions in schools were still prevalent before the pandemic in 2020. At the start of the pandemic in March 2021, most rural schooling communities could not develop ODL and didactical tactics such as blended learning (Mahaye, 2020). According to Dube (2020, p. 4), there was a lack of “infrastructure, unavailability of electricity, electronic tools, and qualified teachers” who could assist with integrating remote or online schooling in these areas. Those schools in more privileged areas had the opportunity to continue learning either online or remotely as they had sufficient resources. Therefore, some schools could continue teaching while others closed, resulting in inequities in learning, disruption, funding, employment losses, and learning facilities, among other things (Alsayed et al., 2020), further widening the gap between rich and poor (Dube,

2020). Although those schools with the resources to implement ODL were privileged to have had the opportunity to develop electronic education practices, adapting to these practices was taxing on the social and emotional learning of teachers functioning in both rural (Palmer et al., 2021) and private schools. It required adjustment to the new learning environment.

This section has discussed the global and South African social contexts created by the implementation of COVID-19 health and safety restrictions and guidelines. In response to the worldwide health crisis, societies across the globe doubted the efficacy and usefulness of regulations and, later on, even the vaccines intended to minimise the negative consequences of the virus. As a result, social phenomena such as the anti-vax and anti-mask movements developed on social media (Iwai et al., 2021). Another consequence of the pandemic was that implementing regulations led to the temporary closure of economic sectors, which meant that businesses, schools, and tertiary institutions had to close to minimise social contact. In 2020, these economic disruptions led to a global recession and individuals lost their jobs, were retrenched, or took salary cuts (Stephany et al., 2020). In the South African economy, increased unemployment and economic input meant increased poverty and scarcity of jobs (Chitiga-Mabugu et al., 2020; Adebisi et al., 2021). The socio-economic impact later caused increased social unrest such as looting and increased crime including gender-based violence in South Africa. Long economic strain also led to global phenomena such as the great resignation, in which many employees who felt that they had worked too hard for too long in understaffed sectors decided to resign (Makoni, 2021; Bhattacharya & Rach, 2021; Campbell, 2020; John et al., 2020; Ellerbeck, 2022).

Furthermore, implementing these restrictions impacted education greatly. While restrictions focused on minimising contact between individuals, many schools and institutions had to close temporarily (Sari & Nayır, 2020). School closures halted academic activity and subsequently impacted curriculum timelines in many schools, leading to learning loss (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021), which posed a direct threat to the global sustainability agenda goals, including Goal 4: Quality education. To solve this crisis, many education sectors across the globe implemented online teaching and learning in their schooling systems (Eloff & Dittrich, 2021). While implementing these systems was convenient for countries with adequate resources and trained teachers, vulnerable nations struggled to develop digital strategies due to their socio-economic circumstances (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020).

In South Africa, schools with more resources, such as private schools, could implement online learning (Keevy et al., 2021). By contrast, schools in rural areas struggled to implement digital learning because of their lack of infrastructure and resources (Palmer et al., 2021). This situation meant that some learners continued to receive teaching and learning while others were left behind (Dube, 2020). This scenario meant inequality in learning opportunities, which widened the poverty gap (Dube, 2020). While private schools had more resources to implement ODL during the lockdown, teachers in these schools faced the major challenge of developing, implementing, and facilitating online learning (Mahaye, 2020). The job roles and responsibilities of these teachers changed. In spite of all challenges, research has been minimal. Hence, South African teachers' experiences are understudied, leading to an inadequate representation of the group in the global context.

The following section of the literature review discusses how the pandemic regulations and implementation of online learning affected teachers' roles and responsibilities and how these factors may have formed part of their subjective experiences during the pandemic. While many studies have examined the strategies that teachers used to adapt to the situational context by implementing ODL, few have focused on how this shift in job role affected teachers' subjective well-being. The following section also discusses relevant literature regarding teaching during the pandemic and teachers' subjective well-being.

2.4 Teaching During a Pandemic

While the previous section discussed the situational context surrounding the phenomenon of teacher well-being by exploring literature focused on the global and South African impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this section focuses on linking the context created by the COVID-19 pandemic to the changed roles and responsibilities of teachers.

2.4.1 Changed Teacher Roles and Responsibilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

A new era of online learning is sweeping the global education sector and changing the roles of teachers (Williamson et al., 2020). The pandemic has changed the job demands, educational environment, pedagogies, mediums, and social factors that define teaching (Williamson et al., 2020).

Globally, teachers played a critical role in assisting their employers and school communities to adapt to the circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic; hence, they had to adapt to new responsibilities (Sari & Nayır, 2020). As discussed in the previous section, many stakeholders

in education, including learners and teachers, had to stay home at the beginning of the pandemic around March 2020 due to school closures. For those schools with sufficient resources and plans to integrate digital learning, teachers had to take swift action to prepare for the uncertain time ahead (Daniel, 2020). In preparation for the stay-at-home period, teachers had to ensure that all students took their educational materials home; this also meant that teachers had to take all their resources and materials home (Daniel, 2020). When institutions with sufficient resources decided to implement ODL, schools had to train their teachers and equip them with the necessary resources. The level of competency in digital learning varies globally. Hence, some teachers had to learn new digital skills for remote teaching and online learning (Aldon et al., 2021; Sari & Nayır, 2020). Schools also had to provide teachers with the tools to teach online such as laptops, headsets, and digital storage. It was also the responsibility of teachers to provide reassurance to the learners and parents during this uncertain and stressful time. Furthermore, teachers had to adapt their assessment strategies and curriculums to ODL, resulting in a possible change in their pedagogies (Henriksen et al., 2020).

2.4.1.1 Teaching Pedagogies During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

How teaching pedagogies changed due to the pandemic is a continuously investigated topic in educational research. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic forced teachers to adapt to new practices concerning synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning (Henriksen et al., 2020). While some schools across the globe had the resources to move to online schooling to keep their learners engaged and learning, others lacked the resources to implement these strategies (Palmer et al., 2021). Regardless, the pedagogies used by most teachers who adopted ODL may have changed somewhat. While some scholars argue that change may be noted in the teaching and learning medium, such as integrating digital lessons instead of face-to-face teaching, others argue that the change lies in the pedagogies used by teachers.

Australian researchers Allen, Rowan and Singh (2020) argue that there has not been a significant change in the traditional pedagogies used by teachers during the pandemic. Although teachers integrated software facilities and functionalities into their practice, these researchers argue that teachers still pursue traditional teaching methods (Allen, Rowan & Singh, 2020). For example, technology-based forms of education such as TED talks and YouTube videos consist of different mediums (video, audio, etc.), which is different from teaching in person. However, the irony lies in the teachers in these videos who stage their

instruction in traditional ways (Biesta, 2019). While the medium differs, teachers in these videos still use teacher-centred pedagogies such as talk and chalk in their lessons, where the teacher talks and explains while others watch, listen, and learn (Biesta, 2019). Dixon et al. (2019) also support the argument that many teachers use digital mediums to teach and replicate standard teacher-centred practices. These arguments are relevant, considering that a systematic review conducted by Bergdahl and Nouri (2021) identified 152 digital learning platforms being used globally by schools; from this list, Google Classroom, Google Meet, and YouTube were the most used applications. These applications primarily use live streaming or post recorded videos (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2021). While research into a change of pedagogy in teachers is a topic under continuous study by scholars such as Bergdahl and Nouri (2021), Allen, Rowan and Singh (2020), and Biesta (2019), some researchers such as Jantjies (2020), Aldon et al. (2021) have focused on understanding the impact of implementing ICT.

2.4.1.2 Adapting to ICT and Remote Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Adapting to ICT was a challenge for many teachers across the globe (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020). COVID-19 created schools that needed teachers to be equipped to adjust to the circumstances. According to Jantjies (2020), technology is no longer a luxury but a serious element of education. Using ICT required tremendous teacher effort during the COVID-19 pandemic (Aldon et al., 2021). A qualitative analysis focusing on 700 teachers from France, Israel, Italy, and Germany identified the management of (1) distance learning stakeholders and methodologies; (2) developing distance learning assessments; and (3) developing inclusive teaching aimed at assisting learners with difficulties as some of the main challenges faced by these teachers in adopting ICT systems in their schooling communities (Aldon et al., 2021). Some teachers who participated in this study also noted the transition from teaching in the physical classroom to complex synchronous and asynchronous interactions across platforms (Aldon et al., 2021). Blau and Shamir-Inbal (2021) identified other challenges experienced by teachers in a similar study focusing on Hebrew- and Arabic-speaking schools in Israel. Teachers identified difficulties in assessing and maintaining contact with students, a lack of technological knowledge and equipment, and organisational guidance whilst adopting ODL (Blau & Shamir-Inbal, 2021). Another aspect that dramatically impacted teachers' adaptation to ODL was digital training prior to the pandemic (Tabatadze & Chachkhiani, 2021).

In a systematic review by Tabatadze and Chachkhiani (2021), 29 case studies conducted in non-Georgian language schools in Georgia identified that teachers needed professional

development opportunities to operate ODL, such as in-service teacher training and education programmes centred around specific needs. Traditional teacher training may not have equipped teachers with the skills to deal with the challenges of the pandemic (Tabatadze & Chachkhiani, 2021). Many teachers and schools may have been unprepared or unequipped to deal with the challenges of remote schooling (Tabatadze & Chachkhiani, 2021). Hence, many other researchers have also recommended that most challenges related to ODL may diminish by integrating digital tools and practices in future teacher training programmes (Vijayan, 2021). Furthermore, Martínez and Tudela-Sancho (2020) argue that integrating ICT into schools is not yet at the levels desired by UNESCO and OECD. While teachers face these challenges, researchers such as Sokal et al. (2020) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) question the consequences of COVID-19 and its challenges to teachers' subjective well-being whilst functioning in their job roles.

2.4.2 South African Teacher Roles and Responsibilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

When considering the global changing educational environment affected by the integration of ICT and ODL, one must consider how the pandemic may have affected the experiences of different stakeholders in South African schools. Depending on the type of school (public, ex-model C, and private) and the course of action the school pursued, South African teachers had to adapt to a new learning environment (Mhlanga & Moloji, 2020). While some schools closed and suspended learning, private schools operated electronically to continue their education while implementing higher alert level restrictions (Le Grange, 2020). This new environment consisted of online learning from home or school and a newly developed COVID-19-safe classroom environment. The resources and socio-economic context of the school community determined technology integration into the schooling environment (Mahaye, 2020). In some public schools based in rural areas, teachers had to pause their curriculum due to a lack of access to electronic resources held by the schooling community (Mahaye, 2020). In most private schools, teachers had to develop, implement, and facilitate online lessons through digital platforms such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams (Mhlanga & Moloji, 2020). Developing online learning meant that the modes of teaching by teachers employed in private schools changed dramatically (Mhlanga & Moloji, 2020).

Teachers in private schools quickly created online systems which required them to master technology-based skills, create online resources and curriculums, and adjust to an entirely new manner of teaching (Mhlanga & Moloji, 2020). By utilising ICT strategies, these teachers

implemented remote schooling, synchronous online classrooms, and asynchronous learning interventions that required tremendous effort from all stakeholders in educational institutions who had the opportunity to engage in these practices (Mahaye, 2020). School principals implemented health and safety measures, including mask-wearing while teaching, sanitisation procedures, screening protocols, and adaptation to a COVID-19 educational environment, which were also aspects these teachers and learners had to master (Mutongoza et al., 2021).

Globally and in the South African context, the shift in roles and responsibilities experienced by teachers may have affected their working circumstances dramatically (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020). Some scholars in social education research focused on understanding if teachers were thriving or surviving during the COVID-19 pandemic by investigating the possible link between their new working circumstances in education and teacher subjective well-being (Dabrowski, 2021; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021; Lemov, 2021).

2.5 Teacher Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Studies such as those conducted by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) and Sokal et al. (2020) focused on understanding teachers' subjective well-being during the pandemic by investigating the adverse effects or contributors to sustained well-being in teachers. Researchers focusing on the adverse effects of the pandemic on teachers' subjective well-being tend to focus on teacher burnout, attrition, turnover, and stress (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021; Sokal et al., 2020). By contrast, other researchers such as Valentyn et al. (2020) investigate topics such as teacher resilience. I will discuss these insightful studies in the following section.

2.5.1 Teacher Burnout and Stress

Various researchers had noted teacher burnout occurring before the pandemic as an international phenomenon (Johnson et al., 2005; Hakanen et al., 2006; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Maslach et al. 2001; Montgomery & Rupp 2005; Stoeber & Rennert 2007). Hence, many studies such as those conducted by Harmsen et al. (2018), Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and McCarthy et al. (2014) focused on identifying teachers' predictors, correlations, and perceptions regarding burnout internationally before the pandemic.

According to Harmsen et al. (2018), a causal relationship exists between teacher stress, burnout, and attrition. There are many predictors of teacher burnout; the literature notes stress as one of the main contributors to burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). According to Sokal et al. (2020), Van Veldhoven (1996) identified stress experienced by teachers as being present in

their experiences of negative emotions and discontent while functioning in their job role. Stressors contributing to teacher burnout may be a mismatch between resources and job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; McCarthy et al., 2014). By contrast, researchers such as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017, p. 775) found that stressors such as “discipline problems, time pressure, low student motivation, and value dissonance” caused emotional exhaustion and, in some instances, depersonalisation in teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Literature on teacher burnout in Spain, Finland, Iran, and Germany before COVID-19 proved that factors such as emotional exhaustion and time pressure were the strongest predictors of what caused stress in teachers (Betoret, 2009; Hakanen et al., 2006; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021).

Many researchers have focused on understanding the predictors and contributors to teachers’ subjective well-being in their respective societies. In a longitudinal study by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), it was found that teacher perceptions of different job demands and resources, emotional exhaustion, lowered motivation, and subjective well-being were associated with increased time pressure. This study analysed the perceptions of 262 Norwegian high school teachers as participants. Furthermore, the study noted that an increase in protective resources and a decrease in job demand were needed to reduce the time pressure experienced by teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). In the United States, stress and burnout were pervasive among teachers employed in the public schooling sector in urban schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, where job demands were often high and resources were low (Bottiani et al., 2019). Studies such as the one by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) identified some trends and themes in teachers’ perceptions of stress and burnout. Nevertheless, it is important to note that each data set, group of participants, or even individual teachers will have many factors influencing their perceptions of subjective well-being, such as stress and burnout. While these burnout predictors were evident in Norwegian teachers’ perceptions, there were significant differences in teacher burnout across cultures and genders (Aboagye et al., 2018). For example, South African teachers found themselves in a situational context where HIV/AIDS is highly prevalent (Necho et al., 2021). According to Johnson and Naidoo (2017), South African teachers have to deal with HIV/AIDS issues whilst working in their already stressful profession. Hence, researchers need to consider these factors when investigating teacher burnout in South African society (Johnson & Naidoo, 2017). By contrast, studies such as those conducted by Alarcon (2011) and Clunies-Ross et al. (2008) focused on the consequences of burnout rather than its predictors.

Researchers have studied the consequences of teacher burnout across the globe. Qualitative and quantitative research presents many consequences and predictors of teacher burnout. For example, many qualitative studies have found that high stress in teachers results in decreased quality of instruction, poor teacher health, and negative teacher subjective well-being (Alarcon, 2011; Clunies-Ross et al., 2008, Harmsen et al., 2018). Quantitative researchers such as Pruski et al. (2013) focused more on other more quantifiable consequences, such as the rates at which teacher burnout was related to attrition and turnover rates in the profession. Teachers primarily leave the profession due to retirement or attrition. According to Ingersol (2001), attrition in the education sector is higher than in other professions. While many factors contribute to teacher attrition, insightful findings such as those gathered by Subair and Talabi (2015) exist around which teachers leave the profession and why these teachers choose to do so.

2.5.2 Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition is a significant issue globally (Wushishi et al., 2014). According to Pruski et al. (2013), approximately 50 per cent of teachers resigned teaching within their first five years. Belfield et al. (2018) found that only 60 per cent of teachers working in England would be likely to continue in the profession after five years of employment. In the United Kingdom, Subair and Talabi (2015) found that 8 per cent of teachers resigned in the first three years of employment. According to García and Weiss (2019), novice teachers are more likely to leave the profession, with rates as high as 50 per cent in low-income areas, hence, 40 per cent of these teachers would leave the profession. Attrition is also an issue in South African schools. Many researchers have focused on this topic, including Draper and Hofmeyer (2016) who argue that more South African teachers are leaving the profession than returning to the profession. Attrition is a significant issue in education because of the funds required for new employee training and professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Therefore, researchers such as Smithers and Robinson (2000) examined aspects that drove teachers out of the profession. They found that 57,8 per cent of teachers left the profession due to workload; 24,5 per cent left because of salary concerns; 21,5 per cent left because of stress; 17,5 per cent left due to a lack of resources and facilities; 17,6 per cent left as a result of other career opportunities; 21,6 per cent left because of public perceptions of their status; 37 per cent left because of a lack of government initiatives; and 10,8 per cent left as a result of conflict with other stakeholders in the educational environment (Smithers & Robinson, 2000, p. 2). Teacher attrition might now have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Soudien et al., 2021).

More research is needed to understand the extent to which attrition may or may not have grown during the COVID-19 pandemic by considering stress and burnout in teachers (Trinidad, 2021).

Before COVID-19, it was evident that long-term stressful working conditions caused teachers to burnout or leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Owing to the situational circumstances posed by the pandemic, antecedents that caused these adverse effects on teachers' mental health may have changed. Although burnout, attrition, and other adverse aspects influencing the subjective well-being of teachers are critical topics in educational research, many scholars, such as Valentyn et al. (2020), focus on identifying the aspects that motivate and keep teachers in the profession. Hence, the topic of resilience has inspired many researchers such as McDonough et al. (2021) to explore the well-being of teachers.

2.5.3 Teacher Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Valentyn et al. (2020) believe that one aspect influencing an individual's subjective well-being during the pandemic may be their psychological reaction to change. The pandemic might have caused a threat of destruction to the individual's identity and/or their role in society; or the individual might have reacted to the changed circumstances by being brave and resilient to combat the threat of the situation, resulting in developing skills related to stress management (Valentyn et al., 2020). Teachers have worked through a pandemic that has changed their pedagogies, mediums of teaching, and teaching environments. Although these circumstances have led to some teachers leaving the profession, others have remained resilient (Kangas-Dick & O'Shaughnessy, 2020). Numerous studies focus on the phenomenon of resilience in education. While some studies investigate the resilience of learners or students, others explore teacher resilience.

Researchers in different fields and theoretical frameworks have shaped the field of teacher resilience over the past three decades as a topic in education. Primarily, many researchers regard teacher resilience as a social–ecological concept. This belief is evident in the views of scholars such as Howard et al. (1999), Luthar et al. (2000), and Rutter (1990). Mansfield et al. (2018, p. 16) who were among the first researchers to conceptualise resilience as a “relative, multidimensional, and developmental construct”. Other researchers have argued that resilience presumes the presence of a threat to the current situation and is thus a positive response to conditions of adversity or that the relationship between a social system and an individual influences resilience (Gordon et al., 2000; Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten et al., 1999). These early conceptualisations developed over the next few years into more

complex ideas such as that of Ungar (2013) who argued that teacher resilience is affected by teacher values, developmental goals, and organisational and political influences. Therefore, teacher resilience is the responsibility of teachers and their schools. This conceptualisation birthed a social–ecological understanding of teacher resilience (Ungar, 2013). There is a prevalence of research focused on understanding resilience as an environment- and process-oriented concept that emphasises organisational policy and culture, relationships, and intellectual environments in teacher resilience (Manfield et al., 2018).

Research in more recent years has continued to prove this conceptualisation correct. In 2018, Peixoto et al. (2018) conducted a study focusing on 765 pre-service teachers based in Germany, Malta, Ireland, and Portugal. Their study formed part of the Enhancing Teacher Resilience in Europe initiative. As part of the project, researchers studied subjective perceptions, such as efficacy, commitment, private life and rumination, and social and contextual factors such as support in the school context (Peixoto et al., 2018). The survey results identified self-efficiency as one of the main factors of teacher resilience (Peixoto et al., 2018). The study also identified differences between contextual factors influencing teacher resilience in different countries (Peixoto et al., 2018). This suggests that teacher resilience outcomes depend highly on the context in which teachers work (Manfield et al., 2018). Therefore, researchers such as Mansfield et al. (2018, p. 74) argue that teacher resilience is relative and that “it is a multidimensional and developmental construct which encompasses positive adaptation within a given context of significant adversity”. Ainsworth and Oldfield (2019) also identified the value of contextual influences in their 2019 study which used questionnaire data collected from 226 teachers in the United Kingdom. The study found that it was necessary to train teachers with skills that promoted school integration, confidence, stress, and control (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019). By equipping teachers with skills to promote these factors, the researchers noted that these teachers had more commitment to the profession (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019) hence providing an opportunity for collaboration, reflection, and crucial awareness in their roles as teachers (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019). Teachers with these skills could also critically identify their progress in reaching their professional goals and adapt to collaborative working environments thereby increasing the chances that teachers could positively adapt to their contexts (Ainsworth & Oldfield, 2019).

To adapt to these contexts and challenges, scholars such as McDonough et al. (2021) reason that teachers require opportunities to learn about resilience in context through collective

professional training for in-service and pre-service teachers. Training accompanied with a focus on thinking dispositions may assist teachers in achieving resilience outcomes and create meaningful learning opportunities in their contexts (McGraw & McDonough, 2019). McGraw and McDonough (2019) argue that training in these psychosocial skills is imperative for professional development. Pre-service teacher training programmes often overlook preparation and adaptation to the socio-emotional aspects of teaching, resulting in overwhelming psychological states that lead to burnout and attrition (Groves, 2021; Erickson et al., 2005; Gray & Taie, 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Integration of professional development programmes in light of resilience has shown promising improvements in teacher integration, confidence, stress control, and the overall development of personal and contextual protective factors (Mansfield et al., 2018). Researchers also regard support as a factor that influences teacher resilience. Researchers such as Cefai and Cavioni (2014), Flores (2018), Kangas-Dick and O'Shaughnessy (2020), Castro et al. (2010), Day and Day (2013); Day and Gu (2013) and Sumsion (2004) found that support from colleagues, effective leadership, a good school atmosphere, and caring and supportive relationships with colleagues were among the factors that influenced a teacher's ability to be resilient (Mansfield et al., 2018).

Furthermore, scholars such as Ebersöhn et al. (2015) have argued that researchers need to create a partnership that may assist those countries with socially transforming societies that do not have in-service teacher training and teacher professional development structures. Hence, research can assist societies such as South Africa in building knowledge about the interventions that may support teacher resilience (Ebersöhn et al., 2015). Although much research exists about understanding teacher resilience before the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to note that the contexts, social aspects in teaching environments, and training required to function as a teacher during this pandemic have changed dramatically since before the pandemic (Mahaye, 2020). Hence, research into teacher well-being during the pandemic may reveal how new aspects influence teachers (Schleicher, 2020). It may also reveal the new context and psychological aspects that teachers must deal with daily.

There is a need for more research into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers' subjective well-being. Few studies have explored this topic using South African teachers as a sample in the context of the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, research presented that South African teachers were in an occupation with high levels of work-related burnout, and emotional and physical exhaustion (Hattie & Yates, 2013; Kim et al., 2020; Lazarević, 2019). Researchers

such as Molero et al. (2019) proved this in a systematic review illustrating the causes of teacher burnout. Their findings indicate that interactions with stakeholders, work overload, and professional development requirements increase teacher stress, leading to burnout syndrome (Molero et al., 2019). Research is yet to address these psychological topics considering teachers during and after the pandemic.

2.6 Studying Teacher Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Although some teachers remained resilient during the pandemic while others left the profession, it is important to understand how the phenomenon of teaching during a pandemic may have affected their subjective well-being. Many researchers have investigated the topic of subjective well-being during a pandemic by focusing on the impact of change perceived in their respective communities (Allen, Jerrim & Sims, 2020; Fancourt et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2020). Most researchers study well-being during the pandemic by exploring health, social and economic behaviour, and status as causal factors resulting in subjective well-being (De Neve et al., 2013). Researchers primarily in psychology have used various research strategies to identify the environmental factors, social factors, precursors, or consequences of COVID-19 on one's mental health and subjective well-being (Slade et al., 2017). Empirical studies use differing discipline-specific theoretical frameworks usually situated in their relevant field of choice (McCallum et al., 2017). Researchers in psychology primarily use hedonistic or desire theories that look at the perceptions and perspectives of individuals. Researchers also use objective list theories that relate to an individual's attitude to external factors (Benjamin et al., 2014; Crisp, 2017; Haybron, 2021). Hedonic theories of well-being consider aspects such as life satisfaction and negative and positive emotions (Bankhead et al., 2020). Eudaimonia theories of well-being are also used by these scholars who explore factors in an individual's life related to the "six factor model of psychological well-being" such as "positive relationships, autonomy, personal growth, meaning and purpose, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery" (Bankhead et al., 2020, p. 4). Studies use these theories in subfields of psychology, such as clinical, personality, positive, or developmental theories (Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2013).

Although many theories of well-being have developed over the past two decades, researchers use different theories depending on their field of study. There is a prevalence of scholars using the theories developed by Diener, Ryff, Keyes, and Seligman in education research. Diener (1984) introduced the "tripartite model of subjective well-being", one of the oldest theories

known in well-being research. Diener's (1984) model perceives subjective well-being as consisting of three components known as (1) positive affect, which refers to feeling positive emotions in reaction to life or changes in one's life; (2) negative affect, which refers to feeling negative emotions such as sadness in reaction to one's life or changes in life experiences; and (3) life satisfaction, which refers to one's perception of life (Diener, 2009). Over time, new conceptualisations of subjective well-being developed, such as Seligman's PERMA model of flourish. Seligman's theory gained popularity because it consists of independently pursued and interpreted dimensions which work together to contribute to subjective well-being (Seligman, 2018). Seligman is well-known across the globe for being the founding father of positive psychology, which birthed his theory. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014) regard the PERMA model of flourish as the study of positive human functioning and flourishing on multiple levels including the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Many scholars and schools have used the PERMA+ model in education. Internationally, the field of positive education has produced various strength-based interventions sourced from successful research studies that aimed to address how the theory applies in the educational context (Chodkiewicz & Boyle, 2017; White & Kern, 2018). Owing to the multifunctionality of this theory, this study will use the PERMA+ model of flourish as its theoretical framework.

In conclusion, this section of Chapter 2 has discussed how teachers across the globe faced the challenge of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, adapting to the circumstances meant that teachers employed in schools with adequate resources had to change their professional roles and responsibilities by adjusting their curriculums and pedagogies while integrating ICT and ODL. Few studies have focused on understanding the experiences that led some teachers to leave teaching while others remained resilient and kept working to hinder learning loss.

In South Africa, the course of action followed by teachers differed due to differences in the resources held by public and private schools. While those teachers employed in private schools had more resources to integrate online learning than in public schools, they also had to work harder to avoid learning loss. At the same time, it is evident that South African teachers were in a profession with high burnout, attrition, and stress levels even before COVID-19. Minimal research has focused on the population of South African teachers who have had to adapt to the circumstances within a flawed education system with a past of inequality and class division.

The experiences of South African teachers are not adequately represented in global research focusing on subjective well-being during the pandemic. Hence, understanding and exploring teachers' lived experiences during the pandemic may reveal more profound insights into how the COVID-19 pandemic shaped their social realities.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Dr Martin Seligman, the father of positive psychology, developed the PERMA model of flourish. In 2017 SAHMRI (2020) developed the newly adapted PERMA+ model to provide a realistic view of understanding the subjective well-being of individuals across the globe (Iasiello et al., 2017). The model consists of attributes that contribute to an individual's subjective well-being when positively strengthened (Seligman, 2013). Researchers have used the original PERMA model of flourish in various research studies on a global scale. The model is inclusive and used by many South African researchers in subjective well-being studies, such as Rothmann, Redelinghuys (2020), Maduagwu et al. (2019), Turner and Theilking (2019), Eloff and Dittrich (2021), and Wessels and Wood (2019). SAHMRI (2017) adapted Seligman's original model by adding additional dimensions as a result of their beneficial application in previous studies. The multidimensional conceptualisation of subjective well-being illustrated by the model provides researchers with a holistic view whilst investigating subjective well-being in the educational context (Lai et al., 2018).

2.7.1 The PERMA+ Model of Flourish: Core Theories and Concepts

As discussed in Chapter 1, Seligman (2013) argued that well-being consists of the following dimensions: (P) positive emotions; (E) engagement; (R) relationships; (M) meaning; and (A) accomplishment (Lyubomirsky, 2011; Seligman, 2013). Each dimension of the PERMA model of flourish contributes to subjective well-being and can be measured subjectively (Seligman, 2013). SAHMRI (2017) built on the theory by adding additional dimensions to Seligman's model, namely optimism, physical activity, nutrition, and sleep (Iasiello et al., 2017).

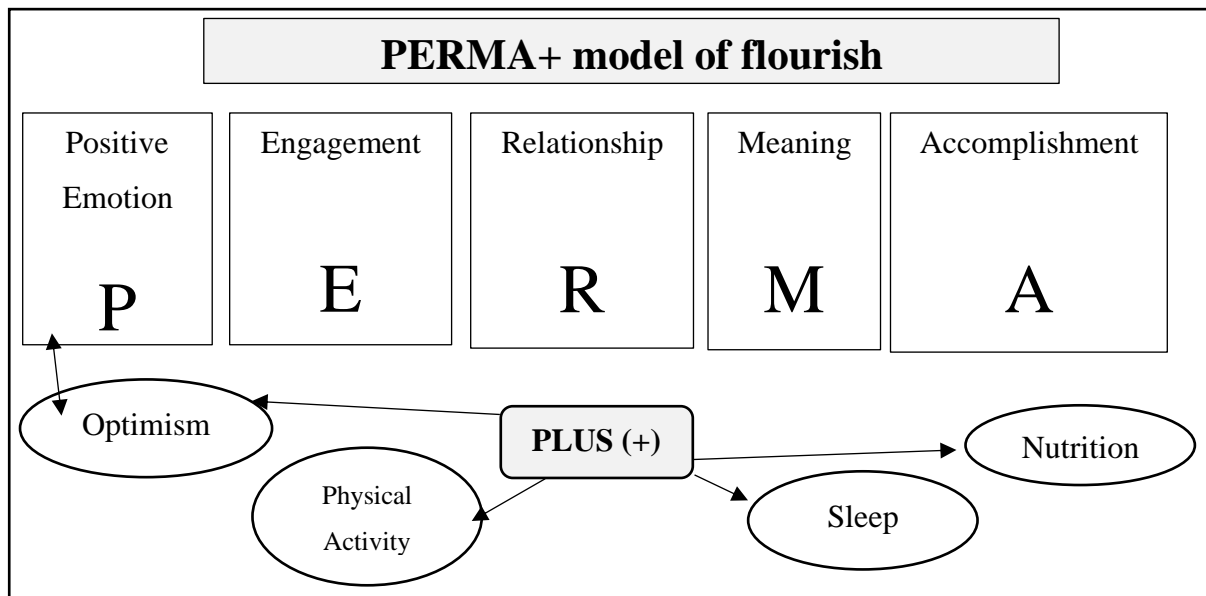


Figure 2. 1: PERMA+ model of flourish

In Figure 2. 1, “optimism” joins Seligman’s “positive emotions” dimension. “Positive emotions” refers to hedonistic feelings of happiness in the individual, such as joy or contentment (Kern et al., 2015; Seligman, 2013). “Optimism” refers to the acceptance of experiencing virtuous results in different life situations (Scheier & Carver, 1992). More optimistic individuals tend to be more resilient in coping with life stressors (Carver et al., 2010). “Engagement” is the psychological connection between an individual and an aspect or activity of their life, otherwise known as “flow”. When matching a significant life challenge to one’s strengths, one reaches the state of “flow”. The “relationships” dimension refers to the subjective experience of relationships in social connectedness, feelings of acceptance, appreciation, care, or support in a social group (Kern et al., 2015; Seligman, 2013). The “meaning” dimension is conceptualised by considering feelings of worth, attitude, or connection to a “greater power” (Kern et al., 2015). “Accomplishment” emphasises the experience of achieving the goals and reaching milestones that are important in an individual’s life (Kern et al., 2015). SAHMRI (2017) added “physical activity” as a dimension. The institute believes that physical and mental health work hand in hand. This belief is further supported by integrating “nutrition” and “sleep” into the model to create a holistic picture of subjective well-being. Although the model depicts a holistic approach to perceiving subjective well-being, its primary father model, the PERMA model of flourish, criticised its implementation in psychological interventions. Some scholars regard the positive psychology model as an impractical stance promoting forced optimistic thinking (Bury et al., 2019). I kept this critique in mind whilst conducting this study.

2.7.2 Theoretical Perspective

This study followed an inductive reasoning approach using a “bottom-up” strategy in which I redefined general concepts to precise terms (Patten & Newhart, 2017). By using the philosophical assumptions of the interpretivism and social constructivism paradigms in this qualitative study, the PERMA+ model of flourish served as the study’s theoretical framework to explore teachers’ lived experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic. This strategy was appropriate due to the nature of the research question. This study did not aim to measure or test teacher well-being experiences during a pandemic. Instead, the research explored teachers’ insights, perspectives, and meanings related to their subjective well-being while teaching during the pandemic. I regarded these experiences, perspectives, and meanings formed during the phenomenon as the source of thematic concepts during the data gathering and analysis. Hence, I employed a phenomenological research design using multiple data gathering methods and analysis techniques.

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, part one of this chapter discussed literature related to teachers’ subjective well-being and the COVID-19 pandemic. First, I discussed the situational context created by implementing COVID-19 health and safety guidelines and restrictions globally and in South Africa. After that, I discussed the impact of COVID-19 on education and how implementing health and safety guidelines changed the educational context in schools. I then focused on how the new educational context impacted the roles and responsibilities of teachers and how this change in professional identity could impact teacher subjective well-being. Lastly, I discussed the different ways in which scholars study teacher subjective well-being. This review led me to the selection of my theoretical framework. In part two of this chapter, I discussed the utility and suitability of the PERMA+ model of flourish for this study and further elaborated on my theoretical perspective.

The following chapter, Chapter 3, discusses the research methodology applied to this study by focusing on the research approach, methods, and philosophical paradigm.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the relevant literature and the theoretical framework which led me to undertake this study. I identified a gap in the literature related to teaching during a pandemic and the possible impact this phenomenon may have on teacher well-being, particularly in the understudied population of South African private school teachers. I developed an appropriate research question central to the identified problem by reviewing the literature on this topic, that is, “What were teachers’ experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic?” This chapter will describe the appropriate research methodology and design to answer the research question.

According to De Vaus (2001), a research design refers to the overall outline which describes a study’s focus, purpose, and expectations. Researchers base their research designs on the research question and the problem it aims to identify (De Vaus, 2001). I used suitable research methods to collect and interpret data to answer the research question. Hence, the research methodology and design served as the blueprint and plan of action that I pursued to gather and interpret the data through appropriate procedures, processes, tools, techniques, and steps. In Chapter 1, I briefly discussed the appropriate research methodology and design selected for this study. This chapter adds detail to my discussion by identifying the appropriate research approach, paradigm, design, methods, sample, and data interpretation techniques central to this study. After discussing the suitable approach, philosophical assumptions, data gathering methods, participants involved, and the data analysis process, the chapter focuses on the quality criteria and ethical considerations adhered to during this study.

3.2 Research Approach

According to Mohajan (2018), research must involve a well-planned, disciplined, and ordered strategy to achieve appropriate results. Different philosophical paradigms, discourses, and methodologies guide the research process. Hence, researchers must use appropriate strategies or approaches to conducting research (Mohajan, 2018). There are three main approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. For this study, I used a qualitative research approach.

Qualitative research is narrative and falls into the descriptive category of research (Walia, 2015). Researchers use this approach primarily to explore narrative concepts such as

perceptions, individual experiences, or written data (Maree, 2016). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research intends to understand phenomena by studying subjective meanings and experiences (Leedy et al., 2021, p. 269) that cannot be generalised or numerically calculated (Maree, 2016).

Qualitative researchers have an interpretive epistemological orientation and an idealist or social constructivist ontological orientation (Maree, 2016). These researchers see reality as socially constructed and understood objectively (Rahman, 2017, Corbetta, 2003; Ryan, 2018; Pham, 2018). Usually, qualitative researchers use data gathering strategies such as interviews or case studies (Maree, 2016). Some researchers have mixed the principles from these approaches and conducted studies using mixed methods to gather qualitative and quantitative data from interviews and surveys (Maree, 2016). Researchers use this approach to develop theories by exploring the world in behavioural, mental, and social contexts (Christensen et al., 2014). Qualitative studies are usually narrative, and the findings exhibit specific and detailed contextual descriptions (Christensen et al., 2014).

Therefore, I adopted a qualitative approach to conduct this study which focused on exploring an understanding or perception of the social construction of reality (Christensen et al., 2014). This approach was suitable because of the study's interpretive nature and intent to explore teachers' subjective perceptions and embodied experiences. The study also explored the socially constructed reality developed by the teachers during the pandemic to identify their subjective well-being experiences using multiple data gathering methods known as triangulation. I used pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interviews as data gathering methods. According to Christensen et al. (2014, p. 69), triangulation refers to the use of multiple research methods, data sources, and perspectives to "cross-check and corroborate research data and conclusions". Furthermore, I explored the teachers' experiences in their natural settings, such as the school environment. Studying an individual in their natural setting is a crucial characteristic of qualitative research (Christensen et al., 2014).

I applied a qualitative research approach to this study in the following manner. First, the study relied on multiple data sources, including interviews, narrative reflections, and pictures representing teachers' experiences of subjective well-being. I used triangulation of these data sources to construct a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of teaching during the pandemic. I gathered this data from a small sample of eight teachers from two private schools in South Africa. The process used to interpret this data in order to understand the subjective

perspectives of the participants will be further explained later in this chapter. The thematic interpretation of the data led to a deeper understanding of the teachers' underlying trends and motivations in the study. I used these strategies to understand and explain the phenomenon of South African teachers' subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, I chose a qualitative approach due to the nature of the research question, which explored the phenomenon of teachers' subjective well-being during the pandemic by considering the perspectives, meanings, and experiences of their subjective well-being. The research approach was both suitable and practical for this study. Furthermore, the qualitative approach suited the interpretivist and social constructivist paradigm aligned with this study which I will discuss in the next section of the chapter (Sefotho, 2018).

3.3 Research Paradigm

3.3.1 The Nature and Use of a Research Paradigm

Guba (1990, p. 17) gives us one of the earliest definitions of a paradigm which reads, "A basic set of beliefs that guide action". A research paradigm helps the researcher to understand the nature of reality (ontology), the acquisition of knowledge (epistemology), and how one comes to understand this knowledge (methodological stance) (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) and it addresses the application of values, beliefs, and judgement during the research process (axiology). The research paradigm assists the researcher in predicting possible limitations and benefits in the research methodology and design. I selected a social constructivist (interpretivist) research paradigm for this study. The following section will discuss the application of this paradigm.

3.3.2 Applying the Social Constructivist Paradigm to This Study

The interpretivist paradigm aligns with the qualitative research approach. Interpretivism forms part of the modernist category of paradigms (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Interpretivism's related variations include social constructivism, hermeneutics, and symbolic interactionism (Collins, 2018). For this study, I used the social constructivist variation of interpretivism.

Theoretically, the social constructivist paradigm supports the assumption that multiple socially constructed realities exist and that each individual has a subjective interpretation of this reality (Maree, 2016). According to Crotty (1998), individuals create meaning by negotiating and understanding these realities. Hence, knowledge is generated through meaning. This process is relative and is based on time, context, culture, and values (Pfadenhauer & Knoblauch, 2018).

Social constructivists strive to understand social phenomena and provide a fluid definition of the situation created through social interactions (Saunders et al., 2019).

Usually, these researchers conduct studies that illustrate how a meaning system generates and sustains itself depending on the values of an individual or group in a particular context (Silova et al., 2017). The data gathering methods associated with this paradigm are naturalistic, which means that researchers use data gathering strategies such as interviews and observation to study phenomena in a natural setting (Dudovskiy, 2018). The constructivist paradigm was appropriate for this study because it focused on understanding the teachers' subjective experiences and meanings in their social realities which were affected by teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. I achieved a deeper understanding of their subjective experiences and the meaning tied to the realities of these individuals in their natural settings (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, I aimed to contextually understand the teachers' experiences concerning their subjective well-being in the particular context of teaching and used this strategy by considering the social agents and circumstantial aspects that may have affected their unique lived experiences. Hence, this study abided by the assumptions of social constructivist paradigms.

3.3.2.1 The Relativist Ontological Stance. Sefotho (2018) argues that ontology is the philosophical study of individual perception of reality. Social constructivism supports the underlying assumptions of a relativist ontology (Dudovskiy, 2018). The relativist ontological stance sees reality as subjective and based on meanings and understandings of experience. This stance draws from idealism, which supports the idea that human consciousness creates subjective reality (Wilson, 2003). The qualitative nature of this study supports the relativist ontological stance due to the assumption that humans construct reality and truth through interaction in a specific context; hence reality is not objective or separate from the individual (Bell et al., 2018). This paradigm supports the existence of numerous realities and meanings that one can restructure through interactions (Maree, 2016). Relativism supports the argument that there are multiple ways of understanding reality by considering the individual's social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Sexton & Griffin, 1997; Sefotho, 2018). Realities are specific and relativists aim to understand, describe, and interpret the truths constructed by social actors.

Individuals, such as the teachers taking part in this study, create their interpretations of their socially constructed realities (Maree, 2016). I applied this ontological stance to this study by exploring the teachers' interpretations, meanings, and perspectives about their social world which they constructed while teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic (Maree, 2016). I interpreted the teachers' realities and world views as relative and described their meaning of their world. Grix (20001) argues that this process allows the researcher to understand the participant's world and society in which they function as individuals. Hence, I interpreted pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interviews from the teachers who presented their subjective well-being experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic as aligned with the relativist ontology. This strategy allowed me to understand and explore the teachers' subjective experiences in this study.

3.3.2.2 The Subjectivist Epistemological Stance.

Epistemology is the method of acquiring knowledge (Sefotho, 2018). A subjectivist epistemology suits the constructivist paradigm. Subjectivism supports the assumption that knowledge filters through linguistic, gender, social class, race, and culture (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Interpretation of reality plays a significant role in this epistemology. While this stance supports the assumption that the observers' value-led interpretations influence observations, they also believe that the observer influences the observed (Levers, 2013). Interpretation and interaction are crucial to understanding and constructing the underlying meaning of reality (Sefotho, 2018; Crotty, 1998). Hence, I believe that knowledge is constructed socially or individually through interaction and reflection on those interactions.

Subjectivist epistemology was suitable for this study. The South African teachers created social realities and interpretations of these realities while teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. They shaped their experiences by interacting with other individuals in society and creating knowledge (Leedy et al., 2019). The subjectivist stance allowed me to believe that social agents such as learners, peers, colleagues, partners, and other sources of social interaction experienced and perceived by the research participants may have influenced their subjective interpretations and conceptualisations of reality. This assumption also applies to the participants' socio-cultural background, self-perception, historical setting, and social hierarchy. This epistemological stance promotes rich data gathering, revealing an in-depth understanding of the thinking patterns, possible influences, and values which may have led to the teachers developing a precise understanding of their reality. Hence, using subjectivist epistemology

allowed me to understand and construct the meaning of the research participants' experiences of subjective well-being as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The strengths associated with the social constructivist paradigm include the ability of studies centred on this paradigm to understand the individual's nature, world view, and emotions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). These studies tend to be more humanistic than those in the positivist paradigm because they emphasise the individual's interpretation of reality (Sefotho, 2018). This paradigm promotes critical thinking and reflection on diverse viewpoints (Sefotho, 2018). Although these general strengths are beneficial in assisting researchers to formulate an in-depth understanding of the world, I argue that novice researchers can benefit significantly by using the principles of this paradigm in their active participation in the research process. Great educational researchers such as Piaget (1950), Vygotsky (1968), and Bruner (1961) birthed constructivist learning theory which supports the assumption that one can actively construct knowledge through interaction and reflection (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Interacting with the participants, undertaking the research process, and being exposed to how the research participants perceived the world advanced my understanding and appreciation of human experience and the benefit that humanities research has in helping humanity understand and conceptualise experience to build knowledge. This world view allowed me to develop my knowledge through interaction with particular participants.

In conclusion, I conducted this research from a social constructivist paradigm perspective. This paradigm was beneficial in addressing the nature of my research topic and question. The ontology and epistemology of this paradigm allowed me to explore and understand the teachers' subjective experiences and the meaning in their social realities. This paradigm allowed me to understand teachers' world views as social agents constructing meaning in their subjective realities. Interpreting these world views allowed me to better understand the South African teachers' experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4 Phenomenological Research Design

I used a phenomenological research design for this qualitative study. Phenomenological research explores human life structures, experiences, relations, and daily situations (Maree, 2016). Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), known as the father of phenomenology, believed that one needs to understand lived experiences and perspectives of individuals regardless of subjective perceptions or assumptions. The German philosopher defined phenomenology as the discipline of the essence of consciousness (Maree et al., 2016). The writings of Merleau-

Ponty (1962) and Heidegger & Jeager (1962) continued to expand Husserl's work which was rooted in the philosophical perspectives of consciousness (Maree, 2016).

Leedy et al. (2019) argue that phenomenology encompasses insight into an external event. This definition is appropriate considering that phenomenological studies focus on the meanings that humans attach to experience. These researchers derive universal meanings from the participants' descriptions of these experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers who use a phenomenological research design interpret situations where perceptions, meanings, and perspectives of experiences exist (Leedy et al., 2019). These researchers use multiple methods in the data gathering process (Christensen et al., 2014). Unlike narrative studies, phenomenological studies have larger samples from which the researcher can describe lived experiences and identify commonalities between participant descriptions (Maree, 2016).

Furthermore, researchers using this design must remain objective to avoid biased interpretations of descriptions during the research process. To avoid tainting the research data, scholars such as Brown and Collins (2021, p. 7) recommend using openness throughout the research process. One achieves openness by perceiving a phenomenon under exploration through an open stance (Brown & Collins, 2021).

A phenomenological research design allows researchers to describe the nature of a phenomenon (Van Manen, 1990). I used Moustakas's (1994) method to apply this design to my study. Hence, I applied this research design by first identifying teacher well-being during the pandemic as the phenomenon through an extensive literature review. Secondly, I gathered data from teachers who had taught during the COVID-19 pandemic. This data consisted of pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interviews. I then developed a description of the participants' lived experiences. This description identified what the teachers experienced and why they perceived these experiences in a particular way. Moustakas (1994) describes this type of phenomenological design as a transcendental or psychological phenomenology. This design emphasises the participants' descriptions of their life experiences rather than focusing on my interpretation. My subjective interpretation was set aside in this process called "bracketing" (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, the primary purpose of this design is to collect data from participants about their experiences and then develop a narrative description of these experiences. Data analysis associated with the design included deducing specific quotes and thematic statements from the data or focusing on metaphors as they emerged from the data (Brown & Collins, 2021).

3.5 Research Methods

Research methods refer to the tools used to collect and analyse data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Maree, 2016). Maree (2016) argues that the research purpose and question must align with the research methods selected for a study. For this study, I followed an iterative process to collect data. This strategy ensured data saturation and included collecting, reflecting, identifying, and further planning to gather more data (Maree, 2016). As a phenomenological research design was used, the primary purpose of the research methods used in this study was to describe the “essence” of teachers’ subjective well-being experiences during the pandemic.

3.5.1 Data Gathering Methods

For this study, I employed three data gathering methods. Using multiple data gathering methods is known as methodological triangulation (Patton, 2005; Noble & Heale, 2019). I applied the strategy to the research process using three different research methods to study the same phenomenon. First, I asked the research participants to submit four pictures representing their experiences of subjective well-being. This data gathering method is known as photovoice or picture research. Then I requested that the participants write a short narrative reflection on their pictures. Lastly, I conducted semi-structured interviews to probe deeper understanding.

Using this strategy assisted me in increasing the validity and credibility of my research findings (Cohen et al., 2018). According to Noble and Heale (2019), validity, which refers to the extent to which the study accurately evaluates the investigated topic, increases through the use of triangulation. Triangulation also increases credibility, that is, the trustworthiness of a study during the research process (Noble & Heale, 2019). Furthermore, using triangulation assists researchers in balancing an explanation of the research phenomenon through multiple data sets and avoids bias that may arise from using only one data gathering method (Noble & Heale, 2019). The following section will discuss the data gathering methods selected for this study.

3.3.1.1 Photovoice: An Arts-Informed Method. Wang and Burris (1994) established photovoice as a data gathering tool to provide a practical way to illustrate the lived experiences of research participants. The method involves using pictures to voice the lived experiences of participants. The title of the method creatively integrates the acronym for VOICE, which represents voicing our individual and collective experiences (Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Wang et al. (1996) first used photovoice in Yunnan, China, to empower women in rural areas to influence their policies and programmes. Their study used photovoice as part of participatory action research by asking Chinese women to capture their daily work and health-related experiences through pictures (Turnbull, 2019). According to Wang (2001), this process included providing participants with cameras to identify, represent and enhance their realities (Turnbull, 2019). Photography assisted the women to illustrate their lived experiences creatively (Walsh et al., 2009). Hence, Wang and Burris (1992) established photovoice as a tool through which pictures and words could work together to express individuals' needs, issues, and ambitions (Nykiforuk et al., 2011).

As previously stated in Chapter 1, the theoretical frameworks that underpin photovoice are (1) the theory of critical consciousness, feminist theory, and document photography (Wang & Burris, 1994). Various researchers have used photovoice to capture individuals' lived experiences across the globe. Populations that have been subject to this type of research include homeless people (Brydon-Miller, 2006; Walsh et al., 2009), criminals and individuals under community supervision (Fortune & Arai, 2014; Fitzgibbon & Healy, 2019; Fitzgibbon & Stengel, 2019); migrants (Pearce et al., 2017; Fassetta, 2016); drug addicts (Copes et al., 2018; Fitzgibbon & Healy, 2019); students and young adults (Rania et al., 2015; Call-Cummings & Martínez, 2016; Stack & Wang, 2018); refugees in San Diego; community health workers (Musoke et al., 2020); and even teachers in South Africa (Taylor et al., 2007). The idea that visual data provides participants with a voice is reasonably practical and beneficial when exploring an abstract topic or conducting a study where there is a language barrier between researchers and participants. Hence, photovoice studies have also focused on providing a voice to indigenous people (Brooks & Poudrier, 2014).

Integrating photovoice data into research includes asking participants to take pictures that express their experiences of a phenomenon. Glaw et al. (2017) argue that researchers who use photovoice add meaning, validity, and a deeper insight into the formation of knowledge (Glaw et al., 2017). This method promotes collaboration in the research process and provides

participants with the agency to voice their experiences while presenting deep, meaningful data (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Participants have the opportunity to capture and contribute to their pictures to communicate their experiences (Call-Cummings & Martínez, 2016; Fitzgibbon & Stengel, 2019; Fortune & Arai, 2014). Participants who take part in these studies tend to capture pictures of their communities while focusing on the research topic provided by the researcher (Butler-Kisber, 2010).

I chose to use photovoice in my study due to its benefits in collecting rich in-depth data and the strategy's alignment with my paradigmatic stance. Photovoice data provides a rich in-depth understanding of an individual's subjective interpretations of the world while using the participant's source pictures (Glaw et al., 2017). This research method aligns with the relativist ontology discussed in the research paradigm section of this chapter, which supports the assumption that the mind creates its reality through interpretation. I applied this data gathering tool to the research process by asking the teachers to capture pictures representing their experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic. This data gathering tool allowed me to unveil the interpretations and perspectives of South African teachers creatively while providing me with the benefit of providing rich data focused on understanding their experiences of subjective well-being. Integration of this data gathering tool formed part of a phased approach to data gathering. Later in this chapter, I will discuss this in the section on the data gathering process.

3.3.1.2 Narrative Reflections: Textual Data Gathering Method.

While integrating this data gathering strategy, I borrowed some principles associated with narrative research. According to Maree (2016), narrative research focuses on collecting stories that describe the lives of individuals. The main principle taken from this research is that one can use stories to make sense of human experience (Maree, 2016). Maree (2016) argues that narratives enable us to link time and meaning. While a narrative research design could have been suitable for this study, there is an apparent variation between the goals of narrative research and phenomenological research (Maree, 2016). Narrative research focuses on exploring the lives of individuals, while phenomenological research focuses on understanding the essence of an experience (Green et al., 2007). I decided to use the principles associated with phenomenological research to understand the phenomenon of teachers' subjective well-being during the pandemic rather than uncovering the life stories of individuals.

While the pictures provided by my research participants helped to create a visual narrative, I also asked them to submit a short narrative reflection with each picture. This step allowed me to link the visual data to each participant's perception of the space and time in the picture. I gained rich and valuable narrative data by asking the participant to state their interpretation of the picture in words. While this step provided meaningful data, it also helped the participants to reflect on their subjective perspective of the photograph.

3.3.1.3 Semi-Structured Interviews.

Although the pictures and narrative reflections were adequate data sources for analysis (Brown & Collins, 2021), I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews as a third data gathering strategy to provide the participants with further opportunities to reflect on their experiences. Semi-structured interviews refer to data gathering methods where the researcher asks participants "(1) standardised questions; (2) follow-up questions to the situational context or discussion; and (3) probe[s] the reasoning of a research participant" (Leedy et al., 2019, p. 161). According to Maree (2016), semi-structured interviews assist researchers in corroborating data from different sources. Hence, I purposefully used this data gathering method to ask questions that I could probe to further clarify the participants' reflections and pictures. While conducting the semi-structured interviews, I remained cognisant of factors such as body language and tone of voice during probing by using responsiveness to avoid tainting the data. Responsiveness refers to being conscious of factors such as body language during meaning-making in situations such as interviews (Brown & Collins, 2021).

In developing questions for the semi-structured interviews, I considered Wang and Burris's (1994) questioning strategy used in their photovoice study focusing on the lived experiences of Chinese women to research social change. As discussed in Chapter 1, Wang and Burris (1994) used the SHOWED questioning strategy for their study. As discussed above, each letter in the acronym SHOWED represents the following dimension:

S "What do you see here?"

H "What is happening here?"

O "How does it relate to our lives?"

W "How does this concern, situation, or strength exist?"

E “How can we become empowered through our new understanding?”

D “What can we do?”

This questioning technique aims to understand the research participants’ world views, situations, and experiences as illustrated through pictures (Liebenberg, 2018).

While my study may construct knowledge that could identify injustices in teaching, the study’s goal was not to determine the parts of society that needed to be fixed but rather to define a specific phenomenon. For this purpose, I used the SHOWED dimensions to develop questions tailored to the nature of the research question and the phenomenological research design used in this study. I developed questions that integrated the original SHOWED dimensions with little change in wording and structure. Thus, the wording in the “W” dimension question, “How does this concern, situation, or strength exist?” changed to, “How does this make you feel?” I excluded the “D” and “E” questions to exclude the social change agenda that these questions inferred.

Therefore, I included the following questions in the semi-structured interview:

- What do you see in your image?
- What is happening in your image?
- How does this situation relate to your life?
- How does this image make you feel?

After conducting the semi-structured interviews, I transcribed the data and analysed the transcripts. I will further discuss the process followed during the semi-structured interviews in the data gathering process section of this chapter (see Section 3.6.3).

In conclusion, in this section, to discover the authentic voice and meaning held by research participants, I collected three data sources to represent their experiences. These sources included: visual data (pictures), narrative written/textual data (reflections), and textual data (semi-structured interview transcripts). I will discuss the analysis of these data sources later in this chapter after defining the sample used in this study and the data gathering process.

3.5.2 Research Sampling

Christensen et al. (2014) define a sample as a population subgroup. In social sciences, sampling provides researchers with a smaller group of individuals from society, making the research process more manageable. According to Maree (2016), there are two sampling categories: probability and non-probability. Researchers use probability sampling strategies to utilise the principles of randomness, while research using non-probability samples tends to select the participants based on a set of requirements or a specific purpose (Maree, 2016; Palinkas et al., 2013).

Probability sampling requires objectivity in the selection process (Leedy et al., 2019). Quantitative researchers use probability sampling methods such as asystematic sampling, stratified sampling, random sampling, and cluster sampling to conduct studies where generalisation plays a critical role in the research process (Maree, 2016). Qualitative researchers use non-probability sampling to identify a specific group of individuals who pose a set of requirements for a particular reason (Patton, 2015). Although qualitative researchers select samples based on set criteria, there are still variations in the selected sample, such as requirements related to race, culture, or ethnicity, to ensure diversity in the gathered data (Patton, 2015). When qualitative researchers use non-probability sampling, they strategically select participants who can provide data suited to the research question. Sampling in these studies tends to be less structured than in quantitative studies. Non-probability sampling methods include convenience, quota, snowball, and purposive sampling (Maree, 2016, p. 197). Researchers use non-probability sampling methods with time, financial resources, or population accessibility limitations (Maree, 2016).

I used a qualitative approach in this research study. According to the assumptions made by Maree (2016), non-probability sampling was suitable for this study. This study explored teachers' lived experiences related to well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. I purposefully focused on teachers engaged in online learning and employed in the private school sector. Hence, I used purposive sampling in this study.

3.3.2.1 Non-Probability Sampling: Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling, also known as selective sampling, encompasses selecting a specific group or individuals from a population with a detailed purpose and a precise set of characteristics or criteria (Leedy et al., 2021; Maree, 2016). Qualitative researchers use purposive sampling to extract individuals from a population who can provide in-depth data about a phenomenon. The

advantages of using purposive sampling include that the method is cost and time effective in identifying a suitable sample for a study (Campbell et al., 2020). This sampling strategy is also sound when a limited number of data sources (participants) provide relevant data to the study (Sharma, 2017). Purposive sampling is also beneficial when the researcher aims to discover meaning through an intuitive approach (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Some disadvantages of purposive sampling include possible errors in judgement by the researcher while selecting the appropriate sample for a study, bias from the researcher, and the inability to generalise sample-generated data in the research findings (Campbell et al., 2020).

There are six categories of purposive sampling: typical cases; extreme or deviant cases; critical cases; heterogeneous or variation sampling; homogeneous sampling; and theoretical sampling (Palinkas et al., 2013; Crossman, 2020). Researchers use typical case sampling “when looking to investigate a phenomenon or trend compared to what is considered typical or average for members of a population” (Alchemer, 2021, p. 1). Extreme or deviant case sampling focuses on selecting a sample where the participants are unusual or special concerning a specific phenomenon (Lund, 2012). Critical case sampling requires selecting samples in the context of the research question which can provide vital information (Stead & Struwig, 2001). Heterogeneous or variation sampling includes selecting diverse samples with characteristics related to a particular phenomenon (Crossman, 2020). Homogeneous sampling refers to selecting a sample with similar or identical traits (Etikan et al., 2016). Lastly, researchers use theoretical sampling when collecting data to generate a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2006).

For this study, I used homogeneous sampling owing to this sampling strategy’s focus on selecting a particular subgroup in which the participants shared characteristics such as occupation (Saunders et al., 2019). Hence, I selected the research sample based on a set of criteria.

3.3.2.2 Sampling Criteria

As discussed previously in this chapter, this study used a phenomenological research design, with the subcategory of purposive sampling, namely, homogeneous sampling, to select the ideal sample for this study. I purposefully selected a sample that was able to provide me with rich and meaningful data in the context of this study. The participants in my research sample shared similarities in employment and situational context. The research sample selected for this study included eight private school teachers who participated in online learning interventions in the physical and virtual schooling environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. I sourced

this sample from two private schools based in South Africa in the situational context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on societies across the globe. Safety regulations such as social distancing, isolation, and mask-wearing guidelines changed the functioning of many sectors of society. The COVID-19 pandemic regulations changed the environmental and social practices of the workforce in these sectors. A particular sector that was dramatically impacted by COVID-19 is the education sector. To adapt to the circumstances posed by the pandemic, schools across the globe had to change their functioning by integrating aspects such as online learning. Teachers were the main facilitators in integrating these new approaches into their educational environments.

South African private and public schools followed different approaches and strategies in adapting to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Soudien et al., 2021). The socio-economic contexts, resources, and training of teachers in the schools determined their strategy to combat the circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Private schools with more technology resources, accessibility, and teachers trained in remote learning could commence online learning during high infection periods. Implementing online schooling in these private schools was also possible because the families in the schooling community were more likely to have access to electronic resources. This characteristic meant that teachers in private schools were more likely to engage in online learning, which may have caused a dramatic shift in their roles and responsibilities. The situation forced teachers to adapt to change by changing their functioning and role in the profession by integrating remote teaching and regulation-led educational and environmental change into their teaching. These challenges equipped private school teachers with characteristics suitable for this research study.

I selected a sample of teachers from two private schools and established the following table of participants from the private school community.

Table 3. 1: Sample criteria

School	Number of teachers
Private School one	Four
Private School two	Four
Total number of research participants	Eight

The criteria for these teachers to participate was that they had to be employed full-time at a private school which implemented online learning during the pandemic. During the data gathering stage of the study, each participant submitted four pictures and a narrative reflection and participated in a semi-structured interview representing their subjective well-being experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Using this sample made this process more accessible as a result of the electronic skills that these private school teachers had acquired in response to the pandemic. Pink (2021) argues that the technology used in studies collecting visual data and using visual methods is essential when determining a study sample. The COVID-19 pandemic created private school teachers who were skilled at remote learning, were technologically equipped, and could communicate electronically using email and online platforms such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and WhatsApp. These private school teachers were likely to have the ability to take and send pictures electronically. Therefore, the participants in this sample had to have access to a mobile cell phone with a camera to take pictures that represented their subjective well-being experiences. The participants forwarded these pictures to me via email. I uploaded these pictures to Google Drive. If the participants could not forward the pictures, I met with them to transfer the pictures manually using a USB drive or cable. Each participant submitted a short reflection with each picture. Hence, I collected a total of 32 pictures with accompanying narrative reflections. Afterwards, I conducted semi-structured interviews, during which I displayed the collected pictures and reflections on my laptop screen. Some participants preferred to meet online for the interview. Four out of eight participants chose to meet online with me through Google Meet. In this case, I digitally shared my screen to display the pictures.

3.3.2.3 Sample Recruitment Process

Eight teachers from two private schools in South Africa voluntarily participated in this research study. To recruit this sample, I used a step-by-step recruitment process (see Figure 3.1).

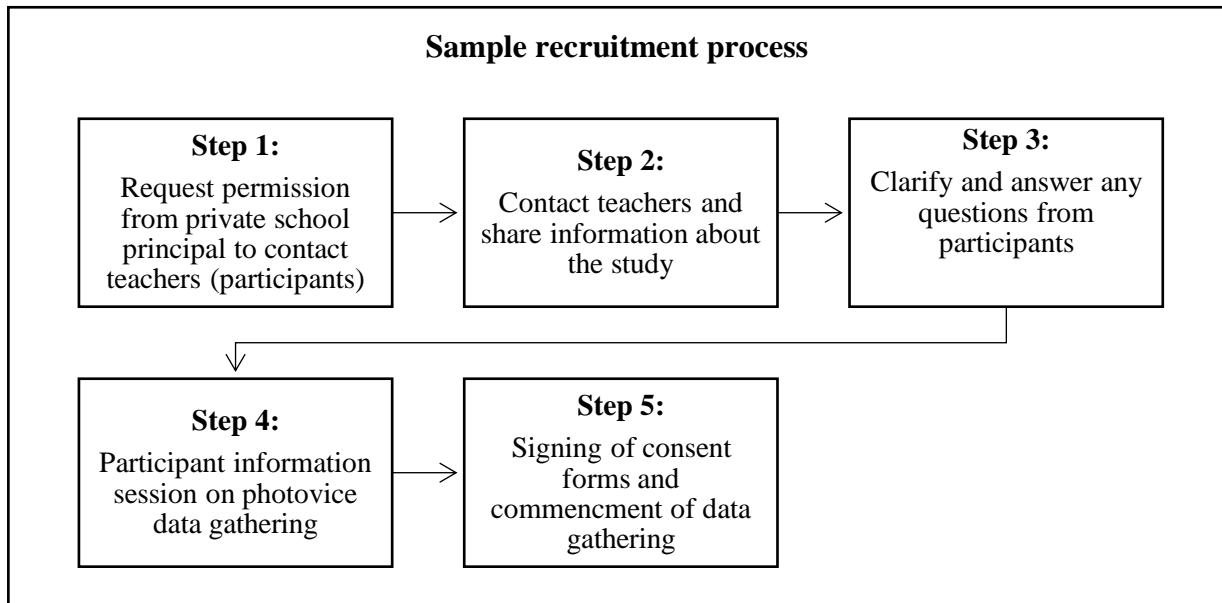


Figure 3. 1: Sample recruitment process

Step 1: Permission from the school principals

At the beginning of 2022, I approached five private schools in Pretoria, South Africa. After scheduling a meeting with the principal of each school, I met them and explained the purpose, scope, and goal of the research study. I then requested consent from the principal to approach the teachers employed at their school to ask if they would voluntarily join an information session focusing on the research study. I requested that the principals sign a consent form (see Appendix A) detailing the research question, purpose, and ethical considerations of the research study. All five schools agreed to participate in the study. I negotiated a suitable means of communication between the teachers and me, such as email invitations or in-person communication. The principals of all five schools agreed to send an email to staff informing them of the opportunity to participate in the study. The teachers then had to opportunity to email me if they were interested.

Step 2: Contacting teachers

I then collected the email addresses of the interested teachers who responded to the information session invitation by email. After more than four teachers per school had shown interest in the study, I emailed them a thorough explanation of what the study aimed to accomplish with the consent form attached. This email contained a document that defined the research problem, rationale, purpose, question, design, methodologies, and ethical considerations. This document provided an overview of the research participants' roles during the research process.

Step 3: Opportunity for questions

In the email discussed in Step 2, I indicated that the recipients had one week to decide if they would like to participate in the study. During this week, they were allowed to ask questions about the study via phone calls, WhatsApp, email, or Google Meet. After a week, I emailed the recipients to confirm their participation in the study. This study generated interest from 33 teachers. While all five schools had teachers who wanted to participate, only two schools had enough volunteers who followed through with the entire research process.

Step 4: Information session

I phoned, held video calls, or met in person with the participants who showed an interest in participating in the study. During the meeting, I explained the ethical considerations they needed to consider while taking pictures for the study. I conducted this step before data gathering, focusing on preparation. I discussed the proceedings of this information session in the “Phase 1: Preparation – Information session and consent” section of this chapter’s “Data-gathering process” section. The meeting focused on the ethical principles that needed to be adhered to while taking pictures in public spaces. I followed up with the participants to ensure they were comfortable participating in the research study. I used this opportunity to answer questions relating to ethical principles and the research study process.

Step 5: Signing consent forms and commencement of data gathering

The participants signed the consent form (see Appendix B), indicating they understood the ethical guidelines. Their signatures did not commit them to taking part in the study if they wished to withdraw. However, it showed their understanding of the ethical guidelines when participating in the phenomenological study.

3.6 Data Gathering Process

After recruiting the research sample, I commenced the data gathering process. As discussed earlier in this chapter, I used pictures, narrative reflections, semi-structured interview transcripts, and narrative reflections as data sources in this study. These data gathering strategies aligned with the qualitative research approach and social constructivist (interpretivist) paradigm and formed part of the methods appropriate for collecting data for a phenomenological study. I decided to use a phased approach to simplify the data gathering process. This process consisted of three phases.

3.6.1 Phase 1: Preparation - Training and Consent

During phase 1, I contacted the participants to explain the ethical use of cameras and photography in school areas. Although this phase did not include any particular gathering of textual data, I decided to include this brief information session as an opportunity for ethical training as preparation for the subsequent two phases of the data gathering process. I considered this phase imperative because it was the first time I had met with the teachers. I focused on building trust and conveying a sense of openness in my interactions with them by engaging in active listening and responsiveness during the discussion.

This introductory phase aimed to avoid the possibility of privacy violation during the photovoice gathering phase of the study, that is, the photovoice data gathering phase of capture and reflect. I advised the participants not to take any pictures in the school environment so as not to violate the privacy of learners and other teachers. The information session also allowed me to discuss the following two phases with the research participants. For convenience, I held this information session via Google Meet, phone call, or in person, thereby minimising social contact due to the pandemic. This step allowed the participants to conveniently join the session from home.

I discussed the following during the information session:

1. **Introduction.** Before commencing the session, I checked that the teacher was present and solved any technical issues related to audio, video and screen sharing. I then introduced myself as the researcher and briefly introduced the study. I held this meeting via Google Meet, phone call, or in person. I used the consent form to formulate the content of the introduction (see Appendix B).
2. **Overview of the research data gathering process.** I then discussed that the participants would be required to capture four pictures representing their subjective well-being during the pandemic. I informed the participants that they would have to write a short reflection for each picture and that a semi-structured interview would follow after this process.
3. **Photovoice training.** I commenced photovoice training, where I discussed the following:

- **Example of the process.** Before photovoice training, I showed the teachers an example of photovoice data. I shared my screen to show the example for those participants who met with me online via video calls. I sent the picture via email to those participants who attended the information session by phone. I displayed the example on my computer screen for those teachers whom I met in person. The caption read, “Take a picture that represents your well-being during a beach holiday”. I explained that this would be a typical question posed in a photovoice study. I then displayed a photograph of the beach on the screen. I added a short reflection underneath the picture.

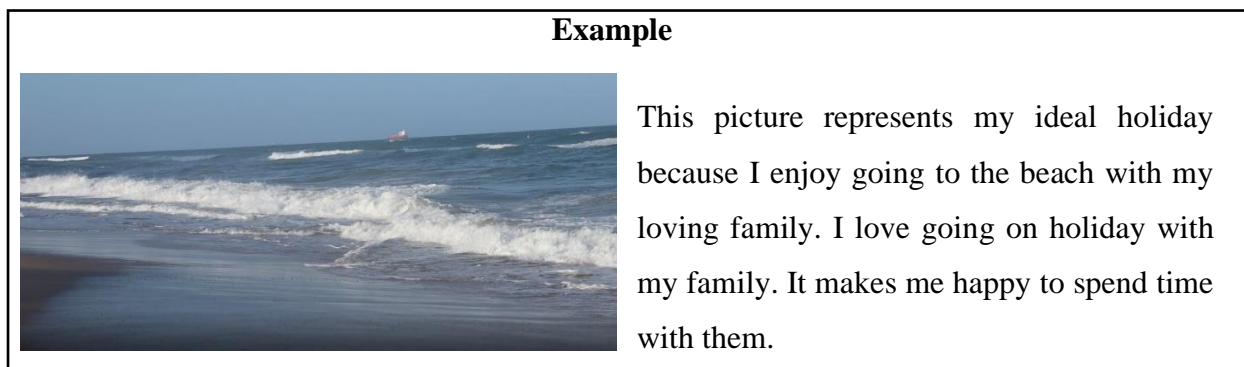


Figure 3. 2: Picture and reflection example for participant

- **Technical training.** We discussed capturing, sending, and uploading pictures with a mobile phone camera.
- **Ethical clarification.** I then explained some ethical guidelines that the participants had to adhere to when taking pictures in public spaces. The training contained a description of the critical principles of safety, respect, and justice in the context of photovoice research. I explained to the participants that they should not take any pictures that threaten the safety or privacy of others. We discussed the use of photography in public settings. This topic focused on privacy regulations in photography. I advised the teachers that they should not take pictures of people or aspects that violate the privacy of others.

After the meeting, I discussed the next phase of the data gathering process. I communicated to the teachers that the next step would be to capture or select pictures, reflect on these pictures, and then participate in a semi-structured interview. I explained that the pictures and reflections should be submitted via email for me to upload these pictures to a Google Drive folder. I then

discussed the semi-structured interview process. The teachers received a consent form which detailed the scope of their involvement in the research process. The participants signed the consent form (see Appendix B).

3.6.2 Phase 2: Photovoice Data Gathering – Capture and Reflect

Once I had established the sample of eight private school teachers, photovoice data gathering commenced. First, I sent the participants an email asking that they submit four pictures representing their subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. I requested that the participants reflect on their pictures by writing a short reflection for each submitted picture. Following this request, the eight teachers captured and submitted four pictures representing their experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic with short reflections for each picture. These submissions were conducted electronically via email, WhatsApp message, or USB transfer.

Submitting reflections with the pictures was imperative in this data gathering phase as they provided the opportunity for reflection. The participants collected and constructed the data by capturing or finding pictures on the internet. They reflected on their pictures by writing and submitting short reflective statements with their pictures. I then reflected on those pictures and reflections briefly since Daba-Buzoianu et al. (2017) argue that researchers might misinterpret visual data if they continuously fail to reflect throughout the study. Reflecting on the data may be time-consuming, but the process may provide an in-depth analysis of participant experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As discussed earlier in this chapter, photovoice is a collaborative data gathering method. I then used Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis to analyse the pictures. After that, I reflected on my analysis by considering the themes which had been identified after the analysis. While reflecting on the participants' pictures and reflections helped me orient myself in their world view, it also assisted me in avoiding a biased perspective on the pictures they submitted.

After analysing the pictures and reflections, I created a Google Drive folder and uploaded the 32 participants' pictures and reflections. I did not print any pictures. I then emailed, phoned, or met with the research participants requesting an available date and time to conduct the semi-structured interviews. I allowed the participants to complete the interview via Google Meet or in person. Four teachers chose to be interviewed in person, while the rest chose to meet online using Google Meet.

3.6.3 Phase 3: Semi-structured Interviews

With the pictures and reflections gathered, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the research participants during phase 3 of the data-gathering process to understand the teachers' experiences. Interpreting this data played a prominent role in this research process and led to a deeper understanding of the experiences of South African teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews were conducted at a date and time convenient to the research participants.

The semi-structured interviews consisted of the following process:

1. I agreed to meet with the participant online or in person. For those interviews conducted online, I checked that there were no technical difficulties related to audio quality, screen sharing, or video quality. I used my laptop screen to display the interview content for in-person interviews. Before commencing the interview, I informed the participant that I would record the session and transcribe the recording after the interview. I then gave the participant the interview form digitally or handed them a printed copy (see Appendix C).
2. At the beginning of the interview, I asked the participant to elaborate on their subjective definition of well-being.
3. I then displayed the participant's four submitted pictures on the computer screen. I shared my screen to display the pictures for those participants who decided to have the interview online.
4. I then asked the participant to rate the submitted pictures from most to least representative of their experiences associated with subjective well-being. I displayed the photograph most representative of their experience on the computer screen.
5. Thereafter, I read the participant's short reflection on the most representative picture and asked the following interview questions:
 - What do you see in your image?
 - What is happening in your image?
 - How does this situation relate to your life?

- How does this image make you feel?

I repeated this action for each picture until all pictures had been displayed and discussed.

6. Lastly, I provided the opportunity for follow-up questions.

In this semi-structured interview, the teachers had the opportunity to explain the context of the pictures, therefore providing deeper layers of reflexivity and interpretation (Daba-Buzoianu et al., 2017). The participants provided in-depth feedback concerning their orientation and experiences during this interview process. Scholars such as Brown and Collins (2021) recommend openness and responsiveness during interviews to avoid tainting the research. One achieves openness by observing the phenomenon under exploration through an open stance (Brown & Collins, 2021). Responsiveness refers to consciousness with regard to factors such as body language during meaning-making (Brown & Collins, 2021).

3.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

According to Smith et al. (2009), data analysis is a meaning-making process in which the researcher makes sense of how the participants interpret their experiences. During the data analysis phase of this study, I interpreted the visual data (pictures), textual data (narrative reflections of each photograph submitted by participants), and the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews to explore the lived experiences of South African teachers. I used an inductive strategy to analyse these data sources. According to Patten and Newhart (2017), the inductive approach or bottom-up strategy refers to a reasoning approach used when the research process starts with the research question rather than a theory. A researcher who uses this approach gathers data and then uses the data sets to generate a theory or concept (Patten & Newhart, 2017). I applied the inductive approach to the data analysis by identifying themes, meanings, and relationships in this study's qualitative data. In doing so, I used Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis framework to interpret and weave the visual (pictures) and textual (narrative reflections) data. In doing so, I discovered a methodological gap in their approach for which I developed a theory, the three-step systematic framework for noticing and describing pictures, which I will discuss in the following section.

Furthermore, I used Smith et al.'s (2009) seven-step interpretive phenomenological analysis framework to understand the meaning that individuals attach to their experiences (Smith et al.,

2009). After that, I employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of a thematic analysis framework to identify and present the findings of this study.

3.7.1 Data Set 1: Pictures and Narrative Reflections

Photovoice researchers often use pictures as a stimulus for discussion during semi-structured interviews rather than as a data source (Brown & Collins, 2021). According to Brown and Collins (2021), researchers who conduct photovoice studies tend to exclude the analysis of pictures as sources of meaning and experience due to gaps in the existing frameworks that place too much focus on the translation of pictures to words. As visual data provides rich apprehension of the different experiences of individuals, it also draws attention to the embodied nature of experience. Pictures allow us to capture experiences beyond language and words (Brown & Collins, 2021). Hence, I found it necessary to analyse the visual data (pictures) and textual data (narrative reflections) submitted by the participants to understand the embodied experiences presented in these artefacts.

Selecting an appropriate framework to analyse the pictures and narrative reflections required much consideration of the work of scholars such as Gleeson (2011), Collier and Collier (1986), Braun and Clarke (2011), Chapman et al. (2017) who provide excellent frameworks for this type of analysis. Whilst diving into the literature, I found that Brown and Collins (2021) brought a fresh perspective to the field by establishing a framework that considered the creative output of participants and systematically joined the visual and textual data through analysis. This framework allowed me to “weave” the visual and textual data through interpretation (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1284).

Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis framework provided me with an inductive analysis strategy, which gave me much interpretive control. The framework primarily applies two levels of analysis, that is, “Level 1 noticing and describing” and “Level 2 conceptualising” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281). Brown and Collins (2021, p. 1281) outline the analysis of the two elements, including “element 1 visual only” and “element 2 transcript only”. One analyses element 1 by first noticing and describing the “artistic [element] in visual work (use of perspective, colour, space, form, tone, light, composition)” and conceptualising the “essential elements that unite artefacts” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281).

Table 3. 2: Systematic visuo-textual analysis framework (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)

	Element 1 visual only	Element 2 transcript only	Element 3 visuo-textual combination
Level 1: noticing and describing	“artistic in visual work (use of perspective, colour, space, form, tone, light, composition)” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“linguistic in textual work (use of language, words, phrases, structure)” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“connecting the visual and the textual (structure, meanings, expressions)” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)
Level 2: conceptualising	“essential elements that unite artefacts” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“words/phrases that capture patterns/themes” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“connections between artefacts and themes” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)

One analyses element 2 by noticing and describing the “linguistic in textual work (use of language, words, phrases, structure)” and conceptualising the “words/phrases that capture patterns/themes” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281). One then combines the elements to present “element 3 visuo-textual combination”, which entails first “connecting the visual and the textual (structure, meanings, expressions)” and then making “connections between artefacts and themes” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281).

I used the framework to analyse each participant’s pictures, element 1, and narrative reflections, element 2. To do so, I made minor adjustments to the original analysis table developed by Brown and Collins (2021). I also developed a theory to address discrepancies in the visual data analysis, which I will discuss in the following section, Picture analysis (visual data).

I therefore changed the following wording of the headings:

Element 1 visual only → Picture analysis (visual data)

Element 2 transcript only → Reflection analysis (textual data)

Element 3 visuo-textual combination → Picture and reflection combined

Level 1 noticing and describing → Level 1: Notice and describe

Level 2 conceptualising → Level 2: Conceptualise

Table 3. 3: Adapted systematic visuo-textual analysis framework (from Brown & Collins, 2021)

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	“artistic in visual work (use of perspective, colour, space, form, tone, light, composition)” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“linguistic in textual work (use of language, words, phrases, structure)” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“connecting the visual and the textual (structure, meanings, expressions)” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)
Level 2: Conceptualise	“essential elements that unite artefacts” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“words/phrases that capture patterns/themes” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)	“connections between artefacts and themes” (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281)

I analysed each participant’s pictures and narrative reflections in table format and presented the analysis in Chapter 4. Adapting the headings of Brown and Collins's (2021) table provided structure to the wording and made the use of table format more suited to academic writing. I then explored the correct application of the steps of analysis in the framework which led me to identify a methodological gap in the visual analysis phase of the framework. I identified this gap in the first level of analysis, being level 1: notice and describe (Table 3.3).

A) Picture analysis (visual data)

In undertaking this strategy, I differentiated the type of analysis I would conduct when interpreting the visual data (pictures). Kondracki et al. (2002) state that researchers must differentiate between analysing “manifest” and “latent” content (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Latent content is the underlying meaning, whereas manifest content refers to the apparent component conveyed (Kondracki et al., 2002). This study's picture analysis process focused on analysing the manifest and latent content through Brown and Collins’s (2021) framework.

While I found it easy to understand Brown and Collins’s (2021) framework in comparison to other visual data analysis methods such as semiotic analysis (e.g. Brown & Gibson, 2009), I found it challenging to understand how one would systematically analyse pictures with the framework, particularly in the first level of analysis (Level 1: Notice and describe).

Level 1: Notice and describe

Brown and Collins (2021, p. 1281) regard Level 1: Notice and describe entails one's "initial attempts at description a focus on details of the object on hand, such as lines, shapes, colours, composition, materials, and subject matter". This level of analysis focuses on artistic visual interpretation of elements such as the "use of perspective, colour, space, form, tone, light, composition" (Brown & Collins, 2021, p. 1281). I found this phase challenging to conduct as (1) the theory surrounding the framework did not provide clear definitions of these elements; (2) little clarity exists as to exactly how one would identify, notice, or describe these artistic elements appropriately following the framework's process; and (3) it was unclear if one must identify or notice all these artistic elements or if one may select or notice one element when analysing a picture. Brown (2021) also mentioned that other scholars found this analysis phase challenging in a discussion of their theory and noted that they often receive questions from scholars about this particular phase of analysis, with the scholars noting that they are untrained in noticing these types of artistic elements in pictures (PhotovoiceWorldwide, 2022).

A clear outline for the analysis of pictures was necessary as the first level of analysis (Level 1: Notice and describe) precedes the analysis in Level 2: Conceptualise. Not having a set of criteria to notice from the picture provided a tremendous opportunity for bias during interpretation as to which artistic elements I should select for the second level of analysis. While the analysis was sent back to the participants for member checking, not having a clear outline of elements to identify meant that my initial analysis focused on random elements that could differ across the participant's pictures depending on what I noticed. For example, I analysed the colour in one picture but then looked at the line in another, making the analysis criteria incoherent. Having criteria and clarity regarding how one identifies and interprets these criteria would have minimised my enormous interpretive control over the visual data.

Consequently, I dove into literature regarding visual analysis to understand if other scholars also focused on identifying artistic elements in the pictures. I found that Gleeson (2021, pp. 542-543) focused on looking at pictures and creating "photo-themes" through a twelve-step process. Ritchie et al. (2013, p. 221) focused on the concept of "familiarisation" and identifying themes, which led to the indexing and sorting of data. Collier and Collier (1986, pp. 181-182) focused on "open and unstructured viewing", which entailed the "immersion in images or film" where one asks questions about the material to present a "microanalysis" of perceived patterns. Braun and Clarke (2011) presented a six-phase framework focusing on familiarisation, generating initial codes, and searching for themes leading to reviewing and defining themes.

Chapman et al. (2017) focused on data organisation, code creation, coding photographs, finding relationships, and interpretation. While these analysis methods focused on interpreting data to generate findings by establishing themes through whichever method was favoured, it became apparent that the actual analysis of the artistic elements in the pictures were under-represented in their frameworks. I then looked at the work of the visual research field's leading thinkers, Sarah Pink (2007) and Gilian Rose (2001). I found that Pink (2007) provided an explicit theory for a method but did not have a systematic technique for conducting a visual analysis focusing on artistic elements. Rose (2001) also provided an account of approaches to visual methodology but did not provide a technique to guide the analysis. Without a clear strategy or criteria to guide the picture analysis in consideration of artistic elements, I decided to develop a strategy to analyse the picture data systematically. This led me to develop an analysis method to clarify what I noticed and described at Brown and Collins's (2021) first level of analysis by considering research done in visual art research.

I looked at theories surrounding the interpretation of art in research to develop an analysis framework. One might analyse art by looking at formal elements such as lines, shape, colour, form, space, value, colour, and texture. Analysing an artefact by considering art's formal elements is considered the most objective way to analyse art (Acton, 2009; De Visser, 2010; Péntzes et al., 2020). To appropriately describe the formal elements of art, Péntzes et al. (2020) conducted a comparative content analysis that considered the KPC art analysis model (Action, 2009; Gerrits, 2018), ILO Uva art analysis model and the Tate Modern art analysis model (Gale, 2016; Wilson & Lac, 2016; De Visser, 2010; Taylor (2014); Huntsman, 2016; Boermans & Van Der Borght, 2017). This analysis revealed that most theories referred primarily to six formal elements, including (1) shape or form, referring to the geometry and contour in an artefact; (2) composition, referring to the symmetry, rhythm, line quality, linearity, movement and dynamics in the artefact; (3) colour, referring to number of colours, colour saturation, colour brightness, hue and mixture of colour; (4) space, which refers to filled area, used space and suggestion of space; (5) surface quality, which refers to texture; and (6) light, which refers to floodlight, light sources and Clair obscure. According to Péntzes et al. (2020), these elements' definitions are not remarkably different from each other but are still distinct.

I considered the formal elements of shape/form, texture, colour, and space in my analysis. Shape or form refers to the use of geometric shapes in the participant's pictures (e.g. squares, triangles). The element of shape/form also included considering the picture's composition,

referring to symmetry and line quality. Texture refers to different types of surface texture identified in the picture (e.g. soft blanket, hard floor). Colour refers to aspects such as colour saturation, brightness, or hue (tone). When perceiving the colour in a picture, I looked at the use of (1) complementary colours, otherwise known as contrasting or opposite colours, which refer to colours that, when combined, create a black or white tone on the grayscale (e.g. red and green, blue and orange), (2) monochromatic colours, such as a picture only using one colour in different shades (e.g. pink and light pink), and (3) analogous colours, which refer to colour schemes consisting of adjacent colours on the colour wheel (e.g. yellow-green and blue-green). I considered art an element that may hold symbolic value. Lastly, space refers to the distance among, around, directly above, below, and in objects. In the context of this study, I used these elements to create criteria for analysis.

Elements of art used in the analysis of visual data in this study (pictures):

1. Shape/form
2. Texture
3. Colour
4. Space

While incorporating the analysis of these elements, I believe one must also consider aspects such as the type of picture subject to analysis. In the context of this study, some participants submitted pictures taken with a camera or pictures downloaded from the internet. The type of picture may affect the analysis. For example, some elements such as texture (e.g. a soft blanket) may be visible in a photograph, while one will not necessarily see these types of textures in digitally downloaded pictures (e.g. figures). I believe one must clarify the type of picture before analysing it to prevent any confusion and to ensure that one cites the correct source of the picture. One must also consider aspects such as text or emoticons in pictures, which one can easily overlook when analysing artistic elements.

With established artistic elements to identify and consideration of finer details such as the type of picture and the use of text, I decided to develop a 3-step process to analyse the pictures systematically, including step 1: noticing and describing objects in the picture, step 2: noticing and describing subjects in the picture and step 3: noticing and describing text in the picture. Before following these steps, I differentiated if the picture submitted by the participant was digitally downloaded or taken with a camera.

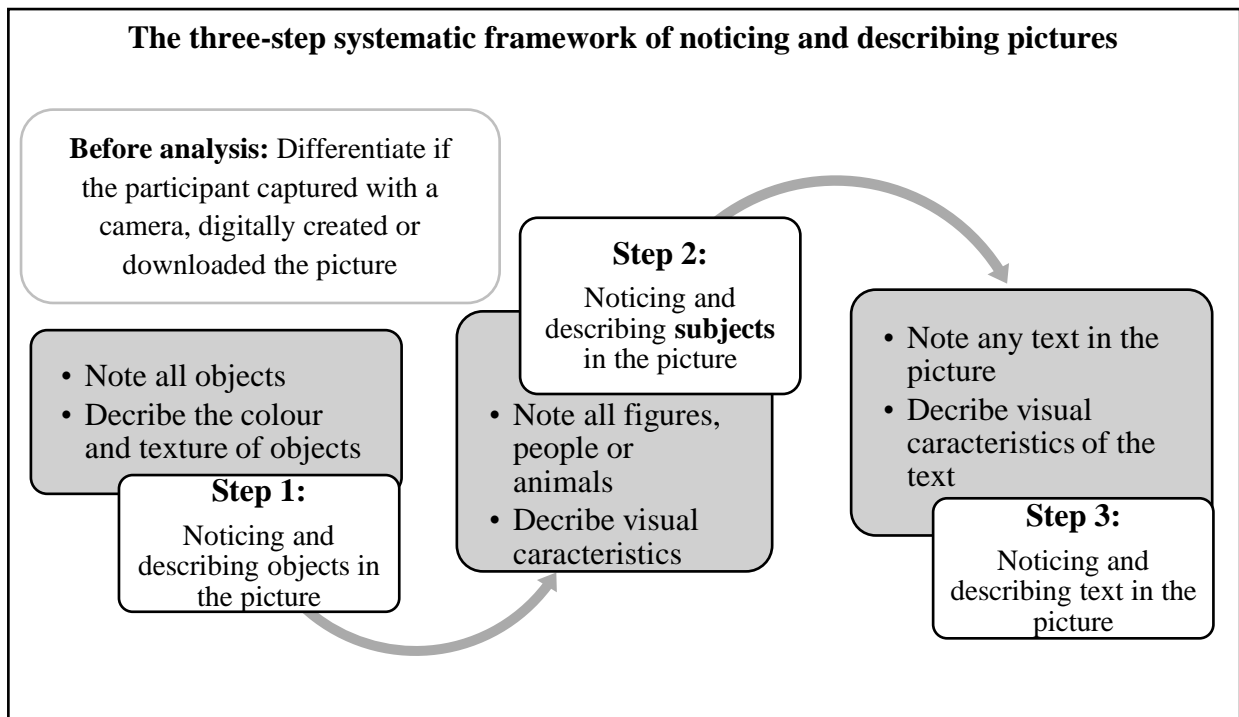


Figure 3. 3: Three-step systematic framework of noticing and describing pictures

Step 1: Noticing and describing objects in the picture

I first focused on noting all the objects present in the picture. Doing so let me consciously consider all the objects that the participant wanted me to perceive. An object refers to any material thing that one can physically touch. In the context of digital pictures, I noted the presence of graphics representing objects such as a digitally animated flower or book. I noted these objects as I noticed them, hence, providing insight as to which objects were more noticeable in my perception. While noting the objects, I described their shape/form, texture, colour, value (tone), and space. Noting these objects was important as it led me to identify objects that represented symbols that I later discussed in the second level of analysis (Level 2: Conceptualise).

Step 2: Noticing and describing subjects in the picture

After identifying the objects, I moved on to identify figures, people and animals representing the subject(s) in the picture. As in the first step, I wrote down these elements in the sequence that I noticed them. When describing a figure, person or animal, I first focused on distinguishing if the subject was an animated or living being. I then described the visual characteristics, such as the colour, value (tone), texture, and shape/form of the clothing they wore, among other characteristics. I also focused on aspects such as facial expression and

which emotions their facial expression portrayed. I then noted the subjects in comparison to each other, noting elements like space and where they were placed in relation to each other to one another.

Step 3: Noticing and describing text in the picture

After following steps 1 and 2, I noted any text in the picture. If applicable, I noted the text's colour, value (tone), and space. In this step, I also identified visuals such as programme logos (e.g. Word and Excel on computer screens).

After following these steps, I ensured that I discussed all the necessary content. To do so, I had to ask myself the following questions:

1. Did the participant take the picture with a camera, or was the picture digitally downloaded?
 - In the case that the participant downloaded the picture, remember to cite the source of the picture.
2. **Step 1:** What objects do you notice in the picture?
 - For each object, discuss the following artistic elements:
 - **Shape:** What shape is the object?
 - **Texture:** What is the texture of the object?
 - **Colour:** Which colour is the object? (Remember to describe the value (tone) of the object's colour, including complementary, monochromatic, and analogous colours).
 - **Space:** Where is the object to other objects in the picture? What is in the background behind the object?
3. **Step 2:** What subjects do you notice in the picture?
 - Is the subject a person, animal, figure, or animated character?
 - Which visual characteristics about the subject can you link to colour, value (tone), texture, and shape/form?
4. **Step 3:** Do you notice any text in the picture?
 - Which visual characteristics of the text can you link to colour, value (tone), texture, and shape/form?
 - Do you see any logos in the picture?

- Note any logos in the picture and stipulate which programme of the company the logo represents.

While these questions provide an outline of aspects to consider, the analysis does not have to follow the exact sequence of the above-mentioned questions or that one must include each aspect. This framework merely serves as a criterion of visual elements to consider while analysing pictures.

After conducting this interpretation, I moved to the next level (Level 2: Conceptualise) of analysis.

Level 2: Conceptualise

As motivated by Brown and Collins (2021, p. 1281), the second level of interpretation (Level 2: Conceptualise) served to state the “essential elements that unite artefacts”. I perceived the artistic elements discussed in the first level of analysis (Level 1: Notice and describe) as ethnographic, meaning that their content would provide deeper insight into the cultural and contextual world views of the participants. According to Pink (2001, p. 51), “There are no fixed criteria that determine which photographs are ethnographic. Any photograph may have ethnographic interest, significance, or meaning at a particular time or for a specific reason. The meanings of photographs are arbitrary and subjective; they depend on who is looking. The same photographic image may have a variety of (perhaps conflicting) meanings invested in it at different stages of ethnographic research and representation, as it is viewed by different eyes and audiences in diverse temporal historical, spatial, and cultural contexts”.

I decided to use the principles of ethnographic content analysis to discuss the artistic elements identified in “Level 1: Notice and describe”. Ethnographic content analysis is an analysis technique where one analyses pictures for their relevance, significance, and meaning (Given, 2008). To do so, I first provided a brief narrative account of what was taking place in the picture; I then discussed the symbols and the symbolic meaning of the colours in the picture. In doing so, I considered Pink’s (2001) observation and remained cognisant of any cultural associations that the participants may have made in their pictures. It is imperative to note that these analyses were adjusted if required by the participant after member checking to ensure accurate cultural and subjective interpretations of the pictures.

3.7.2 Reflection Analysis (Textual Data)

Secondly, I analysed the reflections by noticing and describing the use of words, phrases, and structures in Level 1, notice and describe. I then conceptualised the patterns and themes noted in these words, phrases, and structures in Level 2, conceptualise.

3.7.2.1 Combining Visual and Textual Data. Thirdly, I combined the visuo-textual data findings and connected the visual and textual structure, meaning, and expressions noted in the data to form a coherent narrative (Brown & Collins, 2021). In doing so, I identified keywords from the previous analysis steps thereby identifying structures, meanings and expressions. As part of the conceptualisation step, I wrote a coherent narrative by weaving the interpretations together (Brown & Collins, 2021).

I focused on iteration during the data analysis process as it allowed me to engage in an iterative process which enabled me to utilise a critical-reflexive stance and openness (Brown & Collins, 2021). Engaging in the iterative analysis process enabled me to reflect on my interpretation throughout the research process. According to Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2019), openness refers to a form of curiosity. Utilising openness enabled me to make sense of the data in a meaningful way that considered contradictions, differences, and discrepancies during the interpretation process.

Using Brown and Collins's (2021) visuo-textual analysis provided me with the first layer of interpretation for this data set by providing an analysis of each participant's pictures and reflections.

3.7.2.2 Thematic Analysis of the Visual–Textual Analysis Findings of Each Participant. After analysing all the pictures and reflections submitted by the participants, I identified common themes represented throughout the data set through a thematic analysis, thereby identifying themes commonly present in the 32 pictures submitted. Lastly, I connected the data and themes and presented these findings in Chapter 4. In doing so, I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis to conduct a systematic analysis of the findings.

The six phases of Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework are:

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Phase 3: Searching for themes

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

Phase 6: Producing the report

I applied this analytical strategy by first becoming familiar with the data. I read the results of each participant's visual–textual analysis and noted any initial thoughts. Then I used two coding cycles to generate the initial code in the data. Cycle 1 employed structural coding and subcoding, and cycle 2 contained axial coding. Structural coding refers to the identification of common themes in the data (Namey et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2016). Using two coding methods in cycle 1 is known as eclectic coding (Saldaña, 2016). Subcoding refers to identifying more specific themes, which I identified from the structural codes (Namey et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2016). I then identified the dominant codes in the data through axial coding (Saldaña, 2016). I further discuss and elaborate on the application and background of these coding strategies in the section of this chapter that discusses the semi-structured interview transcripts in which the various emergent themes are identified.

Thematic analysis provided me with the second and final layer of interpretation for this data set by providing an analysis of a combination of all themes identified in each participant's pictures and reflections.

After conducting the thematic analysis, I asked the participants to check the interpretations I had made through member checking. Each participant received a copy of the visuo-textual analysis table and the thematic analysis of their visuo-textual analysis data. I then made any suggested changes to my interpretation to ensure credibility. After that, I presented the thematic analysis findings per individual participant and the entire sample in Chapter 4.

3.7.3 Data Set 2: Semi-structured Interview Transcripts

While I used Brown and Collins's (2021) framework to analyse the visual and textual data, I used a different analytical framework to analyse the semi-structured interview transcripts in Phase 3, the semi-structured interviews. While Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis framework addressed the analysis of the pictures and reflections, I felt that Smith et al.'s (2009) interpretive phenomenological analysis framework was more effective in analysing the interview transcripts due to its practical application in previous research.

3.7.3.1 Thematic Analysis of the Interview Transcripts

While there is no definite method to undertake an interpretive phenomenological analysis, Smith et al. (2009) offer a seven-step analysis guide to interpretive phenomenological analysis. These steps are:

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the interview transcript

Step 2: Initial noting of ideas

Step 3: Identifying emergent themes

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

Step 5: Continuing with the following case

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases

Step 7: Taking interpretation to a deeper level

The following section discusses the application of these steps during the analysis of the individual participant's semi-structured interview transcripts.

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the interview transcript

Before commencing the analysis, I printed the full verbatim semi-structured interview transcripts with a margin on the left-hand side of the text. I then read the first semi-structured interview while listening to its recording.

Step 2: Initial noting of ideas

I noted ideas and points of interest identified during the reading and listening in the margin next to the transcript text. While reading the transcripts, I used highlighters, sticky notes, and coloured pens to underline and identify rich or significant quotes. I made analytical memos and noted any crucial aspects. I noted themes or metaphors that stood out to me during the process. After that, I used the ATLAS.ti software program to import the transcript digitally. I followed a strong naming convention when naming the interview transcripts. I named my first file S1 I1 P1 to represent School 1, Interview 1, and Participant 1.

Step 3: Identifying emergent themes – structural coding and subcoding

The first cycle of coding was structural coding and subcoding. To do this, I identified emerging themes in step 3 using Saldaña's (2016) coding strategies to code the semi-structured interview transcripts digitally. Saldaña (2016) recommends using two coding cycles. During this step, I conducted the first cycle of coding – structural coding and subcoding. Saldaña (2016) identifies 26 different first-cycle coding methods that one divides into six first-cycle coding methods, namely grammatical, literary, language, elemental, exploratory, procedural, and affective methods. Between the first and second cycles of coding, researchers may use eclectic coding, which refers to a combination of first-cycle coding methods (Saldaña, 2016). Second-cycle coding, which I use in step 4 of the analysis process, includes pattern, focused, axial, theoretical, elaborative, and longitudinal coding (Saldaña, 2016).

I selected more than one coding method for this study's first coding cycle. According to Saldaña (2016), various scholars argue that using multiple coding methods enhances accountability and the depth and breadth of findings (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2005). During the first coding cycle, I used structural coding to code segments representing common categories, differences, and relationships in the textual data (Namey et al., 2008; Saldaña, 2016). I used an inductive strategy for this coding cycle and noted the generation of new codes throughout the research process. Structural coding allowed me to identify large segments in the transcripts, forming a basis for further detailed analysis.

After using structural coding to code the interview transcripts digitally, I used subcoding to code this in more refined detail. Subcoding refers to assigning more detail to primary codes to enrich data. According to Gibbs (2007, p. 74) and Saldaña (2016, p. 91), primary or general codes may be referred to as “parent codes”, while one may refer to subcodes as “children”, and those subcodes that share the same “parents” are “siblings in a hierarchy”. I used the terms theme for parent codes and subtheme for siblings in the hierarchy in my analysis (Gibbs, 2007; Saldaña, 2016). Hence, I identified subcodes in the data and formed emergent themes. I repeated this process several times to generate themes. As a result, I reclassified some initial codes identified in the first coding cycle into different themes.

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes – axial coding

During step 3 of the analytic process, I searched for connections in the emergent themes in each participant's interview transcript. To do so, I used axial coding, which refers to identifying

codes in the research that are more dominant than others (Saldaña, 2016). According to Saldaña (2016, p. 244), axial coding “aims to link categories with subcategories and asks how they are related” while providing the opportunity to specify a category’s dimensions. I used axial coding after engaging in subcoding to lessen the number of codes generated in the first coding cycle and to develop more conceptual categories in the data (Saldaña, 2016). Hence, I categorised the parent codes as themes and the sibling codes as subthemes during the second coding cycle (Gibbs, 2007).

Step 5: Continuing with the following case

I then continued to analyse the following seven cases by repeating steps 1-4. During this process, I remained open to new themes while bracketing previously identified themes in previous cases.

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases

I then looked for patterns across each case and grouped any common themes.

Step 7: Taking interpretation to a deeper level

I then reworded my themes into more abstract meanings in a process known as transcending the data (Saldaña, 2016). Hence, I used the identified dominant codes and established major thematic categories for each participant’s set of pictures and narrative reflections (Saldaña, 2016), thereby creating a thematic narrative for each participant’s IPA, which I will discuss in Chapter 4.

Using Smith et al.’s (2009) seven-step interpretive phenomenological analysis framework provided me with the first layer of interpretation for this data set by providing an analysis of each participant’s semi-structured interview transcript.

3.7.3.2 Thematic IPA Findings for Each Participant

After presenting the IPA findings for each participant, I conducted a thematic analysis to identify and group themes across all participant findings. I used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases of thematic analysis to form a coherent narrative of the themes identified across each data set.

I used a thematic analysis strategy by first familiarising myself with the data. To do so, I completed the following steps. I read each participant's IPA findings and noted initial ideas. I then generated initial codes within the data by using two coding cycles. Cycle one used structural coding and subcoding, and cycle two used axial coding. Thereafter, I searched for themes within the data which I reviewed, named the themes and subthemes, and wrote up the findings. I then sent each participant a copy of their findings and engaged in member checking. After member checking, I adapted my interpretations to any recommendations noted by participants. After that, I finalised and wrote up the findings.

Using thematic analysis provided me with the second layer of interpretation for this data set by providing an analysis of a combination of all the themes identified in each participant's semi-structured interview transcript.

3.7.3.3 Thematic Analysis of Data Sets 1 and 2.

After analysing and presenting both data sets in Chapters 4 and 5, I compared the findings generated from the thematic analysis of the systematic visuo-textual analysis framework (data set 1) and the interpretive phenomenological analysis framework (data set 2). To conduct this analysis, I imported my data set 1 and 2 findings into ATLAS.ti.

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of a thematic analysis framework, I identified themes within the data by using the same steps that were used for the thematic analysis of data sets 1 and 2. I then wrote up the findings, which I discuss in Chapter 6. This process enabled me to explore the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of teachers lived experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic (Ciolan & Manasia, 2017).

3.7.4 Data Analysis Strategy

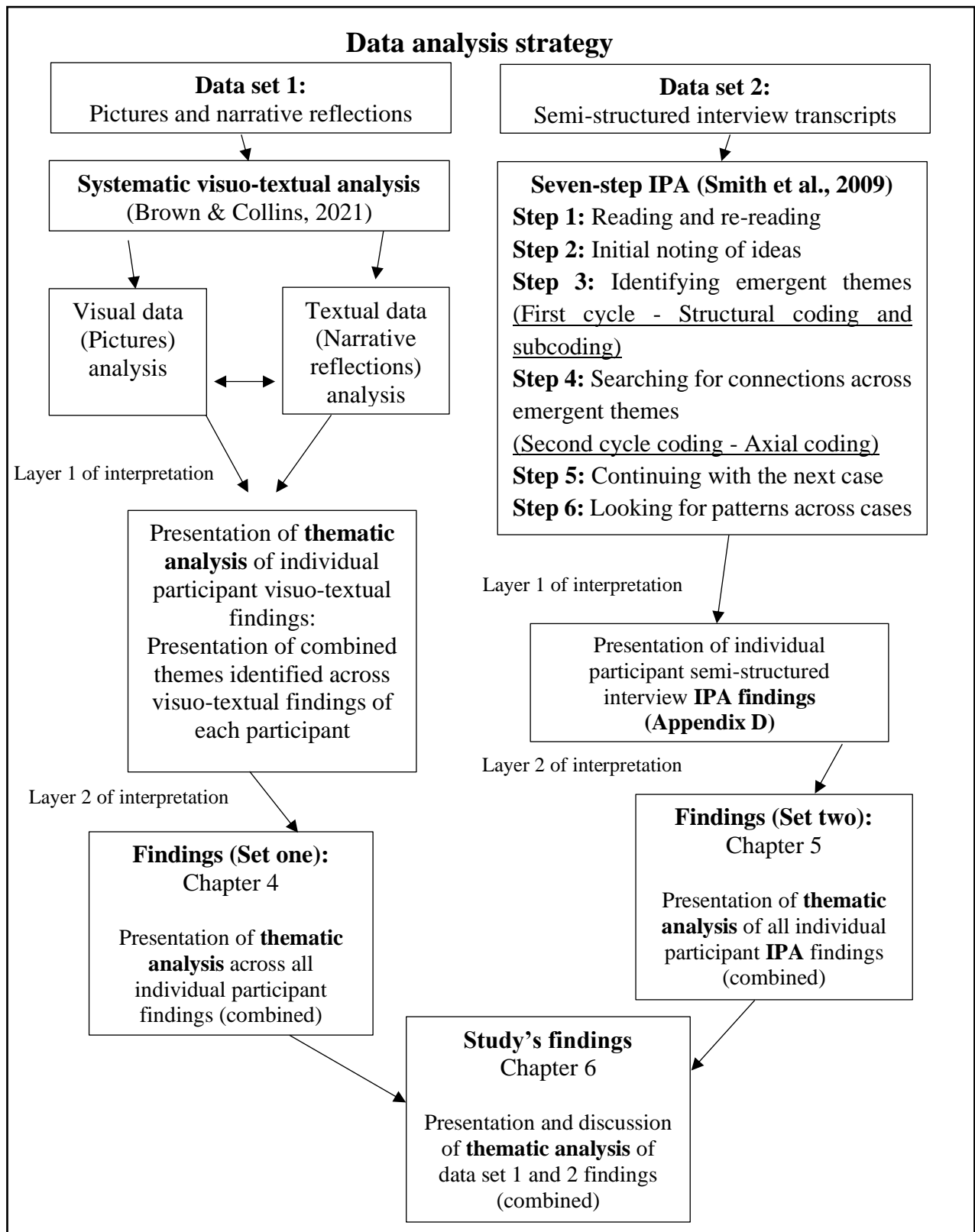


Figure 3. 4: Data analysis strategy

(Brown & Collins, 2021 & Smith et al., 2009; Saldaña, 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2006)

3.8 Quality Criteria

The following section discusses the steps taken to ensure this research study's trustworthiness, creditability, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

3.8.1 Trustworthiness

According to Nowell et al. (2017), in order to conduct a trustworthy qualitative study, researchers must research in a rigorous and methodical manner. Rigour refers to the appropriateness of the research design, data gathering, and analysis strategies in answering the research question (Morse et al., 2002). To formulate a rigorous research strategy, researchers must take an objective stance throughout the research process (Leedy et al., 2019). Accurate identification of research methods adds to the rigour of a research study. Rigour is imperative in conducting a qualitative study (Baillie, 2015; Cypress, 2017). Qualitative researchers must integrate extreme rigour into their research due to the subjectivity intrinsic to this type of research (Cypress, 2017). Integrating measures to ensure rigour hinders the possibility of interpretation bias during the data analysis phase of research studies (Davies & Dodd, 2002). Hence, I have used multiple data sources to hinder this limitation.

Using multiple data sources, including visual data (pictures), narrative reflections, and semi-structured interview transcripts in the data gathering and analysis process ensures the rigour of this research study. While these aspects hindered the possibility of interpretation bias in my study, the procedures and processes involved in the data gathering and analysis of the study were well-defined throughout. These measures worked together to restrict the possibility of interpretation bias and ensured researcher objectivity while conducting the study (Leedy et al., 2019). Furthermore, I used triangulation in this study by comparing the data sets to each other to identify inconsistencies.

Researchers achieve the trustworthiness of a study when executing thoroughly planned data gathering and analysis methods (Nowell et al., 2017) by developing studies that address the correct quality criteria. Guba and Lincoln (1989) were among the first to develop a model for trustworthiness. Their model, named the four-dimensions criteria, addresses imperative quality criteria in qualitative research, that is: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Jones et al., 2012).

The following section discusses this study's dependability, confirmability, and transferability. These aspects work together to establish trustworthiness in this research study (Christensen et al., 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leedy et al., 2021).

3.8.2 Credibility

Maree (2016) argues that credibility represents the extent to which a researcher is confident of the accuracy of the research finding. To ensure the credibility of my research findings, I gathered data directly from the respondents. I achieved credibility by analysing the direct quotes from the participants' reflections and transcribing the semi-structured interviews. Before conducting the semi-structured interviews, I reflected on the participants' photovoice data and reflections. My reflections were subjective and done together with my research supervisor. Using direct data from the participants and consistent reflection throughout the research process, I gathered and synthesised credible data representing the participants' social reality and lived experiences.

Furthermore, I used other precautions such as member checking. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), member checking increases the credibility of research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.8.3 Dependability

The dependability of a research study exists when one can duplicate the study and achieve the same results (Maree, 2016). I have provided a detailed description of the data gathering and analysis process used in this study. These descriptions entailed extensive research and thoughtful consideration of the works of previous expert scholars in the education and psychology field. A quality description allows the study to be duplicated.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Achieving confirmability entails researchers objectively approaching the research study (Maree, 2016). Objectively approaching a study entails the researcher's precautions to prohibit interpretation bias. Pink (2020) argues that researcher bias should not interfere with visual data interpretation. Hence, I used multiple data sources. Triangulation decreased the probability of interpretation bias.

Furthermore, during the research process, I remained aware of the underlying limitations of visual data interpretation and ensured that I approached the research process inductively. According to Pink (2020), objectivity is critical in achieving confirmability. Making a

“personal commitment to either standpoint” should not be pursued by the researcher or intervene with the participants’ direct data (Pink, 2020, p. 16). I, therefore, remained unbiased throughout the research process to achieve confirmability.

3.8.5 Transferability

According to Maree (2016), a study achieves transferability when the researcher ensures that the research findings apply to differing contexts (Maree, 2016). The sampling methods used in this study allowed transferability. One can duplicate these strategies in a different context, such as other school environments.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Pink (2020) argues that researchers must consider ethical codes while conducting visual research. For this study, I conscientiously applied the ethical guidelines permitted by the University of Pretoria, the schools of the participants, and the ethical considerations of visual research. Owing to the nature of the study’s research question, which focuses on subjective well-being, I considered that the data gathering process posed the possibility of heinous discovery. By conscientiously integrating these guidelines into the research process, I remained cognisant of the nature of this research study and integrated ethical measures such as referring research participants to a psychologist or counsellor on the consent forms (see Appendix B) and semi-structured interview sheets (see Appendix C) if required. These documents provided participants with the names of a number of professionals available to assist them with psychological support. Integrating aspects that protected the subjective well-being of the research participants was at the forefront of my intentions as a researcher. I sampled the participants from a private school; hence, I did not apply to for ethical clearance from the Department of Education. I did, however, apply for ethical clearance for this study from the University of Pretoria.

3.9.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent refers to the process whereby the researcher fully informs the participants of all aspects of the research study (Christensen et al., 2014). Participants of this study received documentation that contained detailed information regarding the process and procedures used in this phenomenological study via email and in person. This documentation also explained how the participants’ data would be used in the context of the study. I trained the participants on the ethical guidelines of photovoice research participation. Primarily, this training focused on preserving the anonymity and safety of others during the research process. According to

Pink (2014), preserving anonymity is imperative for researchers to integrate into the research process ethically. As stated previously in this chapter, the participants were not allowed to take pictures in the school environment. The training session stressed this.

Furthermore, the participants also had adequate time to consider taking part in the study and had opportunities to ask further questions about the study. After I provided detailed documentation and training regarding the study's procedures, the participants had the opportunity to decide if they wanted to participate voluntarily. I informed the participants of all aspects of the research study.

3.9.2 Voluntary Participation

The participants voluntarily took part in this study. I stressed voluntary participation while sampling research participants to ensure that the participants did not feel pressured to participate in the research process. I regarded participant emotional safety as a priority in this study. Owing to the nature of visual studies focusing on the subjective lived experiences of research participants, I remained sensitive to the ways that different cultures experience stress and anxiety whilst participating in visual research. (Pink, 2014). I also kept situational factors in mind, such as teachers' responsibilities in their professional and personal lives. I remained cognisant of factors such as the teachers not being available to meet with me because of their workload or personal obligations. I also allowed the participants to discontinue their participation in the study voluntarily if they wished to do so.

3.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

According to Christensen et al. (2014), researchers use confidentiality to protect the privacy of research participants. To achieve confidentiality and anonymity during this research study, I adhered to all regulations associated with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), Act 4 of 2013 (De Bruyn, 2014). I developed the data gathering and analysis procedures of this study by adhering to all guidelines associated with POPIA to protect the personal information of the eight research participants in the context of their schooling and organisational environment. Regulations such as the data gathering rule that research participants may not take pictures of other individuals if it violates their privacy or consent in the schooling environment ensured adherence to regulations associated with the Act in the research process. I applied these regulations to the research process to eliminate the possibility of infringing on the right to privacy held by other individuals in the participant's vicinity. This regulation also protected the participants and the school's reputation.

During this study, I did not conduct research-related activities on the school property other than meeting the principals of the two schools. I perceived the research participants as stand-alone individuals and made no association between the participant, any school governing body, or organisation. The identities of the research participants remained anonymous. I identified them through labels such as Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 3 to protect their privacy and confidentiality. Confidentially protected the personal information of research participants. No other parties knew the participants' identities, including the school principals or staff members.

3.10 Anticipated Limitations

Anticipated limitations of this research study included the research approach, sampling procedures, data gathering methods, and data interpretation. Using a qualitative approach is beneficial in exploring meaning, perceptions, and narrative data. However, the approach still has its limitations. This approach and its methods may be time-consuming and labour intensive due to multiple research methods and the open-ended nature of the data collected (Maree, 2016). Nevertheless, this approach allowed me to shape a holistic perspective of a research phenomenon which outweighed the limitations and was an appropriate approach for this research study (Pham, 2018). I integrated strategies such as member checking and consistent reflection while following an inductive approach throughout the research process and used field notes and reflective discussion with my research supervisor to explore this holistic perspective.

A limitation of the sample of eight private school teachers used for this study was that it did not constitute a diverse representation of all South African teachers. While the sample had differences in race, ethnicity, and culture, there are many diversities in the South African population. Owing to the subjective nature of this study, the personal views of these eight teachers represented their subjective experiences and could not be generalised as a representation of the general population of teachers in South Africa. These perspectives were affected by the research participants' educational environments and personal experiences. The data gathered from the participants' lived experiences did not represent the experiences of all South African teachers functioning in the public, private, or ex-model C schools. This limitation exists because each school followed a different approach to coping with the pandemic. Hence, the respective experiences of the employees in these different schools were vastly different. The eight participants of this study had to be private school teachers with sufficient electronic resources such as cell phones and an internet connection to take part in this study. The participants also had to have taught online during the COVID-19 pandemic. I

consider these requirements as a diversity limitation. The findings may not indicate how public-school teachers experienced the pandemic or even reflect teachers' experiences in different private schools. The sample is tiny, and the likelihood that it might differ significantly in terms of race, culture, gender, and language is likely.

3.11 Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the phenomenon of teachers' subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study followed an inductive approach throughout the research process and used social constructivism (interpretivism) principles to explore the teachers' social realities regarding their subjective well-being experiences. I used a relativist ontological and subjectivist epistemological stance while deciding on the appropriate data gathering and interpretation methods for this study. This study applied a phenomenological research design to gather pictures, textual (narrative) reflections, and semi-structured interviews with the participants, that is, eight South African private school teachers. It followed a non-probability, purposive sampling strategy and used systematic visuo-textual analysis and a seven-step interpretive phenomenological framework to interpret the visual, textual, and semi-structured interview data. After that, I used thematic analysis to develop the study's findings. The next chapter will focus on presenting the research findings of this study.

Chapter 4: Presentation Of Analysis Of Data Set 1

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, I used Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis framework to analyse the visual data (pictures) and written data, including narrative reflections. This chapter discusses the findings gathered from the first data set.

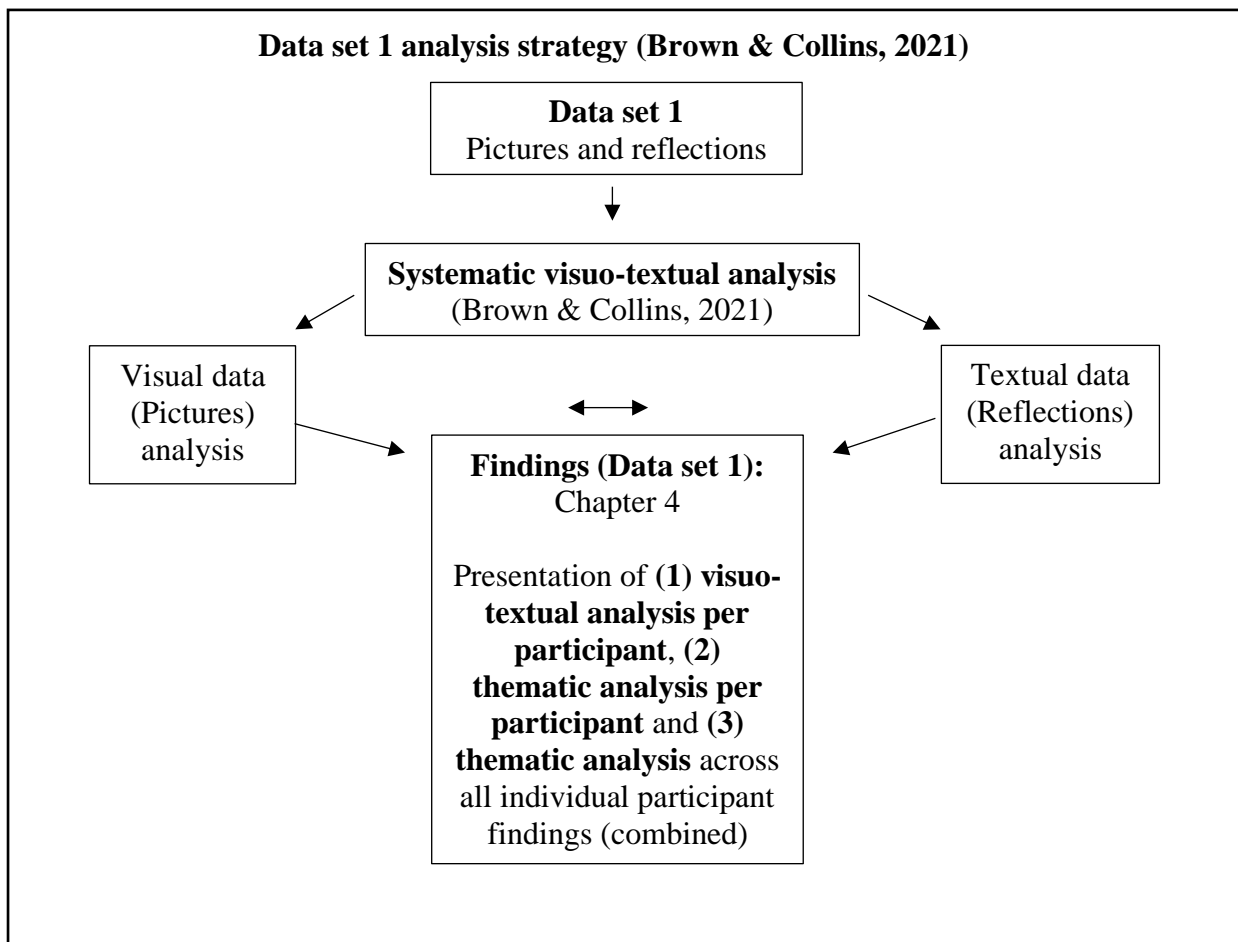


Figure 4. 1: Analysis of data set 1

I followed a three-phase process to analyse the data. Phase 1 was a systematic visuo-textual analysis of each participant's pictures and individual narrative reflections. Phase 2 was grouping the analysis of each participant's individual pictures and reflections together, whereafter, I conducted a thematic analysis on the participant's group of pictures, creating a coherent narrative for each participant. Phase 3 was a thematic analysis of all participants' narratives collectively.

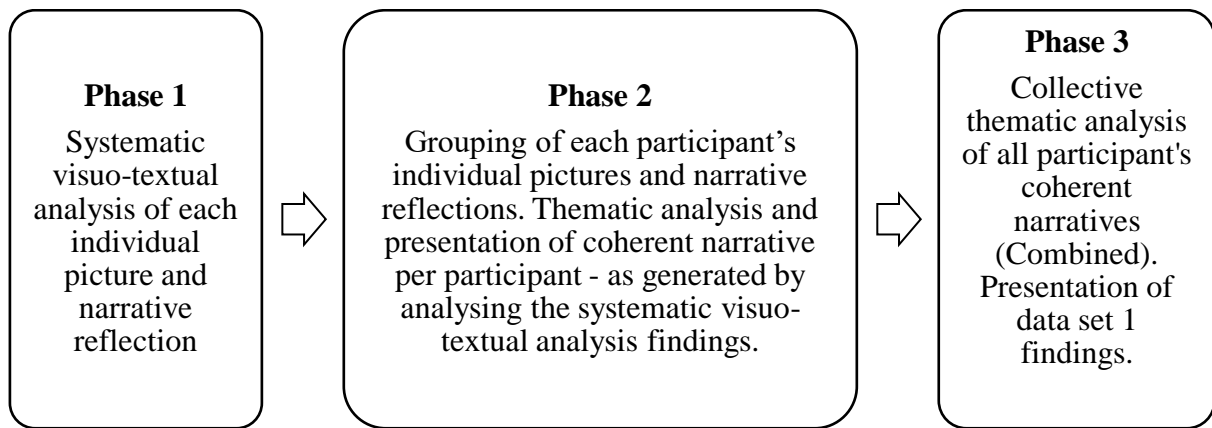


Figure 4. 2: Data set 1 analysis phases

4.2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis

The following section focuses on analysing the pictures and narrative reflections submitted by the eight participants in this study.

4.2.1 Participant 1

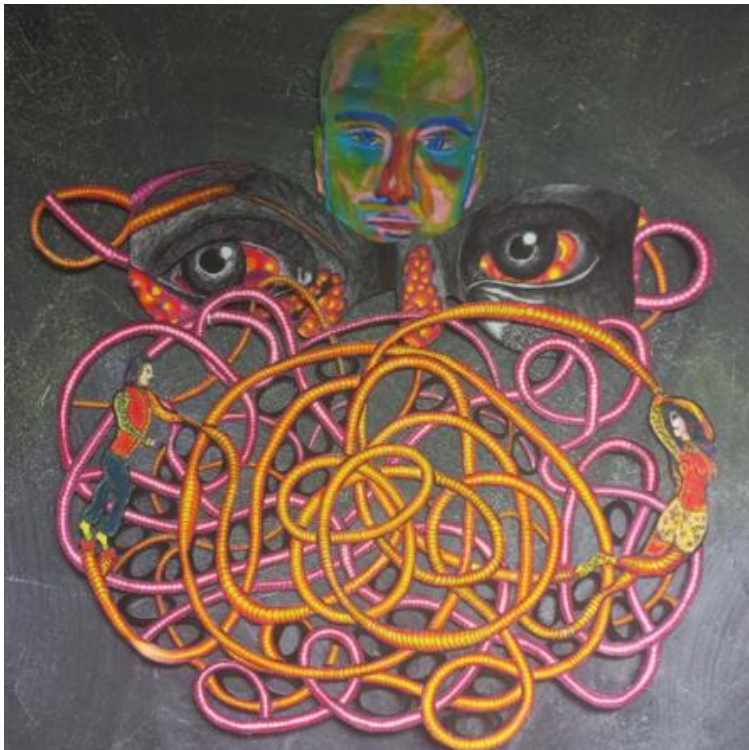


Figure 4. 3: Art piece

“Doing and teaching art was the centre of my sanity.”

Table 4. 1: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>Participant 1 took this picture with a camera. The picture includes a black background consisting of a black chalkboard texture. On top of the chalkboard is a paper cut-out consisting of a colourful contrasting art piece. There is no specific shape to the cut-out but a prevalent use of rounded lines.</p> <p>The art piece was painted and drawn; hence the texture consists of dried paint and coloured pencil texture on paper. The art piece is at the centre of the picture.</p> <p>The primary colours in the art piece are orange, green, red, blue, pink and black. Drawn orange and pink wires connect two figures, a man and a woman, on opposite sides of the art piece. The</p>	<p>Participant 1 used doing and teaching art to access his centre of sanity and teaching others how to use art to maintain “sanity”. The chaotic knots in the wire may represent Participant 1’s sanity and effort to maintain and detangle his emotions and experiences.</p>	<p>Art.</p> <p>Sanity.</p> <p>Teaching.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>man and woman wear red, yellow, orange, and blue clothes. An abstract face at the top of the picture looks at the viewer while portraying the contrasting colours of blue, green, pink, red, and orange. We see two eyes using monochromatic colours (orange hues), which gaze left under the face. Wire strings from these eyes are suggested by the orange and pink colours in the sclera of these eyes.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>Pink and orange wires stream from a being's eyes. This wire is tangled chaotically and represents his mental state. Detangling this wire could represent the artist making sense of his experiences and emotions. The wire connects two people representing the</p>	<p>Participant 1 used teaching and doing art to maintain "sanity". The internal realisation is that without art, we would reach insanity. Detangling emotions associated with insanity could have been at the forefront of the participant's priorities. To do so, he made art</p>	<p>Creating and teaching art evokes feelings of sanity and content while providing one with meaning and purpose.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>participant and his wife. Pink is known as the colour of love, and orange is a warm-toned colour evoking enthusiasm and excitement (Cherry, 2020). The secondary colour of orange may also represent creativity, change, energy, and endurance (Elliot, 2015). These colours contrast with the dark background. A wired path through chaos provides one with a connection to make sense of and detangle emotions. The being overlooking the scene symbolises a higher power watching over the connection between the participant and his partner. All figures, including the green, pink, and orange-eyed figures, portray contentedness in their gaze. The eyes are meaningful symbols, a</p>	<p>which helped him to escape reality and achieve a state of flow (Seligman, 2018).</p>	

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>pathway to our soul. The being portrays the inner soul of the participant subconsciously looking over chaos and connection. These black eyes look at us through the darkness, wanting to see the light again.</p> <p>During the pandemic, we struggled to see the best of the situation. The being's faces are trademarks of anxiety for the future yet content in knowing a higher power(s) is in control. The greater force of control over their fate (eyes of the two figures) makes the participant feel calm and secure, as is evident in the two figures' facial expressions in the wired path. Contentedness, calmness and enthusiasm are all emotions observed in the feeling of love and connection.</p>		



Figure 4. 4: Portrait of wife

“Spending time with my wife, baking, talking, doing art, reading to each other and listen to my wife playing piano.”

Table 4. 2: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 1 took this picture with a camera: a framed, rectangular drawing of a woman. The participant used a pencil, eraser, and paper to sketch the woman. A golden frame surrounds the neatly placed portrait. This pictured woman captures a woman in black and white monochromatic colours.	Participant 1 loved doing daily tasks and participating in hobbies with his wife. The participant found spending time with his wife as source of well-being and formed a more incredible bond with her when spending more time together.	Time. Baking. Talking. Art. Reading. Piano. Love. Marriage. Hobbies.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>The thin lines are sensitive and easily erased. Thicker lines that stand out emphasise the woman's features, such as the smooth texture of her curly hair. She has a shadow covering half of her face. Her facial expressions encompass lifted eyebrows and a lifted lip. She looks at something the viewer cannot see, as depicted by her eyes in the middle of the picture. This creates a nostalgic scene which might represent events that passed. The drawing was signed in the year 2021.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>The black and white sketch is a close-up of her face, portraying emotions such as bravery and content. Her face is relaxed, almost sad. Her facial expressions portray seriousness which the use of black and white colours supports. While black is not a colour, it is well-known to represent</p>	<p>Participant 1 did all these hobbies with their wife because he loves her. She is their pride, joy, source of comfort and entertainment. This artwork and the subject in the piece are so incredible that the participant framed it and could sell it as a</p>	<p>Enjoying shared hobbies through love and marriage contributes to positive well-being experiences.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>authority, power and strength (FatRabbit Creative, 2022). By drawing her, the participant sees his wife as a symbol of strength and bravery. A portrait is symbolic in that it is a way of remembering someone for how they used to look. He chose a golden frame. Gold can symbolise royalty, divinity and power (Designs, 2022). He sees and idolise her as a beautiful goddess and symbol of strength. He drew and put her in a frame to keep that image of her forever. He signed the art piece with 2021, meaning that that could represent how he perceived her during the pandemic. She played a significant role in the participant's well-being; hence he sketched her to preserve and acknowledge her role. Artists perceive</p>	<p>signed piece. Ultimately, the participant regarded his wife's role during the pandemic as an imperative source of well-being. Hence, it emphasised the role of quality time with family during the pandemic.</p>	

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	women as beautiful to the world.		

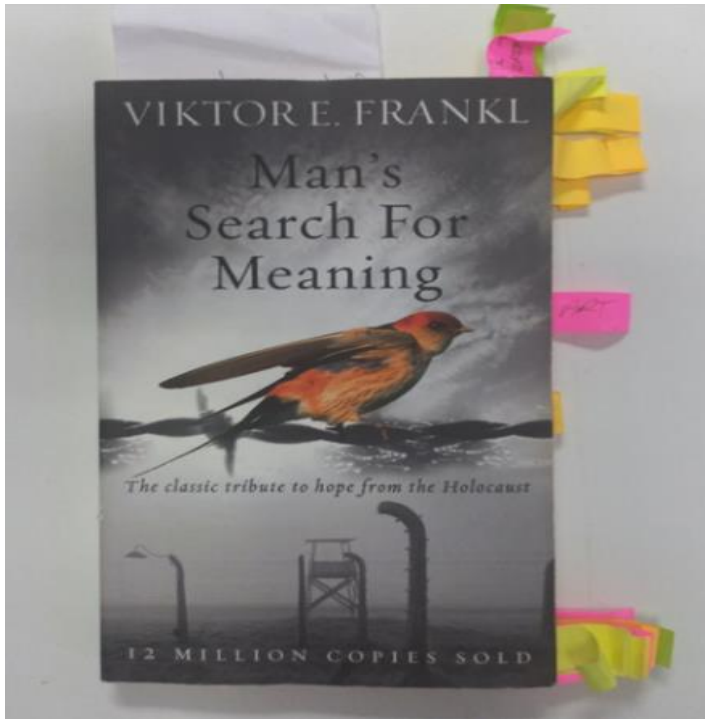


Figure 4. 5: Man’s search for meaning

“Completing my studies in Logotherapy to determine the effects of COVID-19 on my students and how art helped them to cope during this time.”

Table 4. 3: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 1 took this picture with a camera. A book is at the centre of the picture with a white background. The smooth, surfaced rectangular book has many ruffled	This book includes the study of logotherapy. It touches on topics of purpose, life, and outcome. The principles in the book helped the participant	Meaning Art Logotherapy

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>pink, orange, and green sticky notes embedded in the pages on the right-hand side of the book. The sticky notes on the side of the book indicate that the participant studied the book. A white piece of paper is also embedded in the pages at the top of the book. The book's cover is black and white, with an orange bird ready to fly from a piece of barbed wire. The black and white background colours depict a deserted concentration camp, which creates a depressing atmosphere. The bird at the centre of the cover is orange and contrasts with the background. The book's title is <i>Man's Search for Meaning</i> with a subheading, "The classic tribute to hope from the Holocaust", both written in black. The author is "Viktor E. Frankl", and</p>	<p>and his learners search for meaning in life, which helped them to cope and create meaning during the pandemic. The book focuses on events that took place during the Holocaust. The reader could link and compare the pandemic and Holocaust with each other as times when making meaning was necessary.</p>	

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>the book is plentiful, as there have been “12 MILLION COPIES SOLD”, as indicated by the white text at the top and bottom of the cover page.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>The orange bird is a life form in a deserted black and white, empty terrain. This bird represents the participant looking to escape the pandemic and its circumstances. This book has not just been read but studied, as is evident from the multiple coloured and ruffled sticky notes on the right-hand side of the book.</p> <p>The coloured sticky notes could link to the brightly coloured bird and the theme of escaping. The notes, which represent bits of knowledge, could allude to concepts used in the book to escape mental anguish or hardships during the</p>	<p>There has been a struggle to find answers and meaning to events and experiences generated during the pandemic. The participant used this book and its principles to help others. Art is his purpose and source of meaning in life, and he wants to show its use to others. He teaches his learners new ways to cope with the effects of the pandemic through art.</p> <p>This book is a prescribed reading source for the degree that Participant 1 was studying for, that is,</p>	<p>Using Logotherapy strategies to create and find meaning is beneficial to the participant; hence he teaches these principles to his learners to help them cope with the effects of the pandemic.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	pandemic by finding and creating meaning.	logotherapy. Viktor Frankl, the author of the book, developed logotherapy.	



Figure 4. 6: Working in the garden

“Working in the garden and being in nature.”

Table 4. 4: Participant 1 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	This picture was taken with a camera. A man is gardening with a straw hat and a wooden gardening tool. He is wearing a soft-	The man was working in his little part of nature, a garden.	Gardening. Working. Nature.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>to-the-touch, brown t-shirt and green pants. The garden consists of green plants, and red and yellow flowers, a structure that looks like a wooden bridge in the top right-hand corner of the picture, and rocks and sand. It is a sunny day. There are many plants, flowers, trees, rocks, and sand. The nature scene provides a lush visual texture to the picture.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>Well-cared-for green plants fill the garden. The participant looks after this garden since we see him working in garden clothing. Most people enjoy time in nature; green accompanies feelings of calm that many crave in the stressful modern world. The plants have been watered recently by the looks of the hosepipe in the background. There are many kinds of flowers in the garden. The participant chose to</p>	<p>He perceived nature and a garden almost as two separate subjects. He does not refer to this as “gardening” but as “working”; the work could be a burden to him. Working on his “mental garden” was labour-intensive and challenging during the pandemic. Regardless, grounding oneself in nature played a role</p>	<p>The man works in this beautiful garden but describes gardening as labour rather than fun. Regardless, being in nature evokes mindfulness and a sense of being grounded for the participant.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>capture the red and yellow flowers, representing love, life, energy, happiness, hope, and wisdom (Elliot, 2015). The area is youthful, as illustrated by the lush growth of plants. Living plants indicate good health and care. The man's hat symbolises protection against the sun, which may represent hardships. Gardening is a hobby of the participant that he had time to do during the pandemic.</p> <p>This garden may represent the inner world of the participant. By spending time on his hobbies, he consequently worked on his symbolic "mental garden" by taking out the weeds and carefully nurturing the plants, which may represent his thoughts and emotions. Hence, gardening was a source of mindfulness.</p>	<p>in the well-being of Participant 1.</p>	

4.2.2 Participant 2



Figure 4. 7: Birth of a baby

“My baby was born just before lockdown, and the beginning [it] did not affect me terribly. It was actually terribly nice for me to know I only have so much time together with my husband. It put my mental health in a good place.”

Table 4. 5: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	This picture was taken with a camera. A woman is holding her baby in an area with white pillows. The baby is lying on a white and blue textured blanket. We see a window with blinds blocking the sunlight and creating a dim-lit	This woman had a baby before the pandemic began. She cares for her family and loves spending time with them. Quality family time moved her mental	Time. Love. Family. Care. Mother. Mental health.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>atmosphere. The baby wears summer clothes while the mother sits on a couch wearing a purple t-shirt and black earrings. The baby is wearing a pink and white t-shirt with the word “love” written on it. We see the profile of the mother’s face and her eyes gazing at the baby, whose eyes are closed. This is a low-contrast picture with light and warm colours of pink and purple hues.</p>	<p>health to a “good place”.</p>	
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>This is the woman’s baby that she holds so dear to her. She cares for and loves this baby as she looks at it in awe. The baby’s clothes have the word “love” on them, furthering the mother-child connection. This is a newborn child. The child is a symbol of new life, a new start. Her baby is comfortable and sleeping. This picture portrays the love and connection between mother and</p>	<p>The time she spent with her husband and baby during the pandemic was beneficial for her well-being. This time improved her well-being drastically. It was a needed break from the world to see her family again.</p>	<p>Working to gain money for your family comes at a cost – time. The pandemic provided the participant with the opportunity to spend time with her family, which improved her overall feelings of well-being.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	daughter. The pandemic allowed the participant to spend more time with her baby, forming a solid bond. Children bring joy and creativity to a household. The child's pink clothes might indicate she is a girl, symbolising new femininity and calmness in this home (Bakhshi & Gilbert, 2015).		



Figure 4. 8: Teaching from home

“Very quickly learnt how to communicate better with learners through MS teams platform. It was good for me. Learners asked questions more easily. Especially the learners who are introverted.”

Table 4. 6: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	<p>The participant took this picture with a camera. The picture portrays a black laptop and a purple mug for a warm beverage on a smooth wooden table. The picture has many triangles and rectangular shapes, besides the round mug on the yellow material. There is a USB stick on the left-hand side of the laptop and a chair on the opposite side of the table. The sun is shining outside as visible behind the glass black-framed doors. There are green trees outside the doors. Someone is working. There are not any harsh contrasting colours or apparent lines in the picture. The participant is preparing to teach online through Microsoft Teams, as depicted by the logos on the laptop screen.</p>	<p>The teacher enjoyed communicating with learners online, and in her at-home teaching environment, Participant 2 found it easy to teach this way as she could communicate effectively with more introverted learners.</p>	<p>Microsoft teams. Teaching. Preparation. Communication. Online.</p>
Level 2:	<p>A comfortable workspace. The participant is drinking coffee while teaching</p>	<p>She used Microsoft Teams to communicate with</p>	<p>There is a realisation that online teaching can better the</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Conceptualise	<p>online in a well-lit room. This picture depicts a workstation in the participant's home and is not a typical classroom setup. The space looks quiet and peaceful due to the absence of complex contrasting colours. The bright outside sun suggests that it is early in the morning. The green trees outside introduce life. The trees outside the house's doors symbolise the disconnection from nature caused by the integration of technology. Life drains out when working online. Natural in-person interaction is lost; the empty chair on the opposite side of the table supports this idea.</p>	<p>her classes. The teacher knows how to use Microsoft teams as she made groups for her classes. She found that this way of teaching feels better than face-to-face education to communicate with introverted learners.</p>	<p>learners' and teachers' well-being as it facilitates better communication among introverted individuals.</p>

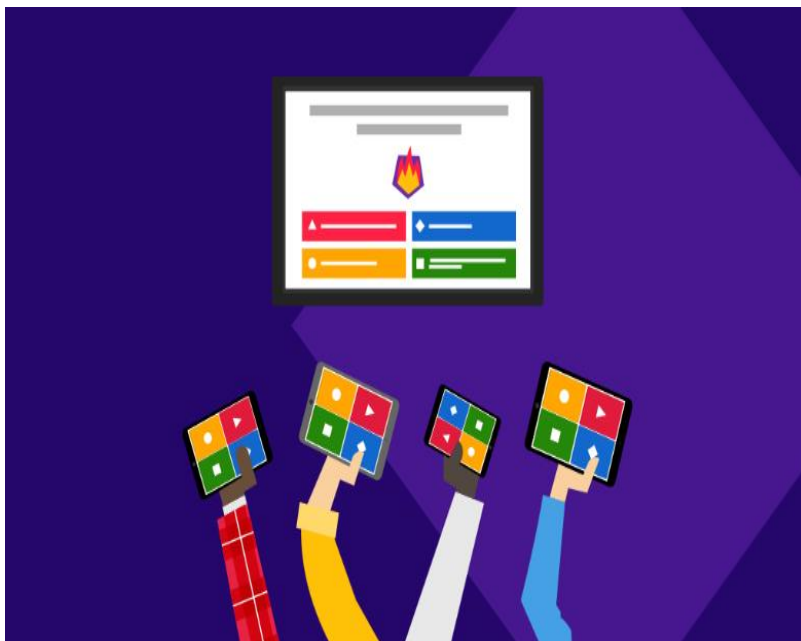


Figure 4. 9: Kahoot

“Online lessons were a lot of work for preparation, but the marking was done for you.”

Clara Cristo (2020). Chair Kahoots a partir de uma folha de cálculo. Cantic.

<https://cantic.org.pt/cantic/2020/05/21/criar-kahoots-a-partir-de-uma-folha-de-calculo/>

Table 4. 7: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 2 downloaded this picture from the internet. Four raised hands hold electronic objects that look like tablets connected to the larger square screen at the top of the picture Both the tablets and screen have blocks with contrasting colours red, yellow, blue and green. This picture used solid	This participant prepared her lessons on an online platform. The online system marked it for her.	Preparation. Work. Marking. Kahoot.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>colours contrasting to the white and purple backgrounds and different variations of lines. The background is purple and has a light purple square. As evident in the raised hands, individuals are playing an educational game. This is a poll. Individuals must choose from a variety of options. People of different races with different coloured clothing (red, yellow, grey and blue), are holding devices in the picture depicting diversity. We cannot determine the object or subject's (figures) texture as this is a digital picture. This picture illustrates the use of the digital learning app named Kahoot.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>This picture indicates that Participant 2 used Kahoot to teach during the pandemic and found usefulness in using an application that uses</p>	<p>Preparing and marking learners' work is draining and exhausting for teachers. Participant 2 found it hard to set</p>	<p>Despite the overload of work and preparation, online platforms such as Kahoot benefit our teachers by making</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>aspects such as multiple choice where learners do not have to write answers. The participant also submitted a digital picture as it was an easy way to convey the process of completing a Kahoot quiz. This picture also symbolises privilege as the idea that the participant could use the application means that her learners had access to technology, which made her lives easier.</p>	<p>up online classes due to the required preparation and work; she found utility in apps like Kahoot. Using platforms like Kahoot made the preparation of classes easier.</p>	<p>marking easier and decreasing her stress and workload.</p>



Figure 4. 10: Picture of shoes

“There was a lot more time for exercise, and that helped me. Every day I saw more and more families going hiking”

Table 4. 8: Participant 2 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 2 took this picture with a camera. Three pairs of shoes – black, white and blue – lay next to a neatly made white bed with brown pillows. The bedding looks soft and comfortable. Dark grey curtains are drawn in the background. A grey rectangle-shaped carpet is in front of the wooden	She had time to do all the exercises she wanted. She would see many people also going into this exercise routine by hiking.	Exercise. Hiking. Family. Connecting with others.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>bedside table with a rough texture. There is a rectangular wooden drawer at the base of the bed. This is the participant's family's shoes after exercise. These were running shoes. The room was tidy. The picture has no subjects (figures, animals or people).</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>The worn-out shoes lay next to the bed. Three pairs of shoes suggest that the family went out to exercise, kicked her shoes off, and relaxed on the bed when they returned home. The participant covered the bed in white linen and made it for the day. These indicators show that the participant is active and enjoys physical exercise with her family. She used her time during the pandemic to bond with her family through exercise.</p>	<p>Many families spent time together during the pandemic. In this situation, the participant valued the large amount of time she now had with her family by exercising. They went on hikes, spent more time together, and met new people during the lockdown. After exercising, Participant 2 and her family returned home and relaxed together.</p>	<p>The participant utilised the time presented by the lockdown to exercise, improving her well-being and family bond.</p>

4.2.3 Participant 3



Figure 4. 11: Benefits of setting boundaries

“During the pandemic, I have grown a lot as a person and learnt a lot of life lessons. The first one is that an educator doesn’t have office hours, we are expected to be permanently “on’,” so if I don’t set boundaries for myself – and not feel guilty about it – I am going to burn out, and then I won’t be of use to anyone.”

Catalyst for self-care (2022). Benefits of setting boundaries.

<https://www.metamorphosiscoaches.com/copy-of-people-pleasing-boundary-se>

Table 4. 9: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 3 downloaded this picture from the internet. This picture includes an illustration that promotes the “Benefits of setting boundaries”. There are eight benefits to this	Participant 3 felt that teachers should have set boundaries. The outcome of having no limits was negative. Teachers must have a point of	Boundaries. Burnout. Guilt.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>term, including: “wards off burnout”, “improved emotional health”, “improved relationships”, “clear expectations for others”, “decreased stress”, “improved self-care capabilities”, “respect from others and self-respect”, and “promotes autonomy”. Small, thin-lined, black arrows point to these benefits. All headings are placed in circles with pink and salmon tones, calming the viewer (Bakhshi & Gilbert, 2015). Pink is a feminine colour and is monochromatically linked with salmon (Bakhshi & Gilbert, 2015). The author’s name, “@CATALYSTFORSELF CARE”, is on the bottom left-hand corner of the image, written in black. There is no apparent use of texture, objects, or the presence of subjects</p>	<p>rest and set up boundaries to avoid guilt.</p>	

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	(figures, animals, or people) in this digital picture.		
Level 2: Conceptualise	<p>The participant set up boundaries to promote autonomy, ward off burnout, improve emotional health, improve relationships, clear expectations of others, decrease stress, improve self-care capabilities and increase her respect for others and self-respect (Metamorphosis coaches, 2022). These benefits are trustworthy since pink is also a colour of love in society (Bakhshi & Gilbert, 2015). Love and trust go hand in hand (Bakhshi & Gilbert, 2015). Salmon is a colour of hope, health and happiness (Designs, 2022). This</p>	<p>Teachers must set boundaries to avoid burnout due to the blurred lines created by an absence of precise working hours.</p>	<p>Teachers need to set boundaries to avoid feelings of guilt and burnout. Boundaries for teachers are essential due to blurred lines between working hours.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>indicates that the benefits in the picture promote the participant's health and happiness. This illustration served as a representation of the benefits of setting boundaries during the pandemic for Participant 3. The participant submitted a downloaded picture which indicates that she chose not to capture the setting of these boundaries through a camera.</p>		



Figure 4. 12: Family

“The sad reality of working for a business is unfortunately, everyone is replaceable, so you have to put your loved ones first as when you quit or get retrenched or whatever the case, the work won’t be there anymore but your family will. With that spending time with family and friends have been crucial to my well-being by being able to unwind and de-stress.”

Dreamtime (n.d). Photograph of people holding up letters of the word family.
<https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/b/happy-family-standing-beach-sunset-time-keep-letters-forming-word-concept-friendly-62427806.jpg>

Table 4. 10: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 3 downloaded this picture from the internet. Four people hold a sign that spells “F A M I L Y”. The black silhouette of the sign stands out against the yellow, orange, white, and grey horizon,	This participant chooses family over having a job. Her family means a lot to her and helps her to come to terms with stress.	Business. Retrench. Replace. Family. De-stress.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>dimmed sun, and blue ocean. The ocean seems smooth to the touch. The sharpness of the lines in the letters contrasts the nature scene. We cannot see the faces of the four subjects in the picture but we know they are standing beside each other.</p>		<p>Unwind.</p>
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>This sign says “F A M I L Y” as a tribute. The four people in this picture appear to be a nuclear family. A man, woman, girl and boy. This family is probably on holiday at the beach. It has reached late afternoon, and the sign is a silhouette. We cannot see the faces of the family, meaning this picture can relate to anyone. The warm-toned colour of the sun brings joy and contrasts beautifully with the blue ocean. The sun represents a cycle of light leaving and coming back. The family enjoy her time together, even in the cycle</p>	<p>The participant felt that she should have prioritised her family as her workplace could easily replace or retrench her. She prioritised spending time with her family to de-stress.</p>	<p>Prioritising time with your family allows you to unwind and de-stress. The participant prioritises family time as she perceives her workplace as a business that can easily retrench or replace her.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>of light and dark. The sun vs the ocean contributes to the different feelings of love and time vs chaos and restlessness. This family sticks together in good and bad times. Sunsets are common ground for coming together with someone you love to see something beautiful. The participant treasures her family and each day spent together.</p>		



Figure 4. 13: Netflix

“Most people will say that exercise is a very big thing for them to de-stress or unwind and is good for not just their physical health but their emotional health too. For me that is NOT the case. I am not a fit and exercise-loving person (unlike my husband 😊🏋️😄) but I really enjoy watching TV series and movies. Sometimes I will have a good cry session as well or feel highly motivated or it will give me topics to talk about and that, to me, is part of my positive well-being.”

[Netflix]. (n.d.). <https://www.booking.com/hotel/fr/the-bancycar.html>

Table 4. 11: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 3 downloaded this picture from the internet. There is a black rectangular screen or monitor in the picture. The participant streams a popular streaming platform, “NETFLIX”, on a television in the middle of the screen. A PlayStation remote under the television indicates that one can also play video games. The picture is black and red. We can assume that the texture of all surfaces is smooth.	Participant 3 used streaming platforms instead of physical exercise for entertainment to improve well-being.	Netflix. Entertainment. De-stress. Unwind. Exercise.
Level 2: Conceptualise	Netflix is known for its red title. The colour red brings feelings of passion and excitement (Bakhshi &	She would rather have watched Netflix than exercise. Netflix	The participant found comfort in watching Netflix to de-stress and

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>Gilbert, 2015). It draws you in. This makes you want to spend more time around it, watching more and more shows. These shows help you to escape reality and bring entertainment. Red is intriguing; it keeps you engaged. Entertainment platforms want us to bury ourselves in a made-up fantasy. This is time-consuming but provides us with the opportunity to relax. This was a good way for many to escape the lonely reality of the pandemic. The red is surrounded by black and red. This could represent a cycle of engaging, blackout, and always returning to binge.</p>	<p>helped her to de-stress and unwind while providing her with an opportunity to let out her emotions (cry). It did not provide solutions, only an escape. This participant wanted to escape from their stress as a teacher. Netflix helped her bring out the emotions she hid away in class.</p>	<p>unwind. She found watching Netflix more effective than physical exercise in improving her feelings of well-being during the pandemic.</p>

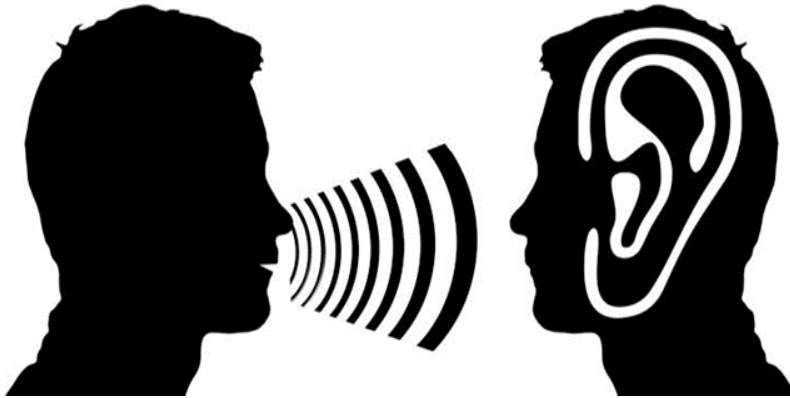


Figure 4. 14: Picture of two figures where one is talking

“A thing that genuinely increases teacher well-being is the workplace at the end of the day – given we spend most of our time there. And to make this a ‘safe’ place, a teacher benefits by feeling valued, heard and understood. To know that, yes, the job is difficult and it feels like the world is against you at times cause you can’t keep the kids and the parents and the fellow teachers and head office and and and happy but it is an amazing feeling to know they got your back and believe in your abilities and trust you. (And maybe not be told the whole time what you’re doing wrong and that you’re so replaceable). Sometimes I just need things ‘explained’ to me more often because as soon as I understand why we do a certain thing a certain way I am 100% on board with it.”

[Picture of two figures where one is talking]. (n.d.).

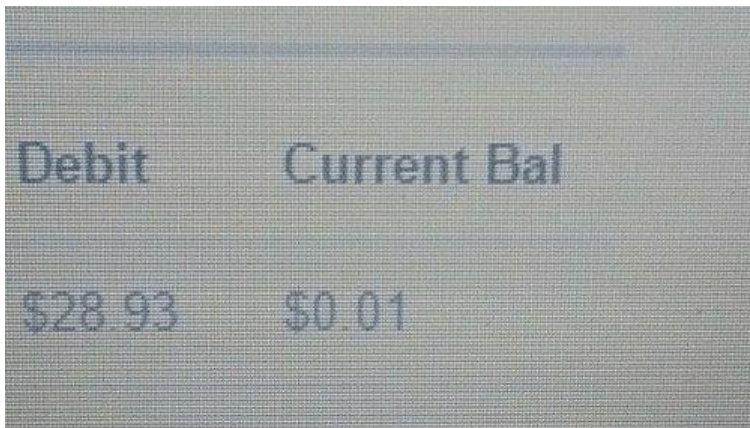
https://www.promonthly.com/online_exclusives/2019/08/listening-to-customers-can-be-your-most-powerful-tool

Table 4. 12: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 3 downloaded this picture from the internet. A man is speaking to another man. The other man is listening	This participant agreed that all teachers needed to be valued and treated with respect. She felt	Unappreciated. Unheard. Misunderstood.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>intently. It is evident that this is a one-sided conversation as one man has a large ear and the other man emits sound waves. The picture is in black and white. There is no apparent use of tone or visual texture in this picture.</p>	<p>that more instruction and explanation directed at teachers would make her feel more respected and informed.</p>	<p>Unhappy. Difficulty. Well-being in the workplace.</p>
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>Feels less like a conversation and more like a one-sided speech. The listener is adamant or hears what they say but is not responding. They are listening. We do not see their faces; this sequence can apply to anyone.</p> <p>Having the picture in black and white gives us room for interpretation. The bigger the ear, the more room for information to be heard. Sound waves are invisible strings in our communication. Things that are bigger draw more attention. This person wants the other to know that he is listening. There</p>	<p>This participant emphasised the role of the workplace in well-being. She felt that being valued, heard, and understood were essential factors to feel valued. The participant's workplace must support her by providing her with positive feedback and not only negative feedback. The participant longed for trust and effective</p>	<p>Schools need to improve communication between teachers and management to improve teacher well-being. In doing so, their staff must feel heard, understood, and valued. In doing so, management must not only focus on negative feedback but also integrate positive feedback into their discussions with teachers.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	is no grey area where he may listen, just black-and- white serial communication. Participant 3 may feel unheard during the pandemic.	communication in the workplace	



Having a positive balance in my bank account. 🥰🥰

Figure 4. 15: Current balance

“A bonus hiehie-haha: the best thing for my well-being is actually getting through at the end of the month and not permanently have financial stress and debt 😂😂😂 but that’s teaching for you; overworked and underpaid 😊😊”

[Having a positive balance in my bank account]. (n.d.). <https://me.me/i/debitcurrent-bal-having-a-positive-balance-in-my-bank-account-16498970>

Table 4. 13: Participant 3 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 5

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 3 downloaded this picture from the internet. There are two columns on a digital screen. There are two totals, “Current balance” (\$0.01) and “Debit (\$28.93)”. A statement at the bottom of the picture reads: “Having a positive balance in my bank account” with two yellow and pink “in love emoticons” next to the statement. There is no apparent use of colour contrast, texture, or shape in this digital picture.	The participant longed to have enough money to pay her debt. She perceives teachers as overworked and underpaid.	Overworked. Underpaid. Financial strain. Stress. Debt.
Level 2: Conceptualise	Two numbers are displayed. One number indicates debit, while the other indicates that her bank account does not have enough money to pay the debt. A low balance in your bank account provokes emotions of sadness, frustration, and fear. The participant is facing financial strain. The	This participant felt that teachers were overworked and underpaid, leading to financial stress and debt.	Teachers face financial stressors due to being overworked and underpaid. Financial security increased well-being.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	“in love emoticons” indicates that the participant longs for financial security.		

4.2.4 Participant 4



Figure 4. 16: Be still and know I am God

“I wrote a Bible verse each day for 100 days and posted it on Facebook along with a few photos of things I was grateful for each day. The Bible verse was just to send encouragement to all my family and friends and to show we were not alone during lockdown. The photos were of us doing general everyday things like baking, reading, exercising in the garden, our dogs, online work and schooling etc.”

Table 4. 14: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	<p>Participant 4 took this picture with a camera. A young boy is holding a chalkboard sign in a kitchen filled with different appliances, cutlery, crockery, and objects. The heart-shaped sign has a biblical scripture written on it with white chalk reading, “Be still and know I am God Psalms 46:10”. There is no precise use of contrasting colours, but the countertop’s smooth texture contrasts with the chalkboard’s rough texture. A Caucasian boy holds the chalkboard and smiles.</p>	<p>The participant wrote and took pictures of multiple Bible verses. Among other pictures, she posted this picture on Facebook to show the support and encouragement of her family.</p>	<p>Gratefulness. Spirituality. Belief. Encouragement for others.</p>
Level 2: Conceptualise	<p>The participant wrote the Bible verse on a chalkboard. It can be erased at any point to add a new verse. The boy appears to be her son. The participant took the picture in her kitchen. There is</p>	<p>These pictures were posted on Facebook so that many people would see her. She is telling us what she is grateful for. Participant 4 posted pictures on</p>	<p>The participant used social media to connect with others, provide encouragement, and engage in spiritual activities. Using social media</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>cutlery and crockery in the background. He was happy to document this picture. He is smiling. The quote is from Psalms, a popular section in the Bible. God is a symbol of love in most religions. The chalkboard is in heart form. She loves this quote, and she wants to share that love by photographing it. The quote states an instruction. The author is unknown. It tells us all to meditate and know that God is real. Black and white without grey. This text can be perceived as either right or wrong. Since the text is white, we are more likely to believe it. The text is in the symbol of a heart, furthering the idea that God is Love.</p>	<p>Facebook to encourage her friends and family, making her feel less alone and part of a community.</p>	<p>to connect with others made her feel less isolated, hence increasing her feelings of well-being.</p>



Figure 4. 17: Blessings during the lockdown

“They are my greatest blessings and during Lockdown I was so thankful to be able to spend real quality time with them each day. It was a privilege to be at home with them to help them with all their online learning. We spent lots of quality time together.”

Table 4. 15: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	The picture was taken with a camera. A woman is posing outside with two boys. They are standing in front of orange and blue flowers with lush green plants behind them. The plants seem smooth to the touch. She is wearing a soft-to-the-touch, pink t-shirt while smiling. Smiling is associated with delight and happiness. The one boy is wearing a navy	The participant has spent time with her family. She enjoyed helping them with online learning.	Thankful. Quality time. Privilege. Blessings. Online learning.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>t-shirt with the word “Frankfurt” on it and what appears to be a flag below it. This family may have visited this place, and the t-shirt is a souvenir.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>This woman is most likely the boys’ mother. They look alike. She is happy to be with them. She could have taken a picture of this moment to remember it. They are taking this picture outside because it is summer. They are wearing summer clothes. The children are of different ages. They are equally happy in this picture. A woman symbolises wisdom, feminine energy and nurture. The individual pink shirt agrees with this statement. The plants behind the people suggest life. Where there is life, there is joy. The bright-coloured plants live happy lives, just like this family.</p>	<p>A mother spent more time with her children due to the pandemic. She was happy spending time with her family. They were all smiling for a photograph. The children appreciate this time too. Their mother was able to help her with online school. Helping her made the mother feel privileged. The home was a safe place for this family during the pandemic.</p>	<p>The participant felt that spending quality time with her family and assisting her children with online learning improved her well-being as it made her feel blessed, appreciated and thankful.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	Physical touch symbolises love in families with young children (Cekaite & Bergnehr, 2018).		



Figure 4. 18: Berry and Rosie

“Our 2 rescue dogs Berry and Rosie. I was so grateful to be able to be with them all day long. They were such a wonderful source of companionship and unconditional love for each member of the family.”

Table 4. 16: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis:	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 4 took this picture with a camera. Two dogs are lying on a	The participant was grateful for her dogs. The	Unconditional love.

Analysis:	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>big grey and green bed. The bed has soft textured pink, blue, yellow, green, purple, white, and orange blankets. The bed is on a paved surface, implying it is outside. The two brown dogs lay comfortably next to each other. The smaller dog wears a green collar.</p>	<p>dogs were “great companionship”. They loved her dogs.</p>	<p>Pets. Companionship. Family. Gratefulness.</p>
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>These dogs look happy and comfortable. The family takes good care of her dogs and loves them. The dogs are like humans to the family. They get a bed and blankets. The dogs are close, like a family as well. They lay next to each other in a comfortable manner.</p> <p>Friendship is linked to physical touch. These dogs lay close to each</p>	<p>This participant adores her pets. They are like close family members to her. They have beautiful names. The family was grateful for the dogs as they provided support, companionship and comfort.</p>	<p>Pets provided a source of companionship, unconditional love, support, and comfort during the lockdown.</p>

Analysis:	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>other in a comfortable object. Providing a bed for your pets is a form of primary care. The pet blankets are pink, symbolising femininity. The dogs are most likely females. The dogs stay their original colour, meaning they are bathed and nurtured. They are loved.</p>		

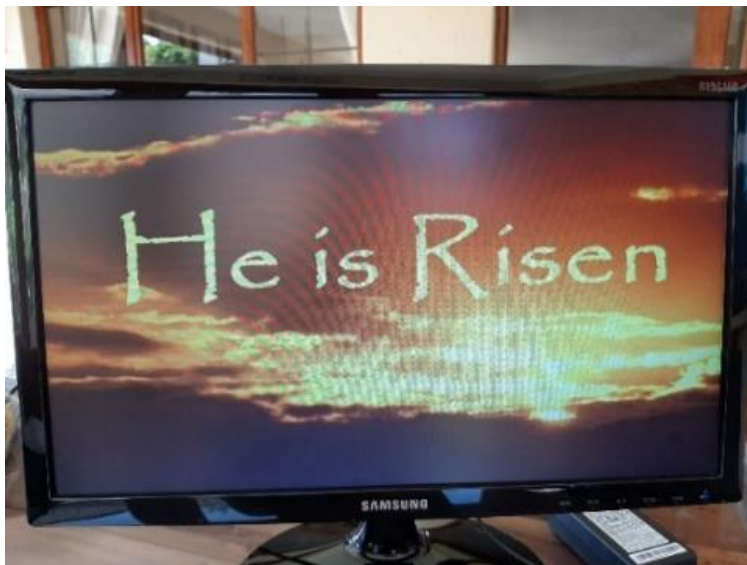


Figure 4. 19: He is risen

“Screenshot of an online Church service. When the churches closed, our church continued to offer online services each week. It was such a lovely source of encouragement and support

during these difficult times when we all felt so isolated. It was lovely to have a sense of community through the online services.”

Table 4. 17: Participant 4 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	<p>The participant took this picture with a camera. This picture portrays a smooth, black Samsung computer screen displaying a biblical quote, “He is Risen”. Biblical quotes are respected and studied, whereas a rectangular-shaped monitor is just an object. There are not any complex visual textures in the picture. There is a yellow, red, and grey sunset with clouds behind the quote on the screen. The picture has no subjects (figures, animals, or people).</p>	<p>The participant enjoyed online church services that she attended weekly.</p> <p>Online church services were a “source of encouragement”.</p> <p>The participant felt isolated and saw the church as a source of support.</p>	<p>Support.</p> <p>Community.</p> <p>Church.</p> <p>Encouragement.</p>
Level 2: Conceptualise	<p>The participant engaged in spiritual activities digitally. She regards this engagement as imperative as she document her experience by taking pictures. The screen is bright with yellow tones of</p>	<p>The participant attended an online church service each week to cope with feelings of isolation and to find meaning in spiritual activities. Attending these</p>	<p>Attending online church services helped the participant cope with feelings of isolation. Church services provided her with a</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>text. The picture brings happy emotions. A colourful quote is saddened by a black frame. The participant believes this quote for its connections to religion; otherwise, the “He” it refers to could be any “he” alive. The H and the R are capitalised. We see capitalising in nouns. She could be objectifying the “He”.</p>	<p>services made her feel a sense of “community”.</p>	<p>sense of community and encouragement.</p>

4.2.5 Participant 5



Figure 4. 20: Minions

“Trying to have fun and find the light side of everyone’s situation. Amongst all the chaos, the panic, the unknown, the new normal, the loss, finding the positive was important. With your family as well as with the children you were teaching, you had to get them through so much, while going through it all yourself.”

Table 4. 18: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>The participant took this picture with a camera. A rectangle-shaped computer monitor displays a picture of a shop entrance. The participant placed plastic minions in front of the monitor in a row. There is a black chair, red object, and fan in the background of the picture, suggesting that the monitor is on the floor. Minions are toys that bring children excitement. The minions are characters from a film by Illumination Pictures called Despicable Me (IMDb, 2010). In the film, they serve as workers or henchmen for the main character, Gru, who starts in the “evil” business but then progresses to being the movie’s hero (IMDb,</p>	<p>Participant 5 tried to have fun in an uncertain situation filled with chaos. She helped others herself to cope with this situation through fun and humour.</p>	<p>New normal.</p> <p>Finding the positive.</p> <p>Supporting learners.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>2010). The minions speak her own language, are yellow, and wear denim overalls and goggles (IMDB, 2010). The minions are placed in a particular sequence, from biggest to smallest. They are in a row, one behind the other, on a smooth wooden floor. The screen shows a picture of the popular grocery store, “Checkers”. The yellow colour of the minions contrasts with the blue Checkers title on the screen. Various logos at the bottom of the screen indicate that the participant used various applications while taking this picture.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>The minions could represent people lining up outside grocery stores. At the pandemic’s start, a limited number of people were allowed to enter stores. This was a notable change in societal</p>	<p>The participant wanted the best for herself, her family, and her learners. This was a difficult time. The positives were minimal. This picture was a way of creating</p>	<p>The participant used humour and fun to cope with the societal change caused by the pandemic. She used fun to cope with uncertainty.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>functioning at the pandemic's start. The screen was valued a great deal during the pandemic. Even children watched the screen instead of playing with their toys. Toys symbolise joy in children. It is a form of physical entertainment; instead of watching a screen.</p>	<p>something funny in a time of distress.</p>	

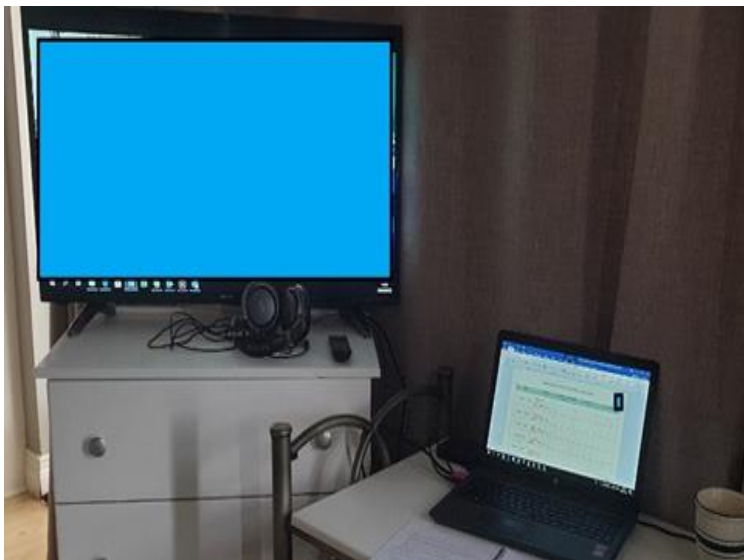


Figure 4. 21: Comfortable working environment

“Making sure your environment was comfortable was important, as you would be spending A LOT of time there! Also making sure it was easy to communicate with the outside world, making sure your family was okay, your colleagues, as they were the only ones who knew the struggles, the pain, the irritation. Constant fun Teams calls was very necessary!”

Table 4. 19: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>Participant 5 took this picture with a camera. The picture consists of two rectangle-shaped screens on top of a white drawer and a white desk. There is a black and smooth plastic laptop and a monitor. There are black and grey headphones and remote control in front of the monitor. There is coffee on the desk. Soft, brown curtains are drawn, which creates a dimly lit atmosphere in the room. The blank blue screen resonates with feelings of gloom and sadness. We can see an application open on the laptop screen, but the picture's quality does not allow us to differentiate which application is open.</p>	<p>Participant 5 used a comfortable environment to her advantage.</p> <p>She used online communication techniques.</p> <p>She checked in with family and friends and felt that this action was necessary for her well-being.</p>	<p>Environment.</p> <p>Comfort.</p> <p>Communication.</p> <p>Family.</p> <p>Colleagues.</p> <p>Struggle.</p> <p>Pain.</p> <p>Irritation.</p>
<p>Level 2:</p> <p>Conceptualise</p>	<p>It's easier to work on two screens. The one screen is blank for now. There is coffee on the table, indicating that someone is working. This setup is in a</p>	<p>She spent most of her time at this desk because she was teaching online. Technology was her medium of</p>	<p>A comfortable working environment was imperative during the pandemic as the participant spent</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>home. The monitor is on a nightstand with headphones. The setup is neat and made with minimal resources. This is the desk the teacher uses to teach during the lockdown. Humans use monitors for observing, watching, and working. It can symbolise overworking or binge-watching since many people have become addicted to looking at it. Headphones are hardware used for listening and escaping.</p>	<p>communication with the outside world. She related to others also using these online platforms to communicate. She did not like to work in an uncomfortable environment.</p>	<p>much time communicating and teaching online. Relating to colleagues who felt a shared pain, irritation, and struggle during this time helped the participant feel less alone.</p>

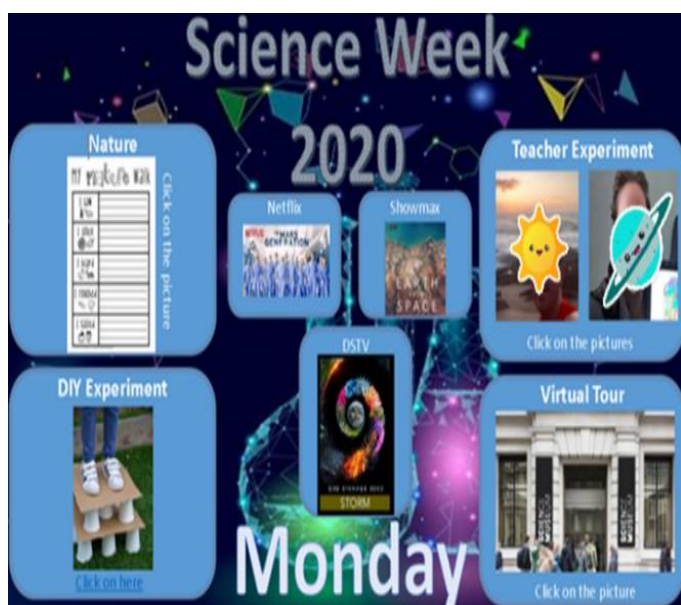


Figure 4. 22: Science week

“The constant need to LEARN new things. Completely thrown into the deep end, in a very quick time. A whole new teaching environment. One that NO ONE had been in before. Again, colleagues getting each other through it, was the most important thing.”

Table 4. 20: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>Participant 5 digitally developed the picture’s content. This is a schedule of the school’s activities.</p> <p>They are presented for the learners to attend as hyperlinks. These activities are in blue blocks. Light grey headings indicate “Science Week 2020” and “Monday”, which indicates that it is the first day of an event week. Various shapes and colours populate the screen with colours such as blue, purple, yellow, green, white, black, and grey. It is not easy to judge the visual texture in the picture as it is digital. There are various</p>	<p>The participant felt she had to learn new things with minimal experience constantly. It was a “whole new teaching environment”. She used her colleagues as a source of support.</p>	<p>Learning new things.</p> <p>New ways of teaching.</p> <p>Support.</p> <p>Hard times.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>shapes in the picture. We only see two people in the picture, which the participant blurred out with smaller graphics.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>The participant facilitated these activities online. The learners could click on any hyperlinks to participate in an activity. Books, schedules, and teamwork are everyday school activities. The blue frames could mean that not all of these activities are enjoyable. The pictures inside them assure us that clicking is better than waiting alone during the pandemic. The use of various shapes and colours represents the amount of effort and work it took to develop this resource.</p>	<p>The participant felt she learnt many new skills to teach online. In coping with the changing educational environment, she found comfort in communicating with colleagues.</p>	<p>Online learning meant that the participant learnt new skills very quickly. She participated in a new way of teaching and used contact with colleagues as a source of support.</p>



Figure 4. 23: The integrated classroom

“This was THE most difficult and still is today. The integrated classroom. Pupils in the classroom, as well as, online. Who do you give your attention to, it’s double the work. Instead of handing out worksheets, you now need to upload them as well. Instead of just marking a book, you now have to print the photo of the page you want to mark, mark it, then scan it and send it back to the pupil. What would normally be a menial job, was now something that took 10 minutes longer EVERY TIME. Parents thinking that their child is the ONLY one going through the pandemic. It was draining. All while trying to remember that you too were in this life-changing situation and trying to look after yourself and your loved ones.”

Table 4. 21: Participant 5 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 5 took this picture in a classroom with a camera. We see a projector screen above a brick wall. There are pictures of minions on the walls. There are green, red, and blue markers under the projector. The picture has	Participant 5 experienced difficulty presenting to the class. She was unsure of whom to give attention to.	Frustration. Integrated classroom. No break. Difficulty teaching.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>various textures, such as the rough brick wall and smooth projector screen. Some of the children are online. Their faces are blurred out with pictures of clouds inserted by the participant. Participant 5 used a smooth projector screen to display the video call to the rest of the class. Not all the learners were on the call, as there were only six rectangular video screens. It appears that the video call platform is Microsoft Teams.</p>	<p>She felt frustration with the learners' parents.</p>	
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>The learners attended the lesson through an online platform. The whole class could see her and participate through video calls. The teacher accommodated both the learners in class, as in the video call during the lesson.</p>	<p>The participant did not like this way of teaching. She had to spend more time on things she did not believe should have taken time. She felt people did not understand her situation, especially her learners' parents. The parents created</p>	<p>Teaching online and in person simultaneously meant an increased workload and stress for the participant as she had to accommodate both learners in class and on the video call. Assisting parents and learners with technology during this time made the</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
		more work for the teachers.	participant feel stressed.

4.2.6 Participant 6



Figure 4. 24: Running on empty

“Often I felt like I was so full of worry that I was running on empty.”

Table 4. 22: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis:	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 6 took this picture with a camera. A blue, black and white speedometer displays a nearly empty petrol tank. The car is not being driven. The plastic speedometer indicates zero	Participant 6 experienced a state of worry. The stress was overwhelming.	Overwhelmed. Stressful. Recurring feeling.

Analysis:	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	with a white pointer. The speedometer is shaped in a circle, alluding to the idea that filling and emptying the tank is a continuous process. The picture has no subjects (figures, animals, or people).		
Level 2: Conceptualise	The picture is low in two places. The petrol tank is almost empty, and the km/h reading is zero. You get stressed when your tank is almost empty because your car can stop at any time. This can represent feelings of low energy and low motivation. The participant could have felt tired while taking this picture. The blue around the low number might also be symbolic of “feeling blue”, which refers to feelings of sadness. This cycle does not end. The dial will always need to be brought up again after it drops. The person always needs the motivation to go	She was worried and overworked. The amount of stress became so much that she was constantly tired. She did not feel motivated to continue working, but you had to.	The participant felt worried during the pandemic. She felt that the demands on her caused her to have low energy and motivation.

Analysis:	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	on. This speedometer and petrol tank represent the participant's energy levels during the pandemic.		

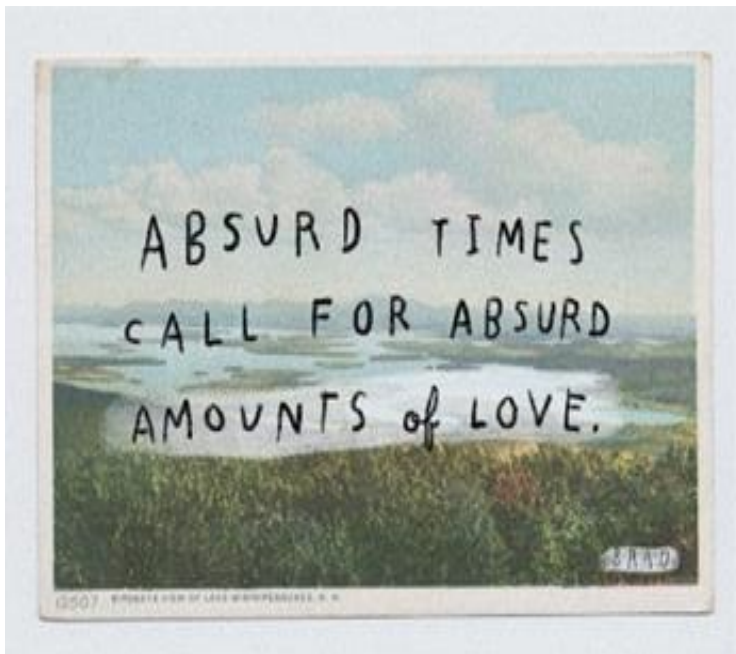


Figure 4. 25: Absurd times call for absurd amounts of love

“As the pandemic continued a realisation that what we actually needed was to be kind & love one another rather than judge. Especially after hearing couples breaking up due to the pandemic.”

[Grassland]. (n.d.).

<https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/n3qZig5ZemaRzdrUroQKyh9SFST8plvwUf5UXSq9WLQ9gqxovxyNx1hToDLyOiOcQYVX0ME=s85>

Table 4. 23: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	<p>Participant 6 downloaded this picture from the internet. The quote’s background depicts a nature scene of a lake and blue skies with white clouds. In the front of the lake, there are green shrubs. This picture is placed on a grey and black background. This picture portrays a black handwritten motivational quote, “ABSURD TIMES CALL FOR ABSURD AMOUNTS of LOVE”. The quote sparks feelings of calm, care, and love. The picture is signed BRAD. The picture has no subjects (figures, animals, or people). It is also challenging to establish a visual texture due to the digital qualities of the picture.</p>	<p>Participant 6 experienced a “realisation” of kindness being needed.</p> <p>She listened to the consequences of the pandemic and learnt from them.</p>	<p>Realising.</p> <p>Learning.</p> <p>Love,</p> <p>Seeing change.</p>
Level 2: Conceptualise	<p>This is a picture of another picture. The participant took the picture as inspiration. The quote has relevant meaning. People needed</p>	<p>The participant believed that we all need to learn something from the pandemic. She wanted</p>	<p>The participant felt she could only get through hard times with massive “amounts of love”</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>love in the difficult time of the pandemic. The image highlights the words “amounts of love”. This is essential information. The picture is in nature. The blue skies and green fields make us feel happy and calm. The plants are alive and well. We assume we’ll feel this way too if we follow the quotes’ saying. The text is handwritten. We are more likely to trust it because it seems like it comes from someone’s experience, not via a robot.</p>	<p>us to realise how difficult it was for everyone. We all needed help, love, support, and kindness to get through it. Now that it is over, we see people’s pain. Now is when we need to implement these new habits of love. People lost their relationships and loved ones due to the pandemic.</p>	<p>rather than judge others. Otherwise, she will lose relationships and find life more difficult.</p>

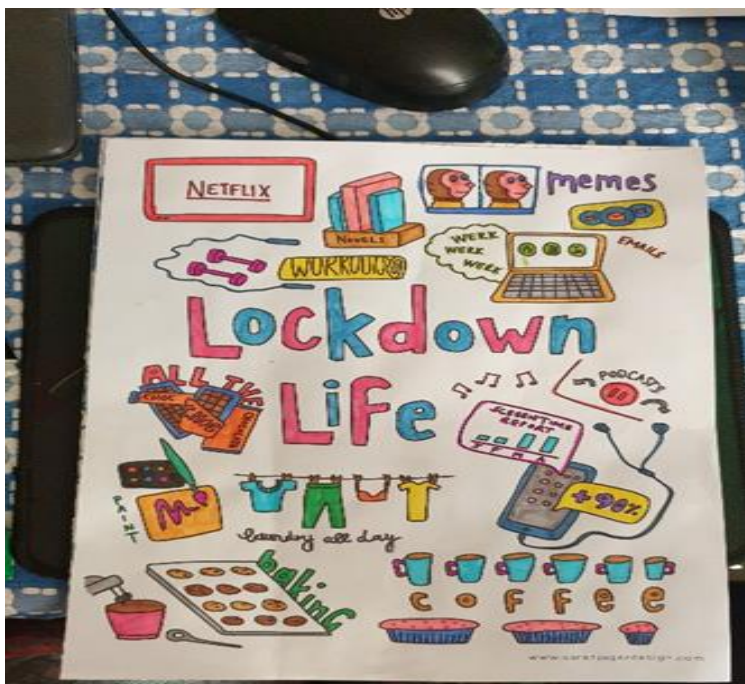


Figure 4. 26: Lockdown life

“A state of realisation that things were not going to get better and acceptance was settling in.”

Table 4. 24: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>Participant 6 took this picture with a camera. It is a picture of a self-made drawing/chart on top of a blue and white patterned table next to a smooth black mouse and a laptop corner in the top left-hand corner. The participant drew pictures of things she experienced during the lockdown. The pictures used pink, blue, yellow, orange, green, purple, brown, and black. Most of these colours contrast with each other creating a complex art piece. The different colours, use of lines and shapes of objects bring us different emotions. There are various texts in the picture such as “Lockdown Life”, “NETFLIX”, “memes”, “WORK”, “EMAILS”, “PODCASTS”, “ALL</p>	<p>Participant 6 accepted these activities would be the activities she would do daily for a while.</p>	<p>Staying at home.</p> <p>Settling in.</p> <p>New daily activities.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>THE CHOCOLATES”, “SCREENTIME REPORT”, “+90%”, “PAINT”, “Laundry all day”, “baking” and “c o f f e e”. These texts are written in different fonts and colours.</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>This is a colourful, fun drawing. It represents what the participant did during the pandemic. The colours give a sense of a happy childhood drawing. She could have enjoyed making this since painting is a hobby in the chart. The drawing is lying in the house, where she had to make it since it was a pandemic. She spent much time online, working, or doing laundry. She baked, painted, or watched Netflix. The drawings are symbols of everyday activities. The different blocks of colour mixed together are chaos. The individual might have been very busy, but she</p>	<p>The participant realised she would do these activities for a long time. She was not happy at first and had lost hope of having fun again. After a time, she accepted the new routine. This was her new life.</p>	<p>The participant felt that things were not going to get better during the lockdown. Accepting the situation and engaging in activities such as painting, baking etc., helped her cope with feelings of uncertainty.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>enjoyed these tasks enough to put them on a page. Drawing these activities on a page was how Participant 6 worked through her experiences of doing these activities.</p>		



Figure 4. 27: My everything

“They are my everything.”

Table 4. 25: Participant 6 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	<p>Participant 6 took this picture with a camera. Two grey, brown, and black dogs are lying on a soft white blanket. In the background, you can see a picture drawn by a child that says “Mom” with hearts below it. There is also a red mug and a heater against the wall. Pink curtains further frame the photo. The dogs are in a home. Dogs are seen as faithful, good companions. It is evident that the dogs are comfortable, as the one on the left-hand side is sleeping. There is no apparent use of line or shape in this picture but rather a sense of comfort through soft materials and visual textures.</p>	<p>The participant owns these dogs.</p>	<p>Appreciated. Loved. Pet lover.</p>
Level 2: Conceptualise	<p>These two dogs are of the same breed. The fact that she bought two means that they love this dog breed. They are comfortable on a bed. This could be the</p>	<p>These dogs were appreciated and loved. Referring to them as “everything” is an interesting hyperbole. The dogs</p>	<p>Pets can provide support during difficult times such as the pandemic.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>participant's bed. This shows that she are very close to the dogs. She lives with them in the house.</p> <p>The background has ordinary house items. There are cups, curtains, and a desk. Dogs bring joy and protection; therefore, we look after them dearly.</p> <p>They lay on a fluffy blanket. Blankets represent comfort and warmth.</p>	<p>are more than pets to them. She loved them as she would love another human.</p>	

4.2.7 Participant 7



Figure 4. 28: Personal growth

“This time in my life was a time of huge personal growth. I achieved this through a weight loss and fitness journey that spanned about five months. My discipline and confidence in my abilities grew, altering how I saw myself. Taking this time to do something for myself was beneficial, and I do hope to get to this level of strength again this year.”

Table 4. 26: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>Participant 7 took a “selfie” with a camera. Participant 7 is holding an empty plastic bottle with blue square lines and a black lid. She is in soft pink and black workout clothes. She is smiling and has green-painted nails that shine in the reflection of light.</p>	<p>Participant 7 went on a journey to grow in herself.</p>	<p>Growth.</p> <p>Beneficial time.</p> <p>Journey.</p> <p>Altering herself.</p>
<p>Level 2:</p> <p>Conceptualise</p>	<p>She finished a workout as the workout clothes show. The bottle most likely had water in it that has now been drunk. She is happy and smiling. She is wearing colourful summer clothes. She enjoys this activity and feel she have accomplished it after a workout. A bottle represents a form of containment, usually of nutrient liquid. Exercise is</p>	<p>Participant 7 took the time during the pandemic to work on herself. She was happy with the results of exercise, fitness, discipline, and confidence. She required this time for growth.</p>	<p>The pandemic gave the participant more time to work on her personal physical fitness goals. Consequently, she felt accomplished and improved her discipline and resilience.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>known for bringing joy to people. The person is smiling, representing her happiness. She wears pink shirts and makeup, which is associated with femininity in society. She also has green-coloured nails, which may represent growth. Just as a green plant grows, the participant experiences personal growth.</p>		



Figure 4. 29: The stables

“During this time, I picked up riding again. I had stopped for a few years, and it was always something I was passionate about. I find working with horses very rewarding, and something that eases the soul. I still ride regularly and truly appreciate the opportunity to do what I love. After a tough day at school, an afternoon at the stables is a great way to wind down.”

Table 4. 27: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	<p>This picture was taken with a camera. Someone is riding on a brown horse. The horse is jumping over a white hurdle outside. The white structure and use of straight lines and shapes demonstrate the rigidness of the hurdle. We see a lush green background and brown sand. The sand seems soft. We see wooden polls in the background. Both the horse and person are wearing blue and black attire.</p>	<p>The participant enjoyed horse riding. The pandemic gave her time to get back into old habits and connect with old hobbies. She rode as a relaxing activity.</p>	<p>Passionate. Rewarding. Easing the soul.</p>
Level 2: Conceptualise	<p>She spent much time horse riding. It must be something she enjoys immensely. This is a track made for horse riding and practising jumps. Horses are giant creatures. They are often used in therapy</p>	<p>She spent time during the pandemic doing what she loves. This was horse riding. She missed having this time to unwind and ride horses. She</p>	<p>The participant sees horse riding as a hobby that improves her well-being as it helps her to unwind.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>settings due to her unique ability to pick up emotions and facilitate regulation. There is life in this picture – the green plants and horses. Horses represent courage and stealth. As both the person and the horse are wearing blue and black, we can also associate the idea of strength and courage with the person. Doing something with your life is exciting.</p>	<p>remembers how it used to be and how “rewarding” it was to have time for this.</p>	



Figure 4. 30: Family helping us heal

“During hard lockdown, it was very difficult being away from family. My sister was pregnant with her first baby. It was a tough pregnancy and so difficult not to be able to help her. I think through being apart we got closer together. Our daily video calls were definitely a highlight. Over the stretch of covid, my family has had a rough time. We lost my mom’s dad and my dad’s mom. My mom’s mom also lost her home to a fire. It has been a really tough time, but the babies have been vital in helping us heal.”

Table 4. 28: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 7 took this picture with a camera. These are four members of a family. The Caucasian	The participant disliked the time in isolation, away from her family. She and	Online communication. Missing of family.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>woman with grey hair sits on a pink plastic chair. She is outside, as evident in the green, grey, and brown paved background. The people are wearing black, dark blue, light blue, pink, and white clothes. The visual texture of the clothes is soft. The blue and pink colours complement each other. We do not see any specific shapes or lines with the intended purpose in the picture. They are happy being together as all people in the picture are smiling.</p>	<p>her family went through hard times, including loss and grief. They kept in touch with each other through video calls.</p>	<p>Helplessness. Being apart brings you closer. Loss and Grief.</p>
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>These adults are looking after the children. She is so close to them that the children must be hers or her family. The participant took this picture of other family members enjoying the moment. They are outside. Bright colours bring creativity and catch the eye. The adults smile,</p>	<p>The participant needed time with her family that they did not get. They had to be away from family to keep them healthy and safe. In being separated from her family, the participant felt emotional stress. The sadness of missing</p>	<p>Being isolated from her family made the participant realise how much she appreciated, loved and missed her family. They communicated with her family through video calls during the lockdown, which helped her cope with feelings such as</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	showing joy for her children.	her family made her realise how much they loved each other. This brought everyone closer. The video calls did not achieve physical love, but they were still fun for the participant.	sadness and isolation. Some teachers experienced grief and loss during the pandemic



Figure 4. 31: Married just before COVID-19

“Chris and I got married just before covid hit. I am so fortunate to have a husband who is so kind and loving, supporting me every step of the way. Many people struggled to be ‘stuck’ with their partners, I wouldn’t have done it any other way. I was able to truly appreciate getting through a difficult time with this amazing man by my side.”

Table 4. 29: Participant 7 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>This picture was taken with a camera. A couple is posing together outside. There is a yellow building, green landscape, grey brick wall and blue sky in the background. The building has many small square windows. The Caucasian woman wears a black and grey t-shirt, blue jeans, and a soft pink purse. The Caucasian man wears a red t-shirt with a graphic print on it. He wears a black watch and black plastic sunglasses. It is sunny as he wears summer clothes (shorts). They are happy in each other’s arms, as both of them are smiling.</p>	<p>The participant is close with her husband. She appreciated that they did not drift apart like other couples in the pandemic. They got through this time together.</p>	<p>Good relationships.</p> <p>Loving partners.</p> <p>Appreciation of time.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 2:</p> <p>Conceptualise</p>	<p>This is a picture of a happily married couple. They love each other. They are happy in this situation together. It is summer since they are wearing summer clothes. The sunshine contributes to the joy of not being isolated. Physical touch is associated with love. The sunshine contributes to the joy of not being isolated. Smiles show happiness. The bright, white sun creates smiles by warming us up. People wear vibrant colours to express her inner joy.</p>	<p>The participant loves her husband. She enjoyed the amount of time she had in the pandemic with him. She realised that other marriages were not so lucky. Many partners did not enjoy all the time together and ended up separating. What she loved the most was that her hard time was shared. Her husband did not have it any easier than she did.</p>	<p>The participant felt she could cope with the pandemic's uncertainty due to her partner's support. Feelings of love and support improved her experiences of well-being.</p>

4.2.8 Participant 8



Figure 4. 32: The world was suddenly cold

“It felt like the world was suddenly cold.”

Yongrong Yu. (2022). Iceland Vatnajokull National Park - stock photo. Getty images.

<https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/photo/iceland-vatnajokull-national-park-royalty-free-image/1151559810>

Table 4. 30: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 1

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 8 downloaded this picture from the internet. This picture portrays blue and white icebergs in a cold landscape. We see a blue sky with white clouds. There is icy, dark blue water with pieces of white	The world felt sad. It was lonesome.	Sudden isolation. Sadness. Hopeless.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>ice below the icebergs.</p> <p>The icebergs and the ice blocks at the bottom of the picture are squares, rectangles, or triangles.</p> <p>We see the use of blue as a monochromatic colour in this picture. There are no subjects (figures, animals, or people) in this picture.</p>		
<p>Level 2:</p> <p>Conceptualise</p>	<p>The ice is frozen solid.</p> <p>There are no lifeforms in this picture. No life to live happily. There are no figures that support or help you. The ice is cold and dense. This could be a representation of the pandemic. Cold is associated with feelings of sadness and loneliness.</p> <p>This picture could also represent an actual cold place. Maybe she experienced the pandemic in a cold house or on holiday on a foreign continent. People compare themselves to ice when they do not care much. An icy cold heart is a sad</p>	<p>This was a “sudden”, fleeting feeling for the participant.</p> <p>Something she were not used to. She now felt sad in isolation.</p> <p>It felt like the world had turned its back on her. Nobody was around to warm her up and help her.</p>	<p>The pandemic made the world feel cold.</p> <p>The participant felt isolated and lonely during the pandemic.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	symbol of loneliness. Getting to the blue and icy stage of your life takes a while. The pandemic set a lot of these stages. An iceberg is also associated with the idea that what you see is only a tiny part of what is there. The largest part of an iceberg is beneath the water.		



Figure 4. 33: Work was never-ending

“Life didn’t have a separation between rest and work. Work was never-ending.”

[Picture of forest]. (n.d.). <https://cutewallpaper.org/27/birch-wood-wallpaper-desktop/view-page-27.html>

Table 4. 31: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 2

Analysis:	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
<p>Level 1:</p> <p>Notice and describe</p>	<p>Participant 8 downloaded this picture from the internet. This picture portrays white trees with black marks on them. The black marks make the tree look rough in visual texture. The lines of the trees are vertical, creating an illusion of endlessness. We see black, grey, and white tones as the primary colours in this picture.</p> <p>This is a forest without any subjects (figures, animals, or people) in the picture.</p>	<p>The pandemic blurred the lines between personal life and work life. This feeling did not end for the participant.</p>	<p>Sameness.</p> <p>Overwork.</p> <p>Never-ending.</p> <p>No separation.</p>
<p>Level 2:</p> <p>Conceptualise</p>	<p>This forest is dense. Forests are seen in fantasy films as a way of escaping the real world. There is barely any space for someone to walk through it. You cannot count how many trees are in this forest. There is life growing, but no one to enjoy it. This could represent all the countless individuals going through the same thing. White trees</p>	<p>They were unhappy with the pandemic. They worked in the place where they usually rest. This made it feel like they constantly worked without rest. They felt like there was no line between the two. This feeling lingered for so</p>	<p>The pandemic and Integration of online learning made the teacher feel that the lines between work and personal life blurred. They felt that they could not rest and that the amount of work they had was never-ending.</p>

Analysis:	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	symbolise immortality. They will live for a long time. White also portrays a sense of calm. Nature is a symbol of life.	long that they felt like it would never end.	



Figure 4. 34: Dominoes

“One thing that happened let so many other dominoes fall.”

Picture of dominoes falling (n.d.). <https://kiada.se/impact.html>

Table 4. 32: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 3

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 8 downloaded this picture from the internet. White and black dominoes are falling. The smooth dominoes are spaced evenly and shaped	Things that happened during the pandemic to one person and this affected many others. The	Consequence. Butterfly effect. Common.

Analysis	Picture analysis (visual data)	Reflection analysis (textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>the same way. We see the use of circles and lines of the dominoes. There is a light blue background. We do not see any subjects in the picture.</p>	<p>pandemic also affected events in the participant's life.</p>	<p>Together in struggling.</p>
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>Dominoes is a popular game. When one domino falls, it causes the others to fall. Each domino could represent a person. Many others will be affected when one person makes a mistake or a choice. In this case, it caused a whole global pandemic. People follow each other, and they mimic and remake what others do. Each domino indicates a step towards an end goal. Different dominoes have different numbers of dots. Each step has its complications.</p>	<p>The pandemic influenced almost the whole world. It was a negative experience for most people. She fell into debt and sadness and began to overwork.</p>	<p>The participant felt that the outbreak of the pandemic led to an array of consequences. One action influenced many others, such as one person getting infected spread the virus to the entire world.</p>



Figure 4. 35: The world was empty

“The world was empty.”

[Popcorn in empty cinema]. (n.d.).

<https://www.nwfdailynews.com/videos/embed/3355357002/>

Table 4. 33: Participant 8 Systematic Visuo-Textual Analysis 4

Analysis	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
Level 1: Notice and describe	Participant 8 downloaded this picture. The picture portrays an empty movie theatre with red chairs with black armrests. There are two seats with a light shining on the seats and on the popcorn on them. The popcorn boxes have lines on them and are rectangular-shaped. Both seats also have cold drinks in their cupholders. This picture uses red, black, and	The world felt isolated. You did not see people often. It felt empty and sad.	Empty world. Isolated. Alone.

Analysis	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	<p>white colours. It is not easy to differentiate the texture of the objects in this picture as it is digital. We do not see any subjects (figures, animals, or people) in the picture, indicating that the cinema is empty,</p>		
<p>Level 2: Conceptualise</p>	<p>A theatre is empty when it is closed. People leave when she does not like the entertainment. In this case, people had no choice but to stay at home due to the COVID-19 restrictions. She was not allowed to enter the theatre and socialise with others. The two popcorn boxes could represent what once was. There is an empty cinema where couples are going out for a simple film. People experience joy here, but now she has been forced to leave the space. Movie theatres symbolise entertainment. The red colours of the seats energise us. We, as</p>	<p>The participant was sad about the lack of socialisation in the world. Face-to-face meetups were now gone. Many places were empty because people were staying home to be safe. The world felt empty.</p>	<p>The participant felt the pandemic made the world feel empty. She felt isolated and that she could not engage in leisure activities to relax.</p>

Analysis	Picture analysis (Visual data)	Reflection analysis (Textual data)	Picture and reflection combined
	humans, crave excitement and fun.		

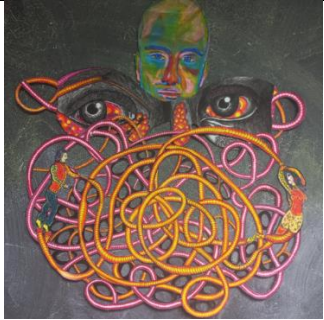

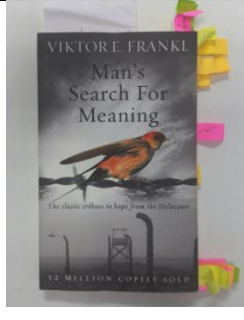

4.3 Thematic Analysis of Visuo-Textual Analysis Findings of Each Participant

The following section presents data set 1's findings by presenting the link between artefacts and themes within the participant's figures (Brown & Collins, 2021).

4.3.1 Participant 1

Participant 1 primarily used art, quality time with family, and hobbies to minimise the effect of negative emotions such as isolation, stress, and uncertainty during the pandemic. Participant 1 captured his photographs with a camera and submitted photographs of two art pieces he had created – a picture of a book's front page and a picture of himself gardening. Participant 1 used rounded lines in his sketches, which portrayed the care he took in sketching the art pieces (Figure 4. 3 and Figure 4. 4). The rectangular shape was used to portray a sketch of his wife and a book by Viktor Frankl (Figure 4. 4 and Figure 4. 5). The texture of three of the four pictures was smooth, as Participant 1 took photographs of the art pieces or books with smooth covers (Figure 4. 3, Figure 4. 4 and Figure 4. 5). Figure 4. 6 portrays the participant in a lush garden with various plant textures. Participant 1 used colour to draw the viewer's attention to the symbols in his pictures. Participant 1 often used dark backgrounds in his pictures to draw the viewer's attention to the colours pink, red, and orange, which depicted a wire in Figure 4. 3 and a bird in Figure 4. 5. Figures 4. 5's-coloured wires represented the mental state of Participant 1. To detangle his emotions and experiences, Participant 1 saw himself as connected to his wife through this chaos. Figure 4. 4 played with black and white colours to represent his wife as a symbol of strength, bravery, and authority (Designs, 2022). The participant enjoyed spending quality time with his wife during the lockdown and loved engaging in shared hobbies (Figure 4. 4). Their connection helped Participant 1 cope with negative emotions; hence Participant 1 sketched his wife as she played a significant part in his well-being experiences. Furthermore, there was no apparent use of space in Participant 1's pictures.

Table 4. 34: Participant 1 – Figures 4. 3 to 4. 6





			
<p>Figure 4. 3: “Doing and teaching art was the centre of my sanity.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 4: “Spending time with my wife, baking, talking, doing art, reading to each other and listen to my wife playing piano.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 5: “Completing my studies in Logotherapy to determine the effects of COVID-19 on my students and how art helped them to cope during this time.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 6: “Working in the garden and being in nature.”</p>

The bird in Figure 4. 5 symbolised the escape of circumstances longed for by the participant. He wanted to escape negative emotions such as anxiety and frustration by creating meaning. To do so, he read and studied Viktor Frankl’s book on logotherapy to find a way to create meaning (Figure 4. 5). Participant 1 prioritised creating and teaching art as an activity that evoked feelings of sanity and content (Figure 4. 3). Creating and teaching others to create art gave her meaning and purpose and consequently improved his well-being (Figure 4. 3). Participant 1 used logotherapy strategies in his classroom to find meaning during the pandemic’s uncertain time and taught these skills to his learners (Figure 4. 5). The participant enjoyed spending time in nature and engaged in activities such as gardening (Figure 4. 6). Figures 4. 6 depicted the participant working in his garden, symbolising her working on his mental health in his inner world. Being in nature and the presence of lush green plants also alluded to the idea that the participant grounded herself through this activity as the colour green represents health and growth (Elliot, 2015).

4.3.2 Participant 2

Participant 2 submitted three photographs and one digital picture to express her well-being experiences. Integrating one digital picture (Figure 4. 7) indicated that Participant 2 saw a digital picture as equal to a manually captured picture, illustrating the utility of using digital media to express lived experience. While there was no apparent use of shape in Participant 2's pictures, the integration of the digital picture (Figure 4. 7) introduced solid vertical and horizontal lines to the expression of experience, thereby bringing more structure to artistic visuals (Figure 4. 9). Participant 2 used soft textures in all her other pictures, communicating a nurturing and gentle experience during the pandemic (Figure 4. 7, Figure 4. 8 and Figure 4. 10). Participant 2 submitted three pictures with dimmed analogous colours representing love, femininity, and calmness (Bakhshi & Gilbert, 2015). Figure 4. 7 symbolised the connection between mother and daughter, whereas Figure 4. 10 depicted a scene of a family returning from an exercise activity and resting. Participant 2 used the time presented by the lockdown to exercise and spend quality time with her family, which improved her well-being. Figure 4. 8 shows a calm workspace secluded from nature and the outside world. Figure 4. 8 emphasises the disconnection between nature and technology as trees are present outside shut doors, and a laptop screen replaces the view of nature. During the pandemic, Participant 2 felt that online teaching bettered the well-being of learners and the teachers as it facilitated effective communication. Figure 4. 9 represents the utility of technology in teaching. By downloading this picture, the participant alluded that technology played a significant role in her well-being during the pandemic as she found it easier to download a picture than to capture the experience with a camera. Despite an overload of work and preparation, online platforms such as Kahoot benefited the teacher by making marking easier and decreasing her stress and workload (Figure 4. 9).

Table 4. 35: Participant 2 – Figures 4. 7 to 4. 10





			
<p>Figure 4. 7: “My baby was born just before lockdown, and the beginning did not affect me terribly. It was actually terribly nice for me to know I only have so much time together with my husband. It put my mental health in a good place.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 8: “Very quickly learnt how to communicate better with learners through MS teams platform. It was good for me. Learners asked questions more easily. Especially the learners who are introverted.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 9: “Online lessons were a lot of work for preparation, but the marking was done for you.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 10: “There was a lot more time for exercise, and that helped me. Every day I saw more and more families going hiking.”</p>

While Participant 2 nurtured her newborn baby, she also nurtured and developed her relationship with her family, self and professional identity by spending time with her child (Figure 4. 7), teaching from home, and trying new teaching strategies (Figure 4. 8 & Figure 4. 9), and exercising with her family (Figure 4. 10).

4.3.3 Participant 3

Participant 3 used five downloaded pictures for her submission. These pictures used text or graphics to convey a more profound message. Digital pictures portrayed various shapes and colours; each picture represented its message in its own way. There was also minimal use of texture in the pictures as they were all digitally created and used different colours and shapes. Each picture linked to the narrative reflection and created portrayed actions participant 3 took to maintain her well-being during the pandemic.

Table 4. 36: Participant 3 – Figures 4. 11 to 4. 15

			
<p>Figure 4. 11: “During the pandemic, I have grown a lot as a person and learnt a lot of life lessons. The first one is that an educator doesn’t have office hours, we are expected to be permanently “on’,” so if I don’t set boundaries for myself – and not feel guilty about it – I am going to burn out, and then I won’t be of use to anyone.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 12: “The sad reality of working for a business is unfortunately, everyone is replaceable, so you have to put your loved ones first as when you quit or get retrenched or whatever the case, the work won’t be there anymore but your family will. With that spending time with family and friends have been crucial to my well-being by being able to unwind and de-stress.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 13: “Most people will say that exercise is a very big thing for them to de-stress or unwind and is good for not just their physical health but their emotional health to. For me that is NOT the case. I am not a fit and exercise-loving person (unlike my husband 😏🤪😁) but I really enjoy watching TV series’ and movies. Sometimes I will have a good cry session as well or feel highly motivated or it will give me topics to talk about and that to me is part of my positive well-being.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 14: “A thing that genuinely increases teacher well-being is the workplace at the end of the day, given we spend most of our time there. And to make this a “safe” place, a teacher benefits by feeling valued, heard and understood. To know that, yes, the job is difficult and it feels like the world is against you at times cause you can’t keep the kids and the parents and the fellow teachers and</p>

			<p>head office and and and happy but it is an amazing feeling to know they got your back and believe in your abilities and trust you. (And maybe not be told the whole time what you're doing wrong and that you're so replaceable). Sometimes I just need things "explained" to me more often because as soon as I understand why we do a certain thing a certain way I am 100% on board with it."</p>
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<p>Figure 4. 15: “A bonus hiehie-haha: the best thing for my well-being is actually getting through at the end of the month and not permanently have financial stress and debt 😂😂😂 but that’s teaching for you; overworked and underpaid 😊😊”</p>			

Figure 4. 11 focused on the benefits of setting boundaries. The pandemic taught Participant 3 that teachers need to set boundaries to avoid feelings of guilt and burnout (Figure 4. 11). She regarded boundaries for teachers as essential due to blurred lines between working hours. Figure 4. 12 displayed a family on the beach. She noted that prioritising time with her family allowed her to unwind and de-stress. The participant prioritised family time as she perceived her workplace as a business that could easily retrench or replace her (Figure 4. 15).

Figure 4. 13 represents entertainment and its use in promoting well-being as a way to escape reality. The participant found comfort in watching Netflix to de-stress and unwind. She found watching Netflix more effective than physical exercise in improving her feelings of well-being during the pandemic.





Figure 4. 14 shows a one-sided conversation between two people, representing the communication between Participant 3 and her school. The participant indicated that schools needed to improve communication between teachers and management to improve teacher well-being so that her staff would feel heard, understood, and valued. She emphasised that management must not only focus on negative feedback but also integrate positive feedback into her discussions with teachers. Figure 4. 15 indicates a longing for financial security as shown through the “in love” emoticons displayed next to a statement alluding to sufficient funds in the participant’s bank account (Figure 4. 15). It is also evident that the participant faced financial strain and felt overworked and underpaid, which increased her stress and anxiety.

The participant downloaded all her pictures and chose not to capture her experiences with a camera. This indicates that Participant 3 struggled to express her experiences through real-world situations. She was dependant on technology in communicating her inner world and experiences and alluded to the idea that downloaded pictures were just as adequate in depicting well-being and lived experiences as those taken with a camera.

4.3.4 Participant 4

Participant 4’s pictures depicted her appreciation for her family and pets and engagement in religious activities. Figure 4. 16 depicted a heart-shaped chalkboard with a Bible verse written on it. The heart represented love and indicated the participant and her family’s love of God (Figure 4. 16). Participant 4 used various textures in her pictures, which often had soft materials symbolising comfort during the pandemic. There was no apparent pattern in the use of colour in the participant’s pictures, but an evident presence of others such as her sons and pets in her pictures.

Table 4. 37: Participant 4 – Figures 4. 16 to 4. 19

			
<p>Figure 4. 16: “I wrote a Bible verse each day for 100 days and posted it on Facebook along with a few photos of things I was grateful for each day. The Bible verse was just to send encouragement to all my family and friends and to show we were not alone during lockdown. The photos were of us doing general everyday things like baking, reading, exercising in the garden, our dogs, online work and schooling etc.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 17: “They are my greatest blessings and during Lockdown I was so thankful to be able to spend real quality time with them each day. It was a privilege to be at home with them to help them with all their online learning. We spent lots of quality time together.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 18: “Our 2 rescue dogs Berry and Rosie. I was so grateful to be able to be with them all day long. They were such a wonderful source of companionship and unconditional love for each member of the family.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 19: “Screenshot of an online Church service. When the churches closed, our church continued to offer online services each week. It was such a lovely source of encouragement and support during these difficult times when we all felt so isolated. It was lovely to have a sense of community through the online services.”</p>

Participant 4 used social media to connect with others and to encourage and engage in spiritual activities (Figure 4. 16). She posted this picture on Facebook as part of a 100-day challenge. Using social media to connect with others made her feel less isolated, hence increasing her feelings of well-being (Figure 4. 16 and Figure 4. 19).


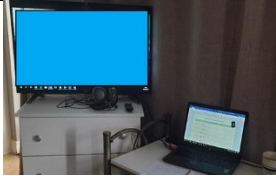
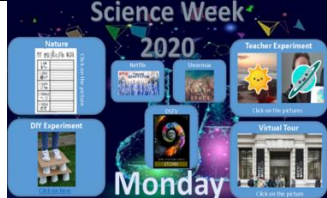

Figure 4. 18 shows Participant 4's dog comfortably laying on a bed, representing comfort and companionship found in pets during the pandemic. Pets provided the participant with a source of companionship, unconditional love, support and comfort during the lockdown (Figure 4. 18).

Figure 4. 17 shows the participant with her sons, representing a strengthened bond during the pandemic. The participant felt that spending quality time with her family and assisting her children with online learning improved her well-being as it made her feel blessed, appreciated and thankful (Figure 4. 17). Figure 4. 19 shows a screen displaying an online church service which indicates that Participant 4 used technology to connect to her church community (Figure 4. 19). Attending online church services helped the participant cope with feelings of isolation (Figure 4. 19). Church services provided her with a sense of community and encouragement (Figure 4. 19).

4.3.5 Participant 5

Participant 5 submitted three pictures and one digitally created classroom resource in her pictures. The rectangular shape was used in each picture which indicated that the participant used many screens during the pandemic which affected her well-being to a great extent. Each screen emitted blue light, supporting the idea that technology centred the participants experiences. Participant 5 showed how she used technology in each of her pictures. The minions in Figure 4. 20 represented the humour that Participant 5 used to cope with societal changes and uncertainty during the pandemic. Figure 4. 21 portrays the at-home working environment of the participant. This environment represented comfort and a place of connection with the outside world (Figure 4. 21). A comfortable at-home working environment was imperative during the pandemic as the participant spent much time communicating and teaching online (Figure 4. 21). Relating to colleagues who also felt a shared pain, irritation, and struggle during this time helped the participant feel less alone (Figure 4. 21). She participated in a new way of teaching and used contact with colleagues as a source of support (Figure 4. 21).

Table 4. 38: Participant 5 – Figures 4. 20 to 4. 23

			
<p>Figure 4. 20: “Trying to have fun and find the light side of everyone’s situation. Amongst all the chaos, the panic, the unknown, the new normal, the loss, finding the positive was important. With your family as well as with the children you were teaching, you had to get them through so much, while going through it all yourself.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 21: “Making sure your environment was comfortable was important, as you would be spending A LOT of time there! Also making sure it was easy to communicate with the outside world, making sure your family was okay, your colleagues, as they were the only ones who knew the struggles, the pain, the irritation. Constant fun Teams calls was very necessary!”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 22: “The constant need to LEARN new things. Completely thrown into the deep end, in a very quick time. A whole new teaching environment. One that NO ONE had been in before. Again, colleagues getting each other through it, was the most important thing.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 23: “This was THE most difficult and still is today. The integrated classroom. Pupils in the classroom, as well as, online. Who do you give your attention to, it’s double the work. Instead of handing out worksheets, you now need to upload them as well. Instead of just marking a book, you now have to print the photo of the page you want to mark, mark it, then scan it and send it back to the pupil. What would normally</p>

			<p>be a menial job, was now something that took 10 minutes longer EVERY TIME. Parents thinking that her child is the ONLY one going through the pandemic. It was draining. All while trying to remember that you too were in this life-changing situation and trying to look after yourself and your loved ones.”</p>
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Figure 4. 22 shows how Participant 5 used technology to conduct lessons with the learners through hyperlinks. The picture’s various shapes and colours represent the effort it took to design this learning resource (Figure 4. 22). Online learning meant that the participant learnt new skills very quickly (Figure 4. 22). Figure 4. 23 depicts a scene where the participant taught both in class and in person. Returning to the physical school environment, teaching online and in person simultaneously meant an increased workload and stress for the participant as she had to accommodate both learners in class and on the video call (Figure 4. 23). Assisting parents and learners with technology during this time made the participant feel stressed (Figure 4. 23).

4.3.6 Participant 6

Participant 6 submitted three photographs and one digital picture with a quote. She did not use any patterns or colour nor texture throughout her pictures. Figure 4. 26 displays an empty fuel tank and speedometer on zero, representing the energy levels of the participant. The participant felt worried during the pandemic. She felt that the demands placed on her caused her to have low energy and motivation (Figure 4. 24). Participant 6 felt exhausted during the pandemic (Figure 4. 24). Figure 4. 25 presented a quote indicating that Participant 6 felt she could only get through hard times with massive “amounts of love”, otherwise, she would lose relationships and find life more difficult.

Table 4. 39: Participant 6 – Figures 4. 24 to 4. 27


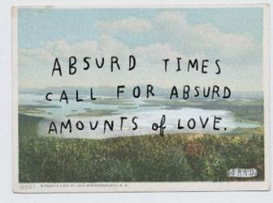
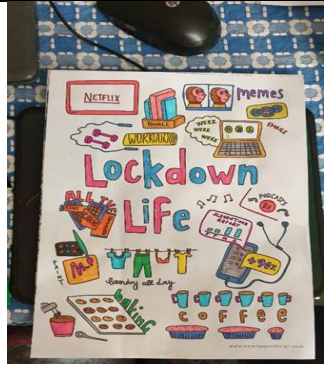

			
<p>Figure 4. 24: “Often I felt like I was so full of worry that I was running on empty.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 25: “As the pandemic continued a realisation that what we actually needed was to be kind & love one another rather than judge. Especially after hearing couples breaking up due to the pandemic.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 26: “A state of realisation that things were not going to get better and acceptance was settling in.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 27: “They are my everything.”</p>




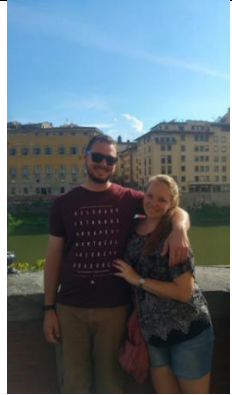
Figure 4. 26 indicates all the activities Participant 6 had time to do during the lockdown and alluded to the idea that writing and drawing these activities helped her work through and appreciate the opportunity to do these things. The participant felt that things were not going to get better during the lockdown (Figure 4. 26). Accepting the situation and engaging in activities

such as painting, baking etc. helped her cope with feelings of uncertainty (Figure 4. 26). Figure 4. 27 indicated the love that Participant 6 had for her pets, which she regarded as essential to her well-being. Pets also provided the participant the same support as a family during the pandemic (Figure 4. 27).

4.3.7 Participant 7

Participant 7 submitted four photographs with different shapes, textures and colours. Figure 4. 28 shows Participant 7 smiling and feeling accomplished after a workout. The empty water bottle represents her reaching her goals (Figure 4. 28). The pandemic gave the participant more time to work on her personal physical fitness goals. Consequently, she felt accomplished and improved her discipline and resilience through growth as displayed through the green of her nails (Figure 4. 28). Figure 4. 29 shows Participant 7 exercising and taking part in a hobby. The participant saw horse riding as a hobby that improved her well-being as it helped her to unwind (Figure 4. 29).

Table 4. 40: Participant 7 – Figures 4. 28 to 4. 31

			
<p>Figure 4. 28: “This time in my life was a time of huge personal growth. I achieved this through a weight loss and fitness journey that spanned about five months.</p>	<p>Figure 4. 29: “During this time, I picked up riding again. I had stopped for a few years, and it was always something I was passionate about. I find working</p>	<p>Figure 4. 30: “During hard lockdown, it was very difficult being away from family. My sister was pregnant with her first baby. It was a tough pregnancy and so difficult not to be able to</p>	<p>Figure 4. 31: “Chris and I got married just before covid hit. I am so fortunate to have a husband who is so kind and</p>

<p>My discipline and confidence in my abilities grew, altering how I saw myself. Taking this time to do something for myself was beneficial, and I do hope to get to this level of strength again this year.”</p>	<p>with horses very rewarding, and something that eases the soul. I still ride regularly and truly appreciate the opportunity to do what I love. After a tough day at school, an afternoon at the stables is a great way to wind down.”</p>	<p>help her. I think through being apart we got closer together. Our daily video calls were definitely a highlight. Over the stretch of covid, my family has had a rough time. We lost my mom’s dad and my dad’s mom. My mom’s mom also lost her home to a fire. It has been a really tough time, but the babies have been vital in helping us heal.”</p>	<p>loving, supporting me every step of the way. Many people struggled to be ‘stuck’ with her partners, I wouldn’t have done it any other way. I was able to truly appreciate getting through a difficult time with this amazing man by my side.”</p>
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Figure 4. 230 shows Participant 7’s family smiling and bonding with the older and younger generations. Being isolated from her family made the participant realise how much she appreciated, loved, and missed her family (Figure 4. 30). She communicated with her family through video calls during the lockdown, which helped her cope with feelings such as sadness and isolation (Figure 4. 30). Figure 4. 31 depicts the bond between the participant and her husband. The participant felt she could cope with the pandemic’s uncertainty due to her partner’s support. Feelings of love and support improved her experiences of well-being (Figure 4. 31).

4.3.8 Participant 8

Participant 8 submitted four digitally downloaded pictures. Figure 4. 32 creates a cold and lonely mood as a result of the use of blue representing coldness (Elliot, 2015). The pandemic made the world feel cold for the participant, who felt isolated and lonely during the pandemic. Figure 4. 33 indicated a scene with never-ending trees where everything looks the same. The pandemic and integration of online and remote learning made the participant feel that the lines

between work and personal life blurred (Figure 4. 33). She felt that she could not rest and that the amount of work she had was never-ending (Figure 4. 33).

Table 4. 41: Participant 8 – Figures 4. 32 to 4. 35



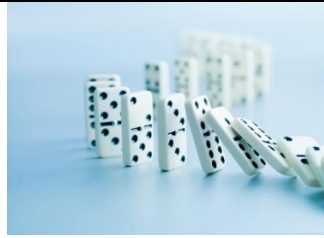

			
<p>Figure 4. 32: “It felt like the world was suddenly cold.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 33: “Life didn’t have a separation between rest and work. Work was never-ending.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 34: “One thing that happened let so many other dominoes fall.”</p>	<p>Figure 4. 35: “The world was empty.”</p>

Figure 4. 35 shows a set of dominoes tumbling down. These dominoes symbolised events where one led to another (Figure 4. 35). The participant felt that the outbreak of the pandemic led to an array of consequences. One action influenced many others, such as one person getting infected spread the virus to the entire world. Figure 4. 35 shows an empty cinema which alludes to her sense of loneliness and isolation. The participant felt the pandemic made the world feel empty (Figure 4. 35). She felt isolated and that She could not use leisure activities to relax (Figure 4. 35).

4.4 Findings of data set 1

According to Brown and Collins (2021), the visuo-textual data analysis strategy presents a method by which the researcher may “weave” interpretation. The following section connects critical themes from the photographic themes identified in the coherent narratives of the participants’ experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic.

The participants felt isolated, uncertain, and burned out due to increased job demands which were significant themes in the analysis. She discussed various coping strategies to cope with the stress caused by factors.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Isolation and Uncertainty

At the start of the pandemic, Participants 4, 7, and 8 reported feelings of isolation and uncertainty. Through her narrative reflections, Participant 8 demonstrated that the pandemic made the world “feel cold” (Figure 4. 32) and “empty” (Figure 4. 35). Participant 8’s pictures portrayed cold scenes (Figure 4. 35) and empty spaces (Figure 4. 35), adding to the concept of loneliness and isolation. Participant 8 indicated that the unavailability of leisure activities during the lockdown and the inability to teach face to face exacerbated her feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Participant 5 shared similar feelings of isolation and found comfort in attending online church services, saying, “It was such a lovely source of encouragement and support during these difficult times when we all felt so isolated. It was lovely to have a sense of community through the online services” (Figure 4. 23). She also used social media to post pictures of Bible verses, which sent encouragement to her social group, hence facilitating a sense of belonging. “The Bible verse was just to send encouragement to all my family and friends and to show we were not alone during lockdown” (Figure 4. 16).

It was evident that forming part of the spiritual community helped Participant 5 feel a sense of belonging, which protected her against loneliness.

Participant 7 also indicated that she felt isolated from her family, stating, “During hard lockdown, it was very difficult being away from family” (Figure 4. 30).

As the lockdown presented a period of isolation from family, Participant 7 noted that she longed for her family’s support which may have provided her with a source of comfort and support against loneliness. While the participant disliked isolation, she noted that “through being apart we got closer together”. Hence, Participant 7 and her family’s bond strengthened, regardless of the negative impact of isolation on the participant’s well-being.

As a result of the implementation of COVID-19 protocols and regulations, the participants felt uncertain in her experiences. Participant 3 emphasised her school management team’s lack of effective communication regarding deadlines and responsibilities as a source of uncertainty. She felt unheard, misunderstood, and devalued as her management often provided her with negative feedback (Figure 4. 14). When describing her ideal workplace communication in the narrative reflection, she noted, “It is an amazing feeling to know they got your back and believe

in your abilities and trust you. (And maybe not be told the whole time what you're doing wrong and that you're so replaceable)" (Figure 4. 14).

Participant 3 longed for appreciation, reassurance, and positive feedback from her management and noted that she felt undervalued in her school as it seemed easy for her school to replace teachers. Participant 3 illustrated this experience by presenting a picture of a one-sided conversation (Figure 4. 14). This negatively influenced her well-being, making her uncertain about her job security. It was also evident that Participant 3 experienced financial strain and felt overworked and underpaid during the pandemic. This added additional stress to her life as she had debt which also have caused uncertainty in her daily life.

Participants 4, 5, and 6 also felt uncertain during the pandemic and presented methods by which she combated uncertainty. Participant 5 noted that she used humour to cope with feelings of uncertainty, explicitly referring to societal change. Participant 5 illustrated this in a scenario in which she lined up minions to enter a grocery store on a computer monitor (Figure 4. 16). At the start of the pandemic, the store had protocols about how many individuals could be there. Hence, many shoppers had to wait in lines outside to buy food. This was a change in the societal norms. To cope with this change and uncertainty, Participant 5 employed humour, as illustrated in Figure 4. 20.

Trying to have fun and find the light side of everyone's situation. Amongst all the chaos, the panic, the unknown, the new normal, the loss, finding the positive was important.

While the protocols caused uncertainty in society, the participant used humour to find the positive in the situation, which she regarded as imperative to her well-being. Participant 6 coped with feelings of uncertainty by stating in her reflection that she reached "a state of realisation that things were not going to get better and acceptance was settling in" (Figure 4. 26). Hence, acceptance of the situation helped the participant to cope. Participant 6 also noted that engaging in activities such as baking and painting helped her cope with feelings of uncertainty.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Teaching During the Pandemic

4.4.2.1 Subtheme 1: Increased Job Demands and Blurred Lines Between Work and Home. Participants 2, 3, 6, and 8 felt increased job demands due to the amount of never-ending work, which decreased their energy and motivation. Participant 3 illustrated her experience of coping with a tremendous amount of work by presenting a picture that depicts the benefits of boundaries (Figure 4. 11). Implementing boundaries into her role as a teacher helped them to self-manage their workload.

Participant 5 noted feeling “completely thrown into the deep end, in a very quick time” (Figure 4. 18) and felt “the constant need to LEARN new things” (Figure 4. 18). It was evident that Participant 5 had learnt many new technical skills due to the prevalent use of technology in all her pictures (Figure 4. 16; Figure 4. 17; Figure 4. 18, and Figure 4. 19). Communicating with colleagues helped Participant 5 feel less alone in her experience of being overwhelmed by job demands as she felt that their colleagues shared her experiences of frustration, irritation, and struggle while teaching online. She noted that they experienced:

A whole new teaching environment. One that NO ONE had been in before. Again, colleagues getting each other through it, was the most important thing. Also making sure it was easy to communicate with the outside world, making sure your family was ok, your colleagues, as they were the only ones who knew the struggles, the pain, the irritation. Constant fun Teams calls was very necessary! (Figure 4. 18).

Making contact with their colleagues made Participant 5 feel less alone in her experience.

Learning new things and teaching online entailed much preparation, according to Participant 2. As noted in their reflection, “Online lessons were a lot of work for preparation, but the marking was done for you” (Figure 4. 13).

While teaching online was a new job demand, technology’s ability to minimise tasks such as marking content made the experience more enjoyable. Participant 6 also felt overwhelmed by job demands and noted that it affected her energy levels, saying, “Often I felt like I was so full of worry that I was running on empty” (Figure 4. 20). Hence, Participant 6 felt burned out and burned out due to the pressure placed on her to teach during the pandemic.

4.4.2.2 Subtheme 2: At-Home Teaching Environment. Integrating a comfortable working environment at home was imperative for participants as she spent most of their time communicating online. Participant 2 portrayed a picture of their teaching environment which showed the comfort of teaching indoors (Figure 4. 8). Participant 5 emphasised her environment's role as she recalled spending much time online, stating, "Making sure your environment was comfortable was important, as you would be spending a LOT of time there!" (Figure 4. 17).

Participant 5 emphasised the use of technology and equipment during this time by submitting pictures that all had elements of technology; in one of their pictures, she portrayed her teaching environment as having two screens, indicating that teaching during this time required technical skills and resources (Figure 4. 17).

Participant 4 enjoyed this time as she could help their children with online learning. "It was a privilege to be at home with them to help them with all their online learning. We spent lots of quality time together." (Figure 4. 12). Hence, Participant 4 found joy in helping her children with online learning from a parent's perspective.

4.4.2.3 Subtheme 3: Increased Stress Due to New Job Demands in the Workplace.

While teaching from home required much effort, returning to school was just as challenging for participants. When returning to school, Participant 5 noted that they had to teach in the physical classroom while calling in learners through video calls. Thus some learners attended the lesson through video calls while others were taught in the classroom. (Figure 4. 18). Teaching both groups simultaneously increased their workload and feelings of stress. Participant 5's stress increased during this time due to the new responsibility of having to help both learners and parents online with technical difficulties. Participant 1 coped with this anxiety by integrating logotherapy strategies into their teaching and personal hobbies to combat anxiety. In doing so, they used the principles of Viktor Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning*, as illustrated in one of their pictures (Figure 4. 5). Participant 2 saved time by using platforms such as Kahoot to set up activities that the program could mark for them; this reduced their workload (Figure 4. 9).

4.4.3 Theme 3: Sources of Improved Well-Being

4.4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Hobbies, Exercise and New Friendships As a Source of Well-being. Participants 1, 2, 3, and 7 engaged in hobbies that improved their well-being. Participant 1 created art to feel sane and gardened to observe art in nature (Figure 4. 7 and Figure 4. 10). Participant 2 exercised by running with their family, engaged with others, and formed new friendships outside their home (Figure 4. 10). Participant 3 watched Netflix to de-stress and unwind (Figure 4. 9). Participant 7 engaged in horse riding to help them unwind and used the time presented by the pandemic to work on their personal physical fitness goals, which made them feel accomplished and improved their discipline (Figure 4. 28 and Figure 4. 29).

4.4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Quality Time With Family and Pets. Participants 2 and 4 noted that spending time with family was imperative and allowed them to de-stress and build strong relationships (Figure 4. 6). Participant 4 felt that spending time with their family and helping their children with online learning made them feel like they had a purpose (Figure 4. 16).

By contrast, Participant 7 reported that feelings of isolation and time spent away from their family made them appreciate their family's support more (Figure 4. 30). Participant 7 found support from their partner was a source of comfort when coping with feelings of uncertainty (Figure 4. 31). Pets also provided support to Participants 4 and 6. Spending time with their pets made them feel unconditional love, support, and companionship, which helped them to cope with stress (Figure 4. 17 and Figure 4. 27).

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the thematic analysis of data set 1. The following chapter focuses on the data set 2's findings. Later I will discuss the findings of this study in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5: Presentation Of Analysis Data Set 2

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I presented the data analysis and findings for data set 2, that is, the semi-structured interview transcripts. I used Smith et al.'s (2009) seven-step interpretive phenomenological analysis framework to analyse each participant's semi-structured interview transcripts in two coding cycles (see Appendix D). For the first coding cycle, I used eclectic coding (Saldaña, 2016). During the first cycle, I used structural coding and subcoding. For the second cycle, I used axial coding (Saldaña, 2016). After analysing each participant's transcript, I conducted a thematic analysis and identified the major themes across all cases using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. This chapter presents the findings generated through thematic interpretive phenomenological analysis across all participants.

5.2 Findings of Data Set 2

5.2.1. Theme 1: *Longing for Connection*

Feelings of isolation, loneliness, frustration, stress, discomfort, and anxiety were among the first significant themes in the data. It was evident that the onset of the lockdown was enjoyable for participants in its infancy, but later, participants longed for connection with their learners and colleagues and felt increased stress due to financial strain. According to Participant 8, "you miss the hype and the vibe in the morning to actually get ready for school, to get ready for work. So it's really, it's the quietness of it that really caught my attention" (S2 I8 P8).

Participant 8 missed her routine of going to work and noted the inaccessibility of leisure activities such as hiking, movie theatres, and other sources of entertainment, which made her feel isolated, as she noticed the quietness associated with halted economic activity. The absence of leisure activities meant she had fewer sources of relaxation.

At the onset of the pandemic, most participants felt isolated, alone, and detached from others. Participant 8 felt "cold and alone and surrounded by coldness" (S2 I8 P8). The cause of these feelings originated from online teaching, which encompassed changes in social interactions and the absence of non-verbal communication.

Participant 5 described teaching from home as having "contact online and so, but that whole human interaction was taken away" (S2 I8 P8). Participants found video calls "really quiet" (S2 I8 P8) and found it challenging to read non-verbal communication when learners turned off their video cameras and microphones, as shown in these quotes:

It's awful to teach to a screen and not see anything or anyone and have no interaction, and my personality doesn't allow for it so, it was, it was definitely challenging. (S1 I3 P3)

So that was a big thing for me to not be able to see their faces and to actually fight with them to see their faces. (S1 I1 P1)

Not seeing the learners' faces as a result of cameras being switched off significantly impacted Participant 5's experience as she felt uncomfortable teaching this way which caused verbal conflict with learners during lessons.

It is also evident that some participants disliked showing their faces on video calls. Participant 2 felt uncomfortable with having her face on a video online, stating: "I wasn't very comfortable with having my face on the screen and making videos, me seeing myself back. I'd rather just be standing in front of the class and teaching. So that was a very uncomfortable time" (S2 I6 P6).

The source of these emotions was the participants' longing for an emotional connection with their learners and the absence of non-verbal cues during interactions. The participants longed for experiences that strengthened their bond with learners. According to Participant 8, "one of the greatest parts of teaching is like having a joke with your class. Everybody is laughing together, having a class party, all of those things, and now suddenly it's taken away" (S2 I8 P8).

A longing by the participants for activities that provided positive emotions were prevalent throughout the data. The absence of activities such as classroom parties and laughter in class added to feelings of isolation and longing for Participant 8. She longed for things to go back to normal, stating, "It can actually make you feel excited in a way to know that it might be coming back. So you long, um, for the future as well" (S2 I8 P8). Participant 8 also longed for the future and described her experience of not being able to read non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, during video calls and experiencing this longing for connection by presenting this metaphor, "You're walking, you're walking through the woods, everything's looking the same, and you almost get lost, um, between these trees, because you have no beacons to look for because everything looks the same" (S2 I8 P8). Without non-verbal communication, participant 8 felt lost and disconnected during video calls as she did not have "beacons" or social cues to look for while teaching. Most of the participants disliked this

communication and felt that online learning made communication harder due to an absence of cues to guide their teaching. Hence, they longed for connection.

The participants called colleagues via video calls to speak about their experiences of longing for connection, which strengthened their bond as co-workers and provided participants with a sense of solidarity and community. “My team and I became much closer during the pandemic because we were altogether alone. Um, and I think we just grew, we grew as teachers, and we grew as, um, colleagues” (S2 I6 P6).

Other teachers used spiritual activities and social media to feel less alone, as they made them feel part of a community and gave them a source of meaning and engagement. Spiritual activities allowed the participants to express gratitude and feel like they were part of a community, giving them a greater sense of well-being while helping them cope with negative emotions as they felt a sense of belonging.

Participant 4 “wrote a Bible verse each day for 100 days and posted it on Facebook along with a few photos of things” that she was “grateful for each day” (S1 I4 P4). Posting pictures online helped her to “send encouragement to all [their] family and friends” and showed that she and her family “were not alone” (S1 I4 P4). Participant 4 attended online church services to cope with isolation and loneliness, which made her feel that she was part of a community and provided her with emotional support and a source of meaning. “It just helped you to feel, uh, less alone - and more, uh, like a still community. We have a small church, but, um, it just helped us to feel connected” (S1 I4 P4). Hence, attending online church services made the teacher feel part of a community which provided her with a sense of belonging and support.

Participant 6 also noted that humour helped her to cope with uncertainty and anxiety during this time, stating, “So it was trying to break that, um, cycle of negativity and, you know, morbidity and all of that kind of stuff” (S2 I6 P6). She noted that humour improved her mood and helped them to escape a negative cycle caused by a longing for connection.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Increased Job Demands

The participants experienced increased responsibilities caused by online learning and when returning to school. During the semi-structured interviews, many of the participants reflected on their experiences. It was also evident that some of them experienced financial strain during the pandemic.

5.2.2.1 Subtheme 1: Additional Responsibility Caused by Online Learning.The participants felt frustrated when teaching online as they experienced changed pedagogy, needed to do more planning, and felt pressure from management to perform. Those who taught practical subjects such as art struggled to demonstrate and assist their learners during lessons, making them feel “anxious” (S1 I1 P1), with Participant 1 sharing, “I found it very difficult, um, to do, not to have them in front of me to show them what to do” (S1 I1 P1).

Participant 1 felt that new responsibilities, such as additional planning, made him feel “not comfortable” (S1 I1 P1). Participant 2 shared the same experience:

They have to do the work, and you must determine how long they will need for this specific thing, and then you can go to the next thing. Um, and then they have to give you feedback, and you have to wait for everybody to respond and make sure everybody has the connections and all of that before you can continue to the next thing. So there was definitely more planning for me. (S1 I2 P2).

Participant 2 felt that she had to plan more due to connectivity issues and learner feedback, while Participant 1 noted that she experienced pressure from management as “they wanted to keep their standards up” (S1 I1 P1). Also, “they didn’t want the students to fall behind, so it was extremely stressful” (S1 I1 P1).

Participant 1 also felt that teaching online was complicated and required follow-up intervention during contact time due to learning loss. He did not enjoy this experience. “I just tried to fill the gaps with actual contact time when we could actually see them, but everything had to be done online, and it was quite a learning curve but not enjoyable for me as an art teacher. (S1 I1 P1)

Participant 1 noted that he had spent time catching up on missed content when returning to the school environment, as teaching online made it very difficult for him to teach practical parts of the curriculum. The participants felt integrating online learning was difficult as many learners struggled with technology. Participant 5 shared the same experience:

Setting up the lessons, marking was way more difficult. Um, you know, like the kids for a technology- technological age that are really bad at technology in general, like uploading photos of their work. Um, they couldn’t do it. Um, their mics don’t work, their cameras don’t work, this and that – and that’s all you spent your day doing

actually or telling the kids please during your mic off I'm trying to teach, and then their parents are in the background. Like it was, I absolutely hated it. (S2 I5 P5)

The participants felt that marking and receiving content from learners was difficult as many struggled with technology. The learners struggled to turn their microphones off at appropriate times. The participants also found it challenging to teach with parents in the background of online videos and disliked the situation. Participant 3 found it frustrating to teach online as many learners made excuses when they needed to submit work or participate in activities. Participant 2 felt that the learners had to take responsibility for their digital literacy. As she explained:

I was a teacher, and IT support, and it felt to me like, I'm sorry, but I have a set of responsibilities, and you know, I've, I've done them, now it's your turn mate, step up to the plate. So I feel a lot of that was just excuses as well. (S1 I3 P3)

Participant 5 felt that distractions during video call lessons were stressful and that many distractions or noises in the background of her video calls made her seem unprofessional, which was stressful for her. "There's a lawnmower or a weed hacker and, um, so that kind of thing, it, it was quite stressful in that aspect. Um, cause you're trying to be professional at the same time" (S2 I5 P5).

While most of the participants felt frustrated when online learning commenced, Participant 2 found it easier to teach online as time passed as the learners improved their digital literacy. She felt that "as soon as they got used to everything and understood what it was about, it was fine. It was quite nice" (S1 I2 P2). So, through time, the participants and learners developed their skills, meaning conducting lessons was more accessible and enjoyable.

Some participants also felt that increased workload resulted from needing to help others with technology. Participants 3 and 5 found it frustrating to teach online as they had to assist learners, parents, and other teachers with the technology. The teachers helped the parents with general digital literacy skills, such as uploading documents and pictures. Participant 5 found it stressful and overwhelming to help parents. Assisting others with technology while managing one's lessons and content was stressful, but the participants also felt overwhelmed by the number of online documents and found it challenging to keep track of content and lessons. According to Participant 8:

They didn't know how to upload stuff, and it was very difficult too, and some parents felt like they were the only kids or parents going through, you know what I mean? And like, you cannot help every single child with everything all the time. (S2 I5 P5)

So you getting lost between the daily things, of, you know, loading your videos, loading the memos. Tomorrow it's the same thing, the loading memos, loading videos, it's a never-ending walk that you're taking. (S2 I8 P8)

You lose yourself completely. You get lost in those woods, and you can't remember which memos you did load, which may memos you did not load. (S2 I8 P8)

Furthermore, the teachers felt they received much negative feedback from parents regardless of their efforts. "You know, we've got a lot of flak, as well, which I think was unnecessary. ... You have the one or two that just constantly make it a bad experience" (S2 I5 P5). Receiving less support from parents made the teachers feel underappreciated as they felt the tremendous stress of helping learners with technology during lessons. Participant 3 felt that more appreciation would have made this experience easier, stating: "The more you are appreciated for what you're doing, the more you will do at the end of the day, but the more you just get slagged, the whole time, the less you want to do it" (S1 I3 P3).

Participant 6 felt that she needed more support from colleagues during this time, saying, "we actually needed to support one another more than judge or, or because we weren't physically being around one another" (S2 I6 P6). She would also have appreciated support from management, parents, and colleagues during that time.

5.2.2.2 Subtheme 2: Returning to School. Implementing new protocols when returning to school was a source of anxiety and stress for most of the participants. Participant 6 felt that it was unfair that she had to return to school in stages. "It was a bit much that first of all, we were all coming back in stages, and it was a bit unfair, about who, who was coming back first" (S2 I6 P6).

Participant 6 felt she needed more appreciation for her efforts to return to school as she risked their safety to teach. Returning to the school environment made her feel unsafe and anxious. She explained:

I felt like I was putting my life on the line because I didn't know what it was going to be like. Was I going to get it? Was I going to make my family sick? ... I needed to

feel more maybe being at school; we needed a little bit more, um, thank you. (S2 I6 P6)

While it was stressful to return to school, Participant 7 also experienced a lack of appreciation and felt anxious as she risked their family's lives by being at school. Integrating new protocols into the school environment stressed most of the participants. Participants noted that they felt that they needed to take on more responsibility.

You're always looking after the kids, but during the pandemic, it was a bit different because you always like masks on, keep your distance, mask on, keep your distance. You can't share, you can't do this, you can't do that, and it was a lot of like nagging, which is so exhausting. (S2 I6 P6)

Most of the participants noted the implementation of mask-wearing as challenging and stressful. This protocol made the participants unable to communicate effectively with their learners as they could not read or express their emotions with masks.

I can't see what your facial expressions look like. Um, also included to that is your masks. Um, it's also something that makes it cold for me because suddenly three-quarters of your face, or well two-thirds actually, is gone. (S2 I8 P8)

Face masks influenced the interactions between teachers and learners and affected some participants' vocal abilities. Participant 2 noted that teaching with a mask on was challenging as she could not articulate when speaking to learners.

I did not like that at all because I don't have a loud voice. So people can't hear me, and for some other reason, I couldn't get people either. So whenever they were talking to me, and I couldn't hear, I would take off my mask as if that would help me to open up my ears, and that didn't work, but so for me, it was a struggle. I couldn't hear properly, and people couldn't hear me, and I didn't like that at all. (S1 I2 P2)

It was challenging to hear others and have others hear participants while speaking. Eventually, Participant 8 had to take her mask off and risk her safety to communicate effectively. Implementing protocols was also stressful for participants as they felt increased anxiety about keeping their learners safe.

If you hear anything, whether it's a person coughing outside or whatever the case may be, you immediately think, okay, how can I keep these kids safe? What should I do?

Protocols everything. And your mind is so distracted from what you are actually teaching that you lose track of yourself completely. (S2 I8 P8)

Feelings of anxiety distracted them from their teaching, which meant disruptions during lessons.

They also disliked giving constant instructions to learners to put their masks on, so, as Participant 6 explained: “It was a lot of like nagging, which is so exhausting” (S2 I6 P6). Participant 6 also felt that the constant repetition of safety instructions during interactions with learners was annoying and exhausting.

Participants also felt that the process of returning to school entailed much uncertainty. “It was just an ever-changing, we’re at school, we’re not a school, we’re back at – the kids are back, the kids are not back. We must go home. We mustn’t go home. There is sport, there’s no sport” (S2 I5 P5). Therefore, Participant 5 did not enjoy the uncertainty of not knowing when things would return to normal.

5.2.2.2.1 Teaching Both in Class and Online. When returning to school, Participant 5 felt that it was “double the work” (S2 I5 P5) as she had to accommodate learners who were physically in class and others who were on video calls.

I had maybe four kids in my classroom, the rest were online. Um, yeah, it was very difficult, and you have to try and think of stuff to do with the kids that they can do at school, or they can do it at home, you know it was before it was only at home stuff, I-I didn’t enjoy this. This was, for me, awful. (S2 I5 P5)

Participant 5 did not enjoy this experience at all. She found it challenging and stressful to teach this way. It was also challenging to conduct assessments with both groups as it entailed more work.

That was also extra work because it would be normal like, uh, test on Word that you would print for the kids at school and then these ones that were at home, you would send them the PDF, like 10 minutes before the test started, then they’d have to print it. Then you’d have kids. Oh, but my printer’s not working, oh but then this, oh mom’s not at home to help me print, okay but, then they’d have to scan in their tests, send it back to you, then you have to go and print. (S2 I5 P5)

Conducting lessons with both groups required Participant 5 to make documents in digital format, which the learners had to print and complete and send back to the teacher at home. Interruptions in this process caused disruptions and made the situation stressful. Participant 5 also doubted the efficacy of conducting assessments in this manner, as parents often helped learners with their tests.

They wrote tests, they had to have their cameras and the mics on so that I could hear if they were, parents were giving them answers, if they were checking up answers online, or, I mean, that's also very much added stress to just walking around, watching them write the tests. Now you have to hear if mom's giving them four plus four is eight. (S2 I5 P5)

Maintaining standardised assessments through different platforms and at school was stressful and required additional effort from the participants who had to split their attention.

5.2.2.3 Subtheme 3: Reflecting on the Experience of Online Learning and Returning to School. When looking back at the stress and frustration caused by integrating online learning into teaching, the participants reflected on their experiences and identified that although it was difficult, it meant tremendous growth for them. Participant 1 felt that the pandemic developed her professionally regardless of the negative feelings the experience caused. While Participant 1 felt uncertain and stressed at the start of the pandemic, his experience shifted toward seeing the experience as an opportunity for growth. As he said, “The negative was definitely the confinement and the uncertainty doomsday feeling, and the positive was opportunities” (S1 I1 P1).

Participant 5 shared the same opinion and felt proud of themselves for getting through the online learning experience.

I was quite proud of myself that I, um, could do such things. Um, you know, a lot of teachers did struggle during the online, um, with technology and in doing things like this. Um, so I was quite proud of myself that I could use it positively in a more positive light. (S2 I5 P5)

5.2.2.4 Subtheme 4: Financial Strain. Not only did the teachers' job demands increase, but it was also evident that many suffered from income shock during the pandemic. Participants 1, 3, and 8 experienced financial strain during the pandemic. Participant 1 had to take a "salary cut" (S1 I1 P1), while his wife also lost their job and source of income due to social distancing restrictions. He described feeling "unhappy" (S1 I1 P1) and defined the experience of financial strain as "more sad than stressful" (S1 I1 P1). Participant 3 had more debt than monthly income. She felt that prioritising healthcare during the pandemic was necessary, but she strained their budget, which caused stress.

I would say, 90 per cent of my stress comes from finances purely because even being physically ill, you know, if, if you don't cough up R 3 000 a month to pay towards health insurance or medical aid or whatever, you won't be able to afford things to make you feel better. (S1 I3 P3)

Participant 3 felt that she could not afford to spend money on items or activities that would have improved their well-being during the pandemic other than healthcare. This contributed to most of her stress. Participant 8's husband took a pay cut, which also strained their household.

My, my husband works on commission-based. Um, so during the pandemic, of course. His salary went down. So in our household, I mean, we are a household of five people, so that really costs a lot of money in a month, but that one other thing that happened spiralled out, you know, we can't, allow you to do, let's say ballet anymore. We can't do this because there are no finances. (S2 I8 P8)

Participant 8 felt she had less money to spend on leisure activities that would have provided their family with physical exercise and flow experiences. Hence, their job demands increased while their salaries decreased, which added additional stress in teachers' households.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Work Overload, Stress and Burnout

All the participants emphasised that the responsibilities posed by online learning increased their workload. As a result of the increased workload and integration of online learning and teaching from home, the participants felt that there was no "distinction between work life and home life. Everything is integrated completely" (S2 I8 P8). Participant 8 stated:

It felt like it was a never-ending workday. (S2 I8 P8)

You never left your house and thought into that work mindset, or you never returned to your home and got into, okay. I'm home. I can relax, kind of mindset. So it must really be never-ending. (S2 I8 P8)

Teaching from home made the participants feel that they could not relax. Participant 5 shared a similar experience. "I had difficulty distinguishing being at work and then being at home when it's at the same, same place. Um, you know, it blurred those lines a little bit" (S2 I5 P5).

Blurred lines between work and home eventually led to burnout in some participants. Participant 6 felt like she was "running empty on energy" (S2 I6 P6) due to being overwhelmed by the number of responsibilities posed by online learning, which made them feel demotivated.

Things were getting too much, and I was running on empty. Like there was just no more that I could give, and every day, it always seemed like there was something new that we had to give in, especially being a teacher going from one day to the next, there was always something new that we had to adapt to or integrate or do, and it was just getting too much, and they were expecting a lot from us when we didn't even know what was really going on. (S2 I6 P6)

It was getting to a point where things were just too much, and I just didn't want to do anything. (S2 I6 P6)

Participant 6 felt overwhelmed and overworked. She felt that each day during the pandemic presented new tasks and responsibilities, which eventually led to exhaustion. Participant 3 felt that many teachers experienced burnout due to work overload.

I feel that a lot of teachers are actually struggling with and suffering from burnout. Some of them don't even realise it, and the problem is there's nothing we can do about it because you must dress up, show up and do your job; nobody else is going to do your job for you. (S1 I3 P3)

Participant 3 felt helpless witnessing burnout among their colleagues, that the situation was hopeless, and that there were no solutions to coping with the overwhelming amount of work.

5.2.4 Theme 4: Factors That Improved Well-Being During the Pandemic

The participants felt that spending quality time with their family and pets, engaging in physical exercise and engaging in spiritual activities served as factors that improved their well-being during the pandemic.

5.2.4.1 Subtheme 1: Spending Quality Time with Family and Pets. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 found comfort in spending time with their families and pets during the pandemic. Participant 1 enjoyed spending time with their wife and engaging in shared hobbies. They shared, “The connection between my wife and myself, just keeping it, um, keeping me sane” (S1 I1 P1). They felt like their bond improved their feelings of sanity during the pandemic.

Participant 2 enjoyed spending time with her newborn baby during the lockdown and noted that it improved her bond with her baby. “It was actually terribly nice for me to know I only have so much time together with my husband. It put my mental health in a good place” (Figure 4. 7). Participant 2 noted that family time contributed to their well-being during the pandemic.

Participant 3 shared a similar experience. “With that spending time with family and friends have been crucial to my well-being by being able to unwind and de-stress” (Figure 4. 12). Spending time with family decreased Participant 3’s stress.

Participant 4 appreciated every moment with their two sons and noted that her family provided them with “joy and unconditional love, which was very rewarding and very special” (S1 I4 P4).

They are my greatest blessings, and during the lockdown, I was so thankful to be able to spend real quality time with them each day. It was a privilege to be at home with them to help them with all their online learning. We spent lots of quality time together. (S1 I4 P4)

Quality time with family made her feel supported and provided Participant 4 with a source of meaning. Participant 6 enjoyed spending time with her pets as it provided her with a source of “comfort” (S2 I6 P6) that made her “feel very happy and, um, supported” (S2 I6 P6). She added, “Besides my daughter, they are the next best thing” (S2 I6 P6).

While Participant 6 saw her pets as a source of improved well-being, Participant 7 felt that her partner was her primary source of support and that the pandemic made her appreciate her family more. Participant 7 noted that her family experienced stressors during the pandemic, which made her appreciate their time with them, saying, “I think through being apart, we got closer together. Our daily video calls were definitely a highlight” (Figure 4. 30).

Most of the participants indicated that their family was a source of support and felt that the pandemic had improved their bond. “I think it just, I don’t know, not improved us, but sort of solidified that bond” (S2 I7 P7).

While the lockdown meant that teachers felt lonely, isolated, anxious, and frustrated due to feeling disconnected from their learners and suffering financial strain, the participants’ time with their families contributed to their well-being.

5.2.4.2 Subtheme 2: Physical Exercise. Participant 1 started gardening during the pandemic as nature provided him with an opportunity to be mindful. Participant 2 started running during the pandemic as it helped him to de-stress and meet new friends. Participant 7 enjoyed exercising and reaching their personal weight loss goals during the pandemic, making him feel accomplished and more resilient.

Participant 1 enjoyed gardening during the pandemic feeling that it increased their mindfulness and calmed his anxiety. Mindfulness helped Participant 1 to cope with anxiety and stress, as his words showed:

Just the busy-ness of, of, of life and what’s happening in my head, um, compared to my outside appearance of calm and, uh, it looks like I’m in control. (S1 I1 P1)

Yeah, mindfulness, um, and paying attention to what you’re doing and, um, taking out the weeds and not looking at them, not harming, the actual, the beautiful plants. (S1 I1 P1)

Participant 2 enjoyed running with her family and felt exercising after work relieved her stress and frustration. She felt improved fitness and relief of frustration through exercise. “If I had a bad day or [had] to repeat myself 110 times to a Grade 4 learner, and I go run, I feel better afterwards” (S1 I2 P2).

Participant 6 saw the additional time provided by lockdown as a “time of huge personal growth” (S2 I7 P7). She reached fitness goals during this time. “My goals then I was on a major weight loss, fitness journey, and my goal was obviously to lose weight and get stronger, but also it became finding more happiness within myself” (S2 I7 P7).

Participant 7 felt that reaching her goals made her happier as she felt more accomplished. When reflecting on her fitness goals, she noted feeling proud of herself, saying, “I see myself, and

I'm happy, and I'm proud, and I am glowing" (S2 I7 P7). The participant saw herself as happy due to exercising.

The participants who exercised during the pandemic tended to discuss more positive emotions during their semi-structured interviews.

5.2.4.3 Subtheme 3: Spiritual Experiences. While physical exercise served as a source of well-being for teachers, spiritual experiences also helped them cope with isolation during the pandemic, bond with their families, and feel a sense of meaning and connection to a community. By posting a Bible verse each day and posting it on Facebook, Participant 4 used the opportunity to express her gratitude by posting "photos of things" they were "grateful for each day" (S1 I4 P4). Posting pictures online helped the participant "send encouragement to all" their "family and friends" and showed they "were not alone during lockdown" (S1 I4 P4). These pictures provided reassurance and encouragement to her extended family and meant that the participant could express her faith publicly.

Furthermore, it is evident that attending spiritual events online, such as church services, served as a source of well-being for Participant 4. Participant 4 submitted a "screenshot of an online church service" as one of her pictures (S1 I4 P4). Participant 4 saw the online church services as an opportunity to connect to her community.

It was wonderful that we could still have an online service each week. Um, it just helped you to feel, uh, less alone – and more, uh, like a still community. We have a small church, but, um, it just helped us to feel connected. (S1 I4 P4)

And it was just a, not a physical support, but just, just a support to know that- We were all going through the same sort of thing. Um, even in different ways, but we were all in it together, and we weren't so alone. Um, because that feeling of isolation was pretty scary. (S1 I4 P4)

Collectively engaging in spiritual activities made the participant feel a sense of belonging to a community as it comforted them when she felt scared and isolated. Consequently, she felt less alone. She also utilised online church services to connect with her family.

With our church, with the outside world. Um, we would get a message each week we would sing; the boys would laugh at me, but I'd make them sing while we were there. Um, it would also give us some routine. Uh, during lockdown, things were so

deurmekaar (confusing). So every Sunday was church, and we would just sit there as a family and just watch and get a message. (S1 I4 P4)

Spiritual activities established a routine in the participant's household and allowed her to connect with her family, which served as a source of comfort and well-being. Engaging in spiritual activities could also have served as a way for the teachers to connect and transcend her experiences during this time.

5.5 Conclusion

I discussed the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted for this study in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Findings

6.1 Introduction

This research study explored the subjective well-being experiences of South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapters 4 and 5 provided insight into the analysis of two data sets. Data set 1 addressed the analysis of pictures and narrative reflections, while data set 2 presented the analysis of the semi-structured interview transcripts. I employed Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis framework to analyse data set 1 while using Smith et al.'s (2009) interpretive phenomenological analysis framework with Saldaña's (2016) coding methods to analyse data set 2. These data sets clarified the teachers' individual experiences and created the backdrop for the thematic analysis. I employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework to interpret each data set.

As noted in Chapter 3, I used a phenomenological research design for this study. In doing so, I focused on the ideas of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology approach when analysing the data (Moustakas, 1994). To understand the teachers' lived experiences and perspectives, regardless of my subjective perceptions or assumptions, using "bracketing" to set my subjective interpretations aside, I reduced the data into specific quotes, thematic statements, and metaphors to develop a narrative description of these experiences (Moustakas, 1994). I unpacked and discussed the major themes identified in the thematic analysis in this chapter by describing what the teachers experienced and why they perceived their experiences in a particular way. The discussion and presentation of these themes served as the findings of this study and answered the research question, "What were private school teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic?"

To answer the research question, I focused on three significant themes from the data. These themes included (1) longing for connection, (2) increased job demands, and (3) protective factors and resilience. The following table provides the structure of this discussion.

Table 6. 1: Themes

Themes	Subthemes	Points of discussion
Theme 1: Longing for connection	Subtheme 1: Longing for connection during the lockdown	Point 1: Physical exercise as a protective factor against loneliness and anxiety
		Point 2: Religious activities and social media: A source of meaning and connection
		Point 3: Hope and optimism: A protective factor against loneliness
	Subtheme 2: Longing for connection due to a lack of non-verbal cues	Point 1: Non-verbal cues in video calls
		Point 2: Video calls with colleagues as a protective factor against loneliness and anxiety
		Point 3: Teaching with a mask when returning to school
Theme 2: Increased job demands	Subtheme 1: Enforcing and implementing COVID-19 protocols	Point 1: A way to cope with uncertainty
	Subtheme 2: Additional curriculum and pedagogy planning	Point 1: Planning and teaching online
		Point 2: Improving digital literacy to save planning time

Themes	Subthemes	Points of discussion
		Point 3: Planning and teaching in person and online simultaneously
	Subtheme 3: Helping others with technology	
	Subtheme 4: Assessing learners during the pandemic	
	Subtheme 5: Increased feelings of burnout due to increased job demands	Point 1: Need for more appreciation and support
Theme 3: Resilience and protective factors	Subtheme 1: Professional development	
	Subtheme 2: Quality time with family and pets	

I discussed these themes to answer the research question by focusing on the data's patterns, relationships, and trends identified in the thematic analysis. I discussed exceptions in the findings and the likely causes for these exceptions. I also focused on the relevance of these findings in light of the new understanding it brings to the field of teacher subjective well-being by considering the background and context laid out in Chapter 1 and the implication of these findings present for other unanswered research questions.

6.2 Discussion of the Findings

The following section discusses the finding of this study.

6.2.1 Theme 1: Longing for Connection

The findings suggest that the teachers experienced a longing for connection during the pandemic, which led to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and frustration. The teachers noted their longing for connection during the lockdown and felt that the way they interacted with their learners, colleagues, and peers through online platforms at the start of the pandemic failed

to meet their need for connection. They met this need by connecting with their peers through social media and video calls, which provided feelings of belonging as they used social support structures to soothe their need for connection.

6.2.1.1 Subtheme 1: Longing for Connection During the Lockdown. The teachers felt feelings of loneliness and anxiety during the lockdown. The lockdown encompassed changes in societal functioning, including the temporary halting of economic activities. Consequently, non-essential businesses and schools closed temporarily in March 2020 (Independent School Association of Southern Africa, 2022; South African Government, 2022b). These safety protocols kept the teachers physically healthy as they were less likely to get infected by COVID-19 but influenced their mental health to a great extent.

During the lockdown, most of the teachers noted emotional reactions to external factors that did not relate to their role as a teacher. They noticed the “quietness” (S2 I8 P8) of public spaces such as ice rinks, hiking areas, and theatres. Against this backdrop, the teachers felt lonely and disconnected, reporting feeling “cold and alone and surrounded by coldness” (S2 I8 P8). The world felt “empty” (Figure 4. 35) to them, indicating a longing for connection.

The teachers also experienced personal stressors such as income shock because there were “no finances” (S2 I8 P8), which meant that they had to limit their spending on leisure activities that might have provided them with more opportunities to connect with others. Other teachers referred to themselves as having “permanent financial stress and dept” (Figure 4. 15). Some of the teachers had to take “salary cuts” (S1 I1 P1) while, for others, their partners lost their jobs at the start of the pandemic, which caused an income shock in their households, increased personal stress, and anxiety. These findings concur with the findings of Donnelly and Farina (2021), who found that income shock negatively influenced individual well-being.

While the teachers were isolated from society with their families and had the opportunity to leave home for essential items such as medicine and food, it is evident that the absence of opportunities for outdoor activities and in-person socialisation led to the teachers longing for connection. These findings concur with those of Smith and Lim (2020) and Young Minds (2020), who found that self-isolation during the pandemic increased feelings of loneliness, isolation, and depression. These findings also concurred with those of Killgore et al. (2020), who found that loneliness was a signature mental health concern during the pandemic. Identifying this emotion in the findings is concerning as Killgore et al. (2020) also found that

increased loneliness led to depression and suicidal ideation when experienced during the pandemic.

6.2.1.1.1 Physical Exercise as a Protective Factor Against Loneliness and Anxiety.

The teachers found that connecting to the outside world was easier after the government implemented adjusted Alert Levels 3 and 4. South Africans could exercise under strict protocols, excluding organised exercise at gyms or groups (South African Government, 2022c). The teachers found utility in exercising during this time and formed new friendships in their neighbourhoods while going for walks or running. As they explained, “We met people along the roads, and yeah, we actually stood outside, chatting with new people and then we had to rush back home just to get back before the curfew. So yeah, it was quite fun” (S1 I2 P2). Forming new friendships was a source of excitement for one teacher as they could interact with others and be in nature.

They also referred to “we” in their reflection, which indicated that it was an activity they did with their family (S1 I2 P2). Being in nature and exercising at home was another comfort for the teachers as most spoke about themselves or their families gardening or exercising in their gardens during this time. Three teachers also mentioned spending time with their pets as comfort and support, saying, “The photos were of us doing general everyday things like baking, reading, exercising in the garden, our dogs, online work and schooling etc.” (Figure 4. 16).

While some of the teachers exercised by running and going for walks with their families, others gardened or spent time with their pets. The data often presented individual experiences surrounding nature and gardening. One of the teachers described gardening as a source of comfort as it helped him to cope with feelings of anxiety caused by loneliness, frustration, and a longing for connection.

I did it because I was frustrated at not being able to do anything and that, that made me not only physically tired, but it, it calmed me down, yeah, made me physically tired and also calmed down the mind. (S1 I1 P11)

Gardening helped this teacher cope with these feelings as it provided him with an opportunity to utilise mindfulness and participate in a flow activity. “Yeah, mindfulness, um, and paying attention to what you’re doing and, um, taking out the weeds and not looking at them, not harming, the actual, the beautiful plants” (S1 I1 P1).

Contact with nature caused increased mindfulness and decreased anxiety. These findings concur with those of Gerdes et al. (2022) who conducted a survey focusing on the connection between gardening and anxiety. They found that gardening and other outdoor activities reduced anxiety during the COVID-19 lockdown (Gerdes et al., 2022). There is a gap in the literature exploring the possible influence of integrating gardening and outdoor activities into teacher well-being programmes as it served as a beneficial activity to teacher well-being during the pandemic. There are studies with concurring findings such as those of Matiz et al. (2020), who found that mindfulness interventions mitigated the negative psychological consequences of the pandemic and helped their teachers to restore well-being.

Furthermore, it is imperative to consider that the lockdown gave the teachers more time to focus on their hobbies, such as gardening. While gardening provided mindfulness opportunities, it allowed them to explore their interests and hobbies effectively, hence, providing them with clarity as to which activities might serve as protective factors against stress. Further insight into this topic may provide a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive participation in physical exercise and hobbies concerning their experiences of subjective well-being.

6.2.1.1.2 Religious Activities and Social Media: A Source of Meaning and Connection. Furthermore, the teachers coped with feelings of loneliness and isolation by expressing themselves through social media. They used social media platforms such as Facebook to post pictures, as Participant 4 did with her Facebook postings (Figure 4. 16).

Posting these pictures and practising gratitude helped the teacher cope with feelings of isolation and loneliness. While the literature suggests that teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with their profession through Facebook groups such as the “Teaching during COVID-19” group, where one out of four teachers stated that they considered leaving the profession due to the circumstances posed by COVID-19 (Hess, 2021), the findings suggest that using gratitude on social media such as pictures of things one is grateful for, improved feelings of isolation and loneliness as it provided teachers with the opportunity to connect with others and form part of an online community or initiative such as the 100-day challenge mentioned by Participant 4 (S1 I4 P4). These findings concur with those of Kardas et al. (2019), who found that gratitude is a predictive variable for well-being.

Teachers also found that attending online church services made them feel a sense of belonging and connection, making them feel less alone and more part of a community.

It was wonderful that we could still have an online service each week. Um, it just helped you to feel, uh, less alone- and more, uh, like a still community. We have a small church, but, um, it just helped us to feel connected. (S1 I4 P4)

And it was just a, not a physical support, but just, just a support to know that we were all going through the same sort of thing. Um, even in different ways, but we were all in it together, and we weren't so alone. Um, because that feeling of isolation was pretty scary. (S1 I4 P4)

A sense of belonging helped the teachers to cope with feelings of isolation as they then felt part of a community that was providing them with relationships and positive emotions. These findings concur with those of Wessels and Wood (2019), who found that South African teachers who experienced a sense of belonging experienced improved relationships, positive emotions, and improved experience of well-being.

6.2.1.1.3 Hope and Optimism: A Protective Factor Against Loneliness. Hope and optimism for the future made the teachers feel positive emotions during the lockdown.

It can actually make you feel excited in a way to know that it might be coming back. You're looking forward to people coming back again. So you long, um, for the future as well. So it can actually go both ways. (S2 I8 P8)

Being hopeful about returning to normal functioning motivated the participants and helped them to cope with their longing for connection. They coped with these feelings by accepting the situation for what it was and moving on to develop coping strategies.

6.2.1.2 Subtheme 2: Longing for Connection Due to a Lack of Non-Verbal Cues. The teachers noted that changed communication methods between teachers, learners, and colleagues primarily added to feelings of isolation and loneliness due to a change in the quality and depth of social interactions among these stakeholders at the start of the pandemic. Teaching through video calls made teachers feel frustrated and disconnected from their learners. The teachers also reported anxiety when teaching through video calls due to the changed quality of the interactions. These feelings persisted when returning to school as teaching with a mask on also hindered the effective use of non-verbal cues.

6.2.1.2.1 Non-Verbal Cues in Video Calls. The changed quality of the interactions among the learners and teachers influenced their learner-teacher relationships and led to emotional

reactions that caused distress. Integrating online learning strategies such as video calls into teaching made the teachers feel like the “whole human interaction was taken away” (S2 I8 P8) during their lessons. Changed interaction meant that they had to manage new scenarios in their online classrooms, which encompassed a range of challenges related to online learning. Among other challenges, the teachers found it difficult to teach through video calls. Behaviour from the learners, such as switching their microphones on and off at inappropriate times and failing to respond when asked questions, were factors contributing to the changed quality of the interactions. It made the teachers feel that these behaviours caused more conflict during lessons and increased feelings of frustration. “That was a big thing for me to not be able to see their faces and to actually fight with them to see their faces” (S1 I1 P1).

While the conflict caused by these interactions caused frustration, a deeper source of these feelings might have been that the teachers taught without being able to see non-verbal cues. Turning off their cameras and staying quiet when the learners asked questions meant that the teachers could not see facial expressions or the learners’ gestures, nor could they analyse paralinguistics such as volume, pitch and tone of voice, body language and posture, eye contact, or physical appearance. These findings concur with the findings of Yarmand et al. (2021), who found that the learners switched off their cameras and microphones. Yarmand et al. (2021) found that the learners preferred not to verbally participate through videos which hindered the teacher’s ability to read their class and make deeper connections with their learners. One teacher expressed this feeling through a metaphor, stating, “you’re walking through the woods, everything’s looking the same, and you almost get lost, um, between these trees, because you have no beacons to look for because everything looks the same” (S2 I8 P8).

A possible cause for feelings of frustration was the teachers’ inability to see the non-verbal cues of those learners who had turned off their cameras which primarily acted as a guiding factor while teaching. Not seeing the learners’ faces in calls meant that everything looked the same. The teachers no longer had beacons represented through non-verbal cues to guide the interaction with their learners. Many teachers noted this experience as uncomfortable and challenging, with Participant 3 declaring, “It’s awful to teach to a screen and not see anything or anyone and have no interaction, and my personality doesn’t allow for it so, it was, it was definitely challenging” (S1 I3 P3).

The teachers found it difficult to gain their learners’ social presence, making them feel out of place. The inability to establish this social presence was a challenge to teaching online. These findings concur with those of Rannastu-Avalos and Siiman (2020), who identified establishing

a social presence as one of the significant challenges to distance and online learning. While Rannastu-Avalos and Siiman's (2020) study focused on the social dynamics in science teachers' experiences in Estonia, little literature on the role of establishing a social presence in video calls exists in the South African context and, more specifically, how teachers establish a presence in video calls across different subjects. Insight into how teachers establish a social presence in the South African context might be useful to understand why the teachers felt disconnected during the pandemic.

Establishing a social presence from the teachers' side meant that they turned their cameras and microphones on while teaching. Some teachers felt uncomfortable teaching through video calls as they did not like the idea of having their faces in videos. It made them feel self-conscious and increased their awareness of their facial expressions while teaching. This was evident in statements made by the participants during their semi-structured interviews. Participant 6 elaborated on their uncomfortable experience by stating, "I wasn't very comfortable with having my face on the screen and making videos, me seeing myself back I'd rather just be standing in front of the class and teaching. So that was a very uncomfortable time" (S2 I6 P6).

The teachers preferred teaching at school to teaching through video calls. While the learners' lack of social presence might have been a reason for this perspective, more subjective experiences, such as feeling self-conscious during video calls might have increased the teachers' anxiety, leading to a negative experience. These findings concur with those of Xiao and Tobin (2018), who found that teachers tend to feel more self-conscious during video calls which cause anxiety. Teachers seeing themselves on video and observing their social cues without "beacons", namely social cues from learners who turned off their cameras and microphones, might have caused doubt in some of the teachers' use of actions, explanations, and facial expressions. Uncertainty about the efficacy of one's communication might have made the teachers anxious and contributed to a feeling of disconnectedness from their learners. Further exploration into this dynamic might reveal profound insights into the role of self-perception, self-doubt, and social cues during video calls in influencing teacher well-being. It is evident that all of the teachers felt disconnected from the learners in video calls.

A changing social climate during online lessons might have made all of the teachers feel disconnected. The teachers experienced a definite change in social connectedness, affecting the social climate of their lessons as a result of their inability to see and read non-verbal cues when the learners switched off their cameras. According to Reyes et al. (2012), a contributing factor to a positive classroom social climate is when the interactions between teachers and learners

are warm and caring. Video calling lessened the likelihood that the interactions included these dimensions, as the learners turning off their cameras meant fewer opportunities for these interactions to take place.

The teachers longed for activities that would strengthen the classroom social climate and improve their teacher–learner bond with their classes. When discussing teaching online, the teachers often spoke of longing for social activities such as classroom “parties” and “sports” (S2 I8 P8) at school, which served as usual sources of fun and engagement during lessons and strengthened the emotional connection between the teachers and learners. According to one teacher. “One of the greatest parts of teaching is like having a joke with your class. Everybody is laughing together, having a class party, all of those things and now suddenly it’s taken away” (S2 I8 P8) so not being able to joke with their classes or laugh meant that the teachers longed for a deeper emotional connection with their learners. The teachers longed for these interactions, which increased their feelings of isolation, loneliness, and frustration owing to the lack of meaningful communication and ability to understand the emotions of their learners. These findings concur with those of Venter (2019), who conducted a literature review focusing on understanding if communicating digitally with a lack of non-verbal cues influenced meaningful interactions between individuals. He found that a lack of non-verbal cues during digital interactions influenced the understanding of emotions and attitudes, compromising meaningful communication and understanding of others (Venter, 2019). In dealing with feelings of disconnection, the teachers used different strategies to feel connected.

6.2.1.2.2 Video Calls With Colleagues as a Protective Factor Against Loneliness and Anxiety.As stated previously, interactions with their colleague made the participants feel more connected to their social network and consequently served as a protective factor against feeling disconnected from their school community. The teachers found it easy to communicate with other teachers through video calls during this time:

Making sure it was easy to communicate with the outside world, making sure your family was ok, your colleagues, as they were the only ones who knew the struggles, the pain, the irritation. Constant fun Teams calls was very necessary! (S2 I5 P5)

The teachers felt that it was beneficial to talk to other teachers through video calls as they “knew the struggles, the pain, the irritation” (S2 I5 P5). They saw video calls with their colleagues as fun and a source of positive emotions as they felt socially supported. Consequently, these interactions made teachers feel more connected to their school network as

their bonds with their colleagues improved. “I think my team and I became much closer during the pandemic because we were altogether alone. Um, and I think we just grew, we grew as teachers, and we grew as, um, colleagues” (S2 I6 P6). These findings concur with studies conducted by Day and Gu (2013) and Sumsion and Patterson (2004), who found that support from colleagues and caring and supportive relationships with colleagues were among the factors that influenced teachers’ ability to be resilient thereby positively influencing their well-being. Interacting with their colleagues as a source of support may also have indicated that the connectedness and belonging to a workplace were central to maintaining the teachers’ well-being.

6.2.1.2.3 Teaching With a Mask When Returning to School.The teachers longed for connection when returning to school in June 2020. While teaching in person meant that they could finally use non-verbal cues in their teaching, mask-wearing posed further complications for effective communication between teachers and learners.

I did not like that at all because I don’t have a loud voice. So people can’t hear me, and for some other reason, I couldn’t get people either. So whenever they were talking to me, and I couldn’t hear, I would take off my mask as if that would help me to open up my ears, and that didn’t work, but so for me, it was a struggle. I couldn’t hear properly, and people couldn’t hear me, and I didn’t like that at all. (S1 I2 P2)

The teachers felt that the learners could not hear them due to masks. This made communication challenging. While it is evident that the teachers longed for in-person contact with their learners at the start of the pandemic, the findings suggest that wearing masks also hindered the reintegration of effective communication between teachers and learners. First, this could have been as a result of the fatigue caused by wearing a mask, which made the teachers feel tired and overwhelmed. Secondly, wearing a mask meant that teachers could not show facial expressions while teaching, which could have meant that their learners could not see their emotions when interacting, contributing to feelings of disconnection. Furthermore, the teachers could not see their learner’s facial expressions as they too wore masks, which could also have contributed to feeling disconnected during social interactions when returning to school.

These findings concur with those of Shekaraiah and Suresh (2021), who found that mask-wearing caused vocal fatigue, discomfort, and voice problems for teachers across studies based on Australian and Italian populations. Leung and Chan (2022), also found that wearing masks

meant that learners could not see the facial expressions and emotions of the teachers, which made teaching less exciting and engaging and made teaching and learning inefficient.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Increased Job Demands

Enforcing and implementing COVID-19 protocols and integrating additional curriculum and pedagogy planning influence the well-being experiences of the participants.

6.2.2.1 Subtheme 1: Enforcing and Implementing COVID-19 Protocols. Returning to school after the lockdown made most teachers feel anxious, stressed, and overwhelmed as it entailed new job demands related to implementing and adhering to COVID-19 protocols to keep themselves, their families, and the learners safe.

Those teachers who went back to school felt that it was unfair that they were “putting their lives on the line” (S2 I6 P6). They also found it stressful as they felt increased anxiety about possibly contracting COVID-19, which would subsequently infect their families. These findings concur with those of Wakui et al. (2021), who found that returning to school increased the anxiety of the teachers working in China during the pandemic because of their uncertainty about their safety with regard to possible infection. These findings also concur with those of Padmanabhanunni et al. (2022), who investigated the interrelationship between a perceived vulnerability to disease, fear of COVID-19, and psychological distress in South African teachers. Their study found that teachers perceived psychological distress, which caused behaviours such as “germ aversion” and avoidant strategies, which caused feelings of anxiety, distress, despondency, hopelessness, and depression (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2022).

The teachers also felt a responsibility to keep their learners safe, which increased their anxiety, and sometimes distracted them from teaching.

If you hear anything, whether it's a person coughing outside or whatever the case may be, you immediately think, okay, how can I keep these kids safe? What should I do? Protocols everything. And your mind is so distracted from what you are actually teaching that you lose track of yourself completely. (S2 I8 P8)

The threat of infection made the teachers anxious and more alert toward the possibility of infection in the school environment, making enforcing and adhering to protocols stressful. While they worried about their survival, they also faced the responsibility of ensuring the safety of their learners. This finding concurs with those of Wakui et al. (2021), who found that teachers experienced anxiety when returning to school as they feared their learners would get

infected. Enforcing protocols such as asking learners to put on their masks and keep their distance was an exhausting new job demand that increased these feelings.

You're always looking after the kids, but during the pandemic, it was a bit different because you always like masks on, keep your distance, mask on, keep your distance. You can't share, you can't do this, you can't do that, and it was a lot of like nagging, which is so exhausting. (S2 I6 P6)

Enforcing COVID-19 protocols made the teachers feel emotionally exhausted as they now faced the responsibility of enforcing new disciplinary measures and catching up on learning loss caused by the pandemic. Adjusting to teaching in person was challenging for all teachers but later became a positive experience. According to Participant 6, it was “negative in the beginning, and then it went to a more positive experience, not positive, but a better experience” (S2 I6 P6).

The teachers felt less stressed and anxious as time passed as they felt it easier to cope with the new job demands posed by COVID-19 protocols.

The teachers also used humour to cope with the uncertainty of the pandemic by seeing the positive side of things. This strategy helped them to feel positive emotions in times of uncertainty, such as at the start of lockdown.

Adding some humour to the situation, I think, you know, um, adding cartoon life to things kind of brings in a bit of humour. So it was trying to break that, um, cycle of negativity and, you know, morbidity and all of that kind of stuff. (S2 I6 P6)

The use of humour helped the teachers to cope with stress as it gave them a positive perspective on situations. This finding concurs with Eloff and Dittrich's (2021, p. 67) quantitative study which focused on the well-being of Tyrolean teachers during the pandemic. The study found that using humour was a protective factor against negative feelings for the teachers, and consequently had a positive influence on their well-being.

6.2.2.2 Subtheme 2: Additional Curriculum and Pedagogy Planning.The participants had to integrate additional curriculum and pedagogy planning into their teaching when teaching online. Consequently, they had to improve their digital literacy to save planning time. When returning to school, they had to teach simultaneously in person (in the classroom) and via video calls from the classroom. This influenced the well-being experiences of the participants.

6.2.2.2.1 Planning and Teaching Online.When teaching online, the teachers felt increased emotions of frustration, anxiety, and confusion. First, it was evident that they had learnt many new skills very quickly at the start of the pandemic. While enforcing protocols was challenging, setting up the appropriate instruction and teaching activities for online lessons during lockdown meant additional planning and consideration of aspects such as time and levels of interaction during lessons. One teacher explained:

They have to give you feedback, and you have to wait for everybody to respond and make sure everybody has the connections and all of that before you can continue to the next thing. So there was definitely more planning for me. (S1 I2 P2)

The teachers also had to consider aspects such as internet connection and the accessibility of online platforms to the learners, which meant that they had to develop resources that the learners could use both online and offline. This task was challenging, particularly for those teachers' teaching subjects with practical curriculum content. Those teachers who taught partly practical subjects, such as art and science, found it challenging to demonstrate and explain skills to the learners through video calls. "I found it very difficult, um, to do, not to have them in front of me to show them what to do" (S1 I1 P1).

The primary issue related to these factors was that planning took a tremendous amount of time. The teachers coped with the stress of work overload by improving their digital literacy.

6.2.2.2.2 Improving Digital Literacy to Save Planning Time.The teachers coped with these frustrations by learning how to use online platforms that made teaching online more straightforward and quicker. Hence, developing their technology skills over time improved their ability to teach effectively and efficiently, increasing their feelings of well-being as it made planning easier for them.

While it is evident that the teachers used various applications, web browsers and platforms such as "File Explorer, Edge, and Chrome" (S2 I5 P5), using hyperlinks and apps such as

Kahoot helped them to cope. The teachers used apps like Kahoot to facilitate collaborative learning and make marking formative assessments easier, which saved preparation time. At the same time, the teachers noted that their learners enjoyed using Kahoot and that the app lessened the amount of marking they had to do. These findings concur with those of Kalleney (2020), who found that Kahoot enhances learner engagement and satisfaction with formative assessments, and that teachers can easily apply the app either online or during in-person learning. The teachers also used hyperlinks to do practical demonstrations and make classroom activities more accessible and fun while teaching online. This meant that teachers who taught practical subjects could upload demonstration videos without having to do demonstrations through video calls. Hence, developing their knowledge of digital platforms was a protective factor against stress caused by increased planning or the inability to conduct demonstrations during video calls. Li and Yu (2022) investigated the role of digital literacy in teacher job satisfaction and found that teachers' digital literacy plays a vital role in the education process. Future initiatives and research into improving teacher digital literacy might mean greater job satisfaction and efficiency of online learning, which will most likely continue to form part of education in the private sector.

6.2.2.2.3 Planning and Teaching In Person and Online Simultaneously. While teaching from home consisted of much planning and curriculum adjustment, the looming fact that teachers would eventually return to school meant that they had to plan a curriculum strategy to catch up with the content they missed during online learning. The teachers had to catch up on the relevant content when returning to school in June 2020. This situation caused uncertainty for most of them as they were unsure when they would return to school and who would return with them. They felt increased stress when thinking about going back to school and how they would plan their curriculum. Rubilar and Oros (2021) found similar findings while investigating stress and burnout in Argentinian teachers during the pandemic. Their study found that uncertainty about the consequences of the pandemic was a predictor of teacher stress (Rubilar & Oros, 2021). Notably, when the teachers and learners were allowed to return to school in June 2020, a few learners returned while the rest of the class remained at home.

From 2020 to 2022, many learners stayed at home at certain times of the academic year as a result of contracting COVID-19 or needing to self-isolate. Currently, private schools still provide their learners with this option, and many stay at home when feeling ill. The teachers continued to teach in the physical classroom while some of the learners who were isolated at home joined the lesson through video calls. The policy in both schools taking part in this study

stated that teachers must call learners into all lessons on their second day of absence. The teachers had to split their attention between both groups while teaching. This scenario caused tremendous frustration in teachers at the start of the pandemic as it entailed “double the work” (S2 I5 P5).

When we first started coming out of lockdown, eish, it was their decision if they wanted to come to school or, you know, some parents had to send their kids to school because they had to go back to work, and so it was very much, I-I distinctly remember, I had maybe four kids in my classroom, the rest were online. (S2 I5 P5)

Having learners both online and in their classrooms meant that the teachers had to set up lessons that could accommodate both groups simultaneously while providing quality education. This task required additional planning and energy, which entailed its challenges.

It was very difficult, and you have to try and think of stuff to do with the kids that they can do at school, or they can do it at home, you know it was before it was only at home stuff, I-I didn’t enjoy this. This was, for me, awful. (S2 I5 P5)

The teachers found this task difficult as they now had to adjust to being back at school, teaching in the classroom, and setting up online learning content, which entailed additional planning and energy. They did so because it was imperative that these teachers had to catch up on learning loss and cover content they missed while teaching online. Doing so meant that teachers could plan their lessons to ensure that all curriculum content was taught to learners. Hence, the learners did not fall behind on their grades and subject-specific learning objectives, regardless of time constraints.

I just tried to fill the gaps with actual contact time when we could actually see them, but everything had to be done online, and it was quite a learning curve but not enjoyable for me as an art teacher. (S1 I1 P1)

The teachers did not enjoy teaching online and at school simultaneously. It is evident that they continuously adjusted their teaching pedagogy and lesson planning, which caused increased frustration and anxiety. Integrating these new tasks and considerations made the teachers feel stressed and overwhelmed, and their private school work environment consented to excessive work demands. These findings concur with those of Bernstein and Batchelor (2022), who found that South African teachers felt that, when returning to school, their work environment entailed excessive work demands and work overload, leading to increased stress. Eventually, the

teachers started to experience burnout and felt that tasks relating to planning and adjusting the curriculum meant constant integration of new work tasks.

There was always something new that we had to adapt to or integrate or do, and it was just getting too much, and they were expecting a lot from us when we didn't even know what was really going on. (S2 I6 P6)

Planning a strategy to catch up on learning loss in consideration of these factors added additional stress to the teachers' daily lives and eventually made them lose track of the overwhelming number of aspects to consider when planning lessons which made them feel hopeless. "You lose yourself completely. You get lost in those woods, and you can't remember which memos you did load, which may memos you did not load" (S2 I8 P8).

The teachers felt overloaded with the content that they needed to upload and eventually lost track and felt overwhelmed. Furthermore, they felt increased stress when they needed to help others during this time.

6.2.2.3 Subtheme 3: Helping Others With Technology. While teaching required additional planning and pedagogy adjustments, some of the teachers also noted the additional job demand of having to help others with technology while teaching online and in person. The teachers emphasised the stress and strain of assisting learners, parents, and teachers with technology and online platforms among their other responsibilities, as the most significant contributor to frustration. The learners struggled with aspects such as uploading pictures, not knowing how to turn their microphones on and off, and not knowing how to do things such as remember passwords.

I was a teacher, and IT support, and it felt to me like, I'm sorry, but I have a set of responsibilities, and you know, I've, I've done them, now it's your turn mate, step up to the plate. So I feel a lot of that was just excuses as well. (S1 I3 P3)

The teachers felt that the learners took minimal responsibility when solving issues related to technology. Helping others was demanding and this included pressure from parents.

Like they didn't know how to upload stuff, and it was very difficult too, and some parents felt like they were the only kids or parents going through, you know what I mean? And like, you cannot help every single child with everything all the time. (S2 I5 P5)

The parents did not understand the time or effort it took to help the learners with technology and expected the teachers to devote their attention to their children whenever needed. While some teachers noted that they received some appreciation from their learner's parents, others noted that some parents made doing their job more challenging and stressful.

It was, it was a lot of hard work. Um, a lot of unnecessary and, you know, we've got a lot of flak as well, which I think was unnecessary. Um, you know, we were all trying to make the best out of a poop situation. Um, you know, some parents gave us a lot of, a lot of, there was a lot of appreciation, more so, but the negative always, you know what I mean? You have the one or two that just constantly make it a bad experience.
(S2 I5 P5)

They felt uncomfortable that some parents underappreciated them as they did much work during the pandemic for their children. It was also evident that the teachers had to help other teachers with technology which they found very annoying during the lockdown as it was challenging to explain technology over the phone. "They really struggled with that technology situation. And it's very difficult to explain to someone on the phone how to do stuff" (S2 I5 P5).

Those selfless teachers with technology skills often took on the work of others as it was easier to do it themselves than to re-explain the solutions repeatedly. "You know, trying to explain to you all the people technology stuff is very difficult because they also don't want to, to learn or, or do it." (S2 I5 P5).

This work was very taxing and is an understudied dynamic in education research. Understanding how the teachers coped with the stress and anxiety caused by this additional job demand could reveal great insight into teachers' resilience and social adaptability generally.

6.2.2.4 Subtheme 4: Assessing Learners During the Pandemic. The teachers found conducting assessments during the pandemic challenging as they had to learn how to use new assessment strategies suitable for both online and classroom learners. Primarily, they experienced the most discomfort when teaching learners both at school and online. Prior to test lessons, the teachers sent documents to the learners to complete at home while the learners at school completed their tests in class. One teacher who used this strategy for assessment noted that they sent the tests to the learners at home 10 minutes before they started writing in class. In doing so, the learners at home had to print the documents and call the teacher through video call. The learners who wrote the test at home had to scan it and send it back to the teacher once their test was complete.

That was also extra work because it would be normal like, uh, test on Word that you would print for the kids at school and then these ones that were at home, you would send them the PDF, like 10 minutes before the test started, then they'd have to print it. Then you'd have kids. Oh, but my printer's not working, oh but then this, oh mom's not at home to help me print, okay but, then they'd have to scan in their tests, send it back to you, then you have to go and print. (S2 I5 P5)

The reasoning behind this assessment strategy was so that the assessment would be fair. The teacher invigilated learners isolated at home who did not have access to the test any earlier than the learners in class, through the video call. The learners had to turn on their microphones and video during the test. Setting up and sending a digital copy of the test required additional effort on the part of the teacher and led to further disruptions, such as learners being unable to print their work and needing assistance during the test session.

The teachers found video calls during classes disruptive as they often heard other noises in the background of the video, such as a parent on the phone or a sibling having another online lesson in their home. The teacher also noticed that some parents helped their children to cheat during tests by searching for the answers online or giving them the answers. Consequently, the teacher doubted the efficacy of the assessment, which placed additional stress on them as they had to ensure that the learners were meeting the requirements of the curriculum.

6.2.2.5 Subtheme 5: Increased Feelings of Burnout Due to Increased Job Demands.

While coping with the job demands, it is evident that the participants felt overwhelmed, stressed, and anxious. Integrating technology into teaching and adapting to new COVID-19 protocols caused these emotions. Consequently, the teachers felt that they did not have enough opportunities to rest during this stressful period. They felt that coping with the responsibilities of online learning, such as uploading videos and memorandums, teaching online and in person, and integrating COVID-19 protocols, made them feel like they participated in a “never-ending workday” (S2 I8 P8).

Integrating technology into education allowed the learners and parents to reach the teachers through email or messages at any point of the day. Consequently, the teachers felt “permanently on” call (Figure 4. 11) and struggled to differentiate between work and home. Coping with new job demands and being unable to switch off made the teachers feel burned out. They felt emotionally exhausted owing to the overwhelming work load and responsibilities they faced and they felt that the demands increased while their energy decreased.

Things were getting too much, and I was running on empty. Like there was just no more that I could give, and every day, it always seemed like there was something new that we had to give in, especially being a teacher going from one day to the next, there was always something new that we had to adapt to or integrate or do, and it was just getting too much. (S2 I6 P6)

The teachers felt overwhelmed by new tasks, which seemed to present themselves each day. The teachers noted that they needed more emotional support during this time as they felt increased exhaustion.

6.2.2.6 Subtheme 6: Need for More Appreciation and Support. Speaking of required support, the teachers felt that they needed more appreciation from their school management team during this challenging time, with one participant saying, “I needed to feel more maybe being at school; we needed a little bit more, um, thank you” (S2 I6 P6).

When returning to school, the teachers felt that there was a lack of appreciation. Notably, only one teacher referred to their school management system as supportive during the pandemic and as playing any role in helping them to succeed with these job demands. One teacher noted, “the deputy helped me through a lot because she, she felt the frustration with me and she also got very irritated” (S2 I5 P5). By contrast, the other participants did not mention their management

teams having any influence, positive or negative, on their experience. They felt that their schools underappreciated their efforts and that the presence of appreciation would have made them feel more motivated to take on additional job demands, such as teaching online and in person and enforcing COVID-19 protocols during the pandemic. Instead, they noted much negative feedback from their management teams.

At the end of the day, the more you are appreciated for what you're doing, the more you will do at the end of the day, but the more you just get slacked, the whole time, the less you want to do it. (S1 I3 P3)

Lack of appreciation negatively influenced their well-being and made the teachers feel demotivated and hopeless in their efforts to gain support. The teachers noted that more support would have made them feel safer at work, where they could have felt valued, heard and understood.

A thing that genuinely increases teacher well-being is the workplace at the end of the day – given we spend most of our time there. And to make this a 'safe' place, a teacher benefits by feeling valued, heard and understood. (Figure 4. 19)

The teacher noted that they needed more support from management during this time and that feeling heard and understood would have contributed significantly to their well-being. It would also have helped if the teacher had received positive feedback during this stressful time. According to Eloff and Dittrich (2021), receiving positive feedback in response to reaching goals contributes to teacher well-being. This finding proves this argument and demonstrates that additional integration of positive feedback would have helped teachers to cope with the job demands posed by the pandemic.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Resilience and Protective Factors

Most of the participants noted that they perceived the pandemic as a period where they could develop professionally and spend quality time with their family and pets.

6.2.3.1 Subtheme 1: Professional Development. Some of the teachers noted that they grew professionally during the pandemic. To cope with the anxiety, stress, and workload, the teachers shifted their focus to themselves by working on their personal and professional development, ultimately making them resilient.

During the pandemic; I think, um, I- I wasn't at my best, but I wasn't at my worst. I think I was working on myself, and that was fun. That was, the pandemic gave me that opportunity as much as there was a lot of negativity. It gave me that opportunity to reflect on growth as a teacher because there was so much growth as a teacher. (S2 I7 P7)

The teachers saw this difficult time as an opportunity for growth and development, regardless of experiencing negative emotions. They felt accomplished when they and their learners had a positive and enjoyable experience while keeping on track with the curriculum content.

I was quite proud of myself that I, um, could you do such things. Um, you know, a lot of teachers did struggle during the online, um, with technology and in doing things like this. Um, so I was quite proud of myself that I could use it positively in a more positive light. (S2 I5 P5)

The teachers felt accomplished using technology to positively influence their learner's learning and development, which motivated them to stay resilient during the pandemic. These findings concur with those of McGraw and McDonough (2019), who found that training and development assist teachers in achieving resilience outcomes.

6.2.3.2 Subtheme 2: Quality Time With Family and Pets. The teachers found it important to spend quality time with family during the pandemic and they found that relationships with the family gave them positive emotions. They regarded their families as more important than their schools.

The sad reality of working for a business is, unfortunately, everyone is replaceable, so you have to put your loved ones first as when you quit or get retrenched or whatever the case, the work won't be there anymore but your family will. With that spending time with family and friends have been crucial to my well-being by being able to unwind and de-stress. (Figure 4. 12)

Spending time with their family helped this teacher to relax and de-stress, hence having a positive influence on their well-being. Those teachers who were happily married felt grateful for their relationships when they noticed many other relationships failing around them. “Many people struggled to be ‘stuck’ with their partners. I wouldn’t have done it any other way. I was able to truly appreciate getting through a difficult time with this amazing man by my side” (Figure 4. 31). The teachers also noted that spending time with their families helped them to participate in hobbies. “Spending time with my wife, baking, talking, doing art, reading to each other, and [listening] to my wife playing piano” (Figure 4. 4).

Spending time with their families was beneficial for the teachers’ well-being. These findings concur with those of Duraku and Hoxha (2020), who argue that the pandemic increased family members’ quality and productive time. This quality time bettered teachers’ well-being.

6.3 Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of subjective well-being of South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. While South African studies have primarily focused on teacher well-being in public schools, this study addressed the private school teacher population. This qualitative study used an interpretative phenomenological research design, photovoice data, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interviews analysed through a systematic visuo-textual analysis and interpretive phenomenological analysis frameworks to conceptualise the experiences of eight teachers employed at private schools.

The presentation of this study’s findings was discussed using the terminology of Iasiello et al.’s (2017) PERMA+ model of flourish. Experiences and consequences related to a longing for connection during the pandemic were described through an absence of (P) positive emotions, less availability of job-related activities that resulted in flow experiences and (E) engagement and changes in (R) relationships which form part of the model’s well-being dimensions. Protective factors included experiences where teachers took steps that made them feel (P) positive emotions, build (R) relationships with their families, and find opportunities to engage in hobbies that cultivated (E) flow and (M) meaning-making. Their experiences also encompassed (+) achieving fitness goals and improving their fitness and nutrition. The PERMA+ model of flourish served as an appropriate theoretical lens to discuss these findings, as most of the lived experiences reported by the participants were linked to the absence or presence of the model’s dimensions. Applying this theoretical lens resulted in rich and detailed findings, which I could easily discuss in the context of subjective well-being.

The findings indicated that the teachers experienced a longing for connection during the lockdown, which caused them to have feelings of loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and frustration. They used physical exercise as a protective factor against these feelings and religious activities helped them find meaning and express gratitude during this time. The study also revealed that the teachers used optimism and were hopeful for the future, which caused positive emotions.

This study also revealed that the teachers longed for connection when teaching online, as video calls consisted of interactions that lacked non-verbal communication, making them frustrated and anxious. To soothe this longing for connection and cope with frustration, the teachers used video calls with colleagues as a source of social support. Returning to school also posed challenges as they struggled to communicate with their learners. Wearing masks made them feel unheard – the learners could not hear them, and they could not hear their learners – which caused frustration.

The teachers experienced various new job demands during the pandemic. Among other demands, they struggled to implement and facilitate COVID-19 protocols when returning to school. Implementing new protocols made the teachers feel exhausted. While this experience was frustrating, they coped with the uncertainty and stress through humour, which made them feel positive emotions.

This study revealed that integrating online learning into teaching meant more planning for the teachers, which led to work overload, burnout, and increased stress; the teachers engaged in professional development and improved their digital literacy, which made teaching online easier. Regardless, they found it challenging to teach simultaneously at school and through video calls as it was difficult to divide their attention between groups of learners. They also found it challenging to assess the learners when teaching this way. This study's findings also revealed that helping others with technology was stressful. In response to more job demands, the teachers felt that they needed more support from their school management team, parents, and other teachers during this time.

Furthermore, the teachers found comfort in spending time with their families and pets and exercising. The study generated new insights into teacher well-being by using various creative research methods and providing a voice to an under-represented group. Recommendations include further research into the influence of teaching during a crisis and the integration of technology on teacher well-being.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of subjective well-being held by South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research process focused on answering the following research question: “What were private school teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic?”. I followed the outline depicted in table 7.1 to conduct this study.

Table 7. 1: Study Outline

Study outline	Chapter 1: Overview and introduction of the study	Introduction and general overview of the research study
	Chapter 2 Part One: Literature review	Review of the relevant theoretical literature focusing on teacher well-being & the COVID-19 pandemic
	Chapter 2 Part Two: Theoretical framework	Discussion of the theoretical framework utilised in this research study
	Chapter 3: Research Methodology	Focuses on the approach, methodology and philosophical assumptions
	Chapter 4: Presentation of data set 1 analysis	Presentation of pictures and narrative reflections analysis
	Chapter 5: Presentation of data set 2 analysis	Presentation of semi-structured interview transcript analysis
	Chapter 6: Discussion of findings	Analysis of the findings of the study in consideration of the literature and theoretical framework
	Chapter 7: Conclusion	Conclusion of the study

This chapter focuses on the study's conclusion. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provided conclusions and discussions as to the findings of this study. In this chapter, I will first discuss the answer to the research question by presenting a review of the study. Secondly, I will focus on the chosen methodology and acknowledged limitations. Thirdly, I will make recommendations for improvements and future research and consider the implications for educational policy and practice by focusing on implications and recommendations for SMTs, policymakers, and teachers. I will then present a personal and professional reflection. Finally, I will note the limitations, make recommendations for future research, and state the contribution made by this study.

7.2 Review of the Study

Chapter 1 of this study focused on introducing the study and providing a brief overview and introduction of the research problem, research question, and rationale. In 2020, private schools implemented remote and online learning to solve the issue of learning loss caused by the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic (Sari & Nayir, 2020). Consequently, during March and April 2020, private school teachers were responsible for implementing online and remote learning in March, April, and May 2020. Private school teachers returned to school in June 2020 when they had to implement COVID-19 protocols and teaching pedagogies to teach in person and through video calls (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020; Mahaye, 2020). Teaching during the pandemic entailed new job demands as integrating technology and protocols created a new classroom environment and changed teachers' functioning in the school context (Williamson et al., 2020). While scholars such as Sokal et al. (2020) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) questioned the psychological consequences of teachers on an international level, minimal studies have focused on South African teachers, especially in the population of private school teachers. Chapter 1 presented the problem statement that exploring South African private school teachers' lived experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic is necessary for the group's under-represented experiences in literature.

Chapter 2 focused on discussing and presenting relevant literature in the field of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the pandemic on education and teacher well-being. While this chapter presented various studies, such as those conducted by Skaalvik and Skaalvis (2021) and Eloff and Dittrich (2021), the discussion also provided a perspective on the different theoretical approaches used to study well-being, such as those situated in positive psychology (Seligman, 2018). As a result, Chapter 2 presented the current conversations in research, which further supported the study's rationale. Chapter 2 also discussed the theoretical framework,

namely the PERMA+ model of flourish, which provided adequate theoretical knowledge to answer the research question from a positive psychology perspective (Iasiello et al., 2017).

Chapter 3 presented the complex methodology. It motivated the use of photovoice data gathering techniques (Wang & Burris, 1994) and presented an in-depth data analysis plan that integrated various strategies such as systematic visuo-textual analysis (Brown & Collins, 2021) interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith et al., 2009), and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Chapter 4 discussed data set 1, including an analysis of pictures and narrative reflections through Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis and thematic analysis conducted by using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Chapter 5 focused on the interpretive phenomenological analysis of the semi-structured interview data. I used Smith et al.'s (2009) interpretive analysis framework to analyse data set 2 in Chapter 6. While Chapter 6 presented the thematic analysis of all the semi-structured interviews, Appendix D included the individual thematic analysis for each participant. After analysing both data sets and conducting a thematic analysis, I weaved the data to create a table of themes in Chapter 6. I now present and discuss the findings of this study in Chapter 7. These findings answer the research question.

7.3 Research Question Conclusion

The following section briefly discusses the answer to the research question, "What were private school teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic?"

The analysis of pictures, narrative reflections, and semi-structured interviews presented the following themes: (1) longing for connection, (2) increased job demands, and (3) resilience and protective factors. These three themes defined the phenomenon of the private school teachers' lived experiences of subjective well-being and included a variety of subthemes supported by the data gathered in this study. These themes portray the aspects teachers identified as forming or influencing their well-being experiences.

The following figure, Figure 7. 1 illustrates the teachers' experiences of subjective well-being.

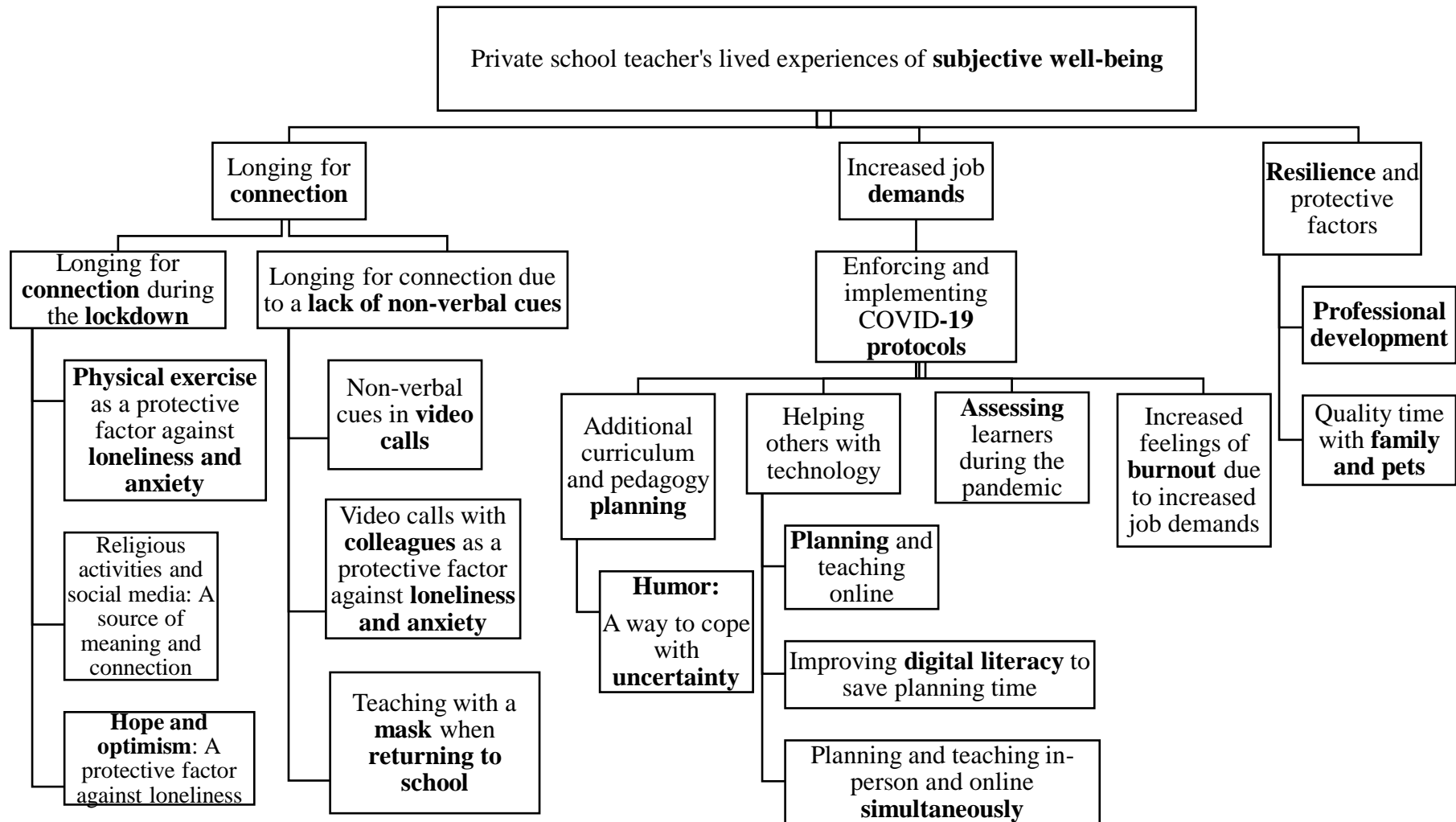


Figure 7. 1: The private school teachers' experiences of subjective well-being

7.3.1 Longing for Connection

The teachers longed for connection during the pandemic. The lockdown period meant that they experienced loneliness, stress, anxiety, frustration, and isolation as a result of being away from their learners and colleagues. In the context of the pandemic, the teachers primarily felt this way as they had to stay at home and only leave for essential services and items during March, April, and May 2020, which meant that they could not physically attend school to go to work (Keevy et al., 2021). To teach online, the teachers had to conduct video calls which encompassed a lack of non-verbal cues from learners. During this time, the teachers used physical exercise, religious activities, and social media to connect with the outside world. They noted that calling their colleagues through video helped them cope with negative emotions as other teachers shared their frustrations in implementing online learning. The teachers also used religious activities such as attending online church services to feel a sense of belonging to a community. While engaging in these activities positively influenced their well-being, the teachers also used hope and optimism to cope with feelings of loneliness and uncertainty during this time.

This need for connection continued when the teachers and learners returned to school. Teaching with masks on negatively influenced the quality of communication between the learners and teachers as it was difficult to read facial expressions. This finding suggests that the dimensions of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, and physical exercise are aspects one must consider when perceiving teachers' subjective well-being during the pandemic. Factors such as non-verbal communication and lack of facial expressions influenced the teachers' perspectives toward these dimensions. Hence, these dimensions present in the PERMA+ model of flourish are relevant in the context of this study, and one may further explore studies focusing on these elements in the South African private school population.

7.3.2 Increased Job Demands

Increased job demands during the pandemic affected teacher well-being negatively. It was challenging for the teachers to adapt to (1) enforcing and implementing COVID-19 protocols in the school environment; (2) completing additional curriculum and pedagogy planning when teaching online and in person; (3) helping learners, parents, and other teachers with technology; and (4) assessing learners effectively while teaching online and in person. Other scholars also found adapting to these new circumstances were challenging for the teachers (Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020; Mahaye, 2020).

Integrating these new job demands made the teachers feel burned out, stressed, anxious, and overwhelmed. This finding was concerning as it is evident that teachers functioned in a profession with high levels of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and stress prior the pandemic (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). It was also evident that many of the teachers experienced financial strain during the pandemic, which caused stress within their households and negatively influenced their well-being. In the context of COVID-19, it is evident that many individuals globally experienced financial shock due to decreased economic spending across societies (Donnelly & Farina, 2021). This finding adds to the body of literature indicating that private school teachers also experienced income shock related to the pandemic. The teachers used humour to cope with the uncertainty but indicated that they needed more appreciation from school management systems, learners, and parents to cope with these negative emotions, especially when returning to school as frontline workers in June 2020 (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2021; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

This finding is relevant considering that although private school teachers had the opportunity to continue teaching and learning, they nevertheless had a tremendous increase in job demands accompanied by other stressors such as financial strain. The long-term effects of teaching under the pressure of these demands on the private school teacher population are understudied and leave a gap in the research. While many studies have focused on burnout in teachers, the pandemic presented more antecedents to stress and anxiety than before the pandemic. Regardless, the teachers remained resilient during this time. Understanding how they maintained their resilience and which tools they used to cope with the increased job demands is an insightful aspect to consider in future research.

7.3.3 Resilience and Protective Factors

While it is evident that the pandemic negatively influenced the teachers' well-being, they used protective factors such as physical exercise, hobbies, and quality time with family and pets to feel positive emotions. The experience of teaching online and at school during the pandemic posed an array of challenges to the teachers, who ultimately felt that the experience had made them more resilient and provided them with immense opportunities for professional development. Professional development, hobbies, and quality family time contributed positively to teacher well-being by providing opportunities for engagement (flow) and strengthening bonds between family members (Seligman, 2013).

In conclusion, a longing for connection and increased job demands meant that the teachers' well-being declined. However, protective factors such as humour, quality family time, physical exercise, hobbies, and spiritual experiences helped them to remain resilient during the pandemic.

Further exploration of the topic of resilience in teachers during this time may reveal a deeper understanding of teachers' protective factors to cope with the pressure and stress of the pandemic.

7.4 Methodological Reflections

The following section states my methodological reflections on the data gathering, analysis and limitations of the study.

7.4.1 Data Gathering Strategy

I used a phenomenological research design to conduct this study. The data collection methods included collecting pictures and narrative reflections submitted by the participants. Thereafter, I held semi-structured interviews with the participants. Technology such as email, Google Drive, Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp made the research process more accessible and manageable. Most of the participants enjoyed using video calls and emails instead of in-person meetings and interviews as, being teachers, they had a hectic schedule and could not meet in person. Technology saved a lot of time, effort, and money during the research process as I did not have to pay additional funds to fill my petrol tank nor spend time driving to schools situated many kilometres away.

7.4.2 Data Analysis Strategy

To analyse my data, I used Brown and Collins's (2021) systematic visuo-textual analysis to analyse the pictures and narrative reflections submitted by participants. Using this framework provided a structured and systematic way to analyse the data efficiently. While I enjoyed using this framework, it also provided me with rich and meaningful interpretations of the visual and textual data, which I could easily group into themes when conducting an individual thematic analysis and group thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. To use this strategy in future research, I believe that one must have an in-depth understanding of the philosophical underpinnings that drive visual research, as these factors guide the analysis process to a great extent. This analysis strategy requires much knowledge of colour theory and symbolism. An additional perspective, such as a supervisor or

co-researcher, could add depth to one's interpretation of the visual data, especially when linking one's interpretation to themes identified in narrative reflections.

I analysed the semi-structured interviews with the seven-step interpretive phenomenological analysis approach (Smith et al., 2009) using the coding methods suggested by Saldaña (2016). I found it useful to analyse the transcripts using this analytical framework as it provided a concise step-by-step strategy which I could easily use. While using both frameworks to interpret the data provided rich and meaningful themes, I found it challenging to link these two sets of findings together in Chapter 6 as it led to the identification of many themes that I had to reconsider when examining both sets. Subsequently, I engaged in an iterative process of adjusting and rethinking themes.

I argue that this methodology is a time-consuming process. Regardless, the process effectively provides a complete embodied understanding of experiences creatively.

7.4.3 Limitations

The limitations of this study included the sample size and methods of communication. While the sample of this study presented insightful data, in future studies, researchers could use larger samples to form a generalisation of an entire group of individuals. Using mixed methods, such as a survey design integrated with visual data and narrative reflections might allow this study to be conducted on a larger scale.

Some limitations related to communicating with technology. For instance, conducting interviews through video calls meant that I could not analyse or perceive the participants' body language during interviews. While I could see their faces in the videos, I could not analyse their body language to identify more non-verbal forms of communication. Using a full view of body videos to document interviews might provide a data set considering these aspects.

7.5 Recommendations, Improvements, and Implications

The findings of this study allowed me to make recommendations for improvements in educational policy and practise and future research.

7.5.1 Educational Policy and Practice

The following recommendations focus on aspects that SMTs can integrate into their schools to help teachers cope with stress and burnout. While some of these recommendations may be costly, it is imperative to consider that teachers' mental health and well-being outweigh any

financial imperative and that strategies to keep teachers in the profession must be a top priority in schools. Taking care of teachers' mental health means that teachers would be happier and more motivated in their profession, which leads to job satisfaction and less turnover in schools.

- Shifting the focus to mental health and well-being

SMTs must consider the tremendous work of private school teachers over the past two years and the consequence of stress on their staff. While many schools focused on preventing teachers and learners from being infected with COVID-19, it is imperative that the focus now shifts to the mental health of these parties. While the teachers who remained in the profession through COVID-19 were resilient in their efforts, schools must consider a gradual reintegration of ordinary practices, such as only teaching at school and stopping simultaneous teaching online and in person. This study proved that teaching online and in person caused increased stress, frustration, and anxiety for all the participants. Excluding this way of teaching would decrease teacher workload and consequently minimise the risk of burnout.

- Appreciation of teachers

As suggested by the study's findings, the teachers in this study longed for appreciation and connection during the pandemic. SMTs must rebuild connections in school communities by providing teachers with more time to spend with their families and more opportunities to exercise and engage in hobbies. It would also be beneficial to provide teachers with more opportunities to bond, as various participants noted that communication with colleagues helped them cope with stress.

Many participants mentioned that appreciation would have helped them cope with the pandemic's stressors. Teachers must know that their schools appreciate them. The integration of positive feedback during discussions and emotional support may be beneficial. Schools can provide teachers with tokens of appreciation. To do so, SMTs must listen to their staff and give them the autonomy to make decisions. It is also imperative that SMTs support teachers in receiving parent feedback as negative feedback may cause emotional distress. Teachers must feel that their SMTs have their best interests at heart when dealing with complex situations.

The findings also indicate that many of the teachers in the study suffered from income shock or financial strain during the pandemic. Owing to increased inflation in South Africa in 2022, the issue of financial strain is getting more difficult each day with fuel and food costs rising

(Arndt et al., 2020). Schools must consider these aspects when discussing and negotiating compensation with their staff and express their appreciation through fair compensation.

- Delegation of duties and provision of Information Technology support

While the teachers worked under the pandemic's circumstances for two years, SMTs must reallocate job responsibilities to ensure that staff members do not have more responsibilities than necessary. Staff faced tremendous work-related stress as a result of needing to help learners, parents, and other teachers with the use of technology. Schools must allocate technical assistance responsibilities to non-teacher employees to reduce the strain on more technologically educated teachers. In doing so, SMTs must provide teachers with the autonomy to decide which responsibilities they can take on and match teachers to responsibilities that meet their skills.

- Professional development recognition and opportunities

SMTs must provide professional development opportunities for teachers regarding technical skills and recognise the new skills learnt by teachers during the pandemic.

- Implications and recommendations for policymakers

The findings of this study suggest that one out of eight teachers mentioned mental health services as a source of support during the pandemic. One teacher also mentioned that although they saw mental health services as a source of support, they did not use these services as their teacher salaries were too low to be able to afford them. Policymakers must allocate more mental health resources for teachers, such as providing mental health sick days or counselling services to assist teachers suffering from burnout, among other mental health issues as a result of the pandemic. It is also imperative to reinvestigate the structuring and responsibilities of teachers in schools to ensure that those teachers with more technical skills are not exploited and over-used for their skills. In doing so, policymakers must consider the integration of counsellors into schools for teachers and investigate the fair distribution of teachers' responsibilities in schools to mitigate the risk of teacher burnout.

It is also imperative that policymakers focusing on the public-school sector consider the findings of this study as an example of how integrating online learning into schools might affect the well-being of teachers.

- Implications and recommendations for teachers

While COVID-19 caused distress for many teachers, there is hope in using quality time with one's family and connecting to the community through spiritual activities or social media. Hobbies such as running, hiking, exercising, creating art, and even gardening were beneficial in helping the participants of the study experience positive emotions and cope with feelings of anxiety, loneliness, and burnout. Using humour to cope with difficult situations was also beneficial in coping with uncertainty and stress. It was also beneficial to set boundaries in the workplace between working hours and responsibilities. Teachers must reflect on protective factors that subjectively assist them in coping with stress and use these actions and strategies to combat burnout and exhaustion. In doing so, teachers must take responsibility for their well-being and understand which activities help them cope with stress.

7.5.2 Recommendation for Future Research

Future research may explore the following topics:

- A comparative study between the perceived subjective well-being of public and private school teachers after the pandemic
- A study exploring teachers' changed job roles and responsibilities during and after the pandemic
- A larger version of this study using quantitative methods such as survey design or perhaps a PERMA+ questionnaire to study a larger group of private school teachers
- An investigative study focused on the psychological differences between teachers who remained resilient during the pandemic and those who resigned
- An exploratory study into the impact of face masks and video calls on non-verbal communication in the South African schooling context
- An exploratory study into the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder in teachers as a consequence of the pandemic
- An exploratory study into the impact of loneliness on teacher well-being

7.6 Personal and Professional Reflections on the Study



I found it very insightful yet time-consuming to conduct this study. While completing this study, I worked full-time as a teacher at a private school. My working hours were from 06:45 to 16:00. I found working and completing this study at the same time challenging as I was also teaching and faced similar challenges to the participants. While it was time-consuming, I believe that working and studying was a challenging task that taught me academic resilience and discipline.

Figure: 7. 2: I always have your back

Giulia Rosa Illustrations (n.d). I always have your back.

<https://stay-hop.com/collections/giulia-rosa-illustrations/products/i-always-have-your-back>

I loved every minute of the challenging experience as it revealed my deep-rooted passion for research. I enjoyed this process to such an extent that I want to develop myself to pursue research as a career. I could not have completed this study without the continued help, support, and encouragement of my research supervisor, Dr Sarina de Jager. Dr de Jager allowed me to explore different methodologies, ideas, and viewpoints throughout the research process, which I found beneficial to my growth as a student and aspiring researcher. Dr de Jager always had my back and supported me with the necessary guidance to build a new understanding of the field of well-being literature while growing my research skills and abilities. As depicted in the picture created by Giulia Rosa Illustrations (n.d), the pink flowered figure represents Dr de Jager, while I see myself as the red-flowered figure. We are both flowers growing on the tree of knowledge, and conducting this study allowed me to branch from this tree and take a risk to see a different perspective. Without Dr de Jager's support to keep me connected to the tree, I would not have been able to conduct this study.

This study also helped me feel less alone in some of the challenges I faced during the pandemic as a teacher. While the focus fell on the participants during the research process, I felt that conducting this study allowed me to reflect on my own experiences. By presenting and

conducting this study, I feel that this research gave us, as private school teachers, a voice within the greater scope of well-being research.

7.7 Contribution of the Study

This study contributed to the literature surrounding teacher well-being during the pandemic as it addressed the lived experiences of an understudied private school population in the South African context. While scholars such as Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), Soudien et al. (2021), and Trinidad (2021) investigated the adverse effect of the pandemic on teacher well-being in the international context, minimal studies have focused on teachers in the South African context. In South Africa, researchers such as Mdluli et al. (2020) explored the impact of the pandemic on South African public-school teachers; yet, minimal data on the well-being of private school teachers' experiences exists. This study addressed the literature gap by considering private school teachers' lived experiences of subjective well-being.

This study also made a methodological contribution to the field of photovoice research as it demonstrated that my theory, the three-step systematic framework of noticing and describing pictures (figure 3. 3), may be incorporated into the analysis of visual and textual data, being the pictures and narrative reflections forming part of data set 1 of this phenomenological study.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Brown and Collins (2021) developed the Systematic visuo-textual analysis framework to analyse pictures and narrative reflections. I chose to use this framework as it provided a systematic way in which I could analyse the pictures and short narrative reflections submitted by participants. Brown and Collins's (2021) model is unique in that it considers the pictures submitted by participants as a source of meaning and experience in contrast to other scholars that focus too much on picture-to-word translation.

It became clear that there was an opportunity for the development of the actual analysis of artistic elements in pictures. These analysis methods were focused on interpreting data to generate findings by establishing themes and did not have a defined artistic perspective. I then decided to look into picture analysis theories focusing on these artistic elements to fill this research gap. One can analyse art by examining formal components like lines, shapes, colours, forms, spaces, values, colours, and textures. According to Acton (2009), De Visser (2010), and Péntzes et al. (2020), the most objective way to analyse art is by taking into account its formal components. Scholars such as Péntzes et al.'s (2020) comparative content analysis of the Tate Modern art analysis model (Gale, 2016; Wilson & Lac, 2016; De Visser, 2010; Taylor, 2014;

Huntsman, 2016; Boermans & Van Der Borgh, 2017), the ILO Uva art analysis model (Action, 2009; Gerrits, 2018), and the KPC art analysis model (Action, 2009; Gerrits, 2018) provide adequate frameworks to analyse art. It is evident that six formal elements were the main focus of the majority of theories: (1) shape or form, which refers to an art piece's geometry and contour; (2) composition, which refers to the symmetry, rhythm, line quality, linearity, movement, and dynamics in the artefact; (3) colour, which refers to the number of colours, colour saturation, colour brightness, hue, and a mixture of colours; (4) space, which refers to the filled area, used space, and suggestion of space.

Shape/form, texture, colour, and space were the formal elements I incorporated into my analysis. I also considered other factors, like the type of pictures being analysed and how the analysis would differ when looking at digitally downloaded pictures and pictures taken with a camera. Hence, I developed a new methodological approach to analysing the data. Consequently, I decided to create a 3-step process to analyse the pictures systematically as part of my new methodological approach to address the methodological gaps in level 1: notice and describe, including step 1: noticing and describing objects in the picture, step 2: noticing and describing subjects in the picture, and step 3: noticing and describing text in the picture.

In step 1, I started by paying attention to every object in the picture. I considered every object the participant wanted me to notice. I referred to anything made of material that can be touched as an object. I observed the presence of graphics representing objects in the context of digital pictures, such as a digitally animated house or dog. I took note of these items as I saw them, giving me insight into which items I thought stood out more to me. I noted the objects and described their size, shape, texture, colour, and value (tone). Making a note of these items was crucial because it allowed me to determine which objects represented the symbols I later discussed in the second level of analysis (Level 2: Conceptualise).

In step 2, I started by identifying the objects in the picture before moving on to people, animals, and other figures representing the picture's subject(s). Like the first step, I noted these components in the order that I had become aware of them. I started by concentrating on determining whether the subject was an animated or living being when describing a figure, person, or animal. I continued by describing the visual characteristics of the people, including the colour, value (tone), texture, and shape/form of their clothing, among other things. I also concentrated on features like facial expressions and the emotions those expressions conveyed.

I then made comparisons between the subjects, taking note of details like space and their placement concerning one another.

In step 3, I took note of any text in the picture after performing steps 1 and 2. As needed, I noted the text's colour, value (tone), and space. During this phase, I also recognised visuals like programme logos (e.g. Word and Excel on computer screens).

These steps formed the Three-step systematic framework of noticing and describing pictures (figure 3. 3) and provided me with analysis methods that considered the analysis of pictures from an artistic and thematic perspective. Applying this model helped me to draw more accurate conclusions when developing my interpretations, as the process of developing these findings was systematic and considered a broad scope of elements. I also noted that my analysis model provided an interpretation I could easily conceptualise in the second level of analysis, Level 2: Conceptualise (Brown & Collins, 2021).

Integrating the new model helped me dive deeper into the teachers' lived well-being experiences, which leaves further room for future research into the role that artistic elements play when expressed through pictures in photovoice studies. Further exploration into this topic may reveal creative ways to conceptualise the lived experiences of individuals and possibly help us better understand teachers' well-being in future studies.

7.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, in Chapter 7, I focused on the answer to the research question by presenting a review of the study. Thereafter, I reflected on the methodology used in this study and discussed the limitations associated with the methodology and research strategy. I then made recommendations for future research and presented a personal and professional reflection. Finally, I noted the contribution made by this study and concluded the chapter.

Among other factors, a key message of this study is that the well-being of private school teachers is an imperative factor to consider, especially in the context of the pandemic. Without further investigation and action to ensure teacher well-being, South African private schools might face a scenario where teachers are burned out, and the schools may have no more staff to complete the tremendous amount of work given to teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Principal consent form



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

Dear:

LETTER OF CONSENT: PRINCIPAL OF SCHOOL

I, Mrs Jamie Spies, am conducting a research study to explore teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 (SARS-COV 2) pandemic. I will complete this study as part of my Masters in Humanities Education degree at the University of Pretoria in collaboration with my research supervisor Dr Sarina de Jager. I discussed the details of the research study with you at our meeting held on the ___/___/____. The discussed aspects have been outlined below for your convenience.

Title of the research study:

Exploring teacher experiences of Subjective Well-being during a pandemic.

Purpose of the research study:

The main objective of this research project is to explore the experiences held by South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 (SARS COV 2) pandemic. The study will focus on teachers who have remained employed at a private school and faced the changes posed by the COVID-19 health and safety regulations in their educational context. The study will explore how the experiences of teachers who have taught during the pandemic relate to their subjective well-being.

Research question:

The key research question of this study is:

What are teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic?

Ethical principles:

The researcher needs to apply for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria and other relevant authorities before engaging in any form of data gathering for this research study.

Among these authorities, the researcher will ask the school principal for permission to recruit the teachers in the school community to partake in the study. All ethical guidelines and regulations must be strictly adhered to during the progress of the study. Such permission will only be granted to the researcher if all participants provide informed consent to participate in the study. The following ethical principles are internationally acknowledged when researching with human participants. These principles will be followed during the research procedure to ensure that the researcher strictly follows ethical guidelines.

Autonomy and voluntary participation:

The researcher will keep all regulations and rules related to the POPIA act in mind whilst conducting this research study. The researcher will inform potential participants of all applicable information regarding the research process and purpose before voluntarily participating in this research study. This information will be discussed with the participants appropriately during an online information session. Each participant will be provided with sufficient time to reflect on the material discussed during this session. Potential participants will also have the opportunity to enquire the researcher to provide clarity on any topic discussed during this session.

Participation in this study is voluntary based. The researcher will not exert inappropriate pressure or unwarranted influence to recruit or retain participants. Participants who voluntarily partake in the study will have the right to withdraw their participation at any point in the research process. This withdrawal will not result in any adverse consequences. All participant information is confidential. Should a participant wish to withdraw from the study, the researcher will destroy all accumulated data gathered during the research process.

Full participant disclosure:

The researcher will provide sufficient information regarding the research process, activities, benefits, risks, or any other aspects that might influence the participants' decision to participate before they voluntarily partake in the study. The researcher will consult participants throughout the research process and keep them informed of any relevant information. Once the project is complete, the researcher will debrief the participants and provide them with a summary of the study's findings. Participant and school identity will remain hidden during the research process, including the conclusion and presentation of the findings phase of the study.

Confidentiality between the researcher and participant:

Each participant has the right to privacy. The researcher will protect their anonymity at all stages before, during and after the research process. No identifiable information, including written or verbally communicated information, will be associated with the participants or schools' identities. Participants have the choice to make their responses and data available to anyone other than the researcher. The researcher will make use of codes when recording data to hide participant and school identities. The researcher will give back all information provided by participants to check for accuracy once compiled. All information, including visual, verbal, and written data, will be stored on a password-protected computer to which only the researcher will have access. This guideline will be strictly adhered to during the research process to ensure the psychological and physical safety of the research participants. The researcher will not place participants in any situation, scenario or circumstance that may cause stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem.

Trust between the researcher and participant:

All findings will be reported to the participants and school entirely and honestly without any misrepresentations. All findings will be returned to participants to check for accuracy. The researcher will not fabricate any data or findings. Participants will not be subject to any acts of deception or betrayal during the research process or its outcomes.

The time frame of the research study activities:

The researcher will ask participants to capture and submit various (four) pictures with their phones within the time frame of two weeks. We request that participants submit a short reflection expressing how each picture relates to their subjective well-being. There is no specific length that this reflection needs to be. Therefore, the time spent on this stage of the process is subjective. Online or face-to-face interviews will not be longer than an hour. Participants will have the option to negotiate and schedule their interview following their personal preference and schedule.

Please feel free to ask the researcher any questions about the aspects mentioned above. We look forward to your response and participation in this exciting study!

Researcher:

Mrs Jamie Spies

jamie.stickling@gmail.com

071 623 6591

Research supervisor:

Dr Sarina de Jager

sarina.dejager@up.ac.za

012 420 5555

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

I, _____, (your name and surname) a principal of the school _____, (school name) have been informed of and fully understand all aspects associated with the research study titled: *Exploring teacher experiences of Subjective Well-being during a pandemic*. I hereby grant the researcher, Mrs Jamie Spies, permission to approach and recruit the teachers in my school as participants in this research study.

A. PURPOSE

As explained to me by the researcher (Mrs Jamie Spies), I understand the aim, scope, and purpose of collecting information proposed by the researcher and how the researcher will attempt to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the information they collect. I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore the subjective well-being of teachers.

B. PROCEDURES

I understand that the researcher will approach and ask the teachers employed at my school to participate in this research study. The researcher will keep all regulations associated with the POPIA act in mind whilst conducting this research study. Hence, I may not know the identity of these teachers due to anonymity. I understand that the name of the school and all aspects associated with the school's identity will remain anonymous. I understand that the data gathered in this study may be subject to secondary data analysis. Therefore, I give my informed consent and voluntarily agree that the researcher may approach the teachers in my schooling community for the study mentioned above, explained and introduced to me by Mrs Jamie Spies, a current student enrolled for a Master's degree in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria.

C. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

The recruitment procedure will be adapted to suit the circumstances posed by the pandemic at the current time of recruitment. The researcher will consult the principal to invite the teachers to a non-compulsory information session appropriately. The format of the invitation to this information session will depend on the convenient method chosen by the school principal. Hence, depending on the suggested method of the principal. The invitation may be through e-mail, during a staff meeting, or one-on-one consultation. Teachers will therefore have the

opportunity to attend this session voluntarily. After the session is complete, they will have sufficient time to decide if they would like to partake in the study.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

I understand that the participants of this study will partake under the following conditions:

- Participants may withdraw their participation in this study at any point without any negative consequences.
- Participants may contact the researcher if they have any questions or concerns about the study.
- Participant identity will be kept anonymous at all times during the research process.
- Participation in this study is confidential.
- The findings of this study may be published in an academic journal or reported at a conference or seminar.

I have reviewed and studied the aspects mentioned above and understand this agreement. I, therefore, voluntarily consent that the researcher may approach the teachers in my schooling community.

Full name and surname : _____

E-mail address: _____

Contact number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Further suggestions or comments:

If you have any questions about the research study or participant's rights in this study, please contact Mrs Jamie Spies (071 623 6591) or the research supervisor Dr Sarina de Jager (012 420 5555).

Complaints or concerns

If you have a complaint or concern about conducting this research project, please speak to any member of the research team or if an independent person is preferred, consult the chairperson of the Ethics Committee (Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria) or the Institutional Office for Research, Telephone +27 012 420 5656 or e-mail: sarina.dejager@up.ac.za

Well-being support

If you feel as though you require emotional support during or after the research project participation, you are welcome to contact the following counsellors to make an appointment:

Vita Nova Counselling Centre	071 297 9992
Dr Tienie Maritz Psychologists	083 922 3435
SADAG helpline	0800 567 567
South African Police Service	120 4200
Dr Erwin Lass Clinical Psychologist	082 873 5849
Dr Sian Green Clinical Psychology	084 240 2175
Dr Erika Nell Clinical Psychologist	072 751 1502
My Therapy Trauma Counselling & Family Therapy in Pretoria East	083 749 6788
Trauma Counsellor	072 842 1190
Dr Annelize Endres - Trauma and Addiction Specialist	082 781 7807

Researcher's contact details:

Mrs Jamie Spies - Student

Jamie.stickling@gmail.com

071 623 6591

Supervisor's contact details:

Dr Sarina de Jager

sarina.dejager@up.ac.za

012 420 5555

Appendix B: Teacher consent form



Dear:

LETTER OF CONSENT: TEACHERS

I, Mrs Jamie Spies, am conducting a research study to explore teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the COVID-19 (SARS-COV 2) pandemic. I will complete this study as part of my Masters in Humanities Education degree at the University of Pretoria in collaboration with my research supervisor Dr Sarina de Jager. I discussed the details of the research study with you at our online information session held on the ___/___/____. The discussed aspects have been outlined below for your convenience.

Title of the research study:

Exploring teacher experiences of Subjective Well-being during a pandemic.

Purpose of the research study:

The main objective of this research project is to explore the experiences held by South African private school teachers during the COVID-19 (SARS COV 2) pandemic. The study will focus on teachers who have remained employed at a private school and faced the changes posed by the COVID-19 health and safety regulations in their educational context. The study will explore how the experiences of teachers who have taught during the pandemic relate to their subjective well-being.

Research question:

The key research question of this study is:

What are teacher experiences of subjective well-being during the pandemic?

Ethical principles:

The researcher needs to apply for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria and other relevant authorities before engaging in any form of data gathering for this research study. All ethical guidelines and regulations must be strictly adhered to during the progress of the study. Such permission will only be granted to the researcher if all participants provide informed

consent to participate in the study. The following ethical principles are internationally acknowledged when researching with human participants. These principles will be followed during the research procedure to ensure that the researcher strictly follows ethical guidelines.

Autonomy and voluntary participation:

The researcher will inform potential participants of all applicable information regarding the research process and purpose before participating in this research study voluntarily. This information will be discussed with you appropriately as a participant during an online information session. Each participant will be provided with sufficient time to reflect on the material discussed during this session. Potential participants will also have the opportunity to enquire the researcher to provide clarity on any topic discussed during this session.

Participation in this study is voluntary based. The researcher will not exert inappropriate pressure or unwarranted influence to recruit or retain you as a participant. Participants who voluntarily partake in the study will have the right to withdraw their participation at any point in the research process. This withdrawal will not result in any adverse consequences. All participant information is confidential. Should you, as a participant, withdraw your participation from the study, the researcher will destroy all accumulated data gathered during the research process about you.

Full participant disclosure:

The researcher will provide sufficient information regarding the research process, activities, benefits, risks, or any other aspects that might influence your decision to participate before you voluntarily partake in the study. The researcher will consult you as a participant throughout the research process and keep you informed of any relevant information. Once the project is complete, the researcher will debrief you and provide you with a summary of the study's findings. Your identity will remain hidden at all times during the research process, including the conclusion and presentation of the findings phase of the study.

Confidentiality between the researcher and participant:

Each participant has the right to privacy. The researcher will protect your anonymity at all stages before, during and after the research process. No identifiable information, including written or verbally communicated information, will be associated with your identity. You have

the choice to make your responses and data available to anyone other than the researcher. The researcher will make use of codes when recording data to hide your identity. The researcher will give back all information provided by you to check for accuracy once compiled. All information, including visual, verbal, and written data, will be stored on a password-protected computer to which only the researcher will have access. This guideline will be strictly adhered to during the research process to ensure your psychological and physical safety. The researcher will not place you in any situation, scenario or circumstance that may cause stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem.

Trust between the researcher and participant:

All findings will be reported to you entirely and honestly without any misrepresentations. All findings will be returned to you to check for accuracy. The researcher will not fabricate any data or findings. As a participant, you will not be subject to any acts of deception or betrayal during the research process or its outcomes.

The time frame of the research study activities:

The researcher will ask you as a participant to capture and submit various (four) pictures with your phone within the time frame of two weeks. We request that you submit a short reflection expressing how each picture relates to your subjective well-being. There is no specific length that this reflection needs to be. Therefore, the time spent on this stage of the process is subjective. Online or face-to-face interviews will not be longer than an hour. You will have the option to negotiate and schedule your interview following your personal preference and schedule.

Please feel free to ask the researcher any questions about the aspects mentioned above.

We look forward to your response and participation in this exciting study!

Researcher:

Mrs Jamie Spies

jamie.stickling@gmail.com

071 623 6591

Research supervisor:

Dr Sarina de Jager

sarina.dejager@up.ac.za

012 420 5555

TEACHER AS PARTICIPANT

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED: Exploring teacher experiences of Subjective Well-being during a pandemic.

I, _____, (your name and surname) a teacher have been informed of and fully understand all aspects associated with the research study titled: *Exploring teacher experiences of Subjective Well-being during a pandemic*.

E. PURPOSE

As explained to me by the researcher (Mrs Jamie Spies), I understand the aim, scope, and purpose of collecting information proposed by the researcher and how the researcher will attempt to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the information they collect. I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore the subjective well-being of teachers.

F. PROCEDURES

I understand that the researcher will ask me to capture pictures representing the concept of well-being to me. I am aware that I may not take any photos at my school or of any person without their consent. I understand that I may not capture any pictures of children. I understand that I will be required to submit a short reflection with each picture. The researcher will also ask me for my views during a semi-structured interview convenient to my schedule. I consent to partake in the gathering of Photovoice and interview data.

Therefore, I give my informed consent and volunteer to participate anonymously in the study mentioned above, explained and introduced to me by Mrs Jamie Spies, a current student enrolled for a Master's degree in Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria.

G. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this study at any point without any negative consequences.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher if I have any questions or concerns about the study.
- I understand that my identity will be kept anonymous at all times during the research process.

- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential.
- I understand that the data gathered in this study may be subject to secondary data analysis.
- I understand that the findings of this study may be published in an academic journal or reported at a conference or seminar.

I have reviewed and studied the aspects mentioned above and understand this agreement. I, therefore, consent to participate in this research study voluntarily.

Full name and surname : _____

E-mail address: _____

Contact number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Further suggestions or comments:

If you have any questions about the research study or your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact Mrs Jamie Spies (071 623 6591) or the research supervisor Dr Sarina de Jager (012 420 5555).

Complaints or concerns

If you have a complaint or concern about conducting this research project, please speak to any member of the research team or if an independent person is preferred, consult the chairperson of the Ethics Committee (Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria) or the Institutional Office for Research, Telephone +27 012 420 5656 or e-mail: sarina.dejager@up.ac.za

Well-being support

If you feel as though you require emotional support during or after the research project participation, you are welcome to contact the following counsellors to make an appointment:

Vita Nova Counselling Centre	071 297 9992
Dr Tienie Maritz Psychologists	083 922 3435
SADAG helpline	0800 567 567
South African Police Service	120 4200
Dr Erwin Lass Clinical Psychologist	082 873 5849
Dr Sian Green Clinical Psychology	084 240 2175
Dr Erika Nell Clinical Psychologist	072 751 1502
My Therapy Trauma Counselling & Family Therapy in Pretoria East	083 749 6788
Trauma Counsellor	072 842 1190
Dr Annelize Endres - Trauma and Addiction Specialist	082 781 7807

Researcher's contact details:
 details:

Mrs Jamie Spies - Student
Jamie.stickling@gmail.com
 071 623 6591

Supervisor's contact

Dr Sarina de Jager
sarina.dejager@up.ac.za
 012 420 5555

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview questions

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

STUDY TITLE: Exploring teacher experiences of Subjective Well-being during a pandemic

NAME: Jamie Spies

STUDENT NUMBER: U15285392

PARTICIPANT NUMBER: _____

GROUP: 1

2

The semi-structured interview will consist of the following process:

- (i) Consented recording of the interview will begin.
- (ii) To understand the teacher's orientation and world view, the research participant will firstly be asked to elaborate on their definition of well-being.
- (iii) The researcher will display the images submitted by the participant on their laptop screen.
- (iv) Teachers will be asked to rate their images from most representing their experiences to least representing their experiences in the context of their subjective definition of well-being.
- (v) The teacher will then ask the participant to elaborate on the photograph they have selected as most representative of their subjective well-being as an teacher during the pandemic by answering the interview questions about each image. Before commencing with the questions for each image, the researcher will read the short image reflection submitted by the teacher.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does the concept of "well-being" mean to you?

PARTICIPANT DEFINITION OF WELL-BEING NOTES:

2. Please rate your images from most representing your experiences of well-being during the pandemic to least represent your experiences.

RANKING: Most representing (1) to least representing (4)

PICTURE 1 TITLE: _____

PICTURE 2 TITLE: _____

PICTURE 3 TITLE: _____

PICTURE 4 TITLE: _____

3. What do you see in your image?

NOTES:

PICTURE 1:

PICTURE 2:

PICTURE 3:

PICTURE 4:

4. What is happening in your image?

NOTES:

PICTURE 1:

PICTURE 2:

PICTURE 3:

PICTURE 4:

5. How does this situation relate to your life?

PICTURE 1:

PICTURE 2:

PICTURE 3:

PICTURE 4:

6. How does this image make you feel?

PICTURE 1:

PICTURE 2:

PICTURE 3:

PICTURE 4:

IN CASE OF HEINOUS DISCOVERY:

Vita Nova Counselling Centre	071 297 9992
Dr. Tienie Maritz Psychologists	083 922 3435
SADAG helpline	0800 567 567
South African Police Service	120 4200
Dr. Erwin Lass Clinical Psychologist	082 873 5849
Dr. Sian Green Clinical Psychology	084 240 2175
Dr. Erika Nell Clinical Psychologist	072 751 1502
My Therapy Trauma Counselling & Family Therapy in Pretoria East	083 749 6788
Trauma Counsellor	072 842 1190
Dr. Annelize Endres - Trauma and Addiction Specialist	082 781 7807

Appendix D: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

The following section focuses on the individual analysis of participants 1-8's semi-structured interview transcripts. While this analysis presents themes within the data, it is imperative to note that the presentation of these findings focused on providing a narrative.

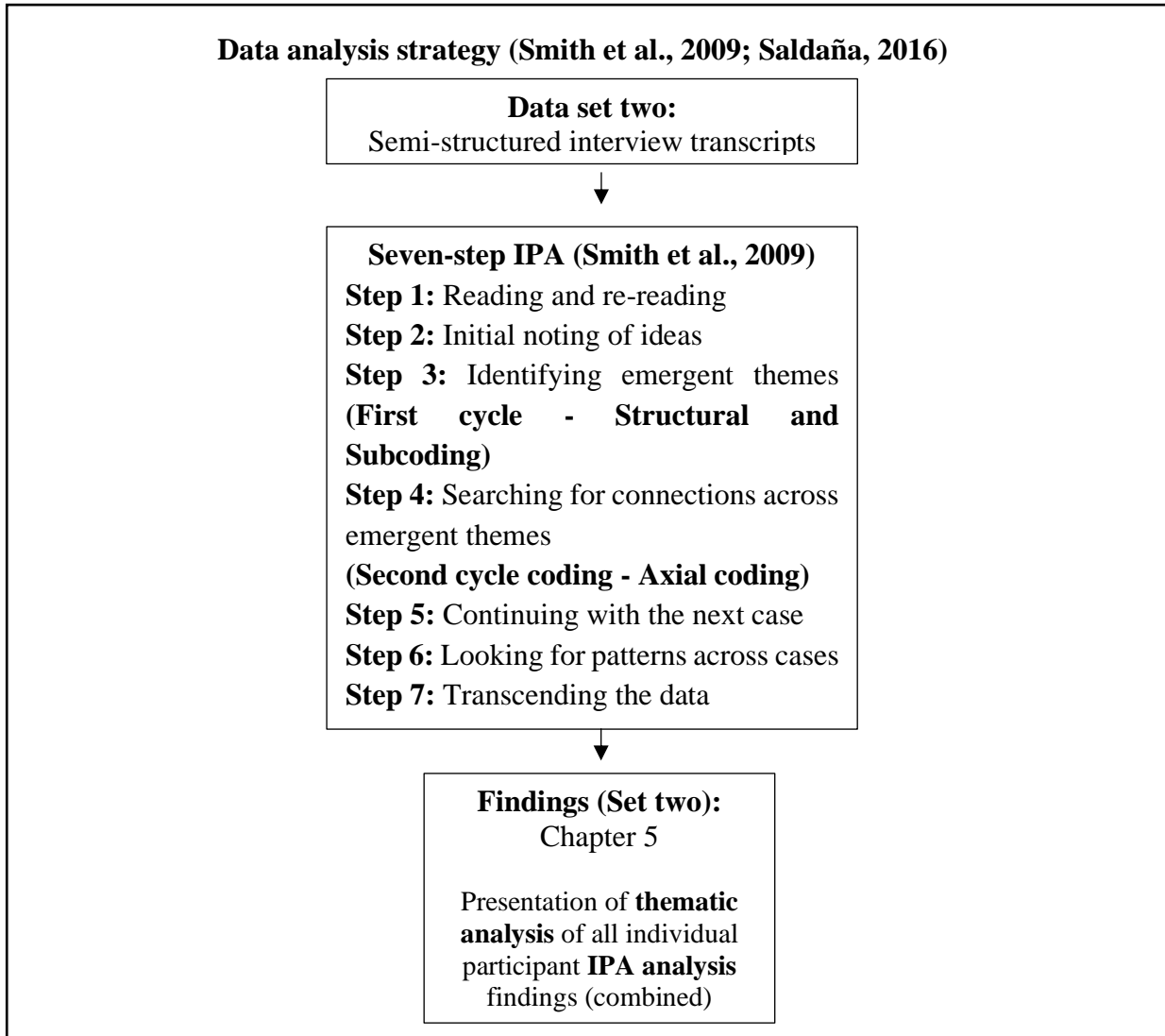


Figure 8. 1: Data set two analysis strategy

1. Participant 1: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

Participant 1 perceived well-being as one's ability to “live a balanced life” (S1 I1 P1). They regarded well-being as having a “physical” (S1 I1 P1), “mental”, and “spiritual” (S1 I1 P1) side. The participant worked as an art teacher during the pandemic and emphasised the importance of art as a source of spiritual well-being throughout the interview by noting that “the benefits of art for well-being is crucial” (S1 I1 P1).

“I find spiritual well-being in, in, um, doing art, um, creating artworks, uh, not necessarily something that you would consider commercial art, just the, going through the process.” (S1 I1 P1)

Participant 1 utilised art to cope with experiences such as uncertainty, anxiety, frustration, and confinement during the pandemic. Within the transcript, I identified the following themes: Uncertainty and income shock, feelings of anxiety, confinement and frustration, coping with confinement and a loss of control.

1.1 Theme 1. 1: Utilising connection to cope with feelings of uncertainty

Participant 1 felt that living during a pandemic felt like “living in a science fiction movie” (S1 I1 P1). They felt “a lot of uncertainty” (S1 I1 P1). To cope with uncertainty, participant 1 emphasised their connection as a point of security. “The connection between my wife and myself, just keeping it, um, keeping me sane” (S1 I1 P1). The first factor that made the participant uncertain was that their family suffered an income shock during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, my wife was a, a choir, she had four choirs that she coached, and she gave piano lessons so that, it's a business that she's had for ten years, and she had to stop immediately. So she was out without a job. (S1 I1 P1)

The participant also received a “salary cut” (S1 I1 P1) while working as a teacher during the pandemic, which further added financial strain to their household. They described feeling “unhappy” (S1 I1 P1) and defined the experience of financial strain as “more sad than stressful” (S1 I1 P1). While the pandemic affected their income, the participant felt saddened that their wife could not continue working and consequently closed down the business she had built up for ten years. They defined the experience as “the negative was definitely the confinement and the uncertainty doomsday feeling, and the positive was opportunities” (S1 I1 P1).

Participant 1 expressed that the connection between them and their partner helped them cope with the sadness they felt. They perceived their wife as a “source of strength” (S1 I1 P11). Participant one admired their wife's courage and found it interesting that their wife used art to cope with their feelings of disappointment.

I felt when she, you know, when everything was taken away from her immediately, she was very sad about it, but she didn't wallow in that. She just immediately made other

plants, um, and just carried on. Um, there wasn't a time when she, she just immediately and then the interesting, the first thing she did is she was, she started doing art. She, she did little paintings on teabags, um, just to keep her, her mind going and I think for our own well-being, um, until she could, you know, sort out and then she tried to keep the choir's going online and then that didn't work and then she realized she needs to actually make a plan now and find alternative income, and then she applied to become an online teacher, and she's still doing that now. (S1 I1 P1)

Participant 1 learned that using art to cope with negative emotions was practical, improving their well-being.

1.2 Theme 1. 2: Teaching art online - Anxiety, frustration and confinement

1.2.1 Sub-theme 1. 2. 1: Feelings of anxiety, frustration, discomfort, stress and work overload

Online learning made participant 1 feel anxious, frustrated, uncomfortable, stressed and overworked during the pandemic. Participant 1 used “Google Classroom” to teach through video calls at the pandemic's start (S1 I1 P1). Adjusting to online learning made the participant feel “anxious during that time” (S1 I1 P1). They regarded the experience as challenging, noting frustrating challenges such as being unable to communicate face to face with the learners and having to do additional planning for lessons which made them feel overwhelmed. They noted

Not having contact with the students, not being able to walk to them and show them, listen to this and do that. Not having that, that interaction while they do practical, the theory wasn't a problem, um, that was PowerPoint presentations and just talking about art that was easy, but the practical side was, I, I found it very difficult, um, to do, not to have them in front of me to show them what to do. (S1 I1 P1)

They noted that a big issue of teaching online was “not being able to see their faces” (S1 I1 P1). “So that was a big thing for me to not be able to see their faces and to actually fight with them to see their faces” (S1 I1 P1).

While reflecting on the experience, they felt “that switching over from being in a classroom for being online and everything you need to think of how to change your whole way of approaching your subject and the kids and, um, yeah, so that was, that that kept my mind busy” (S1 I1 P1).

The participant noted that they had to engage in “new planning because now your lessons need to change and so yeah it was not comfortable.” (S1 I1 P1).

While the participant felt that they improved their technological skills, they did not enjoy teaching online.

I just tried to fill the gaps with actual contact time when we could actually see them, but everything had to be done online, and it was quite a learning curve but not enjoyable for me as an art teacher. (S1 I1 P1)

They found the experience stressful as they needed to keep a high standard of learner achievement whilst teaching online. They felt pressure from management as “they wanted to keep their standards up” (S1 I1 P1). “They didn't want the students to fall behind, so it was extremely stressful and teaching art online is the most difficult thing to do” (S1 I1 P1). Hence, teaching online affected participant 1’s experiences of well-being negatively.

1.2.2 Sub-theme 1. 2. 2: Coping with feelings of anxiety and frustration. To cope with feelings of anxiety, frustration and confinement, the participant noted that they did some gardening during the pandemic. I did it because I was frustrated not being able to do anything and that, that made me not only physically tired, but it, it calmed me down, yeah, made me physically tired and also calmed down the mind. (S1 I1 P1)

Being in nature helped participant 1 deal with anxiety and increased their mindfulness.

Just the busy-ness of, of, of life and what's happening in my head, um, compared to my outside appearance of calm and, uh, it looks like I'm in control. (S1 I1 P1)

Yeah, mindfulness, um, and paying attention to what you're doing and, um, taking out the weeds and not looking at them, not harming, the actual, the beautiful plants. (S1 I1 P1)

1.2.3 Sub-theme 1. 2. 3: Utilising Logotherapy to cope with feelings of confinement. Besides gardening, the participant also decided to engage in professional development and studied Logotherapy during the pandemic. Studying Logotherapy helped the participant cope with feelings of confinement.

That confinement of, of, of being in COVID, but your mind is not confined, and I think that was the, that the studying logotherapy, you know, opened my mind to so much more. (S1 I1 P1)

They not only studied Logotherapy to find meaning in their own life but also wanted to apply the principles of Logotherapy in the classroom to help their learners find meaning during the uncertain time caused by the outbreak of COVID-19.

So I studied Logotherapy. I did; I finished my third-year last year. I did my third year during COVID, and my thesis was about, or my, my project was about how COVID affected teenagers and how art helped them cope and recover from COVID-19. (S1 I1 P1)

As an art teacher, participant 1 found meaning in creating art; they wanted to share this source of well-being with their learners when returning to the physical school environment after lockdown.

They felt that utilising Logotherapy strategies in the classroom after returning from the lockdown helped their learners relax. Hence, participant 1 saw that utilising Logotherapy techniques in their lessons improved their well-being and the well-being of their learners.

I see the kids really benefit ... So I'm going to do it more and more because they learn the technical skills as well, and then lessons like this just lets them, and I allow them to listen to music, their own music and in some cases, I play music for them, um, depending on the mood I want to create, and this really helps them to just focus a bit on, um, get away from the world and, yeah, just relax, put the cell phones away. (S1 I1 P1)

Integrating these strategies made participant 1 feel accomplished.

I think it's just all of that added together, created a stressful environment for, for, for quite a while, but, uh, once again, the study, the logotherapy study, um, kept me going, and it became part of my statistics I can almost say, with the kids, you know, looking at them and how they react sort of felt great. (S1 I1 P1)

2. Participant 2: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

Participant 2 described well-being as “about how you feel, uh, mentally and physically about yourself. I think that's the biggest thing” (S1 I2 P2). They focused on identifying things that made them feel positive during the pandemic while noting some frustrating experiences.

2.1 Theme 2. 1: Improving feelings of well-being by connecting with others

2.1.1 Sub-theme 2. 1. 1: Feelings of appreciation for quality time with family

The participant enjoyed the lockdown time and felt grateful that they could spend time with their family.

I was very fortunate because I, um, was, I just had my baby just before lockdown and then, um, yeah, she was there in then she was, we had extra time together. (S1 I2 P2)

The extra time together helped the participant strengthen their bond with their newborn child.

It's how you build your relationship with your child being there, close to you, she's on your chest, and you're also just loved, and I think that's how it is in my life with her as well. (S1 I2 P2)

This experience made the participant feel “compassion, caring and love” (S1 I2 P2), which improved their well-being.

2.1.2 Sub-theme 2. 1. 2: Forming new friendships and exercising during the lockdown

Participant 2 utilised the time in the lockdown where South Africans were allowed to exercise as an opportunity to form new friendships.

We met people along the roads, and yeah, we actually stood outside, chatting with new people and then we had to rush back home just to get back before the curfew. So yeah, it was quite fun. (S1 I2 P2)

They also used this time to exercise. They found value in reaching their personal goals, which made them feel accomplished. “So there's more value and rewarding goals, like personal goals, like running for me” (S1 I2 P2). They later used exercise to relax when returning to school after the lockdown. “If I had a bad day or to repeat myself 110 times to a grade four learner, and I

go run, I feel better afterwards” (S1 I2 P2). Hence, exercise helped them to cope with negative emotions and provided them with the opportunity to accomplish personal goals.

2.2 Theme 2. 2: Teaching during the pandemic

2.2.1 Sub-theme 2. 2. 1: Feel comfortable with online learning

The participant saw online learning as a positive experience. They noted that the experience taught them new skills.

I learned a lot, and there are new things that you have, uh, got, especially online teaching and interacting with children in a different way. Um, you know, and that was a new adventure. Everybody had to learn a new skill. (S1 I2 P2)

While they experienced some frustration at the start of online learning, their experience improved over time.

Kids will be kids, and they will mute me, and then they will unmute me and they know we'll change their background and put the video on, so there were normal kids distracting, getting used to the new things and but as soon as they got used to everything and understood what it was about, it was fine. It was quite nice. (S1 I2 P2)

The participant expressed that they had to do more planning during this phase of the pandemic.

They have to do the work, and you must determine how long they will need for this specific thing, and then you can go to the next thing. Um, and then they have to give you feedback, and you have to wait for everybody to respond and make sure everybody has the connections and all of that before you can continue to the next thing. So there was definitely more planning for me. (S1 I2 P2)

The communication and additional planning during online learning did not influence the participant's well-being to a great extent.

The participant enjoyed teaching from home as they had more personal space, making them feel relaxed and in control.

For me, it was like kind of freedom while you're at work; you can sit there, communicate, teach, be there with the kids and still be on your own. So that was very nice. (S1 I2 P2).

When you're in your own personal space, and that's where you're usually in your calm, relaxed, relaxing mode. (S1 I2 P2).

Having more “personal space” positively influenced participant 2’s well-being.

2.2.2 Sub-theme 2 . 2. 2: Feelings of frustration due to learning loss

When returning to the school environment, the participant did not notice any changes in their learner's academic abilities. However, they noticed some issues the year after returning to school (2021).

We just slowly got back into it but what I realized is the next year in 2021, when I had the grade fours, you can clearly see there was something missing. They didn't have the skills of the previous year's group. (S1 I2 P2)

The participant noted that learners lack confidence and struggle to do developmentally appropriate things.

They couldn't cut and paste. (S1 I2 P2).

They doubted everything we said. So if I said okay, let's rule off, write a date, then they will ask should we use a ruler to rule off? Yes, please take your ruler and rule off and should we write with our blue pen? Oh that's another thing because they had to transition from pencil to pen and then they never got that opportunity when they were in grade three because they missed half of the year. So they were not sure. (S1 I2 P2)

They also noted that the learners asked more questions due to a lack of confidence which frustrated the participant.

They were not confident in what they were doing. So they ask like extremely a lot. It was quite tiring. I actually counted that one day in the exams because it was the, the end of the year, the November exams, 2021, last year's group. Um ,this was now the group that was in grade three, lockdown, lockdown and then, um, the one-child asked me; I think it was thirty-eight questions in one paper. (S1 I2 P2)

While this aspect frustrated participant 2, they coped with the gap by integrating digital learning into their teaching when returning to school.

The participant noted that they used apps such as Kahoot to motivate the learners. “They love Kahoot. Even though these days when they're fully at school, permanently, high school learners, primary school learners, if they hear Kahoot, they're so excited, they are so happy, and they're very competitive” (S1 I2 P2). The participant felt that the learners enjoyed their lesson more because they did not have to write down answers. “They don't have to write, it's not what they used to, it's something different and they can use technology, yeah. They are allowed to be on their phones now” (S1 I2 P2). Integrating Kahoot into their lessons minimised feelings of frustration due to learning loss.

2.2.3 Sub-theme 2. 2. 3: Feeling frustrated due to wearing masks

The participant did not enjoy wearing masks as it was difficult for them to hear and speak to their learners as they found it easier to “read lips” while communicating (S1 I2 P2). “Well, the mask was very difficult for me. Um, I did not like that at all because I don't have a loud voice. So people can't hear me, and for some other reason, I couldn't get people either. So whenever they were talking to me, and I couldn't hear, I would take off my mask as if that would help me to open up my ears, and that didn't work, but so for me, it was a struggle. I couldn't hear properly, and people couldn't hear me, and I didn't like that at all” (S1 I2 P2).

3. *Participant 3: Interpretive phenomenological analysis*

Participant 3 perceived well-being as a concept relating to one's relationship with “all of your being your entire soul, your heart, your mind, your body, all encapsulating” (S1 I3 P3). They expressed that well-being forms a crucial part of their daily life as they went through a “mental break” in previous years (S1 I3 P3).

The participant emphasised that it is challenging to seek help for one's mental health in South African society as having a “negative stigma towards psychologists and psychiatrists and mental health because, still till today, mental health is seen as, not a disease as, as, as a choice and it's so okay if you book off physically ill, but to book off a day of being mentally ill, that's not okay” (S1 I3 P3).

The participant felt that different stages and scenarios during the pandemic influenced their well-being. At the pandemic's start, the participant worked at another private school and

decided to resign due to communication and work overload difficulties. Online learning and returning to the physical school environment defined the context of their experience.

3.1 Theme 3. 1: Feelings of appreciation of time at home

Participant 3 felt that lockdown helped them to escape stressors experienced before COVID-19 in their daily working life.

I must admit, to some degree, I, enjoyed the pandemic, the lockdown. It gave me quality time with my husband, and because I'm a lazy person in a perfectionistic aura, um, it's really challenging being me, but my lazy self really benefited from COVID-19 from not having to wake up before the sun, without having to be at school at 10 to seven to, um, be on duty and not be in class, on point, on the job, on task as of half-past seven, shouting or not shouting but disciplining kids, kids who don't even listen to you, kids who think that they are above you, kids who don't realize where their place society is, you know, those, those struggles, to fight the whole time, to struggle the whole time. (S1 I3 P3)

3.2 Theme 3. 2: Feelings of stress and frustration due to increased workload

Regardless, the participant found online teaching frustrating when stating: “it's awful to teach to a screen and not see anything or anyone and have no interaction and my personality doesn't allow for it so, it was, it was definitely challenging” (S1 I3 P3). They struggled to connect with their learners and felt an increased workload due to new technological responsibilities.

There was no real way that you could figure out what was actually being received and what was not, and that, to me, was quite frustrating. Also, just everybody's technological issues caused all of a sudden now during lockdown I was a teacher and IT support, and it felt to me like, I'm sorry, but I have a set of responsibilities, and you know, I've, I've done them, now it's your turn mate, step up to the plate. So I feel a lot of that was just excuses as well. (S1 I3 P3)

The participant felt that learners were less likely to cooperate during online learning.

They kept on telling me but, um, my computer doesn't wanna accept my password or my computer doesn't wanna accept my email, and then you're just like okay, but what must I do about it, there's nothing I can do. So that was quite frustrating. (S1 I3 P3)

While they found it frustrating to assist learners with technological support, they also had to assist colleagues with technology. The participant noticed they had assisted many older teachers with technology as they felt less confident with technology use. In one instance, the participant noted:

I've explained it to her, and she still didn't get it. I said obviously you have a lot of work; give me your mark sheet; I'll quickly insert a few because that's gonna take you three months, because I know I can just tab, enter tab, enter, tab. She goes, and she takes the cursor, she clicks, she enters, she goes down, she clicks, she enters, and for her she just didn't wanna do the tab thing because it's as if she was too scared that she makes a mistake because she's not as comfortable around a laptop and the program as I would be. (S1 I3 P3)

The participant felt that their school staff needed more technical skills training as assisting colleges with technology took a lot of their time.

If you realize that there's a problem or even if you have new teachers, how can you not have a session where you get everybody together, and you teach them how to use the program where you need to insert the marks, for example? Why do you leave it onto other teachers and, if you do that, there might be something that one teacher doesn't teach another one, and there's that vital, trivial piece of information that could have saved them a lot of time, a lot of effort, a lot of stress, so we need to, to help on another out and I try my best, but sometimes I will just say rather just let me do it because I know I can. (S1 I3 P3)

They felt like other teachers took advantage of their technology skills. “Some teachers who push their work on me because they don't wanna do it and because they feel that, but our principal said it's not my responsibility” (S1 I3 P3). Hence, having the help other teachers increased their workload, stress and frustration levels.

3.2.1 Sub-theme 3. 2. 1: Need for support from management

The participant felt that they had minimal support from their previous school principal. They felt unheard and, consequently, decided to resign and join another private school. The participant felt that a lack of guidance and leadership made them uncertain about the job role in aspects such as submission dates. A month after the participant started teaching online, the

Principal actually said all right, time to insert the marks, and everybody was like excuse me, but it was lockdown? So he said yeah, but surely you gave assessments and things online, and 90% of the staff was like, what, what are you talking about and so a lot of people actually got into trouble because of that, but, nobody was told, nobody was informed. (S1 I3 P3)

Among other aspects, the participant also noted that they felt unheard in their previous school.

If you asked for the littlest of things, he would shoot you down; he would decline. So, and at that school, it was also a big thing with regards to staff turnover, and I know, you know, when, when, when staff come and go that quickly obviously it means that they're not happy. I just saw how they handled things with the organization, and I just really wasn't okay with that. (S1 I3 P3)

They also felt that their previous school made it difficult for them to request leave in order to spend time with their family.

I went, and I asked my principal, uh, request leave, and he said denied, and I said, um, explain, please. He said, what do you need the holiday for? I told him. Well, my family is immigrating and immigrated, um, so I'm going to go visit them, and I feel family is very important. (S1 I3 P3)

The participant noted that they emphasised their need to spend time with family and that their absence would be a minor inconvenience. Their principal responded to their request by stating, “if you had to die tomorrow, this place would find a replacement for you in seconds” (S1 I3 P3).

The participant noted that they lacked appreciation, which influenced their motivation to continue working.

At the end of the day, the more you are appreciated for what you're doing, the more you will do at the end of the day, but the more you just get slacked, the whole time, the less you want to do it, and that's just a vicious cycle because then it repeats and repeats and repeats itself the whole time. (S1 I3 P3)

3.3 Theme 3. 3: Increased stress due to financial strain

Regardless of emotional strain, the participant also felt a financial strain in their previous and current job role.

I would say, 90% of my stress comes from finances purely because even being physically ill, you know, if, if you don't cough up R3000 a month to pay towards health insurance or medical aid or whatever, you won't be able to afford things to make you feel better and, um, what I've realized, with teachers especially, I haven't really met a selfish teacher in my life yet. They're all quite selfless, and they all give a lot, and the sad part is, we are given so little, and with the economy that's turning with all of the prices that, that are increasing with the inflation, you know, our salaries just keep on getting smaller and smaller and smaller and our debt more and more and more and it's amazing how currently in my situation I'll be honest with you, um, my debt is currently more than my monthly income. (S1 I3 P3)

Financial strain also made it difficult for the participant to engage in relaxing activities.

Because we're not taking care of, and we don't have time or effort or money to take care ourselves. I mean, for goodness sake, we can't even afford a spa treatment, and that's what we all need most um, I think a lot of us suffer from burnout, which is, I just wish the world would actually realize that. (S1 I3 P3)

3.4 Theme 3. 4: Felling burnout

The participant felt that the pandemic increased burnout among teachers.

I feel that a lot of teachers are actually struggling with and suffering from burnout. Some of them don't even realize it, and the problem is there's nothing we can do about it because you must dress up, show up and do your job; nobody else is going to do your job for you. So even if you are having an off day or whatever, you know, you, you're supposed to pretend like everything is okay because, you know, and to some extent, it is fair. Their sitting in front of you, and it's, it's, it's not that their fault that you had a fight with your husband, but also, no human being is that bipolar as an educator where, you know, you can be crying your eyes out because somebody passed away and then

all of a sudden you're supposed to be 100% and teaching a child to the best of your ability just because it's not their fault. (S1 I3 P3)

To me, if I can have a glass of red wine and have Doritos as breakfast and watch Netflix, I'm, I'm happy; that makes my soul happy. (S1 I3 P3).

They also enjoyed watching television. "I'm a very big empath, so I feel a lot about or, of what's happening around me and so it's very nice for me to watch TV because at least then I can sort of control the environment" (S1 I3 P3).

3.5 Theme 3. 4: Boundaries

The participant referred to themselves as having a job where there is "always something that you have to do" they emphasised this statement by saying:

My job that makes it extremely hard because nobody will set boundaries for you and so at the end of the day, everybody will walk all over you and not just even people but the job itself, um, and educator's job is, is never done, uh, there's always something that you must do. (S1 I3 P3)

The participant stated that they are a "big people pleaser" (S1 I3 P3) and noted that setting boundaries during the pandemic was imperative for them.

If you don't take care of yourself, nobody else will, and education especially being a high school teacher it takes a lot of you, and if you don't allow yourself to sit back and relax a little bit, they will take until there's nothing left, so you need to set boundaries in order to be the healthiest possible version of yourself so that you can actually take care of yourself so that you have something from the cup to pour out of. (S1 I3 P3)

4. Participant 4: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

Participant 4 referred to well-being "as a balance of heart, body, mind, um, to just feel that you're on top of things that you are in a good place that just general, general happiness" (S1 I4 P4). Their definition of well-being encompassed "physical well-being" (S1 I4 P4), "emotional well-being" (S1 I4 P4) and "spiritual well-being" (S1 I4 P4). They indicated that their experiences during the pandemic included "Family. It was pets. It was, um, outdoors time. It was baking. It was a little bit of exercise, games, um, online church." (S1 I4 P4).

4.1 Theme 4. 1: Finding comfort in family time, community engagement and gratitude through religious activities

4.1.1 Subtheme 4. 1. 1: Finding comfort and meaning in religious activities

Throughout the interview, the participant emphasised their focus on spiritual well-being. “Things are tough, but I’m okay, and God’s got this, and we’ll, we’ll, we’ll all be okay” (S1 I4 P4). During the interview, the participant used spiritual language by frequently using words like “blessings” (S1 I4 P4). The participant participated in spiritual activities with their family, evident in the frequent use of “us” and “we” during the interview, “it was good for us each day to just look through the Bible and just find a verse that was important to us and spoke to us. So the whole family did it. We all took turns, and we would write it up, and then we’d put it up on the wall.” (S1 I4 P4). They noted, “feeling proud and grateful.” (S1 I4 P4). They “wrote a Bible verse each day for 100 days and posted it on Facebook along with a few photos of things” they were “grateful for each day.” (S1 I4 P4). Participating in spirituality with their family helped them express their gratitude and feel grateful. Posting images online helped the participant “send encouragement to all my family and friends and to show we were not alone during lockdown” (S1 I4 P4). Hence, the participant and their family utilised religious activities to connect with others in their community.

4.1.2 Subtheme 4. 1. 2: Religious activities as a source of meaning, comfort and community engagement

One of their images depicted a “Screenshot of an online Church service.” (S1 I4 P4). The participant enjoyed attending online church with their family as it helped them feel less alone and part of a community.

It was wonderful that we could still have an online service each week. Um, it just helped you to feel, uh, less alone- and more, uh, like a still community. We have a small church, but, um, it just helped us to feel connected. (S1 I4 P4)

and it was just a, not a physical support, but just, just a support to know that- We were all going through the same sort of thing. Um, even in different ways, but we were all in it together, and we weren't so alone. Um, because that feeling of isolation was pretty scary. (S1 I4 P4)

Feeling part of a spiritual community helped the participant cope with negative feelings of isolation, establish a routine and provide an opportunity to further bond with their family. “With our church, with the outside world. Um, we would get a message each week we would sing; the boys would laugh at me, but I'd make them sing while we were there. Um, it would also give us some routine. Uh, during locked down, things were so deurmekaar (confusing). So every Sunday was church, and we would just sit there as a family and just watch and get a message” (S1 I4 P4). Spiritual activities also helped the participant feel positive emotions such as comfort regardless of the negativity they perceived in the outside world, “it was a good, it was a good source of comfort or so. It's helped me keep up the Faith- while, while we were just wondering what was happening in the world and, uh, just with all the negative stuff happening, it was just so good to get a positive basis each week” (S1 I4 P4).

4.1.3 Sub-theme 4. 1. 3: Family, companionship and support

The participant frequently showed further gratitude for spending time with their family by stating, “they are my greatest blessings, and during the lockdown, I was so thankful to be able to spend real quality time with them each day. It was a privilege to be at home with them to help them with all their online learning. We spent lots of quality time together” (S1 I4 P4). “We spent lots of time together, and we, we got time to do things even like, lying in the garden, listening to online stories and things like that” (S1 I4 P4). As a teacher, the participant also had to help their children with online learning during the pandemic. While they specified feeling privileged to help their children with online learning, the participant indicated it was complex to teach other learners online. They described their experience of teaching online from home as “on the floor with my notes, with my stuff, trying to do online with the kids and it was really hard” (S1 I4 P4).

The participant also found comfort in spending time with their pets. When talking about their dogs, they stated:

We got them in 2015, and they were just a constant source of joy for us. Uh, just to, to just comfort and just happiness and. Uh, they are very dearly loved, smothered with love by all the family. So that is cool, and there were just there, and if we needed someone to talk to you, they were there. If we needed a cuddle, there were there, uh, whenever I am cooking, the dogs are always in the kitchen. Uh, you know so, so they're just, they were just there for us, and they really are part of our family. (S1 I4 P4)

They bring me joy and unconditional love, which is very rewarding and very special.
(S1 I4 P4)

4.1.4 Sub-theme 4. 1. 4: Gratitude as a primary focus

Furthermore, the participant stated that gratitude was their primary focus during the pandemic. Gratitude helped them cope with the pandemic.

It wasn't easy, but there's a lot to be grateful for, and that's kind of how I'm trying to live my life is just a sense of gratitude. Um, wherever you are, there are so many things to be grateful for and so many blessings. So I just try to always focus on that. Not always easy. But um, If you do it each day, it's at the end of each day, I look back, and I just count my blessings for the day. (S1 I4 P4)

Each day, they “keep a little diary, and I write down” (S1 I4 P4) “10 things each day of what I'm grateful for.” (S1 I4 P4). The combination of gratitude exercises and religious activities encompassed the participant's experiences.

5. Participant 5: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

Participant 5 defined well-being as “a broad term” (S2 I5 P5) and “different people need it more than others and, you know, different people cope with different situations” (S2 I5 P5). Their definition also included “looking after yourself at the end of the day. Only, only you do look after yourself. Nobody else does” (S2 I5 P5).

5.1 Theme 5. 1: Change in societal norms

5.1.1 Sub-theme 5. 1. 1: Using humour to cope with uncertainty

The participant noted a change in societal functioning as one of their experiences, “everyone having to queue up where their masks, which was a very new thing for everybody. Um, and. Yeah, I'm trying to find more than a lighter side of it because it was such a hectic, it was such a hectic time and completely new for everybody, um. Just trying to, yeah, not panic as much as everybody was at the time.” (S2 I5 P5). They indicated that humour served as a coping mechanism during this time as the situation of the outbreak felt “apocalyptic” (S2 I5 P5). Furthermore, they indicated that “every day was different and hoping for it to change. It was longer than we all thought.” (S2 I5 P5).

5.2 Theme 5. 2: Online teaching

5.2.1 Sub-theme 5. 2. 1: Blurred lines between work and home, isolation and increased screentime

The participant found “difficulty distinguishing being at work and then being at home when it's at the same, same place. Um, you know, it blurred those lines a little bit” (S2 I5 P5). The participant described teaching from home as “very isolating and, um, you know, teaching is a very social job” (S2 I5 P5). They indicated that they primarily used their “laptop” (S2 I5 P5) and separate “screen” (S2 I5 P5) to teach online. The participant described teaching from home setup during the pandemic by stating, “I had my laptop and my screen so that I could split-screen” (S2 I5 P5). They indicated that “that’s what we were doing at the time, working on your screen” (S2 I5 P5).

5.2.3 Sub-theme 5. 2. 3: Teaching from home increased stress

They used video calls to communicate to interact with their learners and peers. The participant stated in their reflection that “Constant fun Teams calls was very necessary!” (S2 I5 P5). “We would often just phone each other on teams and have a good laugh and a giggle, like a break or whatever.” (S2 I5 P5). While video calls provided support and interaction for the participant, they also noted barriers such as distractions which stressed them out during this experience. They noted distractions as a barrier whilst teaching from home and interacting with the outside world through these video calls, “I'm trying to teach, and then my dad's also doing his presentations, and my mom's trying to vacuum, and you know, or my dad's trying to mow the lawn or, and you making a video and you have to start again” (S1 I3 P3). These distractions added stress to the participant's experience. “There’s a lawn mower or a weed hacker and, um, so that kind of thing, it, it was quite stressful in that aspect. Um, cause you're trying to be professional at the same time “ (S2 I5 P5).

5.2.4 Sub-theme 5. 2. 4.: Feelings of irritation and frustration

5.2.4.1 Teaching technology skills to co-workers, learners and parents. Contacting co-workers helped them feel more connected to others, but it also caused them “irritation” (S2 I5 P5) when they had to assist and teach other teachers how to use technology during online learning. “So I live in an estate, and a couple of the teachers here also live in the same estate, and they really struggled with that technology situation. And it's very difficult to explain to someone on the

phone how to do stuff.” (S2 I5 P5). “You know, trying to explain to you all the people technology stuff is very difficult because they also don't want to, to learn or, or do it.” (S2 I5 P5). They emphasised the sense of responsibility they felt, “you don't just have yourself to worry about, you've got to worry about what they do, what the other teachers are doing. Um, you know, are they keeping the kids occupied. Are they this, are they that, um. And I had a very, the one person was very, very technologically disadvantaged, and it was making my job very hard.” (S2 I5 P5). Regardless, they found support from management, “the deputy helped me through a lot because she, she felt the frustration with me and she also got very irritated” (S2 I5 P5).

They also found it challenging to teach learners technology skills whilst teaching their subject.

Setting up the lessons, marking was way more difficult. Um, you know, like the kids for a technology- technological age that are really bad at technology in general, like uploading photos of their work. Um, they couldn't do it. Um, their mics don't work, their cameras don't work, this and that- and that's all you spent your day doing actually, or telling the kids please during your mic off I'm trying to teach, and then their parents are in the background. Like it was, I absolutely hated it. (S2 I5 P5)

The participant also had to help parents with technology, “Again, different parents reacted differently. Um, some that didn't cope well at all. Some were very technologically disadvantaged as well. Like they didn't know how to upload stuff, and it was very difficult to, and some parents felt like they were the only kids or parents going through, you know what I mean? And like, you cannot help every single child with everything all the time.” (S2 I5 P5). Negative feedback from parents also influenced the teacher.

It was, it was a lot of hard work. Um, a lot of unnecessary and, you know, we've got a lot of flack as well, which I think was unnecessary. Um, you know, we were all trying to make the best out of a poop situation. Um, you know, some parents gave us a lot of, a lot of, there was a lot of appreciation, more so, but the negative always, you know what I mean? You have the one or two that just constantly make it a bad experience. (S2 I5 P5)

They also stated that maintaining their well-being was difficult due to the responsibility they felt to assist others, which added to their professional responsibilities. They indicated that they are very agreeable, “you know when you become the person who doesn't say no, then everyone

comes to you first for stuff, because they know you're going to say no- you're not gonna say no” (S2 I5 P5).

5.2.5. Sub-theme 5. 2. 5: Quickly learning new skills to teach online

The participant referred to the online teaching as a “Technological overload” (S2 I5 P5). To adapt to the situation, the participant indicated that they had “to learn a lot of new skills, um, during that time, technology-wise and, um, learning a whole new way of teaching, um, and trying to keep the kids, busy is not the right word, but on track and enjoying themselves as well.” (S2 I5 P5). They used “File Explorer”, “Edge”, “Chrome” (S2 I5 P5), “Word”, “Excel”, “Powerpoint”,(S2 I5 P5) “Outlook”, and “Teams” (S2 I5 P5) to teach online. As a science teacher, they learned to use “hyperlinks” (S2 I5 P5). They also used new digital strategies to keep their learners engaged and motivated to learn, such as conducting a “virtual tour” (S2 I5 P5) and providing hyperlinks leading to entertainment platforms such as “Netflix, Shazam, Show Max, DSTV” (S2 I5 P5). The participant used interactive strategies such as a “DIY experiment, they could click on there and do an experiment, and then they'd send me photos of what they'd done.” (S2 I5 P5). After learning these new skills, the participant felt they achieved something when stating, “I was quite proud of myself that I could you do such things. Um, you know, a lot of teachers did struggle during the online, um, with technology and in doing things like this. Um, so I was quite proud of myself that I could use it positively in a more positive light” (S2 I5 P5).

5.3 Theme 2: Teaching online and at school

5.3.1 Sub-theme 5. 3. 1.: Adapting to new protocols, work overload and increased stress

The participant stated the following as to their experience of teaching at school again during a lockdown: “ when we first started coming out of lockdown-ish, it was their decision if they wanted to come to school or, you know, some parents had to send their kids to school because they had to go back to work, and so it was very much, I-I distinctly remember, I had maybe four kids in my classroom, the rest were online. Um, yeah, it was very difficult, and you have to try and think of now you've got to try and think of stuff to do with the kids that they can do at school, or they can do it at home, you know it was before it was only at home stuff, I-I didn't enjoy this. This was, for me, awful.” (S2 I5 P5). They described teaching during this time as “double the work.” (S2 I5 P5). “You know like they're sitting online and then mom's on the phone in the background, shouting and screaming at somebody, or, or their weed wackers

going, or, you know, their siblings sitting next to them also having a lesson so then you can hear another teacher having a fat chat, you know, it's it was, I found it very stressful.” (S2 I5 P5).

They stated, “it's also very stressful when you when you half online and if something doesn't work and loadshedding and you know, and then half the kids had loadshedding or you have loadshedding” (S2 I5 P5). Changing school strategies also influenced their ability to teach, “every week there were new challenges and you, I don't know it was like a constant changing, do it this way, do it that way, use this platform instead of this one, this one works better than that one.” (S2 I5 P5). Regardless, the participant noted that uncertainty as one of their experiences, “it was just a ever-changing, we're at school, we're not a school, we're back at the kids are back, the kids are not back. We must go home. We mustn't go home. There is sport, there's no sport.” (S2 I5 P5).

5.3.2 Sub-theme 5. 3. 2: Increased stress due to online and in-class assessment strategies

Assessing online and in-person was also very difficult for the teacher, “they wrote tests, they had to have their cameras and the mics on so that I could hear if they were, parents were giving them answers, if they were checking up answers online, or, I mean, that's also very much added stress to just walking around, watching them write the tests. Now you have to hear if mom's giving them four plus four is eight.” (S2 I5 P5). Assessing learners also led to more extra work, “that was also extra work because it would be normal like, uh, test on Word that you would print for the kids at school and then these ones that were at home, you would send them the PDF, like 10 minutes before the test started, then they'd have to print it. Then you'd have kids. Oh, but my printer's not working, oh but then this, oh mom's not at home to help me print, okay but, then they'd have to scan in their tests, send it back to you, then you have to go and print.” (S2 I5 P5). Coping with these types of stressors influenced participant 5's well-being to a great extent.

6. Participant 6: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

Participant 6 defined well-being as “physical well-being, like your body and how you, and then your mental well-being being your, your mind and, um, emotional well-being, your emotions” (S2 I6 P6). They described their experience during the pandemic as “negative in the beginning, and then it went to a more positive experience, not positive, but a better experience” (S2 I6 P6).

6.1 Theme 6. 1: Adapting to change

6.1.1 Sub-theme 6. 1. 1: Using humour to cope with change

They noted that their experience varied due to changing functioning:

Before the pandemic was normal like, now you weren't going to the gym, you were working out of the home. We weren't going to work; your work- you were working at home. Um, you were maybe doing things that you would not, wouldn't normally do. Like maybe you had time now to bake because you weren't driving two hours in traffic 'cause you were at home. Maybe you could get more work done because you weren't travelling. (S2 I6 P6)

The participant indicated they utilised humour to cope with change, “it was trying to break away from the seriousness of the situation.” (S2 I6 P6).

Adding some humour to the situation, I think, you know, um, adding cartoon life to things kind of brings in a bit of humour. So it was trying to break that, um, cycle of negativity and, you know, morbidity and all of that kind of stuff. (S2 I6 P6)

6.1.2 Sub-theme 6. 1. 2: Feeling discomfort when teaching online

Adapting to a changed way of teaching, being online, was difficult for the participant and made them feel uncomfortable. “We’re doing online teaching, um, and then we were asked to make videos as well, as the online teaching and you know, some, me in particular, I wasn't very comfortable with having my face on the screen and making videos, me seeing myself back I'd rather just be standing in front of the class and teaching. So that was a very uncomfortable time” (S2 I6 P6). The participant also noted an increase in screentime. They noted “a lot more screen time during the pandemic for children as well as for adults, 'cause now we weren't, um, meeting in person. We were meeting online.” (S2 I6 P6).

6.2 Theme 6. 2: Going back to the physical school environment

6.2.1 Sub-theme 6. 2. 1: Anxiety when enforcing new protocols

Coping with new protocols in the school environment affected the participant. They noted changes in “keeping a safe following distance or, um, like keeping a distance from each other, staying away from each other, um, wearing masks that would- became the norm for two years

we were so used to” (S2 I6 P6). Implementing these protocols was exhausting for the participant.

You're always looking after the kids, but during the pandemic, it was a bit different because you always like masks on, keep your distance, mask on, keep your distance. You can't share, you can't do this, you can't do that, and it was a lot of like nagging, which is so exhausting. (S2 I6 P6)

This time was stressful, as the participant felt things “just kept coming and coming. Um, For example, another one, I had to come back in June as the grade three class had already come back. Um, I was the first of the groups to come back, um, to teach in class, and I felt that it was just, it was a bit much that first of all, we were all coming back in stages, and it was a bit unfair, about who, who was coming back first.” (S2 I6 P6). When coming back to work, they felt increased anxiety due to uncertainty, “every day at the time, I felt like I was putting my life on the line because I didn't know what it was going to be like.” (S2 I6 P6).

6.2.2 Sub-theme 6. 2. 2: Being a parent and a teacher at the start of the pandemic

The participant felt that returning to work caused more work for herself and her colleagues. “My daughter had to come to school, excuse me, and be looked after by the aftercare teachers. So it wasn't just me that was being affected; it was my child and then as well as another teacher who or aftercare teacher that wasn't supposed to be at work, but now I had to be at work because of me.” (S2 I6 P6). They felt guilty that other teachers had to take care of their children while they were among the first to return to work.

It wasn't a nice experience because I felt like she's my responsibility. She's not someone else's responsibility, and it wasn't at a normal time. It wasn't at when, a time that she should be being looked after; she should be looked after. It was out of the ordinary. So for me, it felt like. It was a bit much. (S2 I6 P6)

The participant also expressed that they experienced increased anxiety as they feared that they would get infected with COVID-19 while teaching during the pandemic. They thought: “Was I going to get it? Was I going to make my family sick?” (S2 I6 P6).

6.2.3 Sub-theme 6. 2. 3: Professional growth and relationships with colleagues

After returning to the school environment, the participant noted a strengthening in their professional relationships. “I think my team and I became a lot closer during the pandemic because we were all here together alone. Um, and I think we just grew, we grew as teachers, and we grew as, um, colleagues” (S2 I6 P6). They also stated that the experience of going back to work made them become “more flexible, um, more accepting. Um, especially accepting of each other's faults. Like we're all humans, I think this also made me feel like we're all just humans and essentially, this thing was going to, you know, reduce our population quite a bit. But in the end, we're all just humans, and we're just doing our best.” (S2 I6 P6).

6.2.4 Sub-theme 6. 2. 4: New responsibilities and work overload

Working during the pandemic and returning to the physical school environment made the participant feel that they were “running empty on energy” (S2 I6 P6).

They felt overwhelmed, “things were getting too much, and I was running on empty. Like there was just no more that I could give, and every day, it always seemed like there was something new that we had to give in, especially being a teacher going from one day to the next, there was always something new that we had to adapt to or integrate or do, and it was just getting too much, and they were expecting a lot from us when we didn't even know what was really going on” (S2 I6 P6).

They felt increased responsibility. “Being as a teacher, like giving, being there for the kids, doing things, having a lot of responsibility.” (S2 I6 P6). Unpredictability and work overload made the participant feel like “it was getting to a point where things were just too much, and I just didn't want to do anything” (S2 I6 P6).

6.2.5 Sub-theme 6. 2. 5: Need for support and appreciation

The participant noted that, as teachers, “we actually needed to support one another more than judge or, or because we weren't physically being around one another, we needed to support each other in different ways. For example, sending a message or having a video call or doing something that just made other people feel, um, loved.” (S2 I6 P6). When returning to school, the participant longed for more appreciation from colleagues and management. “I needed to feel more maybe being at school; we needed a little bit more, um, thank you.” (S2 I6 P6). In

contrast, the participant felt that “teachers have become more appreciated.” (S2 I6 P6) and that “a lot of the parents are very appreciative of what we do, and we may not always hear it, but I do think that we are appreciated”. (S2 I6 P6).

6.3 Theme 6. 3: Family, companionship and support

6.3.1 Sub-theme 6. 3. 1: Spending quality time with family

The participant felt that the pandemic made their family closer. “I feel, um, as a family unit, I definitely feel, we are definitely much closer, spent a lot of time together, um, during the pandemic.” (S2 I6 P6). Spending quality time together was important to the participant. “I wanted to spend time with my daughter to be one of the biggest things that she remembers from lockdown and the pandemic that I got to spend more time with my family.” (S2 I6 P6). When going back to work, the participant longed for that quality time.

I hated the fact that my husband went back to work. I wanted him at home with me. Um, so yeah, I think our, our, um, family unit is very big on love, um. Like my daughter always says, um, we don't have lots of money, but we've got lots of love. And for me, that is what I wanted to take into her life and her relationships. (S2 I6 P6)

6.3.2 Sub-theme 6. 3. 2: Pets as a source of comfort and support

The participant also regarded their pets as a source of “comfort” (S2 I6 P6) that made them “feel very happy and, um, supported” (S2 I6 P6). They regarded the role played by their pets as imperative. “Besides my daughter, they are the next best thing” (S2 I6 P6).

7. Participant 7: *Interpretive phenomenological analysis*

When asked about their definition of well-being, participant 4 stated: “well-being to me means physical, emotional, mental, it's everything, and just being in a good space. I think if you looked after yourself, take care of yourself, you don't run yourself ragged in every part of your life, then you are looking after your well-being and just listening to yourself and listening to your body and how you are reacting to things” (S2 I7 P7). Throughout the interview, the participant focused on physical well-being.

7.1 Theme 7. 1: A time of professional and personal growth

The participant saw the pandemic as an opportunity for professional and personal growth, “during the pandemic; I think, um, I- I wasn't at my best, but I wasn't at my worst. I think I was working on myself, and that was fun. That was, the pandemic gave me that opportunity reflect on growth as a teacher because there was so much growth as a teacher.” (S2 I7 P7). During the lockdown, the participant set personal goals for health reasons and to improve their well-being, “my goals then I was on a major weight loss, fitness journey, and my goal was obviously to lose weight and get stronger, but also it became finding more happiness within myself” (S2 I7 P7). The participant noted a sense of achievement when reflecting on the image above; they stated, “I see myself, and I'm happy, and I'm proud, and I am glowing” (S2 I7 P7).

7.1.1 Sub-theme 7. 1. 1: Physical exercise as a source of appreciation and resilience in the classroom

I started working with horses again after years of not being around horses and, um, I joined a friend of mine, and she took me out on an out-ride when we could, and that was when I started, and from there, I met another horse that I've been working with for a year and a half now and he has come along in leaps and bounds, and he's an amazing boy. And it's really actually just being more of a rehab situation with him” (S2 I7 P7).

For the participant, horse riding was “very fulfilling.” and taught them “a lot of things”, and they “just appreciate the small things, now” (S2 I7 P7). Horse riding helped them. They stated:

During, with the pandemic. Um, yes, because I think it's a lesson that you can learn in everything. You might have a very difficult child, and something small could pop up, and you actually take the moment to appreciate it. It's actually something big. It's something huge. So I think you can reflect on that in the classroom easily every day. (S2 I7 P7).

It also helped them to be resilient in class, “you don't give up, you keep trying and working on these kids, and it was hard, but you did it. You had to figure it out” (S2 I7 P7).

7.1.2 Sub-theme 7. 1. 2: Setting goals and becoming more confident and resilient

This also helped the participant to set goals, “I still ride regularly. I love it, and it's something that's helping me set goals and work to goals, and that reflects in the classroom as well. Like I have a goal of being a tidier person as my desk looks like how, but um, the goal setting, um,

achieving, pushing yourself, trying new things and that confidence, because if you have confidence in one part of your life, it brings it in and another. And I'm somebody who has always struggled with confidence, especially when I was younger. And I've found a way to throw myself at situations and believe in I believe in myself, and I haven't let myself down yet. So you've got to do that in all aspects of life, work, home, play” (S2 I7 P7). Reaching these goals formed part of a “time of huge personal growth” (S2 I7 P7), which helped the participant to their “discipline and confidence”, which in effect altered who they “saw” themselves (S2 I7 P7).

7.1.3 Sub-theme 7. 1. 3: Relaxing through physical activity

Physical activity also helped them relax, “When you're around horses, they're really good for your soul. They soothe the soul. If you've had a difficult day, you don't even have to go ride. You can just be there. And it's really just a good reset and makes you appreciate things, and also, you're outdoors. If you're with a horse, you're outdoors, and I love the outdoors, and I think we get so cooped up in our houses and offices and our classrooms, and as soon as we can just breathe and be outside, it just resets everything. So I think that that's why it makes me feel that way” (S2 I7 P7).

7.1.4 Sub-theme 7. 1. 4: Integrating nature into their online teaching environment

The participant discussed how they integrated natural elements to improve their teaching experience from home, “I would find myself sitting. I have, the sunshine comes into my flat, and I would sit on the floor in the sun, teaching some of my lessons because that's how I felt nice, it felt comfortable and, this, I don't know, sunshine on your skin makes you feel a certain way when you- It was also very cold.” (S2 I7 P7). While teaching online, they:

Didn't have a desk. I was all over the place, yeah, and maybe it would have helped at the if had one set space, but I didn't, I had to move around there. Also, I couldn't sit for that long. So then my husband created a standing desk for me at the kitchen counter so that I could teach and stand because my body couldn't. (S2 I7 P7)

7.2 Theme 7. 2: Family, companionship and support

7.2.1 Sub-theme 7. 2. 1: Spending quality time with family

The participant indicated that the pandemic strengthened their relationship with their significant other, “I think it just, I don't know, not improved us, but sort of solidified that bond.” (S2 I7 P7). They indicated, “he is just a bit of a pillar in my life.” (S2 I7 P7). Hence, he played a supporting role during the pandemic. They also expressed that their family would enjoy travelling again. “We will hopefully be able to travel overseas again soon, but it really installed in us the, the, the need or the desire to be able to travel together and experience life together and do things like this. Maybe get to a point where you can work remotely, still being a teacher and experience, more, not being stuck in the rut of your day-to-day life” (S2 I7 P7).

7.2.2 Sub-theme 7. 2. 2: Stressors and family relationships

The participant's explanation of the aspects that happened to their family during the pandemic indicated stressors that influenced their well-being. They stated:

Okay, so and lockdown. It was quite tough. Heather was pregnant with Emma, and it was very difficult pregnancy. And I had never seen my sister fully pregnant until she had her second child. We couldn't be there for her when she had her baby. So it was really quite tough because she also had a prem, and she was five weeks prem, so it was quite scary. Um, family is just so important, and it was very difficult not being able to be around family. We had a very difficult time between when like, the pandemic started and now, and I mean, my mom's sister lives in Australia, and she hasn't been here since our wedding, which was two and a half years ago, and since then her dad has died and her mom's house burnt down. So there are two very big things that she would have been here for, and she couldn't be. So I think now we just appreciate that time more and make, make that time together more and make an effort, always make an effort to see each other and do things with each other because family is really important. (S2 I7 P7)

7.2.3 Sub-theme 7. 2. 3: Influence of family-sourced stressors on self-awareness and mood in the classroom

They stated that family stressors influenced their mood in the classroom, “it was quite difficult. I was probably in a bit of a, a dwell and I was probably not my best self in the classroom and, um, you know, it definitely would have had an impact on my teaching” (S2 I7 P7).

Along with the balancing of teaching the kids here. Um, like you say emotionally, you can't just switch it off and switch on your happy self for when you're here, you're real, you're a person. (S2 I7 P7)

The participant felt that their level of happiness influenced their mood in the classroom during the pandemic. “Yeah, because your mood, your mood reflects in the classroom, how you, how you react to the children and how you're feeling within yourself. If you're feeling negative and down, then you aren't going to be a very nice person to be around.” (S2 I7 P7). They were also very self-aware in identifying aspects that influence their happiness:

I think that I am very easily influenced negatively, and the situation was a time where I really bought myself out of negativity and found a way of bringing more positivity, and I really tried to be a more optimistic person, but I do, I am easily brought down. Whether it's by politics in a school or if there are issues that we're handling, I'm very easily brought down negatively, and this sort of situation show was a way for me to turn it around, to make more positive and mentally handle situations in a better way. (S2 I7 P7)

8. Participant 8: Interpretive phenomenological analysis

Participant 8 defined well-being as a concept that encompasses “how happy you are” and how “content you are with what you are doing” (S2 I8 P8). They described well-being as a “holistic thing” (S2 I8 P8) concept encompassing a person's well-being “emotionally” (S2 I8 P8) and “physically” (S2 I8 P8). They also noted that well-being is “really important because you, sometimes we get so caught up in our professional lives that you forget that you're also a human being and that you need to look after your well-being” (S2 I8 P8). The participant also focused on their environment contributing to their experience. They frequently used statements expressing their emotional experiences in their environment. Hence, focusing on emotional well-being throughout the interview.

8.1 Theme 8. 1: Isolation, quiet and longing for connection

8.1.1 Sub-theme 8. 1. 1: Longing for classroom physical, social and emotional interaction

Participant 2 frequently focused on emotional well-being throughout the interview whilst describing their experiences of isolation socially. They stated, “everything suddenly got cold” (S2 I8 P8). “you have contact online and so, but that whole human interaction was taken away”

(S2 I8 P8). According to the participant, they felt “aleness, quiet. Um, and not a lot of life, not a lot of life on laughter.” (S2 I8 P8) during the pandemic early stages of the pandemic. They felt “cold and alone and surrounded by coldness” (S2 I8 P8). They longed for the social interaction they would typically experience in their profession because they taught online and had to reduce social contact in the classroom. “I mean, the interaction that you have with a dif- with another person and through a computer screen is definitely not the same as a physical interaction” (S2 I8 P8). Teaching at school during the pandemic meant “you can't just give a child a high five. You need to think for us, it's like that cold human interaction you can't do. If a child is feeling sad or whatever, you can't give that child a hug” (S2 I8 P8). Due to wearing masks in the classroom and public, the participant struggled to communicate their emotions to their learners. They stated:

I can't see what your facial expressions look like. Um, also included to that is your masks. Um, it's also something that makes it cold for me because suddenly three-quarters of your face, or well two thirds actually, is gone. And if you want to smile at someone in the shops or whatever, it just looks like you're squinting at them. You can't really have that. You know, you see something, and you smile at somebody else. That warm relationship it's not there. (S2 I8 P8)

Hence, making them “feel alone, um, in the sense of the word and, you know, detached.” (S2 I8 P8). Teaching online during the lockdown was also difficult for the participant because the learners did not talk as much on video calls as they would in class.

If you're teaching online, sometimes the kids, some kids enjoy being online. Other kids are like, do you have any questions, no ma'am? Um, and then it is, it's really quiet, and you can't have an online class party or it online sports, whatever you do. Um, it's quiet. (S2 I8 P8)

8.2 Theme 8. 2: The domino effect

8.2.1 Sub-theme 8. 2. 1: Increased emotional distress, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive tendencies

The participant described the outbreak of COVID-19 as “One thing that happened affected like a whole lot, um, everything inside your life” (S2 I8 P8). “It was suddenly this small virus, and suddenly the, the whole world is almost in chaos” (S2 I8 P8). “I'm not saying that the pandemic

is small at all, but you know, small little things in your life that occur because of the pandemic, like an emotional trigger or whatever the case may be” (S2 I8 P8). Their reflection and image saw the events happening during the pandemic as a set of cascading dominoes where each event causes the next. The participant expressed how the outbreak of this virus caused them severe emotional distress as they felt the compulsive need to sanitize and follow COVID-19 protocols.

With bacteria and viruses and so that I literally wash the skin off my hands. So suddenly, it's this virus that's coming, and immediately the whole emotional thing gets triggered back. So I still do it. I spray every single piece of grocery that I buy with sanitiser before I put it in my cupboard. Um, and it's when you're outside, you're stressed the whole time. It's like, did I touch my face now? You know, that whole self-doubting thing, did I not just rub my eye or whatever the case may be. So it's that one little virus. It took me a few years to get over there and hand washing problem. (S2 I8 P8)

Hence, the pandemic created a situation that triggered their obsessive-compulsive behaviours, a mental struggle the participant faced for many years.

This anxiety also affected their teaching as they needed to keep themselves and learners in their class safe from infection.

If you hear anything, whether it's a person coughing outside or whatever the case may be, you immediately think, okay, how can I keep these kids safe? What should I do? Protocols everything. And your mind is so distracted from what you are actually teaching that you lose track of yourself completely. (S2 I8 P8)

The protocols also affected their teaching as they felt distracted and distanced emotionally from their learners, “one of the greatest parts of teaching is like having a joke with your class. Everybody is laughing together, having a class party, all of those things and now suddenly it's taken away.” (S2 I8 P8).

8.2.2 Sub-theme 8. 2. 2: Conflict in the home environment due to income shock and increased stress

The stress caused by following protocols in their work environment also affected their relationships and interactions at home: "suddenly you're stressed, suddenly you are like, you

know, don't use this, you're wasting that. So you, you really have a stress situation in your home. And then from there, um, you start fighting with your people at home, you become, you know, sometimes you can be cranky at work or whatever the case may be.” (S2 I8 P8). They also experience financial stress at home when stating:

My, my husband works on commission-based. Um, so during the pandemic, of course. His salary went down. So in our household, I mean, we are a household of five people, so that really costs a lot of money in a month, but that one other thing that happened spiralled out, you know, we can't, allow you to do, let's say ballet anymore. We can't do this because there are no finances. (S2 I8 P8)

Hence, the participant felt stressed due to an income shock in their household and the possibility of getting themselves and their family infected, accompanied by the responsibility of not letting others, such as the learners they taught, get infected.

8.2.3 Sub-theme 8. 2. 3: Decreased opportunities for engagement and relaxing activities

The participant disliked the lack of entertainment during the beginning stages of the pandemic. They illustrate this through the empty movie theatre depicted in their image. They felt that the facilities and resources for entertainment went to waste as nobody could use them during the lockdown.

Suddenly the world became empty again and, you know, there were people had laughter and interaction and a good time, it was quiet. It was almost like a ghost town. Um, whenever you, you left your house, if you had to get supplies or whatever, suddenly everything was, there was no laughter, you know, there was nobody going to theatres or whatever the case may be, ice rink- ice rinks or- you know, entertainment, which is also part of your well-being. I mean, you need to relax at some point. (S2 I8 P8)

They felt that unavailable entertainment facilities made their home and public areas feel quiet. In their reflection, they referred to the world as being “empty”. Furthermore, the participant remained optimistic regardless of the lack of entertainment and engagement from learners to return to physical teaching.

It can actually make you feel excited in a way to know that it might be coming back. You're looking forward to people coming back again. So you long, um, for the future as well. So it can actually go both ways. (S2 I8 P8)

8.2.4 Theme 8. 2. 4: Longing for routine

Not leaving the house for entertainment also influenced their routine and prevented them from participating in leisure activities that would have provided engagement (flow). They stated:

We love going out, not, not just to movie theatres, and so, but going on hikes and, you know, experiencing the outdoors and any entertainment that we can have. Um, and suddenly it stopped suddenly that was taken away from us, and suddenly it was quiet, also in your life as well. I mean, if I think about the buzz in the morning to get the kids ready for school and get myself ready for school and so and suddenly it stopped, suddenly it was quiet in the mornings. So um, um, in the beginning, though, those quiet mornings were quite fabulous. But eventually, the further you got into that lockdown, um, the more you thought, you know, you miss that, you miss the hype and the vibe in the morning to actually get ready for school, to get ready for work. So it's really, it's the quietness of it that really caught my attention. (S2 I8 P8).

An experience they missed as a teacher was getting ready for work in the morning.

8.3 Theme 8. 3: Feeling hopeless, confused and bored

8.3.1 Sub-theme 8. 3. 1: A never-ending workday

The participant described them metaphorically: “you're walking through the woods, everything looks the same, and you almost get lost, um, between these trees, because you have no beacons to look for because everything looks the same.” (S2 I8 P8). The participant described their experience as “never-ending. When you actually went out of your house to go do your job or whatever” (S2 I8 P8). They felt that “when we worked at home in the pandemic, it felt like it was a never-ending workday.” (S2 I8 P8). The participant struggled to find a balance between work and home. They struggled to adjust their mindset to relax: “you never left your house and thought into that work mindset, or you never returned to your home and got into, okay. I'm home. I can relax. Kind of mindset. So it must really be never-ending.” (S2 I8 P8).

8.3.2 Sub-theme 8. 3. 2: Boredom due to repetitiveness in their profession

They also felt bored because their environment looked the same every day. “also being bored because everything looks the same” (S2 I8 P8). “There's no excitement” (S2 I8 P8). They also felt they had less opportunity to grow in their profession when stating: “not necessarily at home, your home life, but you know, professionally, um. Your chances for growth, there's no like conferences to attend or meetings, or just chat to a colleague just saying, look, I've got this problem. Help me. Uh, you can go online, of course, but it's, it's way less.” (S2 I8 P8). The participant felt bored in their daily life due to the repetitiveness of their daily routine and not having many opportunities to learn.

Never-ending. Yeah, it's, it's really an f- um, a feeling of repetitiveness, um, over and over and over the same thing. So it's also quite an extent of being bored. Um, I'm really a person that enjoys new things in my life, you know, new techniques, new, whatever the case may be, and that is something that I've missed. (S2 I8 P8)

8.3.3 Sub-theme 8. 3. 3: Work overload - Feeling overwhelmed with new responsibilities

Teaching online also poses daily responsibilities such as loading documents online that learners need to use to learn. Posting this content made the participant feel lost and overwhelmed. “So you getting lost between the daily things, of, you know, loading your videos, loading the memos. Tomorrow it's the same thing, the loading memos, loading videos, it's a never-ending walk that you're taking” (S2 I8 P8). “You lose yourself completely. You get lost in those woods, and you can't remember which memos you did load, which may memos you did not load.” (S2 I8 P8). Getting into this online teaching routine and loading documents made the participant feel that their days were repetitive.

I was on autopilot for quite some time during lockdown, you know, every day, it's the same thing, and there's no distinction between work life and home life. Everything is integrated completely. (S2 I8 P8)