Gordon Institute of Business Science
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Return to office: understanding employee's perceptions of well-being and the influence on employers and policymakers

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ABSTRACT

The transition back to office environments post-pandemic has initiated significant interest in understanding employee well-being. This study explores how employees perceive their well-being in the context of returning to physical workplaces. It examines the psychological, social, and physical aspects of employee well-being in the context of the workplace, emphasizing both positive and negative impacts. The research also delves into how these perceptions influence employer strategies and policymaking. Employers are seen adapting their approaches to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity, while policymakers are considering regulations that support flexible work arrangements and mental health initiatives. The research seeks to thoroughly explore the various impacts of returning to the office, providing valuable insights for developing work environments that focus on employee well-being.

Keywords:

Well-being

Workplace stressors

Work-life balance

Job satisfaction

Organisational support

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Corporate Strategy at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Background

Prior to the pandemic abruptly leading to a complete paradigm shift in the way of work; the future of the workplace was already a prevalent topic. As traditional workplaces continue to evolve with flexibility and agility driven by the prominence of technological developments becoming even more embedded in working life, this necessitates organisations to readjust their strategies to align to employee expectations.

According to Milo (2023), research highlights that post the pandemic, over 50% of employees prioritize mental health support and well-being as a crucial factor when choosing an employer based on the priority that they have placed on their emotional and psychological needs. Organisations that offer well-being resources like counseling services, flexible working hours, and well-being programs are more likely to attract and retain top talent.

The disruptive shifts in 2020 forced organisations to rethink various aspects of their operations, including employee well-being. Despite the accelerated use of emerging technologies to boost efficiency and support employee well-being, technology in isolation is insufficient; human-centeredness is essential. Embracing purpose, potential and perspective can humanize work and create lasting value. These attributes were demonstrated in organisations such as Delta Air Lines, AstraZenea and ServiceNow (MIT Technology Review, 2023) throughout the pandemic and should continue despite employee's returning to the office.

Workplace stress is a significant issue in many organisations and can be caused by a variety of factors, such as workload, role conflict, lack of control, poor relationships with coworkers or supervisors, lack of recognition or rewards, and poor work-life balance having the potential to negatively impact employees' well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction (Vallasamy et al., 2023). Since the average person spends a third of their life at work, where stressors can have a significant impact on mental health and well-being, employment can play a crucial role in achieving the global health goals (Brassey et al., 2024). Additionally, four years after the pandemic began, many employees and employers have become familiar with the pros and cons of remote work with one of the significant benefits being time saved by eliminating the daily commute, which deemed to be a substantial negative contributor towards employee well-being (Fleck, 2024).

According to Gallup, career wellbeing forms the foundation for other wellbeing elements, with employee engagement being the single biggest driver, meaning that organisations which intentionally address both aspects will realize mutual benefits. Thriving is an important determinant

for individual well-being because despite employees demonstrating high levels of engagement, if they are not thriving in their lives, they are a risk factor to organisations due to their vulnerability. This was highlighted by Gallup survey indicating that 61% of these individuals are often prone to burnout given their daily stress levels and worry have a likelihood of 48% and 66% higher than other employees respectively (Gallup, Inc., 2024).

It's common to think of well-being in terms of just physical health, but a comprehensive definition of wellbeing is inclusive of the key elements based on an individual's perceptions and experiences of what they deem to be important from a physical, career, financial, social and community perspective that require realization for individuals to thrive. An individual's experiences and priorities in life (Gallup, Inc., 2024a).

Amongst several reasons that organisations refer to as drivers of employee's returning to the office is the need to preserve corporate culture, foster better collaboration, and increase productivity. Nevertheless, there has been controversy surrounding Return To Office (RTO) policies, as they frequently cause conflict between employers and employees because workers have become accustomed to the advantages of working remotely (Ec, 2024). At any given time, over 10% of workers are absent due to anxiety, depression, or burnout, further amplified by balancing work and life demands, managing health issues, and coping with the rising cost of living. Cordina et al. (2022) states that the 2021 McKinsey Consumer Health Insights survey highlighted that even though some employees might embrace the RTO, a third of participants expressed that their experience has negatively impacted their mental health. Furthermore, almost 50% of those who are currently working remotely already foresee detrimental impacts on their mental health. With the pandemic having exacerbated the mental distress of individuals in the workplace, several individuals are inclined to encounter another stint of stress and anxiety upon their return to the office.

Historically, large organisations were able to treat mental health discretely, but in 2001, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a groundbreaking World Mental Health Report, which called for a change in the environments that affect mental health, with the workplace being one important arena (World Health Organization, 2001). Now, more than 20 years later, and with the COVID-19 pandemic acting as a catalyst, employers are beginning to recognize their role and responsibilities for addressing mental health in the workplace.

Supportive conditions emerge when employees feel that the organization values and cares about their well-being. High levels of perceived organizational support lead employees to feel recognized and appreciated, fostering a sense of commitment and belonging. This perception of support also creates an environment that enables and motivates employees to perform at their best. (Koon, 2024).

It’s crucial to clearly communicate when and why employees are expected to be in the office, while also allowing for some flexibility to accommodate individual needs. People are generally more cooperative and rational when guidelines can be reasonably adapted to their circumstances. Employers face a balancing act: broad mandates can cause employees to become disengaged and foster feelings of mistrust among employees, while a lack of clear communication and poorly coordinated flexible working arrangements can harm teamwork, culture, and productivity (Agrawal, 2023).

Kelly (2021) proposes strategies that organisations can adopt that can lead to reciprocated benefits for employees and organisations such as providing employees with job autonomy, work-life balance, increase in job and work boundary management, effective two-way communication, creating meaningfulness in work that is aligned to relatedness and creates a sense of connectedness among employees. Moreover, organisations should focus their well-being interventions in pursuing positive outcomes (Fox et al., 2021) as opposed to avoiding negative mental outcomes.

An equitable and balanced relationship between an employer and employee promotes employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention, which in turn benefits the individual and the organisation. In the context of well-being, the employer-employee relationship revolves around the exchange of support and tools provided by an employer to enhance their employee's holistic quality of life based on their perception of value.

The lack of alignment between employers and employees leads to inconsistent and unclear results when it comes to attaining competitive advantages like improved worker productivity, increased ability to attract and retain talent, and increased external recognition (Ungureanu et al., 2019).

The principle of reciprocity, deemed to be the exchange of services for a shared benefit can be a powerful strategic tool for organisations in the context of workplace culture and employee relations, with futuristic organisations recognizing reciprocity as a pivotal component in relation to their overall management and growth strategies (Nasivili, 2024).

1.2 Research Problem

The impact of the lack of information on employee’s perceptions of well-being for employers and policymakers on the transition from remote working to physical return to the office.

Brockner and Van Dijke (2023), highlights that given the unprecedented number of employees who were forcefully transitioned to work from home because of the pandemic, one of the biggest challenges facing employers and policymakers in organisations today, is in what way employees should return to the office. In fact, Employers have taken diverse approaches to return-to-office

policies, some mandate a full-time return for their employees, while others give employees the choice, and some have implemented a hybrid model.

Despite the difficulties in sustaining people at work, most of the research has focused on the process of returning to the office, giving less significance to what occurs post-return (Nielsen & Yarker, 2022). According to statistsa, between 2022 and 2023, 26% of employees in the United States and 38% in India frequently feel burned at work necessitating the criticality of understanding how returning to the office is an enabler or hindrance to the sustainability of returning to the office in lieu of the value proposition offered by employers.

According to Duckworth and Gross (2020) it is imperative for organisations to understand how employee behaviour is created as an initial first step towards understanding how it can be altered, hence the importance of understanding the behavioural changes of employees in the context of well-being post the pandemic. Halliday et al. (2024) further states that successful strategies which benefit the employee and the organisation, necessitate organisations to recognize the significance of the relationship between employee wellbeing and strategy success, urging employers to ensure that employees are in the best possible health and fully engaged when they return to the office.

1.3 Research aims and purpose

The purpose of the research is to increase employers' understanding of employees' perceptions of well-being based on the different dimensions of well-being (mental health, work-life balance and job satisfaction) and their perceptions surrounding what they deem to be organisational support with the transition from remote working to a physical work environment.

This research aims to evaluate how each perspective may explain the individual trajectories of the transition to returning to office of three important facets of the work experience identified as belongingness at work and meaningful work. The aim of this research is therefore threefold based on the principle of reciprocity between employees and their employers, in relation to perceived organisational support and how these dynamics affect job satisfaction.

Firstly, to provide insights into employees' perceptions surrounding well-being in the context of the workplace and how this translates into expectations upon their return to the office. Secondly, these insights will aid employers with the most conducive approaches in driving and shaping an organisational culture that supports well-being aligned to employees' expectations. Lastly, the derived insights can aid in shaping future workplace policies in relation to increasing job satisfaction through the holistic understanding of employee well-being in the context of the transition from intense

remote working which can potentially bolster organisational outcomes including job satisfaction, increased productivity and reduced absenteeism.

1.4 Significance of the study

1.4.1 Contribution to business

This research addresses a timely issue in workplace dynamics and contributes to the broader understanding of how well-being influences organisational effectiveness, helping employers create supportive environments that align with employee expectations and needs. According to the World Health Organisation the “real corporate tax” are the costs incurred by organisations because of the significant increase in healthcare costs over the past ten years, which is affirmed by statistics in a Gallup survey indicating $322 billion of turnover and lost productivity costs as well as 15% to 20% of total payroll in voluntary turnover cost are due to burnout (Gallup, Inc., 2024c). Furthermore, 75% of medical expenses are primarily due to preventable conditions, with an additional $20 million in lost opportunities for every 10,000 employees who are struggling (markets.businessinsider.com, 2022).

On the backdrop of this, this research will aid organisations on how to develop a supportive culture that aligns to employer’s perceptions of well-being and expectations upon physically returning to the office. This is with the expectation that this will lead to reciprocation from employees with a consequential effect on organisations achieving desired outcomes in terms of reduced costs and increase in revenue, through motivation, and commitment to the company's goals and successes. Additionally, improving their brand and appeal will contribute to attracting and retaining top-performing talent.

Additionally, decision-makers and leaders might find these insights valuable when developing workplace policies and guidelines aimed at creating a supportive work environment that promotes employee mental health and well-being.

The insights derived from this research can additionally aid policymakers formulate more effective and fair policies aligned to employee expectations because when employees observe their feedback leading to tangible benefits, this reinforces a reciprocal relationship where both employers and employees’ benefit, leading to more effective engagement strategies.

1.4.2 Contribution to academia

As the COVID-19 pandemic has ended, a significant and recent factor affecting employee well-being perceptions is the transition from intense remote work back to the physical office. This study will enhance the Social Exchange Theory (SET) by including the perceptions of employee’s well-being,

drawing from Blau's seminal work, which highlights the importance of emotional and relational exchanges beyond the traditional economic perspective (Varey, 2015). This enrichment will reveal intricate social exchange dilemmas, demonstrating the reciprocal relationship between employers and employees in navigating the RTO journey.

The increasing complexity of how organisations operate and their influence on changes in organisational behavior, postulate a need to update SET, so this research will contribute to the extension of the principles of the social exchange theory in relation to a contemporary topic post-pandemic by enabling employer's to gain a better understanding of reciprocity in relation to well-being functions in contemporary workplace dynamics based on initiating actions that are found to be both explicit and implicit, such as a feeling (positive or negative), influencing employee well-being.

Additionally, given RTO is a current topic for organisations, the integration of the SET with employee's perception of wellbeing post-pandemic can lead to the development of new conceptual frameworks or models that explore the interplay between employee well-being perceptions in terms of changes in job satisfaction, work-life balance and mental health and well-being following a shift from high-intensity remote working.

Miraglia et al. (2024) highlights a surge in interest from academics and practitioners regarding well-being and how it is affected by work practices and leaders, with a multitude of articles been published detailing strategies for enhancing well-being and quality of working life over the past ten years. On the backdrop of this, evidence gathered from the empirical data in the form of insights on how perceptions of wellbeing and reciprocity affect organisational outcomes can validate or challenge existing theories and offer new insights into the role of perceived reciprocity in employee satisfaction and productivity.

Overall, the contribution of this research is to advance academic knowledge in the SET to current complex workplace challenges, offering both theoretical contributions and practical implications that can shape future studies and organisational practices.

1.5 Scope of the study

The well-being transition within the workplace from 2020 in relation to the shift from remote to flexible working arrangements aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic has been well documented, however, with the pandemic coming to an end and most organisations mandating return to the office, employees' perceptions in relation to employee wellbeing is poorly understood.

This study aims to explore employees' perceptions of wellbeing upon their mandated return to the office, focusing on how these perceptions influence both employers and policymakers. The research involves a qualitative analysis of insights gathered from a minimum of 15 participants, aged between 35 and 45 years, who report to mid-level managers.

The participants are drawn from three key industries in South Africa: automotive, banking, and media. All participants work for multinational and international organisations that have required their return to the office. The study seeks to identify factors that contribute to employee wellbeing during this transition, including mental health and well-being, work-life balance, and job satisfaction.

In understanding employees' perspectives, the research aims to provide actionable insights for employers and inform policymakers about best practices that support workforce well-being in a post-pandemic context. The findings will contribute to a broader understanding of how returning to the office affects employees and will help shape policies that foster a healthier, more productive work environment.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, as a major global event expedited the shift of what is deemed the future of work, as governments globally encouraged office workers to work from home (Sun et al., 2022), to curb the spread of the virus. Work from home, interchangeably referred to as telecommuting (Hu & Subramony, 2022), remote working (Wheatley et al., 2023) and telework (Wöhrmann & Ebner, 2021) by scholars, refers to a working arrangement wherein an employee performs the duties of their job while working from home or another location, outside of the physical work place (Donnelly & Johns, 2020). This shift drastically altered employees' expectations regarding the location and timing of work. Recent studies show that extensive feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and decreased mental health and well-being, which already affected many employees with traditional work arrangements, were exacerbated by this unexpected and forced shift to remote work (Becker et al., 2022).

Although few workers questioned the necessity of a five-day physical presence in the office, that requires long commutes to the office, and unsatisfactory workplace aspects before the pandemic, employer and employee opinions have now drastically shifted (Alfes et al., 2022). Since COVID-19 no longer poses as a risk to the safety of the typical employee, most employers who initially proclaimed indefinite remote working, are necessitating employees to transition back to the office post remote working. This is attributed to employers citing lack of physical presence among employees as a root of many issues related to culture and collaboration (Gibson et al., 2023). Organisations emphasize that social connections through face-to-face interactions promote a sense of belonging correlated with several positive mental and physical well-being outcomes. Considering the pandemic's effects on both work and personal life, many organisations are now compelled to introduce, modify, or enhance new working arrangements to promote well-being (Manroop et al., 2024).

Well-being is a broad concept with multi-dimensional facets (Sonnentag et al., 2023), that refers to many aspects of human life. Seminal literature by Lamers et al. (2010) have made significant contributions by suggesting that well-being can be categorized into three forms: psychological well-being, emotional well-being, and social well-being. Psychological well-being pertains to an individual’s subjective evaluation of personal circumstances and social well-being, while emotional well-being encompasses positive relationships, autonomy, and mastery of one's environment. Moreover, most previous studies have utilized two main perspectives to define well-being. Eudaimonic well-being is a general concept that focuses on the experience of meaning, self-

realization, and the degree to which an individual is fully functioning. In contrast, hedonic "subjective" well-being (considered as an overall mental state rather than an emotion) emphasizes happiness, the pursuit of pleasure, and the evasion of pain (Deci et al., 2001). A study by Yoon et al. (2021) further affirmed hedonic well-being being linked to affective experiences, indicating hedonic well-being as an essential component to employee well-being, corroborating with a substantial amount of research indicating that Positive affect (PA) is beneficial for the healthy functioning of employees across a wide range of domains including work-life balance, job satisfaction, social relationships and mental and physical health whereas Negative affect (NA) the inverse.

Several pre-pandemic studies showed that a majority of employees' health and well-being were previously negatively impacted due to increased role and time demands, leading to an increase in the risk of physical and mental illnesses, and burnout (Walker et al., 2024). This was further exacerbated by the pandemic which triggered unprecedented and rapid shifts in family and work roles. According to Warhurst and Knox (2020) factors that directly influence employee well-being in all contexts of work and employment are mental health and job satisfaction. Individuals work for a considerable portion of their lives, making job satisfaction crucial to improving overall well-being and life satisfaction on an individual basis, resulting in increased employee productivity and lower staff turnover at an organisational level (Dishon-Berkovits et al., 2023). This is because of the optimistic emotional effect that job satisfaction contributes towards the overall evaluation of an employee's work experience (Perugini & Vladisavljević, 2019). Furthermore, maintaining a work-life balance is crucial for enhancing job satisfaction, which in turn positively impacts an employee's mental health and overall well-being (Botros, 2024).

In this study, we focus on exploring the interconnectedness of employee's perceptions of well-being and perceived organisational support, particularly in the context of reciprocity and mutual gains in relation to job-related well-being, which involves employees' perceptions of physical and emotional states (J. Wang et al., 2022) following a shift from high-intensity remote working to the traditional way of working.

Drawing on the Social Exchange Theory (SET), based on Blau's elaboration, this study explores employer-employee relationships in the context of well-being in relation to how reciprocal actions between employers and employees influence workplace dynamics and outcomes to drive mutual benefit. This thorough exploration seeks to broaden the conventional use of SET by revealing the

fundamental social interactions that form the basis of reciprocity between employers and employees, particularly regarding mental health and well-being.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

A widely held perspective on work is based on the idea of social exchange, which posits that employees engage with organisations to maximize their benefits. Employment relationships provide employees with important extrinsic benefits, such as compensation, as well as intrinsic resources, like fulfilling their needs for relatedness and competency (Ilies et al., 2023). Furthermore, while traditional research on psychosocial outcomes has primarily examined the consistent and mostly negative effects of work stressors on well-being and methods to alleviate these impacts, recent theoretical advancements based on the Job-Demands Resource (JDR) theory highlight how the interplay between job demands and resources can result in both work-related stress and motivation, as well as improved well-being. These developments consider the influence of daily changes in the workplace and strategies to manage them.

The primary focus of the social exchange theory is rooted in social relationships that involve actors (employers and employees) exchanging resources. Resources exchanged may be tangible (Employee Assistance Programmes) or intangible (support and emotion) followed by a behavioural response in exchange and subsequently determining the resulting relationship (Cropanzano et al., 2017). In employer-employee relationships, SET can be utilized in understanding by what means mutual actions between employers and employees impact workplace dynamics and outcomes.

Social behavior stems from an exchange process aimed at maximizing benefits, such as job satisfaction and productivity, while minimizing costs like absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover. This reciprocal relationship is critical, especially during times of uncertainty and transition, such as returning to the office from high intensity remote working. The variable driving exchanges in terms of reciprocity being the perceptions held by employees that their employers appreciate their contributions and are concerned about their well-being (Peña et al., 2024). The key drivers are embedded in employees' perceptions centered around fairness in the form of employers' decision-making processes and favourable organisational practices such as supportive work conditions (Eisenberger et al., 2019).

The successful reciprocity between employer and employee exchanges in relation to the expected outcomes by organisations is the continued assessment and agile response to the changes in

employee's needs to maintain a positive office setting, especially in the face of challenges and unpredictability.

2.2 Key Factors Influencing Employee Perceptions of Wellbeing

The current literature by Allan et al. (2018) refers to well-being from the perspective of the work as physical, mental and emotional health in addition to happiness of employees within an organisation.

From the perspective of SET, employers and employees participate in a reciprocal relationship. When employees perceive that their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being, they are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors in return.

This literature review aims to explore whether strong perceived organisational support correlates with improved mental health, job satisfaction, and overall well-being, resulting in mutual benefits for both employees and employers through positive exchanges. Employees experience improved well-being, while employers benefit from increased productivity, lower turnover, and a more engaged workforce. According to Formica and Sfodera (2022), aspects that influence overall employee well-being are mental health, work-life balance and job satisfaction amongst others.

2.2.1 Mental Health and well-being

Mental health ranges from wellness to illness and is more than just the absence of disease. It represents a state of well-being where individuals can reach their full potential, manage daily stressors effectively, and stay productive at work (World Health Organization: WHO, 2022).

The fundamental concept of mental health is consistent across heuristic literature frameworks, which describe the different states individuals may experience. Positive mental health, also known as hedonic well-being, is characterized by general happiness and life satisfaction. Mental health issues involve some distress and coping challenges but still allow for daily functioning. In contrast, disordered mental health is characterized by severe distress and an inability to cope, significantly impairing daily life activities.

Mental health problems are not a new concern, they were merely heightened by the pandemic. With growing public recognition of employee mental health concerns, numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the occupational factors that both predict and result from mental illness. According to Wiklund et al. (2019), mental well-being is essential for a happy and satisfying life, as it is strongly connected an individual's ability to work and maintain healthy relationships. This implies that should organisations fail to proactively address mental well-being they may face serious consequences, however, by empowering and offering employees mental health tools they may also

gain a competitive edge (Kelloway et al., 2022) depending on their approach in fostering mental well-being. In 2022, the WHO reported that one in eight people suffer from serious mental health issues. Additionally, mental health is a major cause of disability among the working population (World Health Organization: WHO, 2024). Organisations incur mental illness costs through absenteeism, turnover and burnout (Nordstrom & Tulibaski, 2019), which have substantial negative consequences on organisational operations. Social interactions can also be negatively altered because of stigmatization attached to individuals with mental health problems (Gilbert et al., 2023).

Black and Britt (2022), has shown occupational stress is a key factor influencing both positive and negative mental health and well-being in the workplace, with workload being a common occupational stressor (Tafvelin et al., 2022). This was further asserted by a study done by Pindek et al. (2022) emphasizing workload influences job satisfaction as it is positively associated with meaningfulness of work, with challenge stressors being related to positive job satisfaction because they provide psychological stimulation and hinderance stressors to negative job satisfaction because of under-stimulation. Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019), reported in his literature that hindrance stressors, like role conflict and commuting, can lead to disengagement. These stressors negatively impact employees' perceptions of work meaningfulness, as they hinder personal growth, skill development, and goal attainment (Afrahi et al., 2022). This is because hinderances are perceived as a fundamental source of stress since they don't provide any meaningful benefits to justify the effort and time spent to achieve goals (O'Brien & Beehr, 2019).

Moreover, challenge stressors can be exacerbated by time constraints and deadline pressure in the workplace which can threaten employees' ability to achieve their goals, leading to employees placing additional effort to manage this stressful situation (Baethge et al., 2019). However, Gallup's 2023 global workplace survey by Pendell (2024), illustrates a contradictory picture in relation to stress stimuli resulting in reduced engagement, highlighting that although employee's in hybrid working arrangements (45%) and fully remote workers (43%) reported the highest levels of daily stress versus onsite workers (38%), their engagement levels were higher than those of onsite colleagues (29%), hybrid workers (34%), and fully remote (32%). This was further affirmed by Chu and Chou (2024) indicating that despite stressors having a negative impact on job satisfaction, stressors can enhance meaningfulness of work, contributing to a sense of fulfillment, purpose, and personal growth which are considered advantageous for mental health and well-being, these are characterized as challenge stressors, such as workload and job complexity.

Magrizos et al., (2022) states despite working remotely being viewed in a positive light by numerous researchers as being associated with positive results, such as work engagement, organisational

commitment, performance, and decreased job dissatisfaction (Afota et al., 2024), this has the potential to also lead to undesired results such as work stress because of an employees' increase in engagement, personal sacrifice, and a sense of loyalty in the form of duty leading to individuals' depleting their psychological resources on work and foregoing other aspects of their lives like work-life balance.

Numerous studies in the broader literature have examined work interruptions as a source of occupational stress, which is common in modern workplaces because of the widespread use of technology and the increasing focus on collaboration and open-plan office designs (Puranik et al., 2019). Interruptions can take many forms, including emails, equipment failures or coworkers looking for someone to talk to, interfering with the individual's day which can substantially impact their work experiences. Keller et al. (2019) highlight that when interruptions occur, employees need to adjust their current actions to deal with the disruption, which demands extra effort to achieve task closure, resulting in a negative mood. Appel-Meulenbroek et al. (2020) further highlights that a noisy open plan office as an additional factor that is constantly confirmed as a cause of a hinderance to completing tasks, leading to employees feeling frustrated, stressed, and unhappy with their work environment. However, Samani and Alavi (2020) argue that the main purpose of physical closeness in the office environment is to encourage social interactions but highlighting that it's important to maintain a balance where individuals feel they have control over their environment to comfortably engage with others. Moreover, De Vaujany & Aroles (2018) further concedes that while silence is essential for productivity, it can also impede the social interactions that make collective workplaces, like open-plan offices, beneficial by promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing. Blagoev et al. (2019) further assert this by highlighting that although structured practices and routines like lunch, making coffee and dealing with office inconveniences can be perceived as time-consuming they enable interactions in a more organic manner.

In addition, another important aspect of urban lives that a number of authors have recognized due to its relationship with employee subjective well-being is commuting. Jang and Ko (2019), suggests that commuting is also frequently observed as a source of stress that negatively impacts quality of life, as a result, many commuters express a strong desire to shorten or eliminate commuting. The key factors affecting commute satisfaction are the length of the commute, the type of transportation used, the attribute of transport services, traffic levels, and the activities people engage fort the duration of their travel (F. Wang et al., 2024). The quality of commuting using public transport has been negatively exacerbated by the covid virus. According to Cho et al. (2023), with most employees travelling to their workplaces for extended hours in shared environments daily, frequent,

face-to- face interactions to and from work can raise concerns about their health and safety regarding exposure to viruses. Commuting is additionally associated with some financial expense (Schneider & Willman, 2018). Calderwood and Mitropoulos (2020) suggested that the stress from commuting can potentially carry over into the workplace, because of the physical and emotional reactions to commuting strain negatively impacting job performance and satisfaction. This notion was further affirmed by Chatterjee et al. (2019) highlighting that this attributed to the negative spill-over effect that long commuting has on fulfilling other activities in other life domains. However, both seminal and recent research suggests that commuting time does not always significantly affect an individual's well-being, as a longer commute can be offset by advantages such as higher salaries, better job prospects, lower housing expenses, and enhanced housing quality (Clark et al., 2019). Moreover, Jachimowicz et al. (2020) further accedes with this notion stating that commuting can serve as a valuable period for transitioning from the home to the work role, because employees who mentally prepare and clarify their work roles before arriving at the office can better manage the shift enhancing their job satisfaction, mental health, and overall wellbeing.

2.2.2 Work-Life balance

Work and family are crucial aspects of an employee's daily life, and recent studies have shown that these domains significantly influence each other (Chen et al., 2024). Work-family conflict (WFC) affects organisations all over the world and appears to be a natural part of contemporary society (Vaziri et al., 2019) necessitating supportive solutions.

According to Ford et al. (2023), work-life conflict arises when work strains interfere with non-work responsibilities, a well-known psychosocial stressor that has been worsened by the pandemic due to erratic work schedules (Bayrakdar & King, 2021). Non-standard working hours due to excessive workload that fail to adhere to the typical 9-to-5 have a potential to yield negative outcomes for both employees (Bolino et al., 2020) and employers; including increased psychological distress, lower organisational commitment and job satisfaction which can lead to attrition (Shockley et al., 2021). Moreover, most employees feel that due to the demanding nature of their role, there is not much they can do to address this dynamic, which places them at a risk of burnout (Kossek et al., 2024), given staying connected after work hours has become a typical aspect of modern employment (Van Zoonen et al., 2023), attributed to work-life balance intrusions in the form of digital advancements having an influence on where and the manner in which work is done has similarly exacerbated the blurring in work and life boundaries (Farivar et al., 2022). Although constant connectivity enables employees the autonomy to manage jobs tasks during their personal time, these fosters a “culture of immediacy” (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2019), which can burden

employees. However, Golden (2021) argues that employees do have the ability to manage work-life conflict by enforcing boundary control through segmentation or alternatively integration. Adisa et al. (2022) affirms this notion by highlighting employees with a low willingness of flexibility, whose preference is to separate their work and non-work domains as much as possible, through creating "micro-borders" and employing time-based strategies to create "controlled integration," encounter negative experiences. This was further asserted by E. Cho (2020), highlighting that employees might experience stress handling personal tasks during their work hours, causing them to juggle multiple responsibilities and frequently switch between different roles. However, a study done by Banu et al. (2023), counterargues the notion surrounding “controlled integration” of work and non-work demands based on prioritization and high levels of social support positively linked to affective well-being (Wood et al., 2022) which is beneficial in the context of work-life balance. The influence of support on work–family experiences differ based on the source of the support whether informal or formal (French & Shockley, 2020). This was further affirmed by Kossek, Perrigino, Russo, et al. (2022), suggesting that when supervisors support their employees’ personal needs, they also enhance positive work outcomes linked to increased job performance and lower employee turnover.

2.2.3 Job Satisfaction

During the pandemic, the mandatory transition to telecommuting allowed employees to mentally reassess the significance of work in their lives in terms of purpose, alignment to their values and meaningfulness (Savvides & Stavrou, 2021).

Seminal contributions have been made by Locke 1976, defining job satisfaction as a positive emotional state derived from individuals' evaluations of their job experiences, it acts as a measure of domain-specific subjective (hedonic) well-being within the context of the workplace (Weiss et al., 2022). Lene (2019) posits that employees assess their work by comparing it to expectations and standards developed through an adaptation process and comparison to past work experiences which shape their needs and desires, ultimately influencing how they evaluate their work. Moreover, previous research showed by Wright and Cropanzano (2000), links job satisfaction as a critical component of psychological well-being.

According to Tóth-Király et al. (2020), work motivation is driven intrinsically when employees deem their tasks inherently fulfilling and perceived as personally significant and in line with their values leading to positive subjective well-being or alternatively internal pressures, such as the need to avoid guilt or maintain self-esteem. Laaser and Karlsson (2021) also place emphasis on mutuality as an essential aspect for meaningful work, with shared ethics and the right structural support that

enable individuals to contribute to a shared objective with dignity and autonomy. However, seminal literature by Hackman & Oldham, 1975, postulates a contradictory finding in relation to the aspect of leader support, suggesting that the sense of meaning in work comes from how employees perceive the importance of their tasks and their impact on others as opposed to cues from leaders given their frequent absence (J. D. Nielsen & Colbert, 2024). Olafsen et al. (2024) furthermore places emphasis on developing an organisational culture that encourages employees to take more control over their work experiences which then drives employees to being proactive and adapt to their tasks and responsibilities since we are operating in a knowledge society. Jiang et al. (2020) affirms this notion, highlighting that autonomy is positively correlated with job satisfaction because of the likeliness to support employees in thriving in their roles. However, Clinton and Conway (2024) posit a counter-narrative arguing that long-term intrapersonal increases in job autonomy can act as a hindrance work-related stressor due to new uncertainties and responsibilities, leading to negative subjective well-being. Conversely, for interpersonal comparisons, the well-being benefits are significant since job autonomy is viewed as a stable resource.

Career development is also another factor contributing to job satisfaction that enhances their eudaimonic well-being, when organisations provide opportunities for growth and development, employee turnover intentions decrease (Yuan et al., 2021). This was further affirmed by the seminal literature of Rosso et al (2010) highlighting that career growth and development as a significant contributor towards the perceptions of employees of the meaningfulness of their work. Engaging in meaningful work can enhance mental health by providing life stability and fostering better stress management and mitigating burnout (Maunz & Glaser, 2024), and additionally improve psychological well-being as it is positively correlated to self-reported health and job satisfaction. When individuals find their work personally significant and valuable, this leads to deriving meaning from their work offering benefits to both the employee, including higher engagement, satisfaction, and motivation (Lysova et al., 2022) and employer, these experiences also enhance organisational success by fostering high-quality performance, creativity, and prosocial or citizenship behaviors (Bailey et al., 2018). Moreover, leaders can enhance employees' sense of work meaningfulness by demonstrating how their daily tasks align with and contribute to the company's broader goals and aspirations. Furthermore, leaders who discover their own sense of purpose can convey this to their employees by helping them understand how their daily tasks contribute to the company's overarching goals and aspirations (Lysova et al., 2018).

Moreover, job satisfaction is also enhanced by social connectedness (Murray & Pascuzzi, 2023). Many individuals are motivated through being valued and included in social groups which was

compromised by the transition to remote working which led to social isolation. Although most interactions remained during remote working, K. Allen et al. (2021) highlight the significance of face-to-face interactions, as fostering a sense of belonging, a human need that is associated with several mental, physical, social, economic, and behavioral outcomes related with eudaimonic well-being. Mergener and Trübner (2022) further asserts that remote working can negatively impact the quality of relationships with co-workers as reduced physical interactions can lead to decreased co-operation, trust and team spirit, which is essential for fostering a supportive work setting. However, regardless of face-to-face interactions being deemed to increase a sense of belonging and necessary to curb isolation, Birmingham et al. (2024) contends the negative implications of social interactions, that if they are dysfunctional void of a supportive environment, they can be conflictual because of perceived exclusion, discrimination and psychological hostility that can lead to anxiety and burnout contributing to job and emotional stress, with subsequent turnover.

2.3 RTO mental health and well-being perceptions: Influence on employers

According to Woods et al. (2019) the workplace can significantly influence employees' well-being, either positively or negatively making it crucial for organisations to identify work-related factors that impact well-being and understand the mechanisms that link these factors to overall employee health. Furthermore, given the emergence and evolution of new catastrophes at different types of macro levels, a need exists to for organisations to understand their influence and perceptions and experience of work and management responses (Hughes & Donnelly, 2022). This was asserted by Shi et al. (2023), highlighting that managing employee well-being and efficiency should be a crucial component of contemporary organisational strategies, as this places emphasis on people rather than resources as part of the preparation (Kim et al., 2022). Organisations that require employees to return to work must establish psychologically healthy work environments that lower stress levels and give workers means that can support their health and well-being. These can include work-life balance, employee involvement and wellness tools.

The end of the pandemic has led to several organisations globally mandating return to the office to restore pre-pandemic operations, however this transition poses several challenges. The primary challenge as highlighted by Baruch and Rousseau (2018) is increased flexibility anticipated by employees, organisations that acknowledge and value these new expectations can potentially decrease job dissatisfaction and increase loyalty to the organisation. This was further asserted by Charalampous et al. (2018) stating that flexible working arrangements benefit employees by reducing work-related stress and exhaustion while enhancing their overall emotional well-being. Kossek and Kelliher (2022) state that with the rapid advancement of technology enabling the

increase in knowledge worker roles to be more virtual and portable, employers should be granting employees the opportunity to negotiate personalized adjustments to their work setups. Furthermore, Kelliher et al. (2019) states the need for organisations to increase their adaptability to cater for the growing and changing diversity in work-life needs evident in the varied manner which employees expect their work and non-work flexibility to be structured, including non-traditional family structures which include non-parent employees but rather emphasis be placed on non-work aspects. This was further affirmed by Ferdous et al. (2021) asserting that organisations can leverage this as a strategic method to attract, retain, motivate employees and support their well-being.

The most successful companies are those that prioritize investing in their employees, requiring leaders to maintain positive relationships with their workers and inspire commitment, thereby boosting organisational success (Sun, 2019). In addition, leaders are essential in promoting work-life balance by addressing workplace stressors like work-life conflict. Leaders can achieve this by acknowledging diverse work schedules, setting clear response expectations, using appropriate communication channels, and planning activities to match team members' availability, thereby reducing conflicts (Barber et al., 2023). Furthermore, Wynn and Rao (2019) posit that leaders can provide informal flexibility to their teams, such as allowing time off for personal commitments. This type of ad hoc flexibility is sometimes integrated into formal company programs designed to equip managers with the required tools and encouragement to offer such flexibility.

It is important for organisations mandating RTO to cultivate a strong work-family culture that promotes family supportive behviours by leaders as this is crucial for aiding employees balance work and family responsibilities, benefiting both employees (higher intrinsic motivation) and organisations (low turnover) (Marescaux et al., 2020).

Drawing on the lens of the SET and principle of reciprocity, when organisations voluntarily provide family-friendly benefits to their employees which they perceive as beneficial for their well-being such as flexible work arrangements, employees tend to feel valued and supported, consequently feeling obligated to reciprocate by demonstrating greater commitment and loyalty to the organisation (Talukder, 2019). However, Kerman et al. (2021) argues that even if an organisation provides flexible working options, employees' perceptions of these options can vary, which can significantly enhance or undermine their well-being and reciprocity. If an employee's view work flexibility negatively, then organisations can expect different outcomes such as absenteeism, presenteeism (Karanika-Murray & Biron, 2019) and increased turnover.

An additional aspect that organisations need to take into consideration is understanding the key factors that make work meaningful. According to Vera et al. (2020), positive meaning is generated

by leader's emphasizing the advantages the organisation provides to its stakeholders, linking work outcomes to core values, and recognizing the long-term effects of their efforts. Job autonomy is linked to both work-life balance (T. D. Allen & French, 2023) and meaningfulness of work making it an imperative for organisations given it's associated with job satisfaction. Leaders can enhance the meaningfulness of employees' work by fostering positive emotions through promoting autonomy, expanding job responsibilities, and encouraging skill development.

Additionally, they can support employees during transitions by setting tiered goals and offering new responsibilities (Kayes et al., 2023). Furthermore, Garg and Sinha (2022) posit that organisations that allow employees to customize their jobs enhance the meaningfulness of their work by providing autonomy, expanding their knowledge, and improving their connections with stakeholders. This strategy can lead to higher job satisfaction, enhanced well-being, and effective performance.

According to Shoshan and Wehrt (2021), another emerging challenge for both employees and employers in the post-COVID era is social isolation. Today's volatile work environment has heightened the need for strong social relationships at work, necessitating organisations to understand the processes that promote connectedness to an organisation as this reciprocally beneficial for both employees and organisations (Kaltiainen et al., 2022). Morever, Greco et al. (2021) postulate that enhancing employees' connection to their organisation is crucial because it positively influences workplace attitudes and behaviors, including increased organisational citizenship, better employee well-being, and improved performance. Additionally, it helps reduce turnover intentions. Support from colleagues, supervisors, and the organisation is essential for employees' well-being and job performance (Zeijen et al., 2024). Employees build their sense of belonging to an organisation through various resources, encompassing everyday interactions and communications with supervisors and colleagues (Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2021). Organisations mandating employees to return to the office need to ensure that their working environment is conducive to support social connections which enhance commitment and trust in both office and remote work settings, reducing conflict and fostering loyalty and pro-social behaviors (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020). According to Jolly et al. (2020) social connections are vital for individuals' mental health and overall well-being as they enhance happiness and life satisfaction positively impacting work quality and productivity. A study by Pearce et al. (2023), furthermore asserts that physical setting influences collaboration, engagement, and commitment in the workplace, necessitating organizations requiring a return to the office to prioritize both the physical and social elements of workspace design to create environments that boost employee well-being and productivity.

Furthermore, the continuous increase in health costs has necessitated employers to seek methods for lowering well-being care costs. A popular approach is to expand the use of wellness programs, which aim to promote preventive care and reduce unhealthy behaviors (Jones et al., 2019). In addition, Proper and Van Oostrom (2019), place emphasis on the execution of mental health and well-being support by employers as a support measure to help employees improve their health outcomes, as these measures are linked to reduced presenteeism and offer a substantial return on investment. Peña et al. (2024) found that organisation wellness programs significantly enhance perceived organisational support. However, Galea et al. (2021) argues that although employers are becoming more aware of the importance of workplace wellbeing, implementing effective initiatives is challenging because wellness programs are often criticized for using one-size-fits-all approaches that target individual lifestyle changes and stress responses, rather than addressing the underlying structural conditions of work.

Moreover, leaders should advocate for mental health as a shared objective, engage employees in creating solutions, and provide personalized support (Bonaccio et al., 2019). Enhancing organisational understanding of specific mental health issues that commonly affect employees can reduce stigma and increase awareness of how to support employees with mental health challenges when they return to the office (Restubog et al., 2021). Moreover, the manner in which mental health is measured within organisations can affect how it is encouraged, endorsed, and normalized. Organisations need to tailor their strategies to foster employee loyalty by recognizing and addressing the needs of employees as this enhances job satisfaction, psychological safety, trust and organisation citizen behaviours (Itzchakov & Grau, 2020). Consistent communication and a sincere dedication to employee well-being are crucial for cultivating and sustaining loyalty (R. C. Ford et al., 2022). Furthermore, Avey and Holley (2024) posits that leaders should identify the root causes of employee disengagement and customize solutions to address individual needs.

2.4 RTO mental health and well-being perceptions: Influence on policymakers

2.4.1 Employee policies : mental health and well-being promoters

Prior to the pandemic, work and life boundaries have always been a challenge for employees, despite the existence of work-life flexibility policies within organisations (Kossek, 2022). This is attributed to an individual's subjective perception of workplace flexibility altering over a period of time in response to various factors including organisational policies, necessitating policy makers to attain knowledge of individuals' needs in the context of the organisational culture (Boccoli et al., 2024). Such as, Microsoft and other leading global employers , in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, are adjusting their employment policies to improve employees' capacity to customize

flexible working arrangements (Kossek & Kelliher, 2022). Furthermore, Kossek et al. (2024) posits that as workplace dynamics evolve due to greater diversity, family needs, and technological advancements creating constant demand, policymakers must adapt their organisations policies to future work trends.

Moreover, this includes adopting flexible policies that enable employees to disengage from work outside office hours since connectivity after hours has become a standard aspect of modern work (Nurmi & Hinds, 2020). The implication for policymakers necessitates implementing policies which are considered to cater for individual abilities to manage boundaries and the specific needs of different worker groups as one-size-fits-all policies for employees are unlikely to maximize job satisfaction (Bech-Wysocka et al., 2024). In addition, according to Fritz and Taylor (2019), while having policies in place shows employees that the organisation values their well-being, it is the enforcement and adoption of these policies by leadership that truly embeds them into the organisational culture.

2.4.2 Employee policies : mental health and well-being hinderance

Understanding the different interpretations of collaboration between employers and employees enables policy makers and practitioners to identify potential conflicts arising from overlooked values and assumptions, ensuring that stakeholders have a shared vision of collaboration which is essential for establishing and maintaining effective collaborative relationships (Bray et al., 2019). For instance, a recent study by Thébaud and Pedulla (2022) has shown that while work-family policies such as parental leave and flexible working arrangements have the potential to improve gender equality both at work and at home, their actual usage remains low and differs significantly across various workplaces. This limited adoption, more common among women, which is influenced by workplace norms that penalize policy use, and the financial costs involved.

Policymakers and practitioners implementing policies need to ensure that policies are sustainable, as they are deemed fundamental for improving working conditions and aiding organisations create a more stable and positive work environment, aligning with broader ethical and sustainable business objectives (Aust et al., 2019). For instance, although policies around mandatory vaccinations necessitated HR professionals and employers to adhere to health regulations to ensure that employees meet vaccination requirements (Collings et al., 2021), this had a detrimental effect on other employees' well-being from an ethical perspective.

Organisations have the ability to achieve a dynamic capability by adapting their "operating processes through a relatively stable activity dedicated to process improvements" (Zollo & Winter, 2002, p.340), this necessitates policymakers and practitioners to adopt an agile and collaborative approach in

designing policies as opposed to attempting to control behaviours of employees as this can pose as a hindrance to organisational effectiveness.

In conclusion, organisations mandating RTO should ensure effective people management by engaging and supporting employees, treating them as assets, and leading by example as this leads to positive outcomes. Furthermore, trust through transparent communication by employers and listening to employees, and fair treatment in rewards and recognition are crucial for fostering engagement and commitment (B. Schneider, 2020).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study investigates the complex interplay between employee wellbeing, perceived organisational support, and job satisfaction as employees transition back to the office. The following research questions will guide this exploration:

Research Question 1: What are the key factors that employees perceive as wellbeing in the context of returning to the office?

Identifying and understanding the factors that contribute to employee perceptions of wellbeing is critical for organisations. The study aims to highlight the specific needs and expectations employees have when returning to the office, setting the stage for fostering a supportive work environment.

Research Question 2: How do these perceptions affect employees' social exchange with their employers?

The concept of SET posits that relationships are formed based on the perceived gains and losses of interactions. When employees feel that their wellbeing needs are being addressed, they tend to develop a greater sense of loyalty and dedication to their organisation. Conversely, if employees feel unsupported, it may lead to feelings of disengagement. This research question will explore how perceptions of wellbeing shape the dynamics of social exchange, impacting employees' attitudes, motivation, and overall job satisfaction. Through understanding this correlation, organisations can better manage employee expectations and foster a more positive and reciprocal work environment.

Research Question 3: How do these perceptions influence the role policymakers play in supporting these perceptions to foster a positive return to the office experience?

Policymakers have a critical role in shaping workplace standards and practices that enhance employee wellbeing. This research question will investigate how employees' perceptions of wellbeing can inform policy decisions at an organisational level. For instance, policies that mandate flexible work arrangements and mental health support can significantly influence employees' experiences upon returning to the office. The findings will provide insights into how policymakers can align their strategies with employee needs, ultimately creating an environment that supports positive experiences and increases overall job satisfaction.

Addressing these research questions, the study aims to illuminate the multifaceted relationship between employee perceptions of wellbeing, social exchange dynamics, and the role of policymakers. This comprehensive understanding will not only contribute to academic discourse but also offer practical recommendations for employers and policymakers seeking to enhance employee satisfaction and wellbeing in the evolving workplace landscape.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology utilized by the researcher, including the chosen methodological approach, data collection method, sampling, data analysis techniques, and limitations. A research design offers a structure for gathering and evaluating data (Bell et al., 2020).

4.2 Choice of Methodology

4.2.1 Methodological approach

The researcher utilized the mono-qualitative research methodology to enhance understanding in the fields of management and psychology. The research study is exploratory in nature as it sought to explore and gain insights into the identified gaps on the outlined topic, derived from the research questions in Chapter 3, as a real issue faced by employees and organisations mandating a return to the office. This was due to the limited current knowledge about the phenomenon (Cissé & Rasmussen, 2022) concerning how the pandemic changed perceptions of mental health and well-being among employees.

A deductive approach was utilized in this study because of time constraints in completing the research. This approach involved a “top-down” analysis where the researcher confirmed or rejected the findings based on the SET (Bell et al., 2020). This method was chosen over the inductive theory, which involves building a theory from the meanings of identified patterns and relationships in the collected data set, a process that can be time-consuming (Sirisilla & Sirisilla, 2023).

The study is grounded in social constructs, focusing on in-depth variables and factors related to the context. It considers that individuals differ due to their circumstances and times, leading to various social realities such as mental health and well-being, especially with organisations mandating a return to the office post-pandemic. This understanding led the researcher to select interpretivism as the epistemological approach for the research (Bell et al., 2020).

4.2.2 Unit of analysis

In the process of designing a research project, a unit of analysis needs to be considered because this is the entity that the researcher aims to base the outcome of their research, which is determined by the research question (DeCarlo, 2018). According to Hasan (n.d.) this can be an individual, groups of people, objects, geographical units.

The study was focused on the perceptions and outcomes of employees in relation to mental health and well-being, so the unit of analysis was at an individual level, employee.

4.3 Data collection method

According Bell et al. (2020), several commonly used research instruments are utilized by researchers for data collection in qualitative research with the commonly used being interviews, focus groups and observation. Interviews may be unstructured with open-ended questions on a topic whereby the interviewer adapts to a response, whilst structured interviews consist of a predetermined number of questions that will be asked to every selected participant.

4.3.1 Research Instrument

The research instrument used by the researcher for this qualitative study for data collection was structured interviews with open-ended questions for extracting insights and collating them into themes. The method followed by the researcher for this study involved prior preparation of an interview guide (Appendix A) with semi-structured questions grouped by themes which were linked to the research questions, in relation to RTO mental health and well-being post the pandemic.

The interview guide was utilized as a tool to guide the focus of the semi-structured interviews, enabling a systematic line of thinking and subsequent questioning (Bird, 2016), given the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews can lead to the interview session being derailed. This assisted the researcher in following a structured and coherent manner that excluded ambiguity coupled with in-depth questions that were designed to enable more comprehensive responses. The use of conducting semi-structured interviews for this study was effective for the researcher due to its adaptability and ease of use whilst having the ability to obtain unclear components of the primary data.

Furthermore, the questions included in the interview guide were based on questions asked by previous researchers with studies including similar topics.

4.3.2 Data gathering process

According to Tessier (2012), when conducting interviews as a data collection method, choices need to be made on how to “record” the data. With the evolution of technology, researchers can utilize tools that enable both video and transcript recordings.

The researcher began collecting data after receiving approval from the GIBS Ethical Clearance committee (Appendix B). The data collection for this study involved the researcher scheduling interviews for a duration of one hour with the selected participants using a virtual tool called Microsoft

Teams, as this was the preference of most participants because of proximity and suitable time availability to conduct the interviews. The questions from the interview guide were not shared with the participants before the semi-structured interviews, this approach ensured that participants' responses were spontaneous and genuine, allowing for a more authentic and insightful data collection process.

Given the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews, follow-up questions were posed to gain additional clarity. All interviews were recorded in audio formats, and the transcriptions downloaded and saved in a password protected folder.

4.3.3 Sampling method and size

Several types of sampling techniques like purposive sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling and theoretical sampling are associated to qualitative research methodology (Bell et al., 2020).

The purposive sampling technique was utilized for this study to gather the primary data because of the suitability of the technique in relation to sampling a specific subset of people to gain an understanding of the unique variations more deeply pertaining to the context (Stewart, 2024) of employee perceptions regarding mental health and well-being.

According to Stewart (2024), unlike probability sampling methods, purposive sampling is deemed to be more feasible in terms of time and resources because it doesn't need a large sample size but still provides rich, relevant and diverse data. Moreover, this method is particularly effective when the researcher seeks to gain in-depth insights into a specific phenomenon, in this case the perceptions of employee mental health and well-being in the context of returning to the office post intense remote working.

The researcher identified approximately 18 key individuals within their existing professional and personal network that fit the criteria of the study for the collection of the primary data; employees who are between the ages of 30 – 45, at a Specialist level within their organisations, reporting to mid-level senior management, employed across multinational or international companies within four specific industries namely, automotive, banking and media mandating a return to the office. The researcher then contacted the individuals within their network, explaining the purpose of the study and the criteria for participant selection, with interested participants forming the sample of the study.

The study had an initial target of a minimum of 15 participants to be interviewed, however, the final sample size achieved was exactly 15 participants due to availability and time constraints of the suitable participants for this study specifically within the identified industries. Moreover, given the

study is utilizing the purposive sampling technique, 15 participants are deemed adequate for gathering valuable insights.

A majority of the interviews took an average of 40 minutes. Table 1 provides a summary of the interview participants, their titles, tenure of office and the duration of their interview.

Participant	Title	Tenure of office (Years)	Length of interview
Participant 1	HR specialist	10	26 minutes
Participant 2	Business Analyst	3	40 minutes
Participant 3	Commercial Analyst	15	32 minutes
Participant 4	CX specialist	4	31 minutes
Participant 5	Commercial Credit Controller	20	55 minutes
Participant 6	IT Business Consultant (Retail)	2	31 minutes
Participant 7	IT Business Consultant (SAP)	6	20 minutes
Participant 8	Internal Risk Audit	2	25 minutes
Participant 9	eCommerce Operations Specialist	3	27 minutes
Participant 10	IT Business Consultant	4	35 minutes
Participant 11	Data scientist	2	49 minutes
Participant 12	Senior CVM specialist	4	30 minutes
Participant 13	Regional Sales specialist	5	35 minutes
Participant 14	Specialist role unknown	3	20 minutes
Participant 15	Senior Business and process Analyst	5	25 minutes

Table 1: List of participants (Author's own)

4.3.4 Data analysis techniques

Bell et al. (2020) posit that there are many approaches to analyzing qualitative data. The thematic analysis approach is utilized in this study due to time and cost constraints. The researcher identified common themes from the semi-structured interviews, to determine whether they were related to the study's themes or not, to contribute meaningfully to the various schools of thought discussed in the literature review.

The open coding method was applied by the researcher in analyzing the data by utilizing the ATLAS.ti tool. This is because open coding is an integral part of the qualitative analysis process that aids researchers to conduct analysis on and draw inferences from qualitative data, allowing the researcher to remain "open" to the various possible outcomes of the meaning in the data so that representations of meaning contained in the study are as close to the data as possible (Sybing, 2024).

The researcher performed a thematic analysis within the framework to design a qualitative research study: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Step 1 - Compiling: The initial step followed by the researcher entailed finding meaningful answers that relate to the research questions based on the responses from the transcripts. The researcher transcribed the data into meaningful information to become accustomed with the data which assisted the researcher with a holistic understanding of the data in its entirety.

Step 2 - Disassembling: The researcher then separated the data post compiling and organizing it. The data was broken down into meaningful groups. The researcher then proceeded to coding the raw data into usable data through identifying concepts that are linked or to some degree interconnected to the research questions.

Step 3 - Reassembling: The researcher then mapped the codes to each concept and grouped them together contextually to create themes, which capture something important about the data in relation to the research question, representing some level of patterned response or meaning within the dataset.

Step 4 – Interpretation: The researcher then derived analytical conclusions from the data presented as codes and then themes. Step 1 – 3 of the frameworks involved understanding by the researcher because regardless of the sequential order of the data analysis, interpretation does not have to come after the completion of investigation.

Step 5 - Conclusions: The researcher then derived answers to the research questions or objective of the investigation based on thematic maps.

Theoretical saturation occurs when further data collection no longer reveals new themes or insights, and all conceptual categories have been fully explored, identified, and completed (Saunders et al., 2017). As the researcher continuously compared the data during the coding process, the number of new codes identified decreased. The researcher started finding saturation of this study from the 12th interview, where no new themes were identified. Please refer to figure 1 below.

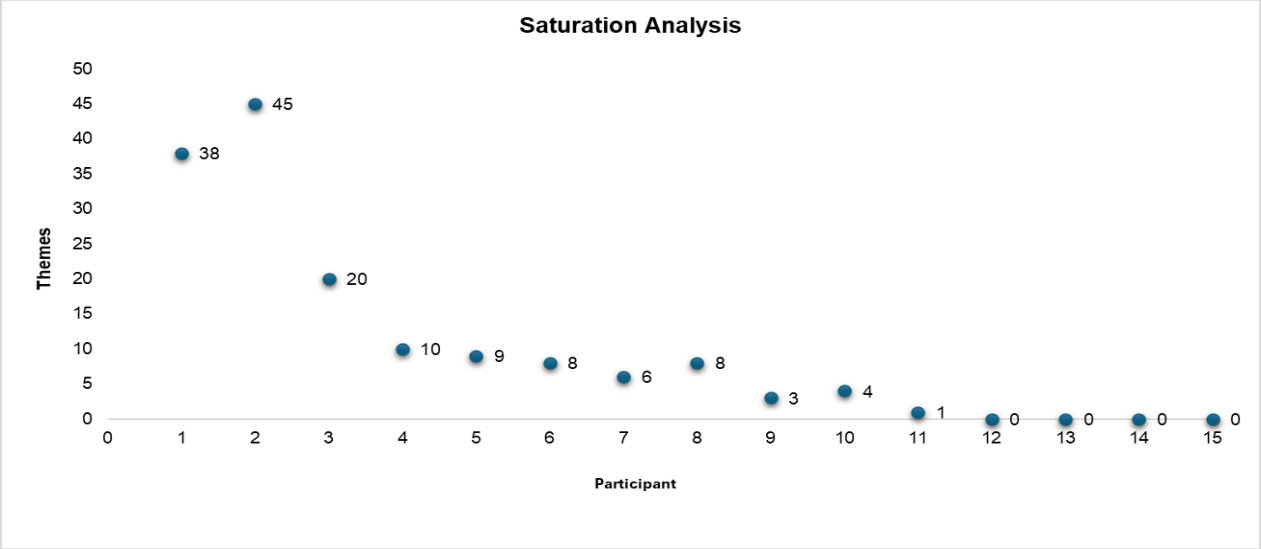


Figure 1: Author's own

4.3.4.1 Data analysis technique challenges

The researcher was a new user of the ATLAS.ti tool so understanding how to navigate the software, utilizing its features and applying them effectively was overwhelming. Moreover, managing and analyzing the large volumes of data across the different data sets was time-consuming.

4.3.5 Research quality and rigour

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, the researcher did not share the research questions with participants prior to the interviews and utilized open-ended questions in the research guide, this maintained researcher neutrality (Daniel, 2019). Furthermore, to minimize bias during the interviews, the researcher utilized a combination of methods such as iterative questioning and continuous self-reflection. In relation to iterative questioning, the researcher asked follow-up questions to clarify and deepen their understanding of responses to ensure that the responses were accurately captured and interpreted. The researcher additionally engaged in continuous self-reflection during the different stages of the interviewing processes to examine their own beliefs, values, and biases throughout the research process, thereby reducing the impact of personal biases on the study's outcomes.

In combining these strategies, the researcher was able to foster a more rigorous and trustworthy research process, which further enhances the credibility of the research.

4.4 Ethical considerations

4.4.1 Institutional standards

The researcher guaranteed that the applicable institutional standards, ethical norms and values when conducting research which involves living participants was taken into consideration (Mirza et al., 2023). The researcher abided by the GIBS ethics and standards outlined in the purple pages, which are aligned to the research ethical norms and values.

The researcher did not make use of material incentives to persuade participation. However, in some instances where further information was sought by the participant, communicated the benefits and use of the research to the participant as a form of motivation for partaking in the research.

4.4.2 Ethical norm and values

4.4.2.1 Informed consent & Anonymity of Participants

To comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), which aims to safeguard personal information processed by both public and private bodies, the researcher informed participants about the intended use of the collected insights and assured them of their anonymity before seeking their consent. The researcher only requested participants' email addresses to arrange interviews via Microsoft Teams as this was the only personal data required for the purposes of the research. To ensure data security, anonymity was maintained by referring to individuals as "Participant n" based on the interview sequence, additionally with no details linking participants to their organisations. After receiving signed consent forms, the researcher scheduled interviews according to participants' availability.

The researcher prior to conducting the interviews and collecting the data sought voluntary consent in the form of a “researcher-participant contract” from the participants, with manual or electronic signatures in the form of consent emailed it to the researcher. The consent form was extracted from the GIBS purple page on the GIBS blackboard portal (Blackboard, n.d.)**,** which outlined the purpose and objectives to avoid deception. The researcher additionally communicated assurance to the participants in relation to maintaining their anonymity regarding the data collected as well as its storage (Appendix C).

The research focused on employees’ perceptions across distinct unrelated industries based on the criteria outlined in the sampling method, therefore the unit of analysis was at an individual level, employee, deeming consent from a specific organisation unnecessary for the purposes of the research.

4.4.2.2 Transcripts and recordings

The researcher sought prior consent from the participants before recording all the sessions utilizing Microsoft Teams as the interviewing platform. Once all the transcripts were downloaded the researcher replaced all the Participant's names with the corresponding Participant naming convention, "Participant n" to ensure anonymity and additionally deleted the Microsoft Teams profile pictures of participants where applicable, the researcher then proceeded to saving the Microsoft Teams audios in a secure location.

4.4.2.3 Storage of data

The data is stored on a cloud-based platform, namely OneDrive as backup and storage for a minimum of 10 years. The researcher additionally saved the transcripts on an external hard drive and placed it in a secure location.

4.5 Limitations

The researcher conducted the study within a limited period of time and inference was drawn from a small sample size which can potentially lead to validity and reliability issues in relation to the study (Sybing, 2024).

Since all the participants reside in South Africa, regardless of them working in distinct multinational and international organisations their responses are limited to the context of their lived experiences within the South African context.

Additionally, the research methodology employed purposive sampling, where the researcher selected the sample size. This approach can introduce inherent subjectivity, potentially resulting in biased or one-sided data. Moreover, samples chosen based on specific criteria or characteristics may not fully capture the diversity and variability of the broader population (Sybing, 2024). The study also depends on self-reported data from employees, which can be influenced by biases such as social desirability or recall bias. Participants might give responses they think are expected or may not accurately recall past events, potentially impacting the data's reliability.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The researcher in this study conducted 15 semi-structured interviews as a form of qualitative method research design utilizing a thematic data analysis approach (refer to Chapter 4) to explore employee perceptions of mental health and well-being through understanding their lived experiences in the context of the traditional 9-to-5 workplace given their mandated transition to the office. Given the conversational nature of qualitative research, the researcher was able to maintain clear boundaries between what participants share and what the researcher discloses.

Furthermore, the ability of the researcher to maintain a formal yet relaxed relationship with participants resulted in high levels of engagement from participants since the research topic is timely and highly relevant to participants. Most participants were willing to share their experiences and showed significant interest in the topic. This engagement enriched the data collection process, providing deeper insights and more meaningful contributions to the study.

The sample size comprised mostly of females, in terms of gender (n=8, 53%), across three distinct industries namely, media and entertainment, automotive and banking (see Table 1).

Gender	**Participants (N=15)**
Male	7 (47%)
Female	8 (53%)
Industry	
Media and Entertainment	6 (40%)
Automotive	4 (27%)
Banking	5 (33%)

Table 2: Demographics of participants (Authors own)

Participant	**Gender**	**Company**
Participant 1	Male	Company 1
Participant 2	Female	Company 2
Participant 3	Female	Company 3
Participant 4	Male	Company 4
Participant 5	Male	Company 5
Participant 6	Male	Company 6
Participant 7	Female	Company 7
Participant 8	Female	Company 8
Participant 9	Female	Company 9

Participant 10	Female	Company 10
Participant 11	Male	Company 11
Participant 12	Male	Company 12
Participant 13	Female	Company 13
Participant 14	Male	Company 14
Participant 15	Female	Company 15

Table 3: Gender profile of participants (Author's own)

Method:

The researcher followed a systematic data analysis process to generate codes, themes and sub-themes that relate to the research questions utilizing ATLAS.ti (as discussed in Chapter 4)

The researcher then listened to the recordings and structured the data generated in the transcripts to ensure that that they are an accurate reflection of the participants' responses, as this is critical for finding credible and meaningful answers to the research questions.

The next step was followed by disassembling of the data through a process of coding insightful responses which are relevant to the research questions, grouping them into themes and sub-themes based on the research questions.

This approach enabled the researcher to derive multiple codes (similar codes merged), 10 sub-themes mapped to each identified theme (4), with each theme linked to a research question.

5.2 Presentation of the research findings

The presentation of these findings is organized by each sub-theme linked to a theme that is mapped to a research question (as discussed in Chapter 3). The researcher will analyze and discuss each theme based on the applicable sub-themes utilizing direct extracts from each script as supporting evidence.

Research questions	What are the key factors that employees perceive as well-being in the context of returning to the office (9-to-5)?	How do these perceptions affect employees' social exchange with their employers?	How do these perceptions influence the role policymakers play in supporting these perceptions to foster a positive return to the office experience?
Themes	• Workplace stressors • Well-being perceptions	RTO perceived organisational support	RTO Organisational policies

Sub-Themes	• **Workplace stressors** - Commuting to work - Disruptions at work - Job demands and time pressure (workload) - Work-Life conflict • **Employee mental-health and well-being perceptions** - Work-life balance - Job satisfaction	- Perceived Organisational Support - Organisational Culture and Leader support	- Employee policies : mental health and well-being promoters - Employee policies : mental health and well-being hinderance

Table 4: A summary of research questions, related themes and sub-themes (Author's own)

5.3 Research Question 1: What are the key factors that employees perceive as wellbeing in the context of returning to the office?

5.3.1 Sub Research Question 1 – What factors do employees perceive as workplace stressors (Theme 1) ?

Sub-Themes	Occurrence of the sub-theme
Commuting to work	19
Disruptions at work	16
Job demands and time pressure (workload)	56
Work-Life conflict	76

Table 5: Occurrence of workplace stressors (Author's own)

5.3.1.1 Theme: Workplace stressors

5.3.1.1.1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work

The underlying contributor of this theme as a workplace stressor was found to be associated with both negative mental health and financial well-being by participants. The interview data analysis suggests a significant link between high stress levels and commuting to the office, which negatively impacts mental health even before starting work.

Some participants mentioned concerns around time management for the completion of tasks and negative financial well-being due to commuting regardless of the mode of transport, given their organisations don't have consideration for commuting time.

Negative implications of commuting
"constantly stressed about having enough money for the last week of the month" **(Participant 2)**
"… travel 70 kms just to get to the office in a single trip …. So to get to the office at 8:00, I literally have to be out of bed by 04h30 and by 05h30, I need to ensure that I'm out of the house…poor sleep quality" **(Participant 5)**
"long-distance public transport commuting costs just over R2500, whereas using my own car can inflate to R6000 a month" **(Participant 5)**.
the workload remains constant, but commuting time is not considered… mental health is affected because you are tired from traffic" **(Participant 7)**
"*workload increased, but now you spend an hour in traffic"* **(Participant 13)**.
"…obviously means that you now need to factor in time to get ready to drive, to work. There's traffic, you get to the office and I feel like productivity levels when you get to the office, aren't as high as it would be when you are at home" **(Participant 15)**

These financial concerns, combined with the physical and mental toll of commuting, create a compounded negative effect on overall well-being. The stress of managing both time and money for commuting exacerbates the mental strain, leading to a significant impact on participants' mental health.

5.3.1.1.2 Sub-Theme: Disruptions at work

The analysis of the interview data revealed participants deem workplace disruptions, in the form of intermittent social interactions, noisy office space and random unplanned requests, significantly contributes to their stress levels as they inhibit them from completing assigned tasks which will lead into a spillover into their non-work life domain.

Intermittent social interactions

Four participants noted that colleagues often engage in non-work-related informal conversations during work hours, which disrupts their focus.

Negative implications of intermittent social interactions
"People will randomly come to you and want to chit-chat, distracting you during your eight to five when you're in the office" **(Participant 3)**

"People coming and talking to you, restricting your time, your focus time" **(Participant 4)**
"the chit-chat does take time sometimes, cause I end up having to stop doing my work just to like chat to someone. So obviously that does increase my stress in terms of having to meet deadlines" **(Participant 8)**
"*being in the office, the stress that I have is that you don't get to the work done because you're always trying to catch up to with people."* **(Participant 11)**

Open plan office layout (Noisy workspace)

In addition to these social distractions, the open-plan office layout was identified as another significant stressor. Several participants found this environment highly disruptive due to the elevated noise levels, which negatively impact their concentration. Moreover, the constant need to regain focus after interruptions not only affects productivity but also contributes to a cumulative sense of stress and frustration among employees.

In addition to these social distractions, the open-plan office layout was identified as another significant stressor. Several participants found this environment highly disruptive due to the elevated noise levels, which negatively impact their concentration. Moreover, the constant need to regain focus after interruptions not only affects productivity but also contributes to a cumulative sense of stress and frustration among employees.

Negative implications of open plan office layout
"… environment at times you find that because it's an open plan, it can be a bit noisy, and your concentration levels are disturbed." **(Participant 3)**.
So my stress levels increase quite a bit when I can't focus and concentrate and then I lose traction, need to recover, recoup and then start again. So, by me losing time doing that, I'm also losing time in actually doing my work." **(Participant 10)**.

However, a distinct finding by a participant highlighted those occasional social interactions and an open-plan office improved their mental health and well-being, particularly after experiencing social isolation while working remotely.

Positive implications of disruptions at work
"I love to be in the office. First of all, rather than working from home because I get to interact with the people" **(Participant 1)**
"...get to be with my colleagues instead of me being home alone" **(Participant 1)**

Random unplanned requests

Furthermore, one participant highlighted that returning physically to the office leads to random requests from colleagues, shifting their focus from planned tasks which now increases workload and necessitates working additional time to meet both planned and unplanned tasks.

Negative implications of random unplanned requests
"... priorities that just come without having you blend them from into your Sprint … because you won't be able to finish whatever that you've planned." **(Participant 6)**

The stress of attempting to navigate workplace distractions whilst maintaining good working relationships with peers and stakeholders can lead to a negative impact on the overall well-being of employees.

5.3.1.1.3 Sub-Theme: Job demands and time pressure (Workload)

Several of the participants identified the demands of their job roles and the associated workload as the primary factors negatively impacting their well-being.

The data analysis from the interviews revealed that company downsizing has led to increased workloads due to participants having to stretch or upskill themselves to ensure completion of tasks that impact their outputs.

Negative implications of downsizing
"a lot of retrenchments mean the workload becomes a bit more" **(Participant 7)**
"upskill myself and learn how to basically execute that bit of element that was executed by somebody who has retrenched that basically assisted me in achieving my KPI" **(Participant 5)**
"*under resourced, so it's almost like you have to stretch yourself beyond your capacity"* **(Participant 9)**

Moreover, a predominant finding from the data analysis pointed out a recurring theme among participants, which was the constant expectation from leaders to complete tasks and meet deadlines within strict or unrealistic timelines. This relentless pressure to deliver results at all costs, to meet company expectations, leads to anxiety and burnout, severely affecting both mental and physical health.

Negative implications of completion of tasks
"… I think mostly it's just the pressure to like, deliver" **(Participant 2)**
"The day if sort of restricted into the 8 to 9 hours that are scheduled within the day" **(Participant 4)**
"We back to basically balancing your your daily outputs in that short space period of time in that 8 hours that you have and ensuring that you actually deliver on those" **(Participant 5)**
"… workload, the time to finish it 'cause when you in the office, I guess you try to finish what you can" **(Participant 7)**
"meeting deadlines and with so much, just going on at work here, there's just multiple deadlines" **(Participant 9)**
"anxiety from not being able to deliver or meet expectations" **(Participant 12)**
"You start getting anxiety about when is this meeting finishing and you're not listening. Two, you start getting very stressed because the day becomes short all of a sudden because 4:30/ five o'clock is already around the corner" **(Participant 13)**
"The time period that we're giving to actually complete that work" **(Participant 14)**
"no day is the same at my orgnanisation, like I I honestly think cause and at that point I was working on quite critical projects. It meant that when I get to work, I'm fully engaged from 8 to 5" **(Participant 15).**

Some participants have highlighted that this often results in feelings of incompetency and self-doubt when feeling overwhelmed with high workload leading to decreased job satisfaction.

Negative implications of demanding job roles
"I think mostly it's just the pressure to like, deliver. I can almost, you know, like fall into and what do you call this imposter syndrome?" **(Participant 2)**

"one procrastinates, or they feel that the job that they in is not for them. And there's no job satisfactory high levels of stress" **(Participant 13)**

These findings emphasize the significant impact of job role demands due to workload on employee well-being, particularly in a 9-to-5 office setting where the pressure to meet deadlines is constant. This environment can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and burnout.

5.3.1.1.4 Sub-Theme: Work-Life conflict

The interview data analysis indicated that being physically present in the office necessitates working beyond the standard 8 to 9 hours to stay current with tasks, which contributes to work-life conflict. Moreover, some participants further stated how additional workload that spills over into their personal life has compromised family responsibilities, forcing individuals to choose between work and family as described below.

Negative implications of lack of organisation and leader support
"…sending your sister to go and attend to your child beacuse instead of you going because you feel like this meeting is important" **(Participant 2)**
"Unfortunately, in our line of work, you have to put in those extra hours to keep up." **(Participant 5)**
"returning to the office has created a little bit of animosity, when the family would have a request that is not really over the top because you don't have that flexibility anymore, you tend to reject those things. Now you have been seen as someone who actually doesn't wanna be helping out within the family, that hinders on your well-being, because now you're like, what do I put first bread on the table or do I go see my family and attend to them?" **(Participant 13)**

Several participants with children who had previously integrated their work and non-work domains during remote working by establishing routines, are experiencing a disruption in these routines increasing dissatisfaction, anxiety and constant worrying about their child's well-being. Moreover, participants with extended family member responsibilities that were able to take care of their loved ones at close proximity, returning to the office has led to support from a distance because of proximity constraints.

"…seeing the school hasn't opened. They are cleaning up and then she has to sort of, like, sit there while they're cleaning up and only when the classes are ready then she goes in. Seeing that really upset me in a way because I was like, the child now has to be here very early because I have to get to the office by 7:30" **(Participant 2)**
"Is the baby OK?" **(Participant 3)**
"2nd shit begins" **(Participant 4)**
"In my case, my mother is literally difficult to get through a telephonically, so me having to sit here knowing that she's got blood pressure and stroke issues and being here throughout the day, not knowing how she's doing, how she's keeping up, if anything, that increased the levels of anxiety to the roof." **(Participant 5)**

Several participants also revealed that technology in the form laptops and emails on their mobile devices contributes to their inability to disconnect because they have to bring their laptops home and continue working preventing them from even with achieving their personal goals due to workload.

Negative implications of mobile devices
"Unless they say you must leave your laptop at the office, you end up working extra hours at home to finish tasks" **(Participant 8)**
"you come back with your laptop, unfortunately you don't leave the office and you still open it during the time that you're supposed to be spending with family **(Participant 12)**
"*unfortunately some of us have our emails on our phones… when that e-mail comes in, you immediately jump and say let me solve this because I want to have a peaceful day. But now you're forgetting that you're actually saying to the organisation, you have access to me all the time. Anytime that you want, which unfortunately is wrong.* **(Participant 13**).

An extreme case involved a participant who had to relocate to another town, leaving their family behind due to changes in remote working policies, which completely disrupted their work-life balance.

Negative implications of ambiguous remote working policies
"… look for a flat in Pretoria, leave the family behind in polokwane, become like a migrant worker. You incur additional costs, you know. Do you know the work life balance of coming home? Helping out the kids with homework, especially when you're in my line of work, when you've got

so much flexible time, you can afford to go to children's plays and those sort of things" **(Participant 14)**

Some participants said that they managed their work-life balance by intentionally disconnecting despite the workload upon having returned to the office predominantly due to the inflexibility of their leaders in promoting work-life balance or a conscious decision to separate work from spilling over into their non-work domain.

Positive implications of RTO
"*Anything outside that I am not bothered because I believe it's a give and take relationship. If somebody is not pulling through, I'm not gonna pull through unless it affects me, so I do very minimal"* **(Participant 3)**
"… my time is my time" **(Participant 14)**
"… me being at the office, so for me to kind of like once I close my laptop that's it" **(Particpant 15)**

Summary of findings – 9-to-5 workplace stressors

The overall findings imply that returning to the office has negatively impacted most employees' mental health, physical and financial well-being. Employees are required to work extra hours to keep up with tasks not completed within the 9-to-5 office hours, which compromises family responsibilities negatively. The inability to disconnect from work due to laptops and emails on mobile devices and excessive workload further exacerbates the issue. The disruption of established routines has caused anxiety, especially for those with children and extended family member responsibilities. Some employees have even had to relocate, completely losing their work-life balance.

5.3.2 Sub Research Question 1 – What factors do employees perceive as well-being? (Theme 2)

Sub-Themes	Occurrence of the sub-theme
Work-Life balance	26
Job satisfaction	
Fulfilment of work	16
Sense of Accomplishment	11
Sense of Purpose	24

Table 6: Occurrence of employee perceptions of well-being (Author's own)

5.3.2.1 Theme: Well-being perceptions

The insights gathered from the data analysis from the interviews highlighted the need for organisations to address these stressors by taking a holistic approach in mitigating these factors, so that they can enhance employee well-being and productivity.

"In the two years that we were at home, literally our lives changed… Priorities changed in the two years" **(Participant 5)**

5.3.2.1.1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance

Several participants said that even though their organisations have introduced flexible working arrangements, the days are minimal, inflexible due to lacking leader support and have obscured micromanagement which leads to the inability to enhance their work-life balance.

Limited flexible working arrangements
"I've got kids to pick up and I've got this routine that I need to run, but my output is not compromised" **(Participant 2)**
"flexibillity to focus more on output and not number of hours that I'm in the office **(Participant 2)**
" I honestly thought that the company will give us even more days to work from home,instead of coming to the office as much as we are doing " **(Participant 3)**
"It does not really need me to take leave for just a few hours to handle personal issues" **(Participant 3)**
"to understand that sometimes life happens and having children, there are uncontrollable events" **(Participant 4)**
"From a support perspective, I'm gonna say the support is minimal, if not, non existent, if anything, because even for that, in our case it's one day at home for that one day you still have to sweat for it" **(Participant 5)**

"I expected no rigidness in this process now anymore since we've got flexibility ,let's make everything flexible you know, understanding that employees are people who are delivering, they were delivering during lockdown. They came back and they still delivering" **(Participant 6)**
"I feel guilty when I'm sitting at home and didn't go to the office. Oh my goodness, I didn't complete my 60%. I don't know what's gonna happen to me, you know… it's not what I expected about this flexibility. So the flexibility is there, but it's not really flexible" **(Participant 6)**.
"*They manage by seeing you and don't manage by seeing outputs"* **(Participant 14)**

Other participants deem their flexible working arrangements as driving work-life balance because they view them as enabling them to separate or integrate their work and life responsibilities.

Flexible working arrangements
*"Now I can wake up at 6 and go run and come back to shower so, "I've used that time of sitting in traffic and driving to work, preparing towards my mental and physical heal*th**" (Participant 8)**
"*So we have to be at the office three days a week and two days you can work from home … mandatory time that you have to be in the office from 9:00 to 2:00 PM so that is at least something I could work with… But if I had to do stuff even for myself or my husband, I'm able to do it at least from 2:00 to 3:00"* **(Participant 10)**
"*I mean, we have the two weeks where we working from home, which is great and the one week working in the office, so for me that works perfectly. There's no negativity around that"* **(Participant 15)**

Summary of Findings - employee's perceptions of work-life balance

Overall, the findings highlight that the participants' perception of well-being being strongly associated with increased flexibility because it mitigates the majority of the 9-to-5 workplace stressors that negatively impact their mental health and well-being. Employers increasing flexibility aids in accommodating changes in employees' non-work domains, as an enabler to support employees in being able to manage and control their work demands without comprising on their work-life balance, mental and physical well-being.

5.3.2.1.2 Sub-Theme : Job satisfaction

5.3.2.1.2.1 Fulfilment of work

The data analysis from the interviews reveals that a key factor in employees' mental health and well-being is the fulfillment of their work as a contributor to job satisfaction. Several participants expressed their work fulfilment attributed to their ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues and stakeholders to complete tasks and finally achieve the intended outcomes.

Job satisfaction (Fulfilment of work)
"team I work with" **(Participant 1)**
"people that support the job I am doing" **(Participant 1)**
"knowing that I have the support, I can bet on" **(Participant 2)**
"collaboration and the teams and then something being taken to the finish line" **(Participant 2)**
"interacting with people across the orgnanisation" **(Participant 4)**
"achieving, you know, wrapping up that project and handing it over" **(Participant 4)**
"work come to life from end to end" **(Participant 4)**
"employees, which is my colleagues, if we are able to work in a team and we work effectively" **(Participant 6)**
"teamwork is the most important thing" **(Participant 6)**
"Whenever we find ourselves in situations that are stressful.We are there for each other. We back each other up" **(Participant 6)**
"culture is quite great, feel like in the people are work with" **(Participant 8)**
"I love working with people" **(Participant 10)**
"These activities sometimes we do activities like in three month time like every three month you get to like have a teams building where you are just chilling" **(Participant 11)**
"project is completed and we have signed off" **(Participant 7)**
"being able to see the value or the impact that my work has directly for the orgnanisation" **(Participant 12)**

Summary of Findings: Work fulfillment

The data analysis from the interviews revealed that a significant contributor to work fulfillment is the ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues and stakeholders. The key points include teamwork and collaboration as employees find fulfillment in working together with their team members to complete tasks. The sense of camaraderie and shared goals enhances their job satisfaction. The presence of supportive colleagues who offer help and encouragement is crucial. This support system helps employees navigate challenges and reduces the impact of stressors. Clear and open communication within teams fosters a collaborative atmosphere, making it easier to tackle tasks efficiently. Taking projects to the finish line as a team provides a sense of accomplishment and reinforces the value of teamwork. This collective achievement boosts morale and work fulfillment. Even in the face of workplace stressors, the ability to rely on and work with others helps employees maintain a positive outlook and stay motivated.

5.3.2.1.2.2 Sense of accomplishment

The insights gathered from the data analysis from the interviews reveal that most participants perceive the completion of planned work tasks within their 9-to-5 as a sense of accomplishment and exceeding work expectations whilst gaining more understanding of the task increases their job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction (Sense of accomplishment)
"gaining more understanding as you go" **(Participant 2)**
"To Do List is finished" **(Participant 3)**
"Checking off a bulk of my To Do List by the end of the day" **(Participant 4)**
"If I'm able to give a different status in each and every meeting I sit in" **(Participant 6)**
"finishing your work off.Maybe before 5:00. You're not having to work later" **(Participant 7)**
"We have been able to support like every single lunch without missing the mark" **(Participant 9)**
"I like to make a list of the things that I want to achieve or complete for that day and if I have ticked all of those" **(Participant 12)**
"A task that is done, ticking things off that To Do List" **(Participant 14)**

Summary of findings: Sense of accomplishment

The data analysis from the interviews reveals several key insights into employees' perceptions of completing their planned work tasks within the standard 9-to-5 schedule as a significant accomplishment. This sense of achievement contributes to their overall job satisfaction and motivates them to exceed work expectations. Gaining a deeper understanding of their tasks enhances employees' job satisfaction because they become more knowledgeable and proficient in their roles, they feel more confident and fulfilled in their work. These findings highlight that employees find fulfillment in their work through the successful completion of tasks and continuous learning that is essential for fostering a positive and productive work environment.

5.3.2.1.2.3 Sense of purpose

The data findings from the interviews additionally revealed that employees feel a strong sense of purpose when their role contributes to the strategic objectives of the organisation because it attaches a sense of relevance to their work.

Job satisfaction (Sense of purpose)
"seeing the impact that my work has and on the strategic direction of the orgnanisation" **(Participant 2)**
"Having my my work measure up to business goals" **(Participant 4)**
"So the fact that that my work has a direct impact, either negative or positive direct customer impact" **(Participant 5)**
"able to add value if my tasks are adding value not tick boxes" **(Participant 6)**
"contributting to safeguard the company because I'm in risk, so I do risk internal audit" **(Participant 8)**
"alignment like what the market needs right now" **(Participant 9)**
"opportunity to actually change other people's lives" **(Participant 13)**

Summary of findings - Sense of purpose

The data analysis from the recent interviews has revealed several key insights into how employees perceive their sense of purpose within the organisation. Employees feel a strong sense of purpose when their roles are directly linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation. This connection makes their work feel relevant and significant, as they can see how their efforts contribute to broader business goals. Realizing the tangible impact of their work on business goals enhances employees'

sense of purpose because when employees understand how their contributions help the organisation achieve its targets, they feel more motivated and engaged. Additionally, employees derive a sense of purpose from knowing that their work has a direct impact on customers, whether positive or negative. This awareness fosters a deeper connection to their roles, as they can see the real-world effects of their efforts. Overall, the sense of purpose derived from these factors has a positive impact on job satisfaction. Employees who feel that their work is meaningful and impactful are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and remain committed to the organisation.

Summary of Findings: Job Satisfaction

The data analysis from the interviews highlights several key factors contributing to job satisfaction:

Fulfilment of work: Employees find fulfillment in working together with their team members to complete tasks. The sense of camaraderie and shared goals enhances job satisfaction, coupled with taking projects to the finish line as a team provides a sense of accomplishment and reinforces the value of teamwork, boosting morale and work fulfillment. In addition, the presence of supportive colleagues who offer help and encouragement is crucial as this support system helps employees navigate challenges and reduces the impact of stressors. Open communication within teams fosters a collaborative atmosphere, making it easier to tackle tasks efficiently.

Sense of accomplishment : Completing planned work tasks within the standard 9-to-5 schedule is perceived as a significant accomplishment, contributing to overall job satisfaction and motivating employees to exceed work expectations. Moreover, insights gained from the data analysis are that gaining a deeper understanding of their tasks enhances employees' job satisfaction. As they become more knowledgeable and proficient in their roles, they feel more confident and fulfilled in their work.

Sense of Purpose: Employees feel a strong sense of purpose when their roles are directly linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation as well as knowing that their work has a direct impact on the customer, this connection makes their work feel relevant and significant. Additionally, realizing the tangible impact of their work on business goals enhances employees' sense of purpose through understanding how their contributions help the organisation achieve its targets increases motivation and engagement. When employees' work aligns with current market needs and positively influences others' lives, they feel that their contributions are timely and valuable, boosting their sense of purpose and ensuring their work is impactful thereby providing profound fulfillment and job satisfaction.

In general, employees who perceive their work as meaningful and impactful tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and stay committed to the organisation. These elements together create a positive and productive work environment, which is crucial for sustained job satisfaction.

Conclusion: Return to office and employee well-being

The findings highlight that employees mandated to return to the office are experiencing significant workplace stressors, including work-life conflict due to having to work extra hours, which compromises their family responsibilities and overall well-being. The disruption of established routines has led to anxiety and burnout, particularly for those with children and extended family members. Furthermore, mobiles devices in the form of laptops have made it difficult for employees to disconnect from work, exacerbating stress and anxiety. Increased flexibility in RTO policies is crucial for improving employee well-being, as it helps mitigate the stressors of a traditional 9-to-5 schedule, positively impacting mental health and overall well-being. This allows employees to better manage work demands without compromising their work-life balance, physical health, or financial well-being. Additionally, the meaningfulness of work is a significant contributor to job satisfaction and mental health. Employees find fulfillment in completing tasks within the standard schedule, gaining proficiency in their roles, and seeing the tangible impact of their work on business goals and customers. This sense of purpose and the opportunity to positively influence others' lives significantly enhance job satisfaction and overall well-being.

5.4 Research Question 2: How do these perceptions affect employees' social exchange with employers?

Sub-Themes	Occurrence of the sub-theme
Wellness initiatives	133
Organisational support	30
Leaders support	17
Organisational policies	9

Table 7: Occurrence of perceived organisation support (Author's own)

5.4.1 Theme: Perceived Organisational support

The findings from the interview data highlight a strong association between participant mental health and well-being with perceived support from their organisation and leader.

5.4.1.1 Sub-Theme: Organisational support

5.4.1.1.1 Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and Wellness initiatives

The findings in the data from the interviews highlighted the awareness of most participants of Employee Assistance Programmes implemented by the organisation to strive towards driving support for their mental health and well-being.

Employee Assistant Programmes	Support offered
"company has just launched LIFE and it's a new service provider that is used for the well-being" **(Participant 1)**	*"company has just launched life and it's a new service provider that is used for the well-being"* **(Participant 1)** *"24 hour pscho therapist that will assist employees with ever stress level they have on requires own personal"* **(Participant 1)**
"program like your ICAS" **(Participant 2)**	*"I've used only the financial aspect of it like the the telephonic and what you call this counselling sessions"* **(Participant 2)**
"orgnanisation has a big drive on well-being in terms of offering services like ICAS and Wellness programs" **(Participant 4)**	*"company is very big on health and Wellness, maybe because they know what it's challenging environment"* **(Participant 4)**
"Momentum" **(Participant 10)**	*"momentum doctors"* **(Participant 10)** *"financial well-being"* **(Participation 10)** *"tax team. Literally, you have a person dedicated to you"* **(Participant 10)**
"ICAS" **(Participant 14)**	*"I even spoke to the lady there because of of the like this work from home thing"* **(Participant 14)**

Furthermore, the findings highlighted differing perspectives based on personal experiences and engagements with the counsellors by participants.

Some participants expressed the effectiveness of the support offered by organisations in the form of EAPs, wellness initiatives and physical onsite wellness services as positively contributing to their mental health, financial and physical well-being.

Positive perceptions of wellness initiatiaves
"So with the counseling one on the telephone and on also like, you know, like sometimes when you have sessions with, you know ain't happy saying for example, just an obituary example and then Thabiso saying goes on maternity leave, then you have to like, continue with the Norma, you know that is also a bit disruptive. But yeah, I could say at a minimum it's a fair process. Like, yeah, the support is there" **(Participant 2)**
"gym available as well as onsite Wellness Center where these doctors, dentists, you know, there's a lady who does nails and gives massages" and "*mental well being as well being offered services of like counseling and all of that stuff is added bonus"* **(Participant 4)**
"I think it's really effective way to be honest. They will explain to you about mental illness" **(Participant 7)**
"teach us like meditation" and "breathing exercises" **(Participant 8)**
"every Monday and like since during covid.I think we had healthcare sessions, where they bring in somebody to teach you about meditation and then they would meditate with you" and "Pilates online" **(Participant 9)**
"So depending on your need and your financial standing, you can choose from any of those 3 medical aids and then within the medical aid, you also have like 3 free services available to you" **(Participant 10)**
"I like how they do the Wellness days, that helps a lot knowing that you don't physically have to drive to your doctor, you just have the guys come downstairs, you go get tested" **(Participant 15)**

Most participants, however, expressed that wellness initiatives and tools are ineffective and merely a formality for orgnanisations to assert that they support mental and well-being.

Negative perceptions of wellness programmes
"Third party institutions, they bring on board supposedly to support us, 1/2 of them, those orgnanisations are ineffective" **(Participant 5)**
"there is awareness, but the orgnanisation is not really backing it up with any policies" **(Participant 6)**
"But I I'm mostly rely on saying that it's a tick box that they need to sort of fill" **(Participant 7)**

"tick box exercise. So, like I mean the when I was doing that employee assistant thing, even the lady from HR was like this place has changed in the past 10 year" **(Participant 14)**
"Companies mask well beings by having programs" **(Participant 13)**
"Blanket approach must be able to have a 60/40 touchpoint instead of a 70/30 or 80/20 because 80% is for them" ***(Participant 13)***

The findings additionally highlight differing views from particpants in relation to the approach adopted by organisations to implement wellness initiatives to drive postive mental health and well-being, some deem the approach taken by their orgnanisations as effective given it caters for employee's needs holistically while other participants feel that it's a one-size-fits.

Wellness programmes approach perceptions
"more general than focused most of the time" **(Participant 2)**
"The approach is is great. It sort of speaks to employee needs from what I see, I mean the programs offered are well rounded" **(Participant 4)**
"I think like because meditation is very popular and whatnot, so it's almost like it's a size fits all" **(Participant 9)**
"methodology and approach is always skewed versus what the employee is looking for… companies like to do with a lot of trends.This is the trend as how you achieve successful well-being" **(Participant 13)**

Furthermore, the data anaysis from the interviews highlight most participants perceive the wellness initiatives to be more supportive than preventative, as one participant expressed that they are reactive about seeking assistance.

Wellness initiatives	**Supportive**	**Preventative**	**Both**
"I would say a bit of both, like with the sessions that and they set up in our calendars" **(Participant 2)**			x
"don't go for that type of help unless we feel like we need to" **(Participant 4)**	x		
"approach honestly speaking is holistic" **(Participant 3)**			x

"I think they meant to be preventative, but in practice they are not, there's support or they intervention is there on paper" ***(Participant 5)***	*x*		
"Once something happened, then all now we have to start doing this" … "reaction is more preventative" **(Participant 6)**		x	
"supportive because as I mentioned, they pay for you to go see a professional" **(Participant 9)**	*x*		
"I think it's both. So they they help you prepare for situation where if you are find yourself in the kind of a situation you are able to say, this person told me to not react like this and proactive in offering that support" **(Participant 11)**			*x*
"They're not preventative or detect whether you have a problem, they move after the fact" **(Participant 14)**	*N/A*		

Summary of findings – EAPs and wellness initiatives

The data analysis reveals that EAPs and wellness initiatives are largely perceived as ineffective by participants. This ineffectiveness is attributed to several factors, including the superficial implementation of wellness programs and the involvement of third-party institutions that fail to provide meaningful support. Employees expect meaningful support and genuine wellness initiatives in return for their loyalty and productivity. The perceived ineffectiveness of wellness programs can lead to a breakdown in this exchange, resulting in decreased employee morale and engagement.

5.4.1.1.2 Sub-Theme 2: Perceived organisational culture and leadership support

The findings from the data interview show differing views in relation to the perceived level of support from both their organisation and management in alignment with the wellness programmes and initiatives offered within their orgnanisation. This is in relation to the actual reinforcement to adopt the learnings within the orgnanisation.

Perceived orgnanisational and leader support	Yes	No
"Are they really driving well-being?" **(Participant 3)**		x
"to go the extra mile to provide a desk or chair or even subsidize your connectivity at home instead if you're experiencing challenges, they expect you to come to the office" **(Participant 5)**		x
"*becomes lip service because they're encouraged to implement the learnings, but once you are not there, then you get calls even when you are not there.So for me it doesn't feel like I was on leave 'cause I worked throughout whether I'm on leave or not"* **(Participant 6).**		x
"you speak to your manager and you have emergency, they're quite accommodating, so in that sense, as to say there isn't change since COVID" **(Participant 7)**	x	
"encourage us to log request if you need a chair you need screen like you just encourage that ergonomic working environment" **(Participant 8)**	x	
"that statement goes right to the very heart of HR, and they make a concerted effort to to make sure that our teams are well equipped" **(Participant 10)**	x	
"So all of that is, is people focused and then they encourage you to take time off … the entire orgnanisation participates in biannual wellness days… that is the reason for me having stayed with the company for so long" **(Participant 10)**	x	
"what projects would you love to be in in order to accommodate like your well-being?" **(Participant 11)**	x	
"they are trying, but I think they could do more. Reason being the current means of like driving well-being or employee well-being at work is online and more often than not, you can choose whether or not to dial into those ***(Participant 12)***	x	
"Whether you're on leave or you're somewhere, when you are required, you are required because they deemed it critical, so there's no well-being there. The well-being is seen after the review when it hits the bank account" **(Participant 13)**		x

"even if you go back and let's say they say you must talk to your manager about the way that they're treating you, you do that, then you become victimized. Now you have even more stress, because now the management is victimizing you for speaking out, even though they're the ones that introduced you to these well-being programs" **(Participant 13)**		x
"support offered by your orgnanisation, but implementation by leadership is the issue … so when you have a very careerist leadership, you bound to have problems, you know" **(Participant 14)**		x
"I just feel like based on our environment; it's always going to be stressful" **(Participant 15)**		x

Summary of findings – Organisational and Leader support

The interview data underscores the critical role of organisational culture and management support in driving employee well-being. Despite well-being initiatives, many employees feel unsupported in adopting these practices, leading to stress and dissatisfaction. The social exchange theory suggests that employees' perception of support from their organisation influences their well-being and engagement. While some participants praised their organisations for prioritizing well-being, others highlighted issues such as lack of genuine support, fear of repercussions for providing feedback, and inconsistent implementation by management. Effective two-way communication and genuine support from management are essential for fostering a culture of well-being.

5.5 Research Question 3: How do these perceptions affect policymakers?

5.5.1 Theme : Influence on Policymakers

Policymakers play a crucial role in shaping the landscape of organisational mandates because their influence can significantly impact how organisations operate and support their employees.

5.5.1.1 Sub-Theme: Employee mental health and well-being driver

In the findings from the data analysis only two insights were gathered in relation to participant's expectations and perceptions of policies having the ability to significantly drive well-being from a reinforcement perspective.

Employee mental health and well-being driver (Policies)
"there needs to they needs to be a mechanism for making sure that maybe you take leave, maybe like leave for just resting, not annual leave" **(Participant 6)**
"So, at least in our HR policy, we've got a mandatory time that you have to be in the office from 9:00 to 2:00 PM so that is at least something I could work with." **(Participant 10)**

5.5.1.2 Sub-Theme: Employee well-being hindrance

In the findings from the data analysis, two participants expressed their dissatisfaction with organisational policies within their organisations that resulted in a hinderance to their well-being.

Employee mental health and well-being hinderance (Policies)
"eventually give in to the system or the mandatory requirement, which was a very interesting factor because for me it was like is HR for the people or the orgnanisation because there are policies as well, so all these things really messed me up. I must say that's the only word I could find. So yeah, the transition wasn't that smooth" **(Participant 2)**
"There was a policy that allowed for us to apply and work from home remotely for the rest of eternity. Now that thing has been rescinded and up in the air and there's a lot of uncertainty around it" **(Participant 14)**

Summary of findings - Influence on Policymakers

Policymakers have a profound impact on organisational mandates through their ability to enforce regulations, set standards, and promote policies that support employee well-being. In thoroughly balancing mandates with strategies that build trust and encourage voluntary compliance, policymakers can create a more supportive and productive work environment. Their role in promoting clear policies that support mental health, and well-being is essential for fostering a resilient and thriving workforce.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will conduct a comparative analysis of the findings from Chapter 5 with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The chapter will be structured around the research questions, similar to Chapter 5, and will discuss the themes and sub-themes.

The purpose of this chapter is to perform an additional analysis to verify if the findings can be supported or contested by comparing them with existing literature.

The growing recognition of the importance of mental health and well-being in the workplace, is critical for orgnanisations in driving productivity and performance. Orgnanisations understanding the factors that impact mental health and well-being can create supportive environments supported by policies that lead to to more engaged, motivated and productive employees.

The readjustment to returning to the office has the ability to distrupt work-life balance that many employees have adjusted to during remote work, so researching these factors can help orgnanisations in focusing on holistic mental health and well-being intiatives and practices that effectively contribute to their employees' well-being.

6.2 Discussion of primary research outcomes by research questions

The primary research outcomes will be discussed according to sub-themes, organized around the main themes related to the research questions.

6.2.1 Research Question 1: Employees perceptions RTO workplace stressors (Theme 1.1)

The sub-themes identified are aimed at understanding participants RTO workplace stressors and what impact they have on their mental health and well-being.

6.2.1.1 Sub-Theme – Commuting to work

6.2.1.1.1 Evidence of commuting from findings

Several of the participants across the industries reported similar negative experiences with commuting to work, regardless of the distance or mode of transport. They found that returning to the office from remote work has significantly impacted their mental, physical, and financial well-being. The need to wake up earlier has disrupted their sleep quality and daily routines to ensure timely arrival at the office. Additionally, many participants felt exhausted upon reaching the office due to traffic delays, even before starting their workday.

Several of the participants also pointed out that the time spent commuting is not considered in their organisation's task delivery expectations, leading to increased stress and fatigue, making time management challenging. Financially, the shift from working at home to the office has added to their expenses, causing constant worry about having enough money for the last week of the month due to commuting costs.

6.2.1.1.2 Evidence of commuting from literature

The significant number of employees travelling to their workplace has increased interest in scholars in understanding the relevance of commuting to organisational dynamics.

Jang and Ko's (2019) research on factors associated with commuter satisfaction explored the impact of long commuting times on employees, similarly to Cho et al. (2023) that extends the research to anxiety caused by poor travel conditions, face-to-face health and safety violations by daily commutes found that long distance commuting with these conditions exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected employee's quality of life. Furthermore, Calderwood and Mitropoulos (2020) posit that this stress emanates from long commuting having a negative spillover effect on other life domains prohibiting time to perform additional activities they deem to be important. Schneider and Willman (2018) further highlighted financial costs incurred as are an additional stress factor for commuters which decreased commute satisfaction.

Clark et al. (2019) postulate the positive role that commuting can have on employee well-being given longer commuting time can be balanced by other benefits that employees consider improving quality to their lives, similarly, Jachimowicz et al. (2020) supports this notion stating that the valuable time offered by commuting can assist employees in mentally preparing and transitioning from their personal to work roles to better manage the shift, which can enhance their job satisfaction, mental health, and overall well-being.

6.2.1.1.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The research findings across the automotive, banking, media and entertainment industries corresponded to the literature regarding commuting as a stressor and a fundamental negative aspect on their daily lives. As per Jang and Ko's (2019) in agreement with Calderwood and Mitropoulos (2020), long distance commuting leads to a decrease in commuter satisfaction due to the negative spillover effect on other life domains. The findings additionally agree with the dynamics of commuting having also been altered by the COVID-19 pandemic, as highlighted by Cho et al. (2023), that commuters are faced with anxiety due to the lack of control on commuters violating health and safety rules.

The findings also indicated how commuting also contributes negatively to their financial well-being which is supported by Schneider and Willman (2018) in relation to commuting leading to financial costs.

The findings in section 5.2.1.1 don't correspond to the literature review in relation to how commuting can positively impact the subjective well-being of employees, as per Clark et al. (2019) who found that long commuting can improve quality of their lives through a trade-off of other benefits, and similarly to Jachimowicz et al. (2020) that long commuting can allow for role transition and increased job satisfaction and over well-being.

6.2.1.1.4 Conclusion

The research noted a dominant view in light of the findings as per the literature that commuting is a stressor with various negative impacts contributing to the literature, however, there are also perspectives that highlight potential benefits of commuting by the literature, suggesting a more nuanced understanding of commuting's effects on individuals' lives. This thus contributes to the existing research on commuting as it relates to mental health and well-being.

6.2.1.2 Sub-Theme – Disruptions at work

6.2.1.2.1 Evidence of disruptions at work from findings

The findings indicate that in physical workspaces, most disruptions stem from unrelated intermittent chats and the noisy environment of open-plan offices. These disruptions cause a loss of focus and heightened stress levels due to the inability of participants to complete tasks. This negatively impacts well-being as it requires constant refocusing on tasks. One participant mentioned that being in the office disrupts their ability to complete planned tasks due to random interruptions from stakeholders, who expect their requests to be prioritized. This often results in partially completed tasks that need to be finished after working hours. These disruptions not only affect productivity but also contribute to a decline in overall job satisfaction because employees may feel overwhelmed and frustrated, leading to burnout over time. The findings also revealed that in the context of residing alone, social interactions and open office layouts are deemed to positively contribute to mental health and well-being.

6.2.1.2.2 Evidence of disruptions at work from literature

The study by Puranik et al. (2019) affirmed that work interruptions are a common aspect in workplaces furthermore their findings of open office work environments as a contributor was supported by Appel-Meulenbroek et al.'s (2020) study in relation to open-plan office with noise

problems highlighting that open-plan offices are a hinderance to completing tasks which can lead to employees feeling frustrated, stressed, and unhappy with their work environment. Keller et al. (2019) further stated that this is because interruptions require employees to adjust their current actions to deal with the disruption resulting in a negative subjective well-being.

However, Samani and Alavi (2020), De Vaujany & Aroles (2018) and Blagoev et al. (2019) argue that regardless of silence being essential for productivity, coworkers looking for someone to talk to and noisy workplaces that are deemed as interruptions that fulfil the main purpose of close proximity office setups because they should encourage social interaction as they are deemed to be beneficial for promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing, highlighting the importance of structured routines and practices as a contributory factor to social engagements.

6.2.1.2.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The research findings in relation to intermittent interruptions from colleagues talking about non-work related matters agree to the Puranik et al.'s (2019) literature on workplace disruptions. The findings on workplace distruptions from noisy work environment particularly in open-plan office setups also corresponds to literature by both Keller et al. (2019) and Appel-Meulenbroek et al. (2020) who highlight noisy workspaces as a hinderance to completing tasks which in turn lead to reduced subjective employee well-being because this now requires refocusing on the existing task which demands extra effort and delays output.

The one finding that relates to physical office presence resulting in interruptions from completing planned tasks because of matters related to work is aligned to De Vaujany & Aroles (2018) and Blagoev et al. (2019) literature in relation to the purposes of an open plan office, however, similarly to both Keller et al. (2019) and Appel-Meulenbroek et al. (2020) given the nature of the interaction, it is deemed an interruption given it's a hinderance to completing the participant's planned tasks.

A unique finding in relation to the purpose of social interactions and physical office spaces deemed to promote social connectedness is aligned to the literature by Samani and Alavi (2020), De Vaujany & Aroles (2018) and Blagoev et al. (2019) as this enabled collaboration.

6.2.1.2.4 Conclusion

Overall, the research findings are consistent with the existing literature, reinforcing the understanding that both non-work-related and work-related interruptions, as well as noisy environments, significantly impact employee productivity and well-being in open-plan office settings, however in some instances serve the anticipated purpose in relation to social

connectedness. This thus contributes to the existing research body of knowledge on workplace interruptions as a theme in mental health and well-being.

6.2.1.3 Sub-Theme – Job demands and Time-pressure

6.2.1.3.1 Evidence of Job demands and Time-pressure from findings

The findings highlight job demands because of increased workload with some industries attaching this to being under-resourced because of downsizing that has taken place in their organisations leading to participants having to extend themselves either by having to forcefully upskill themselves to achieve their KPIs or required output.

Additionally, the findings indicated pressure to complete and meet deadlines within traditional office hours. This constant expectation to deliver results was a common theme, with several participants describing their workdays as fully engaged from start to finish. The relentless pressure to meet company expectations has led to anxiety and burnout among participants. Two participants specifically highlighted feelings of incompetency and self-doubt because of high workloads leading to procrastination and stress and experiencing imposter syndrome due to the pressure to deliver.

6.2.1.3.2 Evidence of Job demands and Time-pressure from literature

Black and Britt's (2022) literature on the relationship of job performance, health and well-being highlighted occupational stress as a contributing factor to either positive or negative subjective well-being. Baethge et al. (2019) in their literature on hinderance effects in relation to time pressure further highlighted the interplay between the additional time put in by employees to ensure completion of tasks due to time constraints and pressure to meet deadlines predominantly linked to challenge stressors as employees perceive them to be achievable.
Two types of occupational stressors were identified in the literature namely Challenge and Hinderance stressors.

Chu and Chou's (2024) literature on work stressors highlighted that challenge stressors are linked to positive mental health and well-being as being positively correlated to employee's perceptions of meaningfulness work which is a significant contributor towards promoting a sense of fulfillment and purpose as well as personal growth for employees.

A contrasting stressor identified by Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019) is recognized as a hindrance stressor which negatively contributes to subjective well-being because they are stress factors that are associated the inverse of challenge stressors since they are considered to create obstacles and impede personal goals. This was agreed to by Afrahi et al. (2022) in his literature on work

disengagements in relation to hinderance stressors being associated with altering employee's perceptions of the meaningfulness of work.

Pindek et al.'s (2022) literature on the inconsistency observed in the curvilinear relationship between workload and employee attitudes and mental well-being highlighted affirming that work load influences job satisfaction, challenge stressors being strongly correlated to positive job satisfaction and hinderance stressors the inverse.

6.2.1.3.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The research findings in the context of workload strongly correlates to the literature of occupational stressors having a negative impact on subjective well-being by Black and Britt (2022) and Baethge et al. (2019). This is attributed to the time pressures experienced by employees in meeting deadlines requiring them to work additional hours.

The findings further highlighted excessive workloads due to downsizing and being under resourced as a hinderance stressor associated to obstacles of completion of their outputs which is strongly linked to Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019). Even though the findings also highlight a need for upskilling due to downsizing to achieve their KPIs which is generally associated with personal growth as per Chu and Chou's (2024) literature, participants expressed dissatisfaction as this increased their workload resulting in it being a hinderance stressor.

The findings expressed by the participants additionally affirmed Pindek et al.'s (2022) literature specifically around workload and employee's attitudes in relation to additional workload leading to over-activation which led to decreased job satisfaction due to it being deemed a hinderance stressor by participants.

6.2.1.3.4 Conclusion

In the context of workload and time pressues, the overall research findings are consistent with both workload in addition to time pressures as an occupational stressor being postively associated with negative well-being as per the literature around hinderance stressors regardless of whether the completion of the workload requires upskilling which is associated to challenge stressors. This thus contributes to the existing research on workload and time pressure as a theme in mental health and well-being.

6.2.1.4 Sub-Theme – Work-Life conflict

6.2.1.4.1 Evidence of Work-Life conflict from findings

The findings in relation to work-life conflict reveal that being physically present in the office often necessitates working beyond standard hours due to excessive workload and time constraints, significantly contributing to work-life conflict and burnout. Participants noted that this extended workload spills over into personal life, forcing them to choose between work and family, causing stress and household conflict.

Additionally, returning to the office has disrupted established routines, especially for those with children or extended family care duties, leading to anxiety. The need to continue working from home further blurs the boundaries between work and personal life, exacerbating the conflict. The use of portable technology like laptops also contributes to work-life conflict, as work is often taken home despite leaving the office.

6.2.1.4.2 Evidence of Work-Life conflict from literature

The significance of work and family as essential domains in the lives of employees highlight the need the supportive solutions to address work-life conflict as it globally affects orgnanisations.

Ford et al.'s (2023) literature on work-life conflict affirms that work demands are a significant contributor to work-life conflict because they interfere with family responsibilities and a psychosocial stressor attributed to erratic work schedules (Bayrakdar & King, 2021).

This was confirmed by Bolino et al.'s, 2020 literature on non-standard work schedules that excessive workload yields negative mental health and well-being outcomes for both employees and employers.

The literature by Kossek et al., 2024 on advancing work-life supportive contexts highlighted how most employees have accepted work-life conflict as a norm given the demanding nature of their roles regardless of being aware that this will eventually lead to burnout. This is further worsened

by digital advancements that lead to constant connectivity, contributing to blurred work-life (Farivar et al., 2022).

This was argued by Van Zoonen et al.'s, 2023 literature on the interplay between autonomy and feeling less exhaustion from staying connected highlighting that autonomy plays a critical role in mitigating burnout, although excessive autonomy can lead to frustration. This was counter argued

by Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2019, pointing out that although technology enables autonomy in terms of constant connectivity in managing tasks, it fosters a culture of immediacy.

6.2.1.4.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The findings in terms of being physically present in the office leading to erratic work schedules due to work demands in the form of excessive workloads with a spillover into the personal lives of participants as a key contributor to work-life balance yiedling negative mental heath and well-being outcomes corresponds to Ford et al.'s (2023), Bayrakdar & King (2021) and Bolino et al.'s, (2020 literature on erratic and non-standard work schedules.

The findings were not explicit in relation to the participants perceiving the demands of their roles as being a norm as per Kossek et al.'s, 2024 literature but rather expressed the negative impacts of working outside of working hours on their personal responsibilities.

Furthermore, the findings corroborated to both Farivar et al., 2022 and Leclercq-Vandelannoitte's, (2019) literature on digital intrusions and employee technology "Ill-Being" as technology being a contributory factor to their negative work-life balance in terms of constant connectivity leading to a culture of immediacy.

The findings don't explicitly highlight participants as having autonomy over their work but rather utilizing technology as a means to ensure completion of their tasks outside of the workplace which is contradictory to Van Zoonen et al.'s, 2023 literature on autonomy and less feeling exhaustion from staying connected.

6.2.1.4.4 Conclusion

The overall findings indicate that being physically present in the office often leads to erratic work schedules and excessive workloads, spilling over into personal lives and negatively impacting mental health and well-being, with technology being a digital intrusion as a means of providing the autonomy to work outside of the physical workspace, that leads to constant connectivity contributing to a culture of immediacy and negative work-life balance. This thus contributes to the existing research on work-life conflict as a theme in mental health and well-being.

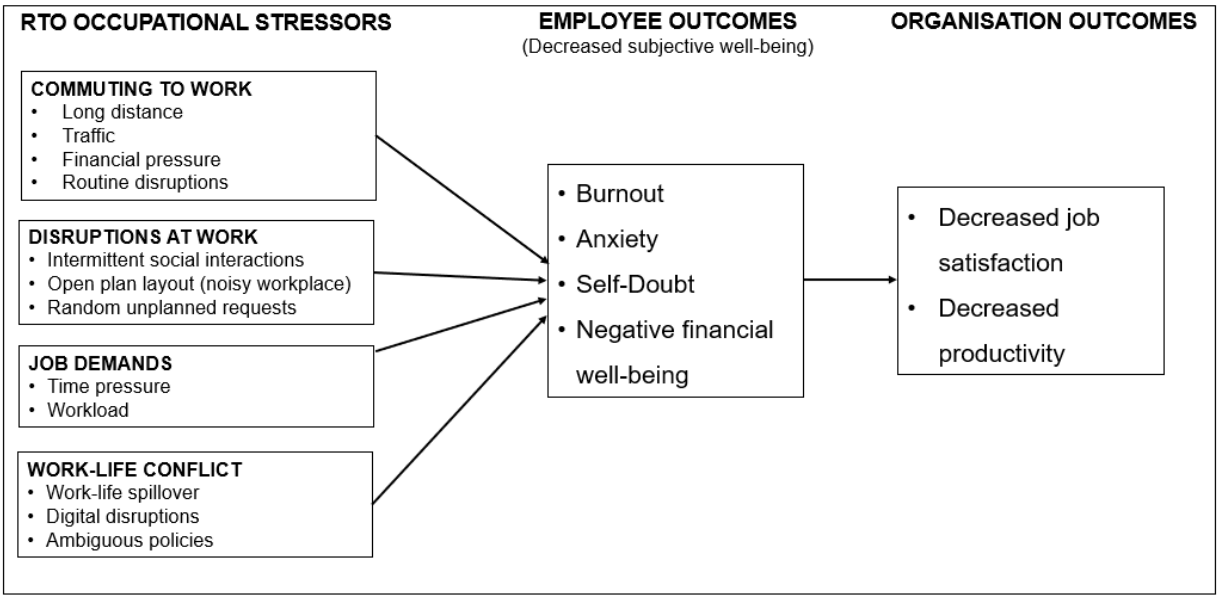


Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram – Occupational stressors : Employee and Organisation outcomes (Author's own)

6.2.2 Research Question 1: Employees perceptions of well-being (Theme 1.2)

The sub-themes identified are aimed at understanding participants perceptions of mental health and well-being upon returning to the office as mitigators to their perceived RTO workplace stressors.

6.2.2.1 Sub-Theme – Work-life balance

6.2.2.1.1 Evidence of Work-life balance from findings

The overall findings on work-life balance from the participants reveal a mix of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with flexible working arrangements.

The findings highlight many participants who consider increased flexibility, particularly working from home, a significant contributor to improving their work-life balance. They expressed that working from home saves commuting time and money, increasing their financial well-being and productivity compared to working in the office.

The findings from the interview data in terms of work-life balance reveal that flexible working arrangements are limited and not as accommodating as expected given the minimal number of days allowed to work from home and the lack of substantial support from their organisations and leaders.

The findings additionally reveal partial satisfaction from some participants given the stringent conditions associated with the flexibility offered in terms of specific dates mandated to physical work in the office, expressing that they still deem them as inflexible.

The findings also revealed that other participants have accepted the flexible working arrangements, because they find them manageable and beneficial in terms of affording them the flexibility to balance work and personal responsibilities, even if the flexibility is not perfect.

The findings reveal that most participants emphasize the need for increased managerial flexibility to support their work-life balance, especially after two years of remote working. They expect support in the form of maintaining their previous routines that allowed them to achieve work-life balance while ensuring their output remains uncompromised.

The findings revealed that if their organisations focus more on delivery rather than the amount of time spent at work, this will support their mental health and well-being.

In some of the findings from the interview data, participants recognize the value of the flexibility offered by their organisation as it allows them to use time previously spent commuting to improve their mental and physical health.

6.2.2.1.2 Evidence of Work-life balance from literature

Golden's (2021) literature on the navigation of work-home boundaries posits that employees have the ability to achieve work-life balance by segmentation or integration of work and life aspects. This notion is supported by Adisa et al.'s (2022) literature on exploration of the impact of the pandemic on employee's boundary management highlights that employees with a low inclination to flexibility by keeping their work and home separately and adopting strategies to create controlled integration will encounter negative experiences. This was further endorsed by E. Cho's (2020) literature on the examination of boundaries to understanding the impact of the pandemic on vocational behaviours, highlighting that employees might experience stress handling personal tasks during their work hours because of the frequent switching between different roles.

This perception around controlled integration was counterargued by Banu et al. (2023) in his literature on negotiating business and family demands highlighting that work and non-work demands based on prioritization and high levels of social support are positively linked to affective well-being, which was endorsed by Wood et al.'s, 2022 literature on satisfaction with one's job and working a home during the pandemic. Furthermore French & Shockley (2020) pointed out that the social support aspect is strengthened by informal or formal support, with

Kossek, Perrigino, Russo, et al's. (2022) literature on missed connections between leadership and work-life fields advocating for supervisor support to enhance the work-life balance of employees in the form of their personal needs to drive positive work outcomes.

6.2.2.1.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The findings in terms of employees requiring increased flexibility in terms of working from home as means of driving work-life balance corrobrates with the literature of Golden's (2021) in relation to the aspect of integration.

The findings also confirm both Adisa et al. (2022) and E. Cho's (2020) literature from the aspect of low flexibility and controlled integration in relation to employee's managing their work and life leading to negative affect because employees from the findings have implicitly indicated that given their inability to separate work from their lives, increased flexibility will enable them to integrate both.

The findings lack sufficient evidence to corroborate findings by Banu et al. (2023) in terms of controlled integration based on prioritization even through informal or formal support because participants are able to simultaneously achieve a work-life balance through increased flexibility by ensuring integration which enables them to focus on both aspects particularly in a home environment setting.

The findings however highlighted the aspect of leadership support in relation to personal needs in the form of increasing flexibility that drives work-life balance especially when employees are physically in the office, which is agreeable with Kossek, Perrigino, Russo, et al's. (2022) literature.

6.2.2.1.4 Conclusion

Overall, the findings suggest that while flexible working arrangements are appreciated, there is a strong desire for increased flexibility and better support from organisations and managers to truly enhance work-life balance by providing the correct support. This thus contributes to the existing research on work-life balance as a theme in mental health and well-being.

6.2.2.2 Sub-Theme – Job satisfaction

6.2.2.2.1 Evidence of Job satisfaction from findings

The findings from the interview data reveal that job satisfaction contributes positively to employees' mental health and wellbeing and is significantly influenced by the fulfillment of work, a sense of purpose, and a sense of accomplishment.

Seven participants across the different industries highlighted effective collaboration with colleagues as a source of fulfillment. Furthermore, observing the value and impact of their work, especially when recognized by stakeholders, enhances fulfillment.

Several participants feel that what gives them a sense of accomplishment for the day is when they complete planned tasks within their 9-to-5 schedule and additionally exceeding work expectations and gaining a deeper understanding of tasks also increase their job satisfaction.

Most participants highlighted that employees feel a strong sense of purpose when their roles align with the strategic objectives of the organisation. Moreover, this alignment gives their work a sense of relevance and importance.

6.2.2.2.2 Evidence of Job satisfaction from literature

The liferature by Tóth-Király et al. (2020) on improving the understanding of work motivation profiles, highlights that work motivation is driven by different factors, when employees percieve their tasks to be fulfulling and significant in line with thir values this drives instrinsic motivation which leads to positive subjective well-being whereas alternatively employees are driven by internal pressures such as guilt to complete tasks which has a negative impact on their subjective well-being.

The literature by Laaser and Karlsson (2021) on meaningful work, corroborates with Tóth-Király et al. (2020) on the aspect of work motivation in line with their values, highlighting that mutuality as an essential aspect for meaningful work with shared ethics and desired structural support that enable employees to contribute to a shared objective with autonomy.

Seminal literature by Hackman & Oldman found a contradictory findings in relation to the aspect of leader support as an instrinsic motivator as suggested by Laaser and Karlsson (2021), however, corroborating only on the aspect of mutuality similarly to literature by Tóth-Király et al. (2020). The aspect of structural support also corroborates with J. D. Nielsen and Colbert's (2024) literature on affective shifts shaping perceptions of daily task significance highlighting that leader support is frequently lacking, so meaningfulness of work is driven by employee's finding their work tasks as fulfilling.

Jiang et al.'s (2020) literature on thriving at work by linking task identity and autonomy to job satisfaction additionally highlights that autonomy is positively correlated with job satisfaction. The literature by Clinton and Conway (2024) on job autonomy linked to greater employee strain

corroborates with Jiang et al's (2020) study, however, extended further to highlight that long-term intrapersonal increases in job autonomy can be a hindrance work-related stressor due to new uncertainties and responsibilities for individuals.

Career development has also been deemed to be positively linked to job satisfaction as per the literature by Yuan et al. (2021) on prediction of turnover intentions. This was corroborated by seminal literature by Rosso et al. (2010), indicating that career growth and development as a significant contributor towards the employee's perceptions of the meaningfulness of their work.

Maunz & Glaser's (2024) literature on psychological need satisfaction, meaning in work and burnout affirmed that meaningful work may contribute to positive mental health as it creates stability in life mitigates burnout.

6.2.2.2.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The findings in terms of participants perceiving their tasks to be meaningful as an intrinsic driver of their job satisfaction corrobrates to both Tóth-Király et al. (2020) and Laaser and Karlsson's (2021) literature. A majority of the findings didn't mention anything in relation to leadership support corroborating with findings by both Laser and Karlsson (2021) and J.D. Nielsen and Colbert's (2024) literature as participants still maintained intrinsic motivation regardless of any form of structural support affirming that perceived meaning in their tasks drives job satisfaction. The findings from the perspective of leader support are contradictory to Tóth-Király et al. (2020) so the researcher was unable to make a comparative analysis with the literature.

Furthermore, the findings corroborate to both Tóth-Király et al. (2020) and Laaser and Karlsson's (2021) literature in relation to mutuality from a perspective of shared value as this gives a sense of purpose that drives intrinsic motivation in relation to employee's perception of the meaning of their work which leads to job satisfaction.

The findings lack sufficient evidence in relation to career growth and development as a driver of their job satisfaction as per the current and seminal literature by Yuan et al. (2021) and Rosso et al. (2010), additionally no evidence was acquired in the findings in relation to autonomy as a driver of their job satisfaction so the researcher was unable to make a comparative analysis with the literature.

The findings in relation to a sense of accomplishment in relation to the completion of tasks corrobrate with the literature in section 6.2.1.3 Sub-Theme – Job demands and Time-pressure in relation to challenge stressors which are also deemed to increase job satisfaction.

The findings overall is aligned to Maunz & Glaser's (2024) in relation to job satisfaction having a positive impact on employee's subjective well-being and consequently mental health.

6.2.2.2.4 Conclusion

Overall, the data suggests that job satisfaction is significantly influenced by the fulfillment of work, a sense of purpose, and a sense of accomplishment. These factors contribute positively to employees' mental health and well-being. Further research can be conducted in relation to autonomy and career development as contributors to job satisfaction. This thus contributes to the existing research on job satisfaction as a theme in mental health and well-being.

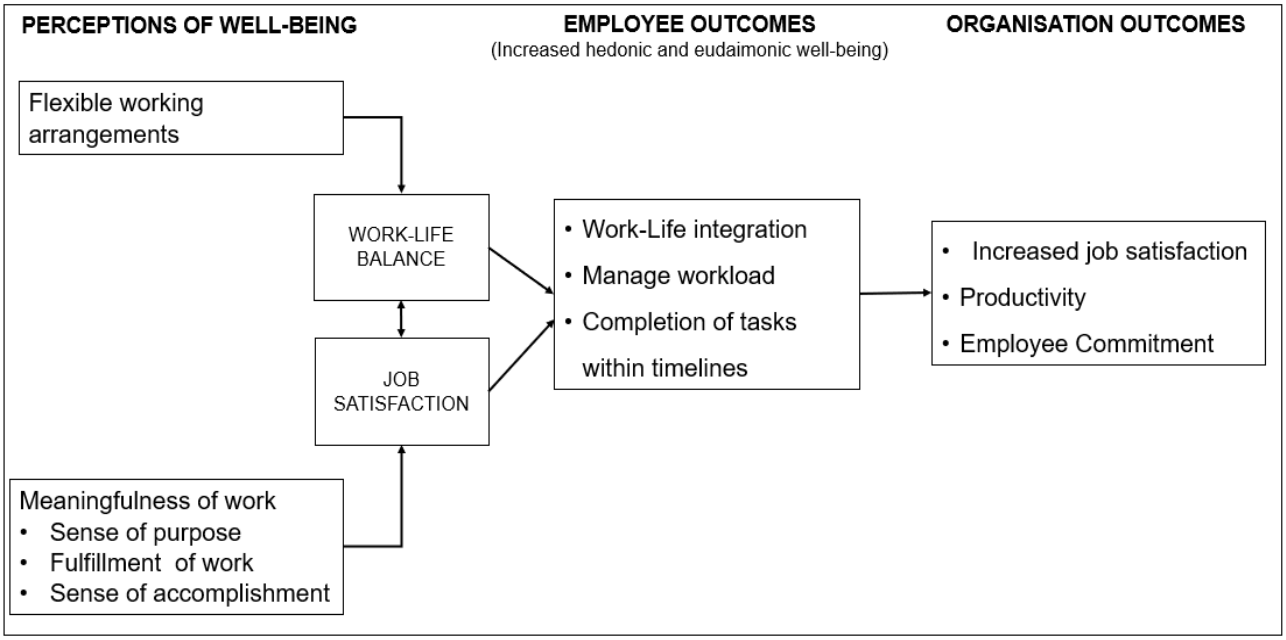


Figure 2: Conceptual Diagram – Employee perceptions of well-being (Author's own)

6.2.3 Research Question 2: Employees perceptions on orgnanisational support

The sub-themes identified are aimed at understanding employee's perceptions of orgnanisational and leader support in the context of their transition from intense remote working to returning to the office.

6.2.3.1 Sub-Theme – Orgnanisational support

6.2.3.1.1 Evidence of Orgnanisational support from findings

The findings on perceived support of mental health and well-being were particularly impressive from a perspective of all participants' awareness in relation to the mental health and well-being tools

available in their organisations to drive well-being, however, the differing perspectives were based on their effectiveness.

The findings showed that some participants found the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) to be effective based on utilization. Some participants found the EAP support effective, though there were disruptions due to changes in counselors. Additionally, the findings showed that their organisation is proactive in terms of finding solutions that cater to the individual needs of employees within the organisation based on their affordability, for example different medical aid options. Moreover, other findings additionally expressed appreciation for additional wellness activities like daily meditation and breathing exercises that have been embedded into their organisational culture as these activities were associated with better mental and physical well-being. Similarly to findings in relation to physical on-site wellness facilities and services, such as gyms and wellness centers, as being viewed positively by participants as a form of support. Furthermore, these services included counseling, medical facilities, and even amenities like nail services and massages.

The findings also highlight diverse perspectives on organisational approaches in implementing the wellness programmes in relation to addressing mental health and well-being, some participants appreciated the well-rounded programs addressing employee needs, whilst others felt the programs were too general, trend-driven, and not tailored to individual needs.

The findings revealed that they perceived wellness programmes as mostly supportive rather than preventative and a lack of reinforcement to adopt wellness learnings within organisations, whilst other participants expressed positive views about their organisation prioritizing well-being and providing necessary resources, such as ensuring ergonomic support in both their work setups.

The findings also revealed that disconnecting from work was a challenge that is exacerbated by high performance cultures and high-pressure environments making it difficult for employees to disconnect and manage stress.

These findings highlight the varied experiences and perceptions of organisational support for mental health well-being, emphasizing the importance of tailored and reinforced wellness initiatives.

6.2.3.1.2 Evidence of Orgnanisational support from literature

The past and current literature by Kossek and Kelliher (2022) on making flexibility more I-deal and Baruch and Rousseau (2018) in relation to integrating psychological contracts highlights the need for organisations to increase flexibility based on employee’s expectations based on personalized

adjustments to their work setups based on their transition from intense remote working to returning to the office. Furthermore Kelliher et al.'s (2019) current literature on reconceptualizing work-life balance for the 21st century corroborates with both the current and past literature affirming that orgnanisations need to adjust their adapatability to cater for diverse work-life needs of employees. The literature on reviewing remote e-worker's well-being by Charalampous et al. (2018) asserts that increased flexibility in terms of working arranges has a positive impact on employee's subjective well-being.

Literature by T.D. Allen & French (2023) on work and family also highlight the importance of organisations employing job autonomy as it deemed to enhance meaningfulness in work, this was further corroborated by Garg and Sinha (2022), asserting that autonomy through job crafting enhances autonomy which is linked to job satisfaction, increased well-being and performance.

The literature by Kaltiainen et al. (2022) on social resources at work additionally highlights the importance of organisations fostering a culture of strong connectedness within the workplace because they are mutually benefical for both employers and employees. Greco et al's. (2021) literature on identification at work further affirms this notion, highlighting that enhancing employee's connection to the organisation positively influences employee's subjective well-being through orgnanisational citizenship and is liked to increased well-being, improved job performance and reduced turnover intentions.

The literature by Hafermalz & Riemer (2020) asserts that orgnanisations should create a conducive environment to support social connections which enhance commitment and trust all work setups fostering loyalty and pro-social behaviours. This was further corroborated by Jolly et al. (2020) who higlighted that social connections are critical for mental health and well-being because they enhance happiness and life satisfaction having a positive impact on work quality and producivity.

Furthermore, a study by Pearce et al. (2023) on cultivating identity at work asserts that a physical setting significantly influences collaboration and commitment to the workplace, necessitating orgnanisations to prioritize the workspace to foster environments that enhance employee well-being and productivity.

Literature by Jones et al. (2019), Proper and Van Oostrom (2019), and Peña et al. (2024) on wellness programs highlight the organisations utilize wellness programs to promote preventative care and reduce unhealthy behaviours as they are perceived to aid with improving health outcome and have a significant return on investment. Galea et al.'s (2021) literature on following the rules

being bad for well-being highlights that implementing wellness programmes is challenging because of their perception as following a one-size-fits-all approach in addressing well-being issues as opposed to organisation's addressing structural conditions of the workplace.

Furthermore, organisations can reduce stigma around mental health through driving an in-depth understanding of mental health and creating an environment that is conducive for supporting employees with mental health issues (Restubog et al., 2021).

Literature by both Itzchakov & Grau (2020) and R.C. Ford et al. (2022) on high-quality listening and how organisations signal their loyalty to employees, indicate that the need for organisations to tailor their strategies to foster employee loyalty by addressing their needs through constant communication and sincere dedication to their well-being.

6.2.3.1.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The findings in terms of perceived organisational support in the form wellness tools perceived as driving mental health and well-being partially corrobrates with the literature by Jones et al. (2019), Proper and Van Oostrom (2019), and Peña et al. (2024) on wellness programs. Whilst some participants deemed wellness programs to promote healthy outcomes, most participants deemed wellness programs to be more supportive as opposed to preventative.

Insufficient evidence exists in relation to the return on investment in the wellness programs given the focus of the study was on employee perceptions as opposed to benefits reaped by organisations.

Furthermore, several of the findings that expressed wellness programs to be ineffective corroborated with Galea et al.'s (2021) literature highlighting that most organisations adopted a blanket approach in implementing wellness programmes and furthermore that their organisation's are not addressing operational conditions of the workplace, leading to their perceptions of wellness programmes as merely a mask or formality.

The findings and literature in section sections 6.2.2.1.1 and 6.2.2.1.2 (Sub-theme: Work-life balance) corroborate with the literatures by Kossek and Kelliher (2022) and Baruch and Rousseau (2018) in relation to increased flexibility based on employee's circumstances as perceived organisational support in promoting their mental health and well-being as affirmed by Charalampous et al. (2018).

The findings and literature in sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2.2 (Sub-theme: Job satisfaction) additionally corroborates with literature by T.D. Allen & French (2023) and Garg and Sinha (2022) highlighting the importance of organisations in employing job autonomy and job crafting in promoting meaningfulness in work and being positively linked to job satisfaction, increased well-being and performance.

Furthermore, although insufficient evidence in the findings exists in relation to social connections as perceived organisational support, the findings and literature in 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2.2 (Sub-theme: Job satisfaction) on meaningfulness of work corroborating with literatures by Kaltiainen et al. (2022), Greco et al. (2021), Hafermalz & Riemer (2020) , Jolly et al. (2020) and Pearce et al. (2023) on sense of purpose corroborating highlighting that a conducivie and supportive environment being crucial for increasing job satisfaction thorugh beneficial collaboration and a sense of identity to the organisation which leads to increased commitment.

6.2.3.1.4 Conclusion

Improving employee mental health and well-being organisations plays a critical role through genuine support and fostering trust with employees through support systems tools, fostering a culture of social connectedness and interactions. This thus contributes to the existing research on perceived organisational support as a sub-theme in mental health and well-being.

6.2.3.2 Sub-Theme – Leader support

6.2.3.2.1 Evidence of Leader support from findings

The findings from the interview data indicate a differing view in terms of perceived support from leaders in terms of supporting their mental health and well-being.

Some participants felt that leaders' behaviors contradicted the teachings of wellness programs, for instance, despite being encouraged to implement wellness learnings, participants reported being contacted for work even while on leave, making it feel as though they never truly had time off. Furthermore, the finding highlighted that career-focused leadership is problematic and counterproductive to the goals of wellness programs. Whilst other findings expressed fear of being victimized for speaking out about their treatment by managers, even when encouraged to do so by wellness programs adding stress and undermined the effectiveness of the programs.

The findings additionally highlighted positive leadership support, whereby leadership support with a people-focused organisational culture, whereby leaders encourage employees to take time off and enable participation in wellness activities which contributes to their job satisfaction and

retention. Moreover, participants appreciated managers who were accommodating in emergencies and supportive of their well-being needs, this support was seen as consistent, even post-COVID.

6.2.3.2.2 Evidence of Leader support from literature

The current literature by Zeijen et al. (2024) on giving and taking social support at work highlights that suport from supervisors is essential for the well-being of employees. This was further corroborated by Van Zoonen & Sivunen (2021) literature on the impact of communication frequency on isolaction and psychological distress, indicating that employees build a sense of belong.ing through social interactions and exchanges with their superviors. As per Sun (2019), this necessitates leaders to foster positive relationships with their works to inspire commitment.

To foster an environment that is conducive for mental health, leaders are pivotal in advocating for mental health through personalized support (Bonaccio et al., 2019).

Literature by Barber et al. (2023) on how managers can mitigate the stressful implication of an "always on" culture and Wynn and Rao (2019) highlights that leaders are crucial in promoting work-life balance by encouraging switching off when outside of work and providing informal flexibility to their teams as and when required.

6.2.3.2.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The findings in terms of leadership support being pivotal for driving mental health and well-being corrobrates with the literature by Zeijen et al. (2024), Van Zoonen & Sivunen (2021) and Sun (2019) in terms of social connecteness to increase subjective well-being which is important for driving organisational commitment.

The is no evidence in the findings in relation to personalized support for individuals experiencing mental health challenges given the sensitive nature of the topic, so the researcher was unable to corroborate with Bonaccio et al.'s (2019) literature.

The findings in relation managers playing a crucial role in enforcing work-life balance is strongly corrobrate with both Barber et al. (2023) and Wynn and Rao's (2019) literature.

6.2.3.2.4 Conclusion

To improve employee mental health and well-being within the organisation, leadership support places a critical role through genuine support and fostering trust with employees through social positive social interactions. This thus contributes to the existing research on perceived organisational support in the context of leader support as a sub-theme in mental health and well-being.

6.2.4 Research Question 3: Role of policymakers

The sub-themes identified are aimed at understanding the role of policymakers in formulating policies that are perceived by employees as either promoting or hindering employee mental health and well-being in the context of returning to the office.

6.2.4.1 Sub-Theme – Employee well-being promoter

6.2.4.1.1 Evidence of Employee mental health and well-being promoter from findings

A specific finding highlighted by a participant was in terms of their policies in relation to returning to the office being associated to their organisational culture that promotes work-life balance with mandatory office hours of 9am to 2 pm daily including 60% flexible days within the week of working in the office which was expressed by a participant as positively promoting work-life balance.

Moreover, another finding highlighted that organisational policies has the ability to drive well-being as a form of reinforcement.

There is insufficient evidence in the findings in relation to other participants specifically in terms of policies that promote mental health and well-being.

6.2.4.1.2 Evidence of Employee well-being Promoter from literature

The literature by Kossek (2022) on the future of flexibility at work posits that despite the existence of work-life policies within organisations pre-covid, work-life policies have always been a challenge.

Literature by Boccoli et al. (2024) on the psycholocial experience of flexibility in the workplace highlights that employees' perceptions of workplace flexibility has altered over time necessitating orgnanisations to adjust their policies accordingly to gain an understanding of their needs. This was further affirmed by Kossek et al. (2024) who posit that this attributed to technological advancement, workforce diversity and family needs.

The literature by Nurmi & Hinds (2020) on work designs based on connectivity demands and behaviours indicates that flexibile policies allow employees to connect, moreover cater for indivdiual abilities to manage work-life boundaries instead of policies that adopt a one-size-fits-all approach (Bech-Wysocka et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Fritz and Taylor (2019) indicates that although policies are available and signal as promoting well-being, enforcement as a norm is enforced by leaders.

6.2.4.1.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The findings in terms of organisational policies as a mechanism of reinforcing the support of mental health and well-being corrorobrates to Kossek et al. (2024), Boccoli et al. (2024), Nurmi & Hinds's (2020) and Fritz and Taylor's (2019) literature in terms of work-life balance policies aligning to employee needs and promoting a work-life balance culture.

The findings are contradictory to literature by Bech-Wysocka et al. (2024) since one-size fits all approach has higlighted to be effective in driving a work-life balance if it does cater to the needs of indivdiuals and furthermore aligns to the literature of Kossek (2022) that implementing work-life policies is a challenge give the diverse perceptions of employees in relation to work-life balance.

6.2.4.1.4 Conclusion

Overall the findings in relation to the participants corrobrates that despite the challenges in formulating organisational policies that cater to the individual needs of employees in promoting drive work-life balance, this can be achieved. This necessitates policymakers to understand the needs and perceptions of employees in relation to support of required of achieving work-life balance. Further studies are required fo explore the impact of organisational policies on promoting employees mental health and well-being. This therefore adds to the body of knowledge on perceived organisational support in the context of organisational policies promoting mental health and well-being.

6.2.4.2 Sub-Theme – Employee well-being hinderance

6.2.4.2.1 Evidence of Employee mental health and well-being hinderance from findings

A particular finding in relation to organisational policies as a hinderance to employee mental health and well-being was in relation to mandatory COVID vaccinations in terms returning to the office.

Additionally, another finding emphasized the harmful impact of unclear policies on employee mental health and well-being, resulting in a total loss of their work-life balance.

6.2.4.2.2 Evidence of Employee mental health and well-being hinderance from literature

Literature by Bray et al. (2019) on meanings on co-operation in the employment relationship highlights the importance of policymakers understanding the perceptions of what drives collaboration between employers and employees to ensure that policies are not a hinderance to the mental health and well-being of employees. This was further asserted by Thébaud and Pedulla's (2022) literature on the effects of the stigma and financial cost of utilizing work-life policies indicating limited adoption due to penalization.

Aust et al. (2019) highlights that policymakers should ensure the sustainability of policies that improve working conditions aligning to broader and ethical and sustainable business objectives.

6.2.4.2.3 Comparative Analysis of Findings vs Literature

The specific finding on the mandatory COVID vaccine aligns to literature by both Bray et al. (2019) and Aust et al. (2019) from the perspective of policymakers understanding that despite policies being deemed to promote the safety of employees by aligning to the ethical and substainable objectives of the organisation, imposed co-operation infringes on the ethics of employees as this can be a hinderance to employee's mental health and well-being.

Furthermore, the finding on ambigous policies as a hinderance to work-life balance aligns to Aust et al. (2019) that such policies are hinderance to improving working consitions and sustainable business objectives.

Both findings are contradictory with Thébaud and Pedulla's (2022) literature on penalization of adopting such policies given participants would be penalized for failure to adopt these policies, however insufficient evidence exists in the findings relating to stigma and financial costs in relation to utilizing the policies.

6.2.4.2.4 Conclusion

Overall the findings highlight the importance of policymakers understanding how organisational policies can either promote or hinder employee's well-being by gaining insight into what drives co-operation in relation to the adoption of policies. This thus contributes to the existing research on perceived organisational support in the context of organisational policies hindering employee mental health and well-being.

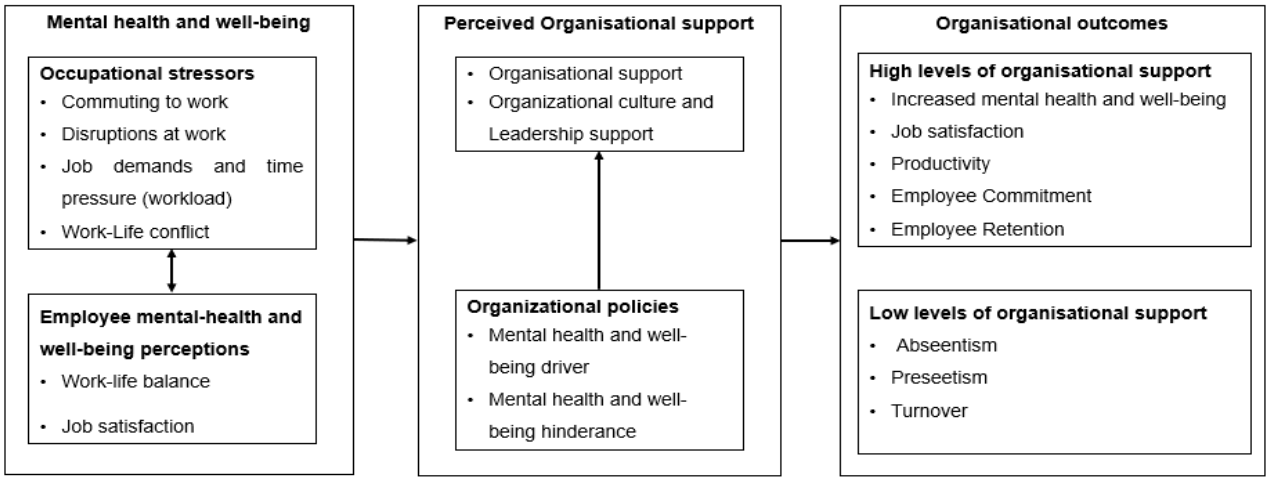


Figure 3: RTO mental health and well-being conceptual framework : Authors own

The conceptual framework provided outlines the various factors influencing employee mental health and well-being, and their impact on organisational outcomes in the context of transitioning from high-intensity remote working to the physical office environment post the pandemic.

The framework outlines several occupational stressors that negatively impact employee's mental health and well-being in a physical office environment; commuting to work which is stress related to travelling to and from the workplace, disruptions at work considered as interruptions and disturbances in the work environment, job demands and time pressure deemed to be workload and the pressure to meet deadlines and work-life conflict which reflects employee's struggles to balance work responsibilities with personal life.

In addition to wellness programs aimed at enhancing employee mental health and well-being, employees view organisational support, shaped by the company's culture and leadership, as crucial for providing the necessary flexibility to meet their unique needs at any given time. This support is seen as essential for achieving work-life balance and overall job satisfaction, as it helps employees find meaning in their roles, which positively affects their subjective well-being. Furthermore, organisational policies play a significant role in either promoting or hindering mental health and well-being, making it vital for policymakers to stay attuned to employee needs and current trends in mental health and well-being.

If employers consider these factors, they can anticipate positive organisational outcomes such as enhanced mental health and well-being, increased job satisfaction, higher productivity, stronger employee commitment, and improved retention. From a reciprocity perspective, when employees feel supported, they tend to respond with increased loyalty and dedication. Conversely, neglecting these aspects can lead to negative outcomes like absenteeism, presenteeism, and high turnover rates.

Organisations can leverage this framework to improve employee mental health and well-being by identifying key stressors related to returning to the office and implementing strategies that align with employees' perceptions of well-being. If organisations address these areas systematically, a healthier and more supportive work environment can be fostered that enhances employee well-being and drives positive organisational outcomes.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter marks the culmination of the researcher's investigation into employees' perceptions of mental health and well-being, especially in relation to their experiences of returning to the office. It brings together the research findings, emphasizing the preliminary contributions of the study. These insights illustrate the potential effects on employees' mental health and well-being, thereby reinforcing the researcher's argument to expand the social exchange theory. The recommendations provided for employers, leaders, policymakers, and suggestions for future research are based on these findings.

7.2 Research Background and Objectives

Following the pandemic, several organisations have made public commitments to tackle workforce well-being issues, dedicating substantial resources such as an average of US$11 million annually for companies with over 20,000 employees, to enhance health, well-being, and productivity. However, despite these investments indicating support, the outcomes suggest they may not be effective (Bhatt et al., 2024).

This research study sought to explore employee mental health and well-being as employees returned to the office post a period of intense remote work, and to examine the implications for employers and policymakers. The research suggested that by understanding workplace stressors and employees' perceptions of well-being during this return-to-office phase, organisations could enhance job satisfaction in line with employee expectations. This alignment could, in turn, positively impact productivity and help achieve desired organisational goals. The main findings discussed in Chapter 6 are summarized below.

7.3 Main Findings

The research study's findings, summarized in terms of the research questions, are presented as a conceptual framework for employees' perceptions of mental health and well-being in terms of returning to the office, as shown in Figure 3 of Chapter 6. This framework outlines the factors that negatively affect employee mental health and well-being in the form of occupational stressors (Figure 1) , as well as the perceptions that can positively influence it (Figure 2). It also illustrates the subsequent negative or positive organisational outcomes based on the perceived support from organisations, leaders and workplace policies.

The framework demonstrates that high levels of perceived support led to employees feeling valued and motivated, which enhances their mental health and overall well-being moreover when organisations invest in their employees' well-being through supportive policies and practices, employees are likely to respond with increased loyalty, commitment, and productivity. As highlighted in section 2.2 Theoretical Framework of this study, the SET further explains that workplace relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges of resources and support. Thus, when organisations provide resources and support for employees' mental health and well-being, employees are likely to respond with positive behaviors and attitudes, such as increased productivity, engagement and reduced absenteeism.

7.3.1 The perceptions of employee RTO workplace stressors

The study's initial findings highlight the main source of workplace stress during the return to the office is the increased workload and time pressure from tight deadlines, leading to burnout and reduced job satisfaction. These results align with the literature by Black and Britt (2022), Baethge et al. (2019), Mazzola and Disselhorst (2019), and Pindek et al. (2022) on hindrance stressors.

Additionally, the need to readjust to in-person interactions, including non-work-related social interactions, unexpected requests from stakeholders, and noisy office layouts, causes frustration and an unhappy work environment. This negative spillover into personal life is supported by Puranik et al. (2019) and Appel-Meulenbroek et al. (2020) on workplace interruptions. However, this contrasts with the literature by Samani and Alavi (2020), De Vaujany & Aroles (2018), and Blagoev et al. (2019), which suggests that social and structural interruptions can enhance mental health and well-being through social connectedness, fostering collaboration, and contributing to job satisfaction, commitment, organisational identity, and reduced turnover intentions, as found by Kaltiainen et al. (2022), Greco et al. (2021), Hafermalz & Riemer (2020), Jolly et al. (2020), and Pearce et al. (2023).

Furthermore, commuting has disrupted established routines, causing anxiety, especially for employees with children or those supporting family members, as noted by Jang and Ko (2019). Public commuting post-pandemic has introduced new occupational stress due to the lack of control over fellow commuters' adherence to safety and health regulations, as per Calderwood and Mitropoulos (2020).

Employee perceptions of commuting differ from the literature by Clark et al. (2019) and Jachimowicz et al. (2020), which highlight the potential mental health benefits of commuting as a transition

between work and non-work domains. However, commuting is predominantly linked with negatively impacting financial well-being, as supported by Schneider and Willman (2018).

The workplace stressors mentioned above contribute to work-life conflict, as highlighted by Ford et al. (2023), where work demands significantly interfere with family responsibilities. This interference is due to unpredictable work schedules, as discussed by Bayrakdar & King (2021) and Bolino et al. (2020). Additionally, the constant connectivity and the resulting always-on culture, driven by technology, exacerbate this conflict as per Leclercq-Vandelannoitte (2019). As per Van Zoonen et al.'s, 2023, the autonomy to work from anywhere, while seemingly beneficial, has potential to contribute negatively by distorting work and personal life boundaries should autonomy deem to be too excessive.

7.3.2 The perceptions of RTO employee mental health and well-being

The second fundamental finding is employees' perceptions of their mental health and well-being during the RTO transition are multifaceted and deeply influenced by their individual experiences and the support provided by their organisations. This is supported by Golden's (2021) literature in relation to the integration aspect of both work and non-work domains as a promoter of improved mental health and well-being.

Furthermore, employees deem increased flexibility from organisations that is ideal to their personalized circumstances and adjustable given changes in their non-work domains such as an addition to the family in the form of a child or elderly person residing with them will increase their subjective well-being based on the ability to achieve work-life balance as per the literature of Kossek and Kelliher (2022), Baruch and Rousseau (2018), Charalampous et al. (2018) and Kelliher et al.'s (2019). A strong correlation exists between employee productivity and commitment with positive mental health and well-being. Flexibility enables employees to better manage work demands without compromising their work-life balance, physical health, or financial well-being.

Additionally, the meaningfulness of work is a significant contributor to job satisfaction and mental health as per Maunz & Glaser's (2024) literature on psychological need satisfaction. Employees find fulfillment in completing tasks within the standard schedule, gaining proficiency in their roles, and seeing the tangible impact of their work on business goals and customers. This sense of purpose and the opportunity to positively influence others' lives substantially increases job satisfaction and overall well-being. These findings are aligned to literature by both Laaser and Karlsson (2021) and Tóth-Király et al. (2020) on meaningful work and work motivation. The findings

in relation to meaningfulness of work were void of leader support, given the motivation is generally driven intrinsically, this aligns to J. D. Nielsen and Colbert's (2024) as leader support is usually lacking.

7.3.3 What do employees perceive as RTO organisational support?

Employees perceive organisational support during the RTO transition through several key dynamics that significantly impact their well-being and productivity.

The third main findings revealed differing views on organisational support regarding mental health and well-being systems. Nearly all participants were aware of the wellness programs and activities their organisations offered, which provided access to mental health resources. Some employees found these programs to be genuinely supportive and effective in promoting mental health awareness as intended by the organisation, which corroborates Jones et al. (2019), Proper and Van Oostrom (2019), and Peña et al.'s (2024) literature.

In contrast, other participants perceived them as mere formalities, suggesting that the organisations were only superficially concerned about employee well-being which corroborates with Galea et al.'s (2021) literature on the challenges of implementing wellness programmes as well as the ineffectiveness of adopting a blanket approach. Furthermore, findings perceived the support systems as being more supportive as opposed to preventative which contradictory to the Jones et al. (2019), Proper and Van Oostrom (2019) and Peña et al.'s (2024) literature given wellness programmes are deemed to be more preventative.

In addition, the study revealed that the effectiveness of these wellness programs often depended on the overall organisational culture and leadership commitment. In environments where leadership actively prioritized mental health and well-being, employees were inclined to feel supported and valued as per literature by both Zeijen et al. (2024) and Van Zoonen & Sivunen (2021). This, in turn, fostered a positive work environment, leading to increased levels of employee engagement, loyalty, and retention. Conversely, in organisations where leadership did not visibly support these initiatives, employees were more skeptical about the sincerity of the wellness programs, which could negatively impact their perception of the organisation. Moreover, employee perceive organisation's fostering an environment that supports their mental health and well-being based on increased and customized flexibility that is ideal to enabling their work-life balance as per Kossek and Kelliher (2022), Baruch and Rousseau (2018), Charalampous et al. (2018) and Kelliher et al.'s (2019) literture. Employees deem their work meaningful based on a sense of fulfilment and purpose based

on collaboratively completing tasks with colleagues and stakeholders in addition to their tasks being linked to strategic objectives, necessiting organisations to foster a culture of strong connectedness and mutual benefits as per Kaltiainen et al. (2022) and Greco et al's. (2021) literature on organisational citizenship, furthermore organisations are expected to increase job satisfaction by increasing autonomy and job crafting as per literature by T.D. Allen & French (2023) Garg and Sinha (2022) based on the findings surrounding employee's expectations is a work environment that is delivery focus as opposed to stringent work schedules.

7.4 Recommendations

7.4.1 Recommendations for Employers

Employers can take several proactive steps to support their employees during the RTO transition, ensuring a smooth and positive experience for everyone involved as follows:

Firstly, prioritizing clear and transparent communication is essential. Employers should provide regular updates about RTO plans and reasons driving any changes in policies. This transparency helps reduce uncertainty and anxiety among employees, fostering a sense of trust and security. Open channels for feedback and questions can also make employees feel heard and valued, contributing to a more supportive work place.

Implementing flexible work arrangements is another fundamental recommendation. Offering flexible scheduling working arrangements allows employees to balance their work and non-work domains effectively. Offering flexibility can greatly alleviate stress and enhance job satisfaction. Employers should understand that employees have diverse needs and preferences, making a uniform approach less effective.

In addition to offering mental health support systems and wellness programs, conducting regular mental health check-ins at the team level can be advantageous as this encourages an environment where mental health is normalized which can encourage employees to seek help when needed.

Employers ensuring a safe and healthy work environment is also crucial, employers should ensure that employees are provided the correct office equipment upon returning to the office, this includes ergonomic workstations and measures to reduce physical strain.

Recognizing and appreciating employees' efforts is crucial for maintaining morale and motivation. Employers should implement formal recognition programs and encourage managers to provide

regular, informal praise. Acknowledging employees' hard work and contributions can boost their sense of value and belonging within the organisation.

Supporting work-life balance through policies that promote flexible hours and adequate leave provisions is also important. Employers should encourage employees to take breaks and manage their time effectively, recognizing the importance of personal time for overall well-being. Providing resources and training on how to manage time effectively to enable work-life balance can further support employees in this area.

Through adopting these recommendations, employers can foster a supportive and positive atmosphere, aiding employees in smoothly transitioning back to the office while maintaining their mental health and well-being.

7.4.2 Recommendations for Managers

Managers are essential in aiding employees through the return-to-office transition. Here are some key suggestions to help them manage this process effectively:

Managers should focus on maintaining clear and transparent communication with their teams by providing regular updates on RTO plans and policy changes. This approach can help alleviate uncertainty and anxiety given that open dialogue fosters a psychologically safe environment, building trust and creating a supportive workplace.

In addition to the organisation's flexible working arrangements, managers are vital as the main point of contact for their teams, ensuring these arrangements can adapt to employees' personal circumstances, thereby promoting work-life balance. Managers should cultivate an environment where team members feel encouraged to disconnect from work outside of their scheduled hours. This practice enhances well-being, reduces burnout, and supports a healthier, more sustainable work environment. Moreover, managers should cultivate a culture that respects employees' time off and avoids disruptions during their leave.

Managers should ensure that, in addition to providing mental health resources and wellness programs, they cultivate a culture where mental health is normalized, making employees feel at ease when seeking help.

Managers should create a culture of regular formal and informal appreciation and recognition within the team to acknowledge hard work and contributions as this can boost morale and motivation, which reinforces a positive work culture.

Reestablishing team dynamics is essential during the return-to-office transition. Managers should arrange team-building activities and group events to enhance relationships and build a sense of community. A strong sense of team connectedness can improve morale and support mental health.

Managers applying these approaches can foster a supportive workplace atmosphere that helps employees navigate the transition back to the office more smoothly and maintain their mental health and well-being.

7.4.3 Recommendations for Policymakers

Policymakers can greatly assist employees during the return-to-office transition by adopting essential strategies that address the varied needs of the workforce, including the following recommendations:

Policymakers should ensure that flexible work arrangement policies are genuinely adaptable and meet employees' expectations. These policies should also empower managers to use their discretion to promote work-life balance within their teams. This approach not only caters to individual needs but also promotes a more adaptable and supportive workplace. Enhancing flexibility in return-to-office policies is crucial for improving employee well-being, as it reduces the stress of a traditional 9-to-5 schedule, positively impacting mental health and overall well-being. Additionally, policies that mandate reasonable working hours and protect employees' right to disconnect can further support work-life balance such as adequate leave provisions beyond annual leave.

Policymakers should promote policies that encourage open communication between employers and employees. Transparent and frequent communication is critical for addressing concerns, developing trust, and ensuring employees feel heard and valued. Additionally, fostering regular feedback mechanisms helps organisations stay attuned to employees' needs and make necessary adjustments.

Furthermore, policymakers should ensure that mental health policies incorporate employee performance. This means designing mental health initiatives that not only support employees' well-

being but also enhance their productivity and job satisfaction. By integrating mental health considerations into performance management, organisations can create an all-encompassing approach that recognizes the interaction between mental health and work output. This includes developing balanced performance metrics that account for both productivity and mental health indicators, ensuring that employees are meeting their goals while maintaining their well-being.

Lastly, it is vital for policymakers to ensure that workplace policies are inclusive and consider the diverse needs of employees for creating a supportive work environment, this includes endorsing a culture of respect and belonging protecting employees against discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.

In adopting these recommendations, policymakers can help create supportive environments that facilitate a smoother transition back to the office and promote the mental health and well-being of employees.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on supporting employees during the return to office (RTO) transition can explore several key areas to provide deeper insights and practical recommendations.

It is a challenge to measure employee mental health and well-being upon returning to the office over a short period of time. The researcher proposes conducting a dedicated long-term study to track changes in employees' mental health and well-being over time given the transition back to the office. These studies can help identify lasting impacts and the effectiveness of different support strategies that can better inform workplace interventions and policies.

A comprehensive research study could be undertaken to examine how flexible working arrangements impact employees' productivity, job satisfaction, and mental health, particularly when these arrangements are tailored to meet their personal needs for flexibility. The findings from this study would assist organisations in crafting flexible work policies that align with employees' needs, thereby fostering positive organisational outcomes.

A research study should be conducted to explore how different organisational cultures influence employees' experiences and well-being during the RTO transition, which can provide valuable insights. The research can examine why these organisational cultures are deemed to be

supportive, inclusive, and communicative in advancing a positive impact on employee satisfaction and mental health.

A research study could be undertaken to determine the most effective wellness interventions and how they can be tailored to different employee groups. This would involve assessing the impact of specific mental health initiatives, such as counseling services, stress management programs, and wellness activities, on employees' well-being during transitional periods.

A research study could be conducted to understand the most effective methods to formulate RTO policies which are deemed to encourage employee mental health and well-being in conjunction with the desired organisation culture, leadership and style and wellness programmes adopted within organisations.

A research study could be conducted on how the RTO transition impacts various groups of employees differently. This should include examining the experiences of employees with non-traditional family structures, those from diverse cultural backgrounds, and those with different caregiving responsibilities. Gaining insights into these variations can aid in developing more inclusive and supportive workplace policies.

A study could be conducted exploring the influence of different leadership practices on employees' transition experiences and can help identify best practices for transition to the office.

In exploring these areas, future research can offer valuable insights and practical advice to help organisations better support their employees during the transition back to the office.

7.6 Limitations

Even though this study seeks to offer valuable insights into the interplay between employee well-being, perceived organisational support, and job satisfaction during the return-to-office (RTO) transition, it is important to recognize several limitations that may affect the findings and their generalizability.

One potential limitation is the utilization of purposive sampling as highlighted in Chapter 4, meaning the study sample is not sufficiently large or diverse, so the findings may not be representative of the broader employee population. This could limit the ability to generalize the results to different industries, job roles, or demographic groups.

The study employed a cross-sectional design, data is captured at a single point in time. This approach may not fully capture the dynamic nature of employees' perceptions and experiences over the course of the RTO transition. Longitudinal studies would be more effective in tracking changes and trends over time.

The study may not account for all contextual factors that influence employee well-being and job satisfaction. External factors such as economic conditions, organisational changes, or personal circumstances can impact employees' perceptions and experiences, potentially confounding the results.

While the study focuses on key dimensions of well-being, such as mental health, work-life balance, and job satisfaction, there may be other relevant factors that are not explored in depth. This could limit the comprehensiveness of the findings and their applicability to broader well-being considerations.

The study does not fully consider variations in policies and workplace cultures across different regions or countries. These differences can greatly influence employees' perceptions and experiences, making the findings potentially less universally applicable.

In recognizing these limitations, the study can provide a more nuanced interpretation of the findings and suggest areas for future research to address these gaps. However, despite these limitations, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the factors influencing employee well-being and organisational support during the RTO transition.

7.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the transition back to the office presents a complex array of challenges and opportunities for both employees and organisations. Employees' perceptions of their mental health and well-being during this period are influenced by several aspects, such as workplace stressors, the availability of support systems like wellness initiatives, and organisational and leader support. Flexible working arrangements, effective communication, mental health support, and inclusive practices are crucial in mitigating stress and fostering a positive work environment.

For organisations, adopting flexible work policies, enhancing mental health resources, and ensuring a safe and comfortable physical workspace are essential strategies. Managers play a pivotal role in this transition by fostering open communication, recognizing employees' efforts, and supporting

work-life balance. Policymakers can further support this process by promoting flexible work arrangements, enhancing mental health support, and ensuring safe work environments through clear policies.

From an academic perspective, the Social Exchange Theory provides valuable insights into the dynamics of workplace relationships during this transition. This theory suggests that the quality of social exchanges between employees and their organisations significantly impacts employees' mental health and well-being. Positive exchanges, characterized by work-life balance support and job satisfaction, can enhance employees' sense of value and belonging, thereby improving their overall well-being. Conversely, negative exchanges can exacerbate stress and diminish mental health.

Incorporating the principles of SET, organisations can better understand the significance of reciprocal relationships in the workplace. By investing in employees' well-being through supportive policies and practices, organisations don’t only foster a healthier work environment yet enhance employee loyalty and productivity. This academic contribution underscores the critical role of social dynamics in shaping mental health outcomes in the workplace.

Future research should focus on long-term studies of mental health, the impacts of flexible working arrangements, and the role of organisations and leaders in supporting employees during the RTO transition. In addressing these areas, more effective strategies can be developed to support employees, ensuring their well-being and productivity as they navigate this significant change.

Overall, a collaborative approach involving employees, managers, organisations, and policymakers is essential to create a supportive and resilient work place during the return to office transition.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW GUIDE

I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview regarding employee mental health and well-being in your workplace. Please may you confirm if you understood the contents included in the consent form that I previously sent to you and if not, what clarity do you require?

I will now proceed with the interview, subject to your permission.

RQ1: What do employees perceive as effective wellness support upon their return to the office? (Theme: Mental Health/ Well-being)

- What levels of stress do you encounter during a typical 9 -5 in the office, and what factors contribute to these stress levels?
- How did your stress levels shift during and after COVID while working remotely or in a hybrid setup, and what factors contributed to these changes?
- What is your opinion on the current support offered by your organisation to drive well-being? How do you think it will be effective to deal with work-related stress upon returning to the office?
- What are/ were your expectations on your organisation requiring employees to return to the office?

RQ2: How do employees feel about work-life balance? (Theme: Autonomy)

- How do you anticipate returning to the office will affect your work-life balance, and what factors do you think will influence this change?
- How do you believe the level of support for dealing with family or personal issues will change upon returning to the office?
- To what extent do you think returning to the office will enable you to disconnect from work-related concerns during your personal time?
- How have you managed your well-being, mental health, and burnout in your different work setups (Remote, Hybrid, Physical Office)?

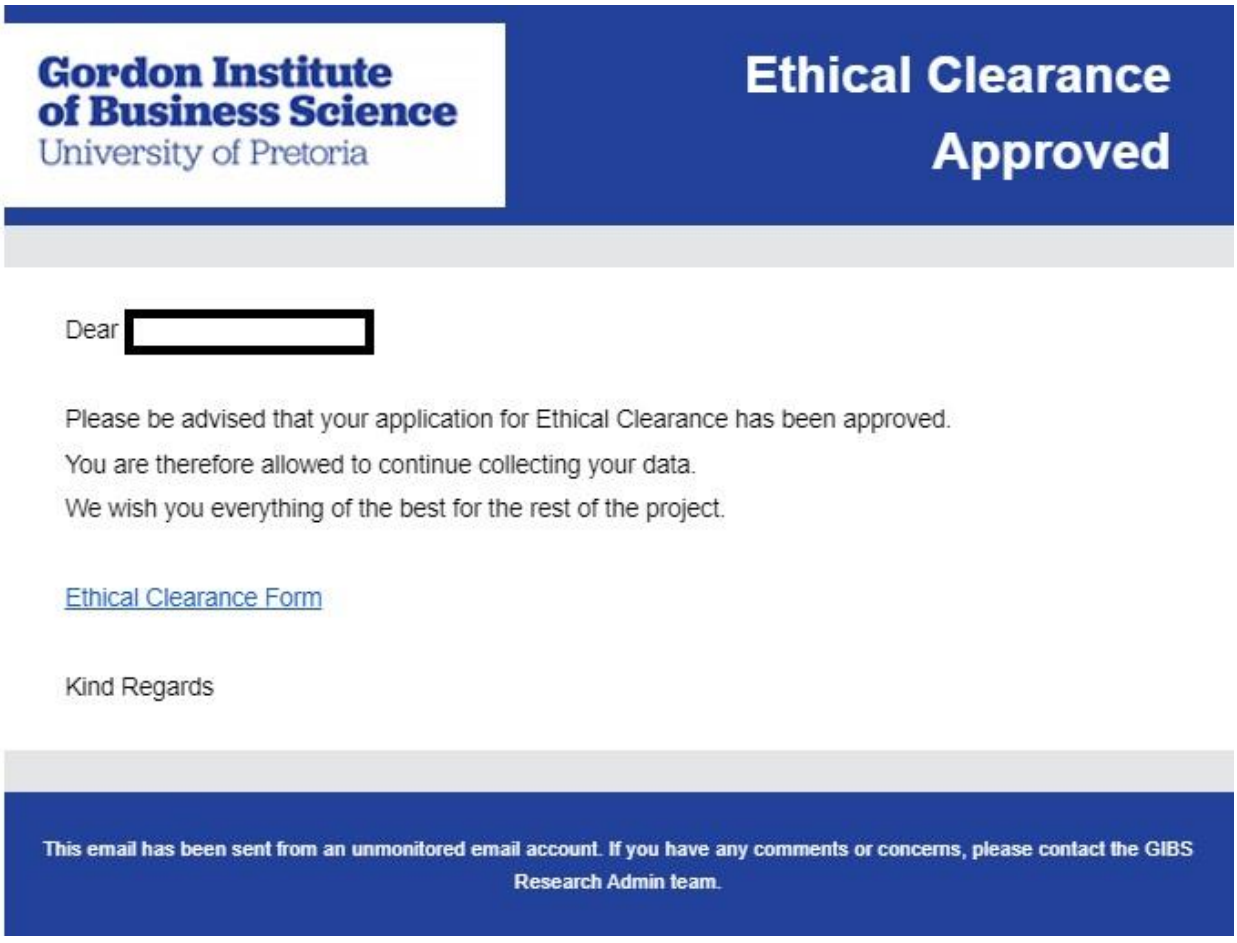
RQ3: How do employees feel about their role within the orgnanisation? (Theme: Meaningfulness of work)

- What makes your work fulfilling/ enjoyable?
- What gives you a strong sense of purpose related to your role within the orgnanisation?
- Please describe what gives you a sense of accomplishment from what you do on most days?

RQ4: What are your perceptions of your work environment? (Theme: Psychological safety/ Organisation culture)

- How does your organisation foster an environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their opinions and feelings about the workplace?
- What is your opinion on the approach followed by your organisation when implementing wellness initiatives?
- Please share your opinion about the mental support initiatives provided by your organisation (Supportive or preventative or both).

APPENDIX B – ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Ethical Clearance Approved

Dear [redacted]

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.
You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.
We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Ethical Clearance Form

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.

APPENDIX C - PROFORMA CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

I am conducting research on the topic, Return to Office: Understanding employee's perceptions of well-being and the influence on employers and policymakers in driving engagement. To gain insight into this topic, you are requested to participate in the form of an interview. The interview is expected to last between 45 minutes to one hour and will be recorded. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Please be advised that confidentiality will be maintained and only your collected data in relation to the recorded transcriptions from the recording will be analyzed and reported.

Should you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me as per the details provided below.

Researcher name: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Research Supervisor name: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D – ATLAS Ti CODEBOOK

Code	Code Groups
. I think it's a lot because I now need to engage with people in person	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
Everyone wants to get to know how everyone is doing. You spend most of	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Colleague distractions (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Highly disruptive environment (Open plan office) (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - More focus, less disruptions (Less stress levels)	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Work-Family integration (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 RTO - intentionally set that time and boundary to not talk to anyone	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): People will randomly come to you and want to chit-chat, distracting you during your eight to five when you're in the office	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - High stress levels (time management, commuting)	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Lack of concentration and distractions	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-life balance work social disruptions	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): So that do like kind of could cause I end up having to stop doing my w	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Stress contributor (RTO) - Workplace disruptions - social interactions	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Ignore people	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Increased focus	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Less social distractions	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Commuting negative financial impact (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - That's an hour and 30 minutes, that I could have well slept an hour or extra and logged in fresh and rejuvenated versus having to wake up at 4h30 stressing about driving through marabastad through public transport (Commuting)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Economic factors, not having to spend on fuel (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) -Minimal expenses (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (RTO) - Commuting to the office	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 Stress - My levels of stress is around basically time management (Commuting)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): I mean, it obviously means that you now need to factor in time to get	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): In my case, I don't know if you are aware, but I travel 70 kms just to	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): my case it or in cases of different employees, it was a case of basica	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Commuting (Increased anxiety, increased infections)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Commuting costly	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Increased commuting time	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Long distance public transport commuting - just over R2500 versus when I use my own car which can inflate to R6000 a month	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Mental health is affected 'cause you are tired from traffic (Commuting)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work

RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Negative financial impact (commuting)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Public commuting exposure to COVID risk	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Workload remains constant but commuting time not taken into consideration	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - No commuting	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Private commuting (Less exposure)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Hybrid) - Face-to-Face interactions in the office	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Hybrid) - Face-to-Face interactions with manager	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (RTO) - Ability to check emails and tell people face-to-face that your were on lunch (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (RTO) - Get to be with my colleagues instead of me being home alone (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (RTO) - Walking to the individual's desk and ask whatever I need (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Face -to-Face meetings routine disruptor	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Negative face-to-face interactions, decreased productivity	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Negative peer to peer working relationships	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Sitting in meetings on headphones, no social connections	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Social connectedness	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Social connections not working lke pre-covid	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO- No interaction is possible because we are always chasing work	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): So that do like kind of could cause I end up having to stop doing my w	RQ1 Sub- Theme: Workplace distractions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): The returning to the office has created a little bit of animosity.	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Ease of conflict resolution	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Face-to-Face interactions (Clear articulation of virtual communications)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Face-to-Face interactions (Improve employee relationships)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Face-to-Face interactions (Real time responses)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Face-to-Face interactions (Team support)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - High social connectedness	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - No expectations, happy to put name to a face	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Phsyical contact important	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Physical interactions increase work related support	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO/Hybrid - Social engagements with colleagues	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Face-to-Face Interactions
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Commuting costly	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Incur additional financial costs	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being

RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Negative financial impact (commuting)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Relocation	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Positive financial implications	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Well-being management - RTO (Communting - Burnout)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Well-being management - WFH save money and socialize	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Wellness support - Interest free loans (recommendation)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): WFH - Buying own data, made sense to me	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Well-being initiatives - Used financial aspect telephonically (effective)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Financial well-being
I think working at my company, I mean no day is the same at my organiz	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Job role demands (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to5 (Covid) - Stretch yourself and work until 10pm if you could	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): one procrastinates or they feel that the job that they in is not for t	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): So I have to now rise to the occasion upskilled myself and learn how t	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Stress contributors - Increased workloads due to retrenchments	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Stress contributors - Under resourced	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Stress contributors (Covid) - Constantly working	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Stress contributors (Covid) - High work overload	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): with all of that workload, piling up until our responsibility onto our	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
when I get to work, I'm fully engaged from 8 to 5 right. Like stress l	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
depending on what I'm working on is stressful, but I think my stress l	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
I don't think there was a normal day where I would log off before 7:00	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
I guess work will always be work and it just depends how you manage it	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Blurred work-life balance (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Constantly online (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Don't have time for breaks (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Wake up in six, start working and then finish up in 9 or 8 or 10 or you don't have to (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Work more hours - perception not working (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid)- No tea time, lunch breaks, didn't even check time (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (RTO) - You can go to lunch (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): about to say that's something that doesn't exist in our in our space.	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): having elderlies in the house, having a frail beings in the House. Let	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): I don't think I disconnected. It's very hard, e	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): I feel like the family support is very compromised cause the flexibili	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): In my case, I don't know if you are aware, but I travel 70 kms just to	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance

RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Is the baby OK?	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Project workload increase	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - work overtime	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remoting working - Work-life conflict	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - 100% Work-life conflict	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - After work, leave, drive, start with chores	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Boundary management - Non-existant	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Communting (Put priority on work-family relationships suffer)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Decreased time flexibility	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Disconnect - Carry laptop home	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Disconnect - Remember task needs completion	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Disconnect - Won't help much	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Distant family support	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Distractions from meetings	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Don't stick to schedule when in the office	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Is the baby okay (Stress high)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Loss of freedom	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Mental health is affected 'cause you are tired from traffic (Commuting)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Refuse work from any office linked to institution	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Relocation	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Routine disrupted	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life Balance - Achieve alot more at home than at the office	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life Balance - I think the guys that I report to	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life Balance - In early, leave late	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life Balance - Second shift begins	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life balance - Strictness	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life balance - Switch laptop off but thoughts running at the back of your mind at home	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-life balance - Thought maybe we learned we can do this thing outside the building	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life balance - Time Flexibility	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-life balance disruption	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-life balance work overload	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-life balance work social disruptions	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - work-life conflict (animosity) - work takes preference	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance

RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life conflict (Detriment to personal life)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-Life integration distruption	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): the school hasn't opened. They are cleaning up and then she has to sor	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): WFH - Stress levels alleviated (Work-Life balance)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-life balance - acknowledge maturity levels of employees	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life balance - But as long as we deliver	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-life balance - Feel like you have to compensate for everything you doing	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life balance - How management is handling the whole thing	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life Balance - if ever need to take away life balance because of let's say I have more projects that will be discussed with my manager.	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-life balance - Lack of flexibility and maturity despite work ethic	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life balance - management not making flexibility conducive	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-life balance - Not allowing it to take its place and unfold	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life Balance - One day out of office, anything happen outside day then line manager won't allow	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life balance (Remote) - In pain but trying to compensate	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life balance (Remote) - Utilize commuting time for self-love	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life balance (RTO) - Formal setup and structure engagement like meetings	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life balance (RTO) - Personal Issue - Send sister to go and attend your child instead of going	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Work-Life Balance (RTO) - won't affect anything.	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): hybrid - work-life balance	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): I'm back online again, rejuvenated from a good 30 minute nap with a li	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): me being at the office, so for me to kind of like once I close my lapt	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Pre-covid - Work-Life balance - Had to be in the office, flow of things	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Pre-covid - Work-Life balance - Set routine	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Work-Life Balance - Parent, make lunches, cook	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Disconnect - Easy, I do my 8 to 5, anything outside that, I am not bother (Give & Take)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Disconnect - If somebody is not pulling through, I'm not gonna pull through unless it affects me	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Intentional boundary management	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): well balanced diet of fruits	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): WFH - Buying own data, made sense to me	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): WLB - (Disconnect -RTO) - My work ends at the office	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Work detachment - Thinking about alternative revenue streams	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance

Since I have a deadline where I'm like OK, I need to go back home and	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
So post coming to work, I think I found a way to balance my stresses b	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
Being in the office, the stress I experience is due to not getting work done because I'm always trying to catch up with people."	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Achieved tasks (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Constantly need to move onto next thing (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Deadlines (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 - Workload completion within hours of the day (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Integrating kids into work-home routine (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Leadership part is the most important one (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Less traffic from people, less noise, no grapevine (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Pressure to deliver (High stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Relaxed, slower paced (Stress levels low)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - work around delivery (Manager) (Low stress levels)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Covid) - Workload was paced, lots to do but not pressured to complete work within a set timeframe	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Hybrid) - Able to workaround personal stuff during the day	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Hybrid) - Make up for time lost during the day	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Hybrid) - More control when WFH	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Hybrid) - Plan better	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Hybrid) - Push more work (WFH) for days in office	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): I think mostly it's just the pressure to like, deliver. I I can almost	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Control of how to manage your work	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Increased delivery expectations	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Increased workload	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Project workload increase	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Remote/ WFH - try to push as much as your can	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Confined working hours available	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Decreased performance	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Decreased time flexibility	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Delivery expectations (High workload)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Inability to complete work timeously	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Inablity to meet daily outputs	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Increase in workload (hybrid)	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Limited time in office	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance

RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Workload increase	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Workload remains constant but commuting time not taken into consideration	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Commuting to work
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO Stress contributor - Tight deadlines	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO- No interaction is possible because we are always chasing work	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Stress contributors - Inability to deliver	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Stress contributors - Meeting work expectations	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Job role demands
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): WFH - Focus on getting work across the line	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): WFH - Go overboard	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): WFH - Go the extra mile	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): WFH - Push delivery of items	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Early commencement with work tasks	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - High task completion	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - More control of environment	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Remote working - Work at own pace	RQ1 Sub-Theme: Work-life balance
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - Completion of tasks	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - gaining more understanding as you go.	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - Getting this done and learning from experiences	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - Manage to solve inquiries	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - Management recognition	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - Problem solving complex tasks	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - Recognition from stakeholder I assisted	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment - See that status updates are adding value to that particular project	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplishment- Ability to exceed work expectations	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplisment - Contribution of value to other teams	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of accomplisment - Sense of sense worth	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of accomplishment
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Autonomy	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: if I can tell you about the one aspect of the business that I understa	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work Fufilment - I am enjoying it	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work Fulfilment - share what I know and whatever area of business with my colleague and just exhaust everything that I know	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - Being able to see project starting and ending	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work Fulfilment - Colleagues, able to work in a team and work effectively	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - End-customer satisfaction	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work Fulfilment - Happy stakeholders	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work Fulfilment - Interacting with people across the organisation	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - It's not enjoyable at all	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - New learning in ecommerce role	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - No team spirit	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment

RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - Orgnanisational culture	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - See value/ impact of work on orgnanisation	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfilment - Working relationship with my manager	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Work fulfiment - Problem solving	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Meaningfulness of work - can manage own work and outcome	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Meaningfulness of work - Customer brand experience	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Meaningfulness of work - Direct customer impact	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Meaningfulness of work - Flexibility but RTO eliminated	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Meaningfulness of work - Revenue contribution	RQ1/ RQ2 Sub-Theme: Work Fulfilment
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Role alignment to market needs	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Able to add value and not just tick box exercise	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Alignment with consumer preference changes	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Brand on it's own	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Career growth and development	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Company not fined due to timely compliance submission	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Different stakeholder collaboration (Diff skillset)	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - driving towards like those strategic directions and objectives.	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Enriching people's lives	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Good company to some extend an loved by our customers	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Interact with customer not getting a picture and excited when getting a picture	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - means not doing work in vain	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Positive feedback from stuff completed	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Recognition	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Safeguard company from risks	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - Seeing the impact that my work has and on the strategic direction of the organisation	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - shows that people are appreciating	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Sense of purpose - work measure up to business goals	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: the fact that my output has a direct either negative or positive impac	RQ1/RQ2 Sub-Theme: Sense of Purpose
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expecations - Flexibillity to focus on output and not number of hours that I'm in the office.	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expecations - No expectations, business as usual	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expectations - feel like you've been watched also by someone	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Lack of delivery/ outputs focus	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: Autonomy	
employee coming back to the office, it was more like you have to be at	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
I mean, we have the two weeks where we working from home, which is gre	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 RTO - Flexibility dependent on your line manager and team	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expecations - maintain routine from covid tenure	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expectations - routine that I need to run, but my output is not compromised.	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility

RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expectations - Days in offices work until 12pm	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expectations - Guilty concious if don't complete 60% in office	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expectations - Office once a week to catch up with colleagues	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): employee expectations RTO - Higher flexibility	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): RTO - Work-life balance - Thought maybe we learned we can do this thing outside the building	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO expectations - Happy with less days in the office	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO expectations - Not comfortable going back full-time	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): RTO expectations - Not to return full-time	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): EE expectations - Higher flexibility
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): Employee expectation - Two-way communication	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: And the one on one sessions with our line managers and before you even	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
I just feel like based on our environment, it's always going to be str	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
I think the company does provide a support in that sense.	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Lack of empathy	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - "Careerist" Leadership	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Always-on availability	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Different perceptions of well-being	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Emails on phone	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Employee voice non-existent	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Employer oriented (No employee voice)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Every man for themself	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Family comes first	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Family time is well-being (Perception)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Give into system, HR is for the people	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - High demand delivery (Employee lack of focus & priority)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - High performance (Output)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - High workload conflicting with attending events	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Lack of appreciation	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Non-attendance leads to anxiety	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Response to emails after hours	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Social interconnectedness vs workload	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Stayed with company for long	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Training & encourage time-off	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - well-being centred across organisation	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - WFH negative financial implications	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture

RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - WFH threats	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Work culture changed/ diminished	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - People first and well-being	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Acceptance of remote working	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Low score pillars addressed by management	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - No sense of support (Human Capital)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Not daily working in office	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Abrupt, one-way communication	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
so my expectations was like, either you conform or you find something	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
Sometimes you feel like just getting up and leaving that business update	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
there is awareness, but the organisation is not really backing it up w	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Organisational Culture
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Factors (Mental health & Well-being): 9-to-5 (Remote work) - Manager at the time was understanding	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Family issues - Family support is not as effective as when you home	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Family support different - bound to office	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Family support non-existent	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal Issue support - Scared to ask all the time	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal issue support - agreement between you and your manager, don't have to book leave day	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal issue support - Challenge dependant on how many issue in that week	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal issue support - Dependent on your manager	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal Issue support - Manager concern is delivery, competion of tasks	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal Issue support - n, if you have, let's say, an emergency that you need to take care of, you can also ask your manager sometime off(No change)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal issue support - Side eyeing every time kid sick	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal issue support (Not considered/discussed)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal Issues - Difficult to leave office	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal issues - Sense that being sick but not taking sick leave	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal support (Challenging adjustment)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal support non-existent	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO Personal issues - Sick child & key player in meeting in boardroom	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Personal Issue Support (WLB)
a lot of things seem to be very much because people are scared of, you	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 1 Job Satisfaction: And the one on one sessions with our line managers and before you even	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - "Anonymous" feedback	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Always uncertainty if it's really anonymous	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Anonymous but calling that line you don't know if it's gonna be traceable back to you	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Anonymous forums	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Career limiting move	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice

RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Committee setup to discuss employee issues raised with Execs	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Confidential Psychological platforms	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Data gathering tool for managers	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Dedicated champions bound to confidenitality	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Employee survey (Annual Pulse check)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Fear if I say something, walls have ears	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Feedback sessions post survey completion	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Heard by giving space but just do it not lose your job	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - HR (If manager not helpful)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Limited to specific topics	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - lines which you can call to report stuff	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Manager	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - No bargaing power for RTO	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - No psychological safety	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Office vibe	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Officevibe	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Open door policy	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Process & systems in place but adoption & implementation different thing	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Pulse survey (Anonymous)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - realized people tend to not be honest	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - space to really speak your mind without being afraid	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Take them seriously because we we we really think that we discussed when we have our our pulse as HR, the well-being of the employees	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - ticking the compliance box, effective and trusted something else	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Trust thing	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - Two people manage escalation to Exco (Anonymous)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice - weekly sessions with our management	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Employee voice -Anonymous digital suggestion box	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Employee voice	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Feedback taken seriously	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Psychological safety/ Employee voice
I like how they do the Wellness days, that helps a lot knowing that yo	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 1 9-to-5 Workplace Stress Mitigators (Mental health & Well-being): Wellness support - Interest free loans (recommendation)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Drive well-being - company has just launched life and it's a new service provider that is used for the well-being	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Drive well-being - Health care tool/ Clinic	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives

RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Drive well-being - three times a week, there's gonna be a person that's coming from there, from the Wellness Center, Therapist.	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Drive well-being (Pilates online)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Literally, you have a person dedicated to you.	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Orgnanisation support - Breathing exercises	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - 3rd party vendor wellness support	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Wellness initatives (Tick box exercise)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Wellness initiatives (Pseudo supportive)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Wellness initiatives (Supportive not Preventative)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational culture - Wellness support ineffective	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - On paper , I believe is there but definetly not there	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Are they really driving well-being?	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Attend wellness initiatives but work still needs to be done	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational Support - Big drive on well-being (ICAS & Wellness programs)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Both physical and emotional	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - can use lessons learnt	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Company is big on health& wellness, challenging environment	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - delivery focussed	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Determined by leadership	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Doing a bit	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Don't see emphasis on going away, taking leave and switching off	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Drive productivity, job satisfaction	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Effective in all work setups	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Effective to be honest	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Emotional support focus	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - External vendor check-ins	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Faster turnaround times office equipment	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Hybrid high delivery and stress mitigator	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - ICAS (Ineffective)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Introducing hybrid work	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Job autonomy	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Job-Fit support	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Lack from leadership	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Left to line manager	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Life-work conflict	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - lip service	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives

RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Log requests for ergonomic equipment (WFH)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Manager driven due to work complexity understanding	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Masked by wellness programs	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Mental and Phsycial well-being focus	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - new though patterns on how to cope with work	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - No implementation - calls during leave	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - No resource, office option	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Not practically adopted	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Online employees prioritize work deadlines and timelines	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Onsite gym, wellness center, Massages and nails	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Onsite psychologist	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Onsite psychologist (Career well-being)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Personal issue support (High)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Personal issues - Manager support	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Personal issues (Manager support)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Pre covid non-existent	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Presentations on mental health	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Proactive approach	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Provide mental illness classes	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Psychological test (Career development)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - RTO Personal issues (Highly support)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Suitable medical aid	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Teaching meditation techniques	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Team activities (Stress mitigators)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Tool of trade own cost	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Tool of trade subsidy	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Tool of trade subsidy eliminated	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Tool of trade support (Vouchers) - Recommendation	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Wellness initiaitves (Mean't to be preventative)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Wellness initiatives (Online support material 24/7)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - Wellness initiatives awareness creation	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - WFH & Tool of trade (own cost) trade off	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support - WFH Flexibility	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Organisational support -Holistic well-being support	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives

RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Definitely beneficial, no added pressue to find doctor off-site	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Mental well-being, onsite facility, no payments	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Migraine attended to at the office	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - More to drive well-being not just meeting and webinars	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Program like ICAS	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: POS - Support there but face-face counseling more effective	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Availability of well-being resources	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Personal issues - Proximity from office	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO - Well-being initiatives - Ineffective	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: RTO POS - general feel of the people, understanding mental impact of RTO	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: these programs are to help you and your stress levels, but at the end	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: They're not preventative or detect whether you have a problem, they mo	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Well-being initiatives - Used financial aspect telephonically (effective)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Well-being support - there's no support offered	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellbeing initiatives - don't go for help unless we feel we need to	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellbeing support - Meditation Mondays	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Welless initiatives - Know how to deal with indiviual at a personal level	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellnes initiatives - Call someone over the phone and get counselling	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellnes initiatives - Follow-up every two weeks	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatiaves - Momentum	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative approach - Holistic (Preventative &Supportive)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative approach - Speaks to employee needs	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implemenation - Blanket approach	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Approach is great	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Based on results received from the survey	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Driven by trends	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Driven from employer angle	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - HR/PR Level	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Methodology/ Approach skewed to employee needs	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - One size fits all	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - programs offered are well rounded	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Push strategy	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Tick-box, benefical for orgnanisation	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - Tick-box, benefical mostly for organisation	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative implementation - When we join session they will say can you suggest topics	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives

RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiative process - more general than focused most of the time.	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - I would say a bit of both, like with with with the sessions that and they set up on our calendars	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - QR codes, ICAS, visibility in corridors	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Bi-annual wellness day (Half day)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Both - More tick-box exercise	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Both - Proactive and Reactive	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Both not just preventative	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Financial advise	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: wellness initiatives - Focus on all employees	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Had to understand people first	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - How to take breaks	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Individuls from outside coming onsite	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Inital face-to-face assessments	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Mixture of both	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Momentum doctors	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - No follow-up	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - normally send out a survey	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Only providing support	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - people only seek those interventions when the see fit	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Preventative	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Regular wellness days	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Supportive	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - supportive once something happens, now we have to start doing this	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Supportive targetted at certain individuals	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - Tax team (Dedicated personnel)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 2 Perceived Organisational Support: Wellness initiatives - work setup agnostic (Advisory)	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
So I know like at some point I know during covid they used to have lik	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
so the fact that the orgnanisation is able to provide services like tha	RQ2 Sub-Theme (POS): Wellness initiatives
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: HR policy, we've got a mandatory time that you have to be in the offic	RQ3 Theme: Organisational Policies - Work-life balance
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: RTO - Mandatory vaccinations	RQ3 Sub-Theme: Mandatory vaccination Policy
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: eventually give in to the system or the mandatory requirement, which w	RQ3 Sub-Theme: Mandatory vaccination Policy
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: Organisational Policies - Mandatory vaccination policies	RQ3 Sub-Theme: Mandatory vaccination Policy
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: RTO - Mandatory vaccinations	RQ3 Sub-Theme: Mandatory vaccination Policy
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: Workplace Forum, who as well doesn't have much bargaining power, you k	RQ3 Sub-Theme: Mandatory vaccination Policy
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: Organisational policies - Employee uncertainty	RQ3 Theme: Organisational Policies - Inconsistent
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: Organisational policies - Inconsistent to Organisational culture	RQ3 Theme: Organisational Policies - Inconsistent
RQ 3 Influence on Policy makers: Organisational support - Flexibility policies allow Work-Life balance	RQ3 Theme: Organisational Policies - Work-life balance

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