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Teachers' Perceptions of Personal Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Exploration of Job Demands and Job Resources

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

Teachers' Perceptions of Personal Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Exploration of Job Demands and Job Resources.

A research report presented to

The Department of Psychology

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Education

(Educational Psychology)

by

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DECLARATION

I, Shenay Ganasen, declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Education (Educational Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

Signature: 

Date: 24 October 2023

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my late father, Seggie Ganasen, whom without none of this would have been possible. I began this journey with you by my side and now I'm ending it with you watching over me.

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I would like to extend my gratitude to all who have assisted in this research project:

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- God Almighty – thank you for giving me the strength and courage to persevere and achieve my dreams under adverse circumstances. Without You, the successful completion of this research project would not be possible.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In exploring teacher wellbeing, it is important to understand the way in which the job characteristics of the teaching environment, such as job demands and job resources, influence teacher wellbeing. While previous literature does examine the influence of job demands and resources on teacher wellbeing within the South African context, studies concerning the role of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to teacher wellbeing are scarce. This chapter provides an outline of the literature underlying this research, highlighting the importance of such a study. In doing so, the chapter addresses the rationale of the study, the aims of the study as well as the research questions posed in order to achieve these aims.

1.2. Background

It is evident that the wellbeing of teachers and their ability to thrive depends greatly on the balance between the job demands of their working environment and the job resources that are available to support them (Collie et al., 2020). Research shows that many teachers struggle to achieve a balance between job demands and job resources. Consequently, they experience job-related stress and reduced wellbeing (Collie et al., 2020). This imbalance was further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic which intensified existing teaching demands, reduced job resources, and brought about new demands for some teachers. This is supported by literature highlighting the psychological and physiological effects of job demands and resources on teacher wellbeing in other countries during the pandemic. Understanding the way in which the wellbeing of South African teachers was affected by the pandemic is crucial to being proactive in managing or preventing similar challenges in the future. As documented research in this area is limited, especially within the South African context, this research study serves as a potential contribution by addressing this gap in the literature.

Understanding teacher wellbeing is important for several reasons. Firstly, teacher wellbeing is a priority in and of itself as teachers play a fundamental role in society. Secondly, the wellbeing of teachers can have a significant influence on the wellbeing of learners. Various studies have shown that teacher wellbeing can affect learner wellbeing through teacher-learner relationships (Collie & Martin, 2020; Harding et al., 2019). Thirdly, teachers are the frontline workers of the education system, and their wellbeing can affect the education process. Teachers impart knowledge in ways that allow learners to receive and understand the information that is provided (Chen et al., 2020; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). If teachers

are unable to maintain their health, the learning and teaching process can become disrupted (Doucet et al., 2020). Finally, teacher wellbeing is important in ensuring teacher work performance, the quality of education provided (Chen et al., 2020; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021), and hence, the success of the school. Based on the above points, it is important to gain an insight on the way in which job demands and resources have influenced teacher wellbeing in South Africa, particularly during the pandemic.

1.3. Rationale of Study

While the influence of job demands and job resources on teacher wellbeing has been previously examined in the South African context, it has not been done during a pandemic or state of crisis. The pandemic brought about significant changes to teachers' lives as it gave rise to new teaching challenges. Teachers not only had to ensure the wellbeing of their learners and support them academically, but they had to do this whilst navigating adverse and stressful circumstances in their personal lives (Doucet et al., 2020). Exploring the influence of job demand and job resources on teacher wellbeing in South Africa, particularly during the pandemic, allowed for the identification of areas where support was provided to teachers and where it fell short. Such research could be beneficial in managing similar national or international crises which may occur in the future. It can also potentially inform educational psychology practice, educational policies and contribute to literature on providing support to teachers in times of crisis.

1.4. Research Aims

The overall aim of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of their wellbeing amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, the study also aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of their wellbeing in relation to their experienced job demands and resources during the pandemic.

1.5. Research Questions

In meeting the aims of this research study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How did teachers perceive their wellbeing during the pandemic?
2. What job demands did teachers experience during the pandemic?
3. What job resources did teachers experience during the pandemic?
4. How did teachers experience job resources in relation to job demands?
5. How did teachers perceive their wellbeing during the pandemic in relation to their experienced job demands and resources?

1.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a basic outline of the literature underlying this research study, highlighting the potential contribution of such a study. In doing so, the chapter addressed the rationale of the study, the aims of the study as well as the research questions posed in order to achieve these aims. The next chapter examines the theoretical background and supporting literature of this study. Chapter Three provides an outline of the research methods that were adopted in this study while Chapter Four provides an analysis of the results. These results are then discussed in Chapter Five along with the implications and limitations of this research as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about sudden and unprecedented changes to the ways in which people live and work. This included global education systems. The lockdown imposed by the pandemic brought about challenges for teachers who had to make a sudden shift towards teaching remotely (Meinck et al., 2022). South African teachers were not exempt from such challenges. As vaccinations were rolled out, South African schools began opening their doors. A rotational learning system was introduced by the Department of Basic Education to further combat the spread of COVID-19 while schools continued to open (Ximba, 2021). Remote learning and rotational educational systems required teachers, not just in South Africa but throughout the world, to continue with their teaching duties despite the extremely adverse circumstances. Not only were teachers expected to ensure the wellbeing of their learners and support them academically throughout the pandemic, but they had to do so whilst navigating adverse and stressful circumstances in their personal lives (Doucet et al., 2020). The additional demands that the pandemic brought about in the teaching profession caused many teachers stress and anxiety, ultimately taking a toll on their wellbeing (Doucet et al., 2020; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021; Sokal et al., 2020). This chapter presents the theoretical background and supporting literature of this research study. In doing so, the chapter looks at teacher wellbeing, the Job Demands-Resources Theory and the way in which this influences teacher wellbeing as well as teacher wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2. Teacher Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a diverse and fluid construct that is underpinned by several notions. It is unique to each individual as it is based on personal values, beliefs, experiences, and contexts across time (McCallum et al., 2017). Much of the literature on teacher wellbeing has focused on teacher stress and burnout, with some studies indicating that teaching is a stressful and challenging profession (García-Carmona et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2005; Kyriacou, 2001; Linseman, 2016; Marko, 2015). Greenberg et al. (2016) define job stress as a harmful emotional and physical response that occurs when the demands of the job outweigh the resources available to cope. Job stress can give rise to both physical and mental health consequences and therefore affect teacher wellbeing (Greenberg et al., 2016). While there are studies that indicate the stressfulness of the teaching profession (Carroll et al., 2022; Kerr et

al., 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015), literature also shows that some teachers experience greater job satisfaction. This; however, depends entirely on the individual's circumstances (Hakanen et al., 2006; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

In accounting for the many factors that influence teacher wellbeing, several definitions have been coined (McCallum et al., 2017). For some, wellbeing represents the subjective assessment of employees' life quality in relation to the physical, social, and psychological aspects of their work environment (DeJoy & Wilson, 2003; Yan et al., 2020). A definition of teacher wellbeing that suits the aims of this research is that of Dodge et al. (2012) who define teacher wellbeing as the balance between resources available and challenges faced. According to this definition, the wellbeing of teachers will be reduced particularly when the challenges faced by the teacher outweigh the resources that the teacher has available (Dodge et al., 2012). Hascher et al. (2021) provides a similar definition in that they describe teacher wellbeing as a positive imbalance whereby positive factors including teaching resources outweigh negative factors such as the challenges in the profession. These definitions of teacher wellbeing fall in line with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory which looks at the way in which job demands and job resources influence employee wellbeing.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1. Conceptualising Job Demands and Job Resources

According to the JD-R theory, every profession consists of job demands and job resources that influence wellbeing (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Sokal et al., 2020). Job demands and job resources refer to elements of any given work environment that are social, organisational, psychological, or physical in nature (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Collie et al., 2020; Demerouti et al., 2001; Sokal et al., 2020). While similar in nature, these are entirely different constructs. Job demands involve constant physical and/or mental effort and can therefore bring about physical and/or mental costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Examples of job demands include but are not limited to workload or work pressure, an unpleasant working environment as well as social and/or emotional demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Khan et al., 2014). Other demands can include technostress, role ambiguity and role conflict (Khan et al., 2014). In contrast, job resources facilitate learning, growth, development, and the attainment of work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Collie et al., 2020; Demerouti et al., 2001; Sokal et al., 2020). Examples include but are not limited to organisational support, performance feedback, autonomy demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Khan et al., 2014),

funding, administrative or organizational structures, supervision, relationship with colleagues and opportunities for professional learning (Granziera, et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2014). The Job Demands-Resources theory explores the ways in which job demands and job resources can influence employee wellbeing.

2.3.2. Job Demands-Resources Theory

According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, there are two psychological processes that influence wellbeing: 1) the health impairment process and 2) the motivational process (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). The health impairment process concerns job demands and the effort that they require. When demands become excessive, physical and/or mental effort is exerted over prolonged periods of time. This can cause a depletion in energy, giving rise to both physical and mental health problems, ultimately affecting wellbeing (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Sokal et al., 2020). The motivational process, in contrast, concerns the motivational potential of job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). The motivational potential of job resources can be intrinsic in that it facilitates learning, growth, and development; or it can be extrinsic in that it allows employees to attain their work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In doing so, the motivational potential of resources can encourage wellbeing which can bring about work engagement and better performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001).

The JD-R theory also illustrates the way in which job demands and job resources can interact to influence employee wellbeing. The first interaction occurs when job resources act as a buffer against strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Strain can occur when the job demands of the work environment exceed the job resources that are available. This can lead to undesirable outcomes such as poor physiological and/or mental health and hence, wellbeing (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Sokal et al., 2020). When the availability of job resources matches the level of job demands; however, strain is reduced as employees are better able to cope. Thus, when job demands and job resources are balanced, wellbeing is maintained (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The second interaction takes place when job demands boost the motivational potential of job resources. While job resources have a motivational potential, this potential becomes much stronger when both job resources and demands are high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), employees that experience both high resources and demands view their demands as challenges that they are equipped to

handle. In such cases, employee wellbeing is maintained, and employees become more motivated and engaged with work.

The revised version of the JD-R theory introduces the role of personal resources. Personal resources are associated with resilience and refer to the successful influence one has over their work environment (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Examples include optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and resilience. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) propose that personal resources serve a similar function as job resources in that they assist employees in overcoming job demands and hold a motivational potential. While personal resources are a crucial element of the JD-R theory, this study focuses on the influence of job characteristics (i.e., demands and resources) on teacher wellbeing and does not explicitly investigate the role of personal resources.

2.4. Research Supporting the JD-R Theory and Teacher Wellbeing

There are several international studies that use the JD-R theory to illustrate the way in which job demands and resources affect teacher wellbeing. Most of these studies focus on burnout and engagement as indicators of teacher wellbeing. These studies indicate that high job demands can bring about burnout through strain and/or exhaustion, reducing teacher wellbeing (Hakanen et al., 2006; Herman et al., 2021; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Sokal et al., 2020). They also show that high job resources motivate teachers, increase work engagement, and maintain employee wellbeing (Hakanen et al., 2006; Han et al., 2020; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Sokal et al., 2020). Not only do these studies support the health impairment and motivational processes of the JD-R theory, but they provide evidence on the way in which these processes influence employee wellbeing.

There is also literature that supports the way in which job characteristics interact to influence teacher wellbeing. Some studies show that when high job demands are met with low job resources, burnout is experienced, and teacher wellbeing is reduced. However, when high job demands are met with high job resources, burnout is reduced as there is less strain and hence, teacher wellbeing is maintained (Collie et al., 2020; Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Other studies show the way in which high job resources give rise to work engagement, particularly in the presence of high job demands (Collie et al., 2020; Roslan et al., 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). These studies not only support the buffering role of job resources, and the boosting role of job demands, but they also provide

evidence on the way in which job demands and job resources can interact to influence teacher wellbeing.

2.5. Teacher Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it challenges to the teaching profession. Teachers not only had to engage in remote and/or rotational teaching to ensure the well-being of their learners while supporting them academically, but they had to do so while navigating adverse and stressful circumstances in their personal lives (Doucet et al., 2020). Many teachers have experienced the intensification of existing job demands such as workload and time pressure during this period (Chan et al., 2021; Gadermann et al., 2021; Souto-Manning & Melvin, 2022). Teachers may have also experienced new job demands during the pandemic. For instance, teaching remotely required a more technological shift in teaching which came with technical barriers and inadequate digital skills amongst teachers (Klapproth et al., 2020). Additionally, teachers may have also experienced a lack of resource availability during this time of uncertainty. Some teachers reported a decline in social support from their colleagues and/or parents of their learners during the pandemic (Chan et al., 2021; Gadermann et al., 2021; Nagasawa & Tarrant, 2020; Walter & Fox, 2021). In addition, the increased workload and time pressure may have reduced the time that teachers had available for themselves, Souto-Manning & Melvin (2022) reported that long working hours led to a reduction in self-care amongst teachers during the pandemic.

With the challenges faced by teachers amidst the pandemic, many teachers reported a decline in their wellbeing (Billett et al., 2022; Chan et al., 2021; Lau et al., 2022; Nagasawa & Tarrant, 2020; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021; Souto-Manning & Melvin, 2022). There are several studies that show that there was a decline in teachers' mental health during the pandemic (Gadermann et al., 2021; Kush et al., 2022; Minihan et al., 2022), with some teachers having reported increased anxiety and depression (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). While many teachers had experienced stress prior to the pandemic, there are several studies that show an increase in teacher stress during the pandemic (Billett et al., 2022; Hascher et al., 2021; Kush et al., 2022; Lau et al., 2022; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). Literature has also shown an increase in burnout and exhaustion amongst teachers during the pandemic (Lau et al., 2022; Minihan et al., 2022; Sokal et al., 2021), with some studies associating the burnout experienced by teachers to high job demands and low job resources (Sokal et al., 2020). Minihan et al. (2022) have also shown the adverse effects that the pandemic had on

the physical health of teachers. In addition to lowered physical and mental health, literature also suggests that some teachers may have experienced a decline in job satisfaction during the pandemic (Alves et al., 2021; Billett et al., 2022; Gadermann et al., 2021; Minihan et al., 2022). Some teachers have reported dissatisfaction with their jobs due to poor leadership support (Sokal et al., 2021), whereas others have reported lowered self-competence and efficacy in adequately supporting their learners (Chan et al., 2021; Gadermann et al., 2021; Kim & Asbury, 2020). Additionally, some teachers have even reported intentions to leave the profession (Minihan et al., 2022; Sokal et al., 2021). In fact, there are several studies in the United States indicating an increase in the teacher turnover rate since the onset of the pandemic (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2023; Camp et al., 2022; Carver-Thomas et al., 2022; Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022).

In terms of coping, research has shown that teachers' coping methods towards changes in job demands and resources varied throughout the pandemic. According to MacIntyre et al. (2020), positive psychological experiences amongst teachers were positively correlated with functional coping methods whereas negative psychological experiences were correlated with dysfunctional coping methods. MacIntyre et al. (2020) also reported that as the stress levels of teachers increased, so did the use of dysfunctional coping methods. While it appears that some teachers may have resorted to dysfunctional coping methods, Klapproth et al. (2020) found that some teachers adopted a relatively functional method of coping with the stressors induced by the pandemic. In fact, Herman et al. (2021) reported that some teachers experienced lowered stress since the onset of the pandemic; however, this may have been due to the resources made available to these teachers during the pandemic. Some studies have also found that social support from colleagues, where made available, served as a protective factor for teachers (Gadermann et al., 2021; Nagasawa & Tarrant, 2020; Trinidad, 2021; Walter &Fox, 2021), increasing their job satisfaction and occupational motivation in some cases (Trinidad, 2021).

2.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical background and supporting literature of this research study. In doing so, the chapter looked at teacher wellbeing, the Job Demands-Resources Theory and the way in which this influences teacher wellbeing as well as teacher wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the methods implemented in this research study. The chapter will address the following: research design selected, sample and sampling procedures used, instruments used, methods of data collection and data analysis, qualitative trustworthiness and rigour processes followed, reflexivity conducted as well as the ethical considerations that were adopted during the process of the research study.

3.2. Research Design

In keeping with the aims of this research, a qualitative exploratory research design was employed. Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences of phenomena and the contexts within which they occur (Rahman, 2020; Salkind, 2012). This fell in line with the aims of this research study to explore teachers' perceptions of wellbeing and experiences of job demands and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, an exploratory design is useful when documented research on a certain topic is limited (Creswell & Poth, 2016), as was the case with the area of interest in this research study.

The research study was also grounded in the interpretivist paradigm and adopted a phenomenological approach to qualitative research. The interpretivist paradigm allows the researcher to understand the experiences or perceptions of a particular phenomenon from the viewpoint of the participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016), while the phenomenological approach assists the researcher in understanding participants' experiences of phenomena under study by making sense of the meanings that participants ascribe to these experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The phenomenological approach also guides the researcher in remaining objective when making sense of participants' experiences of phenomena, preventing preconceived notions of the phenomena from influencing his/her understandings (Converse, 2012).

3.3. Sample

The sample for this research consisted of teachers of any age or gender that taught during the pandemic and volunteered to partake in this research. More specifically, the inclusion criteria for participation in this study included teachers from both government and private schools in Johannesburg, Gauteng. These teachers had to have at least one year of teaching experience prior to the pandemic. The sample consisted of eight participants as this was identified as an

adequate sample size for a phenomenological approach to qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2016). As mentioned above, this approach aimed to collect extensive detail on the phenomena under study rather than information that is generalisable (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In collecting such information, interviews were conducted until all themes identified were thoroughly explored and data saturation was reached. Table 1 below provides a summary of the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience (years)	School Sector	Teaching Level	Geographical Area
A	Female	49	20	Public	Primary	Township
B	Female	52	24	Public	Primary	Township
C	Female	27	5	Public	Primary	Suburban
D	Female	52	28	Public	Primary & Secondary	Suburban
E	Female	59	30	Public	Primary	Township
F	Agender	28	3	Private	Secondary	Suburban
G	Male	29	4	Private	Primary & Secondary	Inner City
H	Female	31	7	Public	Secondary	Suburban

Of the eight participants in this study, six were female, one was male, and one was agender. The age of the participants ranged from 28 years to 59 years. In terms of teaching experience, participants' experience ranged from 3 years to 30 years. Six of the eight participants taught at public or government-funded schools while the remaining two taught at private schools. In terms of teaching levels, four participants taught at the primary phase level, two participants taught at the secondary level and the remaining two participants taught at both levels. Four participants taught at schools in suburban areas, while three taught at schools located in townships and one in a school situated in the inner-city area.

3.4. Sampling Procedure

In conducting this research, a non-probability, purposive sampling strategy was employed. To gain a detailed understanding of teachers' perceptions of wellbeing and their experiences of job demands and resources during the pandemic, the participants of this study were purposefully selected rather than randomly selected. Additionally, the use of nonprobability sampling ensured easier access to the participants of the study (Salkind, 2012). The specific approach that was adopted to recruit participants was snowball sampling. This method of

sampling relies on a process of referral in which one participant identified other potential participants that might be interested in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Hancock et al., 2001). The participants in this study were approached through online platforms and networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp to participate in the research. These participants then identified potential participants and referred them to the contact information of the researcher if they were interested in contributing to this study.

3.5. Instruments

There were two instruments used to collect data in the current study: a demographic questionnaire and a semi-structured interview schedule.

The demographic information of participants was collected using a brief demographic questionnaire (Appendix E). The demographic information collected included age and gender. Additionally, information more specific to the teachers was also collected such as the level of teaching experience (in years), the type of school within which the teacher was employed (private or government funded), the level of the school within which the teacher taught (primary, secondary or both), the type of geographical area within which the school at which they taught was located (rural, urban, inner city or township) and lastly, the socio-economic status of the area within which this school was situated (high, middle or low income).

Additionally, semi-structured interviews (Appendix G) were used to collect the required data. Semi-structured interviews encompass a set of main questions and prompts that help define the areas of interest to be explored (Gill et al., 2008). This method of data collection was flexible in that it enabled the interviewer or interviewee to deviate from the set of main questions to further explore an idea or answer of interest and enhance understanding (Gill et al., 2008). Additionally, this method of data collection complimented the phenomenological approach to qualitative research that was adopted in that it sought to obtain data concerning the phenomena of interest that is rich and meaningful from a relatively small sample size (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix G) consisted of questions and prompts that explored the participants' work environment, job demands, job resources and their perceptions of their personal wellbeing both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questions and prompts also explored the way in which job demands and job resources interacted to influence perceptions of wellbeing during the pandemic. In exploring these points of interest, the questions posed were informed by the JD-

R Theory as well as existing literature on teacher wellbeing. Therefore, some questions were theoretical in nature. To gain a deeper understanding of participants experiences, some t descriptive, exploratory, and experiential questions were also posed. Additionally, comparative questions were posed to gain an understanding of participants experiences differed prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The prompts posed were informed by trends on teacher wellbeing and the J-DR Theory in the literature. The prompts were further developed by the pilot interviews which gave the researcher an idea of questions that needed to be further explored.

At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to discuss any additional, relevant material that was not elicited by the questions posed in the interview schedule. Implications of online administration: safety was secured but there were challenges with wifi connectivity. Some participants struggled to operate online platforms whilst others had trouble connecting. Conversations were interrupted and communication wasn't always clear.

3.6. Methods of Data Collection

Once ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee - Non-medical (ethics clearance number MEDPSYC/21/04) (Appendix H) at the University of Witwatersrand, sample recruitment began as per section 3.4. Potential participants were approached on Facebook and WhatsApp and provided with a Participation Information Sheet (Appendix A) which outlined the purpose of study, the requirements for participation, an invitation to participate (Appendix D) and the contact details of the researcher should the invitation be shared with others (Appendix A). Upon accepting the invitation to participate, participants were provided with consent forms to obtain written consent for participation (Appendix B) and video-record during the interview (Appendix C). Once consent was obtained, online meetings for the interview were arranged with participants. These meetings were held on platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom and WhatsApp.

At the beginning of the meeting, the demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) was administered online, and participants were provided with a copy of the interview schedule (Appendix F), with probing questions excluded. At the beginning of the interview, participants were reminded of voluntary participation and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Matters regarding confidentiality as well as the storage of transcribed data were also discussed. At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to

discuss any additional, relevant material that was not elicited by the questions posed in the interview schedule.

The interviews conducted lasted between 30 minutes and an hour. The first two interviews conducted were used to pilot the understanding of interview questions. The purpose of this was to adjust the interview questions if this was necessary. No adjustments were made to the interview questions and the two pilot interviews were included in the final data analysis.

3.7. Data Analysis

Data collected through the interview process was transcribed and interpreted using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was used to find, interpret, and report themes within the given dataset. In doing so, the dataset was organized and described in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke have identified six steps to conducting thematic analysis. First, one must familiarize themselves with the data obtained (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In doing so, the verbal data from the interviews were transcribed and stored in documents for data analysis. Thereafter, the transcriptions were reviewed. This step required thorough engagement with the transcribed data to ensure that the information provided was accurate. Second, one must engage in data coding to identify points of interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In doing so, the data was examined closely, and codes were generated for points of interest that could be interpreted in a meaningful way.

Third, one must search for themes in the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this step, the data was re-examined to sort the generated codes into overarching themes that were used to answer the research questions posed. Fourth, one must review the themes identified in the previous step. This step involved the refining of themes so that each theme has clear boundaries and the overlap between themes is minimal (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process also involved reviewing the themes several times until new themes could not be identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and the data was saturated (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Fifth, the final themes were defined and further refined to develop an 'essence' of what the theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In doing so, these themes were analysed and interpreted in relation to the main research questions of the study. Sixth, the findings of the analysis are presented in a written report in a manner that supports the arguments made in relation to the main research

questions of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is addressed in Chapter Five of this study.

3.8. Qualitative Rigour

The trustworthiness and rigour of qualitative research depends greatly on the selection of research design and methods of collecting data, data analysis, data interpretation and reporting of findings. In ensuring methodological rigour and trustworthiness, this research study met the following criteria: congruency, appropriateness, credibility, adequacy, transparency, and dependability.

In ensuring congruency, the research adopted a qualitative, phenomenological approach as this appropriately aligned with the aims of the research (Fossey et al., 2002) to understand teachers' perceptions of wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Appropriateness was ensured using sampling and data collection strategies that informed the research questions (Fossey et al., 2002) such as snowball sampling and semi-structured interviews. This also contributed to credibility as using appropriate methods ensured that the given study measured what it intended to (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Maher et al., 2018). With regards to adequacy, a detailed description of the sample and sampling techniques was provided along with methods of data collection and analysis that were sensitive to participants' views (Fossey et al., 2002). The recording of detailed information in reflective journals and audit trails also informed transparency (Fossey et al., 2002) as well as dependability, should future researchers want to repeat the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Maher et al., 2018). Furthermore, the data collection and analysis methods used are sensitive to participants views which further ensures credibility as this allowed the study to accurately reflect the reality of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Maher et al., 2018).

In ensuring interpretive rigour, this research study met the following criteria: authenticity, coherence, permeability, and transferability. With regards to authenticity, the findings and interpretations consisted of participant quotes as well as a range of views held by participants (Fossey et al., 2002). With regards to coherence, the findings of the study were presented in a manner that reflects the data that was collected, and a large portion of the data collected was considered (Fossey et al., 2002). Permeability was ensured through a reflective journal that conveyed the researcher's understanding of their influence on the study and vice versa (Fossey et al., 2002). The study also ensured transferability by providing a description of the

context within which the research was conducted so readers could gain a sense of how applicable the findings are to similar contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Maher et al., 2018).

3.9. Reflexivity

In conducting this study, the researcher engaged in self-reflexivity. Reflexivity can be prospective which concerns the way in which the researcher impacts the study; or it can be retrospective which concerns the way in which the study impacts the researcher (Dixon, 2018; Probst, 2015). Prospective reflexivity can aid in reducing researcher bias throughout the research process. This ensures the validity of the research as well as ensures the credibility of the results (Dixon, 2018; Probst, 2015). In addition, retrospective reflexivity makes the researcher more aware of the impact that the research process has on him/her, allowing him/her to work through this accordingly (Dixon, 2018; Probst, 2015).

In engaging in a self-reflective approach, a reflexive journal was used to record my thoughts and feelings about the research throughout the research process. In particular, the way in which my experiences of being a former teacher may have affected the research process and the way in which participants' thoughts, feelings and perceptions of teaching during the pandemic affected me. Thus, this approach considered both prospective and retrospective reflexivity. Additionally, an audit trail was used throughout the research process. This allowed for the mapping of all the steps in the research process and was useful as an aid for tracking purposes.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

There are several ethical concerns that were addressed at different stages of the research process. Prior to conducting the research study, ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee - Non-medical (ethics clearance number MEDPSYC/21/04) (Appendix H) at the University of the Witwatersrand. Once ethical clearance was obtained, potential participants were approached using online platforms. Potential participants were given a Participation Information Sheet (Appendix A) that informed them of the purpose and requirements of the research. They were also informed that participation was voluntary and did not involve any direct benefits or foreseeable risks. Additionally, potential participants were informed of their right to not answer any specific questions as well as their right to withdraw from the study if they wished to do so. Lastly, they were informed that withdrawal from the study did not involve any disadvantages or penalties.

At the beginning of the data collection process, informed consent was obtained for participation in the research (Appendix B) as well as the recording of interviews (Appendix C). Anonymity was ensured using pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information from both transcripts and report of findings. Participants were also informed that the interview recordings would be kept safe on a password protected laptop with limited access and would be destroyed after 5 years. At the end of the data collection process, participants were debriefed. They were given the opportunity to ask questions concerning the research and were provided with the contact details of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) (a mental health support service) if they required emotional support.

3.11. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an outline of the research methods implemented in this research study. The chapter addressed the following: research design selected, sample and sampling procedures used, instruments used, methods of data collection and data analysis, qualitative trustworthiness and rigour processes followed, reflexivity conducted as well as the ethical considerations that were adopted during the process of the research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to better understand teacher wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and the way in which this may have been influenced by their experienced job demands and job resources. In gaining such an understanding, the following research questions were explored:

1. How did teachers perceive their wellbeing during the pandemic?
2. What job demands did teachers experience during the pandemic?
3. What job resources did teachers experience during the pandemic?
4. How did teachers experience job resources in relation to job demands?
5. How did teachers perceive their wellbeing during the pandemic in relation to their experienced job demands and resources?

The objective of this chapter is to present the results of the study. This includes exploring the themes that were identified in answering the research questions listed above.

4.2. Teachers' Perceptions of Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In investigating teachers' perceptions of wellbeing during the pandemic, two factors were explored: health (physical and mental) as well as job satisfaction and performance. According to Yan et al. (2020), these components are crucial to employee wellbeing. The following section addresses the themes found within each factor. These themes are presented in Table 2.

4.2.1. Health

In analysing teachers' perceptions of their health during the pandemic, most participants seemed to focus on the challenges experienced with their physical and mental health. In terms of physical health, three themes were identified: pre-existing health conditions, COVID-19 diagnosis, and new health concerns.

Pre-existing Health Conditions

Some participants referenced challenges with health conditions prior to the pandemic. Some of these conditions were chronic such as diabetes and high blood pressure, whereas others were health concerns that caused physical illness:

> *"I am diabetic, but I also have issues with high blood pressure. My physical health before the pandemic was not the best. I was a bit sickly."* (Participant B).

Whilst some of the participants had pre-existing health conditions, a few participants had reported that they were relatively healthy prior to the pandemic.

COVID-19 Diagnosis

Some of the participants had also tested positive for COVID-19. Although some of these participants had reportedly experienced mild symptoms, others experienced symptoms that differed in severity. Interestingly, all participants who had received a diagnosis also had pre-existing health conditions, including Participant B (above):

> *"I was sick myself. I was off for 3 weeks. I had COVID and was sick in hospital."* (Participant B).

Table 2

Teachers' Perceptions of Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

	Themes	Subthemes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Physical Health	Pre-existing Health Conditions			X			X	X		X
	COVID-19 Diagnosis			X				X		X
	New Health Concerns		X		X			X	X	
Mental Health	Stress		X	X	X		X		X	X
	Anxiety	Personal Wellbeing	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
		Wellbeing of Others	X	X	X		X			
		The Future	X		X		X	X		X
	Exhaustion				X	X		X		X
Job Satisfaction & Performance	Declines in satisfaction & performance		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
	Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction & Performance	Job Demands	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
		Job Resources		X		X			X	X
		Motivation	X	X		X			X	X
		Wellbeing	X	X	X				X	

New Health Concerns

While some participants had received a COVID-19 diagnosis, others had also described challenges with new health concerns. Some participants reported that they felt sickly with no specific symptoms, particularly after interactions with those who had tested positive for COVID-19. Other participants reported experiencing fatigue, coughing, headaches and difficulties with concentration:

> *"I can definitely say that my health was impacted…I had trouble with concentration and consistent headaches from wearing the mask for so long."* (Participant G).

While participants referenced their physical health challenges, they also mentioned challenges with mental health. Three themes were identified when analysing the perceptions that participants held of their mental health: stress, anxiety, and exhaustion.

Stress

Most of the participants perceived teaching under the pandemic as stressful. Additionally, at least half of the participants had pre-existing stress and described their stress levels as having increased since the onset of the pandemic:

> *"I used to think my stress was high then but after all this COVID stuff, I think I had it pretty easy."* (Participant C).

Anxiety

Most of the participants also described challenges with anxiety. Under this theme, three subthemes emerged: concern about personal wellbeing, concern about the wellbeing of others as well as concern about the future. Most of the participants seemed to express concern about their personal wellbeing and the ways in which this would be affected by the pandemic. While most participants were concerned about infection and the associated consequences, some of the participants also expressed concern over the potential effects that the COVID-19 vaccination could have on their health:

> *"There's just a lot that's been said about the vaccine and I don't know the effects of it so… you have to be cautious, and you have to think twice about what you want to do."* (Participant D).

Some of the participants had also experienced concern about the wellbeing of others in addition to their personal wellbeing. It seems that these participants were concerned for

those in their personal lives such as family and friends as well as those in their professional lives such as their colleagues and the learners they teach:

> *"We are still scared because we still have other families and other colleagues that are still not vaccinated. That are still denying it, you see? And now they're also telling us they are not 100% accurate and you can still get COVID even if you're vaccinated. So now, we are not safe."* (Participant A).

Additionally, some of the participants had also expressed a concern about the future in general as the pandemic had not only disrupted and changed teaching, but almost every daily practice:

> *"Not knowing what's happening. Whether we are going to come to school or not…We didn't know anything."* (Participant C).

> *"I'd say there was definitely more anxiety with regards to the future as a whole."* (Participant F).

Exhaustion

Another theme identified was the experience of exhaustion. Some participants had described themselves as being emotionally drained, tired or both. It should be noted that some of these participants had also experienced challenges with anxiety as well as increased stress.

> *"Even up until now you feel emotionally drained and tired…with COVID on your mind, it has really drained you."* (Participant D).

Overall, it appears that most participants perceived their health as challenging. While most faced physical health changes, all participants experienced mental health challenges regardless of age, gender, years of teaching experience, teaching level and geographical school location. This excludes Participant F who reported minimal mental health challenges during this period. It should be noted that Participant F was one of two participants that taught in a private school. This may have influenced his wellbeing differently compared to the other six participants.

4.2.2. Job Satisfaction and Performance

In terms of job satisfaction and performance, two themes were identified: declines in job satisfaction and performance as well as factors influencing job satisfaction and performance.

Decline in Job Satisfaction and Performance

Most participants had expressed that they had experienced a change in their level of job satisfaction and performance during the pandemic. Many participants reported being somewhat satisfied with their job and performance prior to the pandemic; however, most of these participants described their level of satisfaction and performance as having declined during the pandemic:

> *"It went down…you couldn't plan ahead because you didn't know… You don't have that much work with them anymore because you are trying to catch up on what they lost… You can't move forward, you can't, because you're stuck there."* (Participant C).

Despite the majority describing their level of satisfaction and performance as having declined, Participants F and G both described their performance as having increased. It should be noted that the only notable difference between these participants and the rest of the participants is the school sectors where these participants were employed. Both Participant F and G were employed at private schools whereas the remaining participants were employed at public schools. Despite both participants working in private schools, Participant F experienced an increase in job satisfaction whilst Participant G had described a decline:

> *"I think mainly the lack of support and inability to follow the COVID protocols affected my satisfaction…Performance wise, I would say I took on a lot more work. I've always been a go-getter so I took on as much as I could and tried to stay positive and push forward. I didn't let the circumstances slow me down."* (Participant G).

Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction and Performance

Most of the participants focused on the challenges they experienced and the way in which these influenced their level of job satisfaction and performance. Consequently, the following sub-themes were identified: challenges with job demands, job resources, motivation, and wellbeing. In terms of job demands, most participants expressed the challenges they had experienced in adapting to rotational and/or online teaching as well as adapting to the changes made in the curriculum. Most participants described these

challenges as having influenced their job demands, with some experiencing their demands as having increased.

> *"So, it's more demanding because you must still have the same amount of activities, the same amount of this, but now you're only seeing them every second day, it's not the normal amount they would be doing you know?"* (Participant C).

In relation to the second subtheme, job resources, some participants described their experience of social support as having declined which they then linked to the challenges they experienced with job satisfaction and performance. It should be noted that the specific job demands and resources experienced by participants during the pandemic is addressed in the next section.

In terms of the third subtheme, motivation, some of the participants linked their level of motivation to their level of job satisfaction and performance. These participants had described their level of motivation as having declined during the pandemic. Some of these participants had expressed that they felt less appreciated or valued in the workspace:

> *"It's hard to be motivated when all this is going on. And it's just like, what's the point in all this you know? Why should I even try? Like over time, I just didn't care as much."* (Participant H).

Additionally, others seemed to grapple with self-efficacy and questioned their abilities:

> *"…because you feel that you have taught that concept and some children haven't grasped it even as yet. Like I have my failures now. Then you wonder where did you go wrong as a teacher."* (Participant D).

Lastly, some of the participants linked their level of job satisfaction and performance to challenges with their wellbeing. Some participants described the health challenges they experienced with personal protective equipment (PPE) and how this influenced their performance; whereas others described a fear of infection which influenced their concentration and hence, performance:

> *"…my performance is not like before…I can't go around, be next to them, move around like we used to do before…Now I'm even afraid of touching their books because now I don't know where they are coming from and how is it at home... Concentrating on that more than the work that you are doing…"* (Participant E).

Overall, it appears that most participants perceived their job satisfaction and performance as having declined during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of these participants reported that much of their dissatisfaction stemmed from challenges with job demands, job resources, motivation and wellbeing during the pandemic. This excludes Participant F who did not report any declines in job satisfaction and performance. In summary, it seems that most of the participants had perceived their overall health, job satisfaction and performance as challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.3. Job Demands Experienced during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the pandemic, most participants experienced new job demands and/or changes to existing job demands. In investigating the overall job demands that were experienced by the participants during the pandemic, two themes were identified: job demands experienced and factors influencing job demands (Table 3).

Job Demands Experienced

Most participants experienced an increase in their existing job demands regardless of age, gender, years of teaching experience, teaching level, school sector as well as school location. Additionally, many of these participants also experienced new job demands. In exploring the overall job demands that were experienced by participants, the following sub-themes emerged: workload, time pressure, learner behaviour, role ambiguity, emotional distress. In terms of the first subtheme, workload, most participants experienced an increase in their workload. Most participants had expressed that their teaching preparation, administrative work and teaching load had increased with some of the participants suggesting that these were as a result of the challenges that they had experienced with rotational and/or online teaching as well as adapting to changes with the curriculum:

> *"The demands are higher because of the pandemic situation we are in now with the repetition of the work…"* (Participant A).

> *"It's more demanding cause you must still have the same amount activities, the same amount of this, but now you're only seeing them every second day, it's not, the normal amount they would be doing you know?"* (Participant C).

Table 3

Teachers' Experiences of Job Demands during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Themes	Subthemes	Codes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Job Demands Experienced	Workload	Administrative Work	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
		Teaching Load	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
		Teaching Preparation			X			X	X	X
	Time Pressure	Curriculum		X	X	X	X		X	X
		Administrative Work		X		X	X	X	X	X
		COVID Protocols		X				X	X	X
	Learner Behaviour	Absenteeism	X	X			X	X		
		Disruptive Behaviour			X	X	X			
		Disregard for COVID Protocols			X				X	
		Failure to Submit Work						X		X
	Role Ambiguity	Care-taker Roles	X		X	X	X			X
		Other Professional Roles		X					X	
	Emotional Distress	Stress	X	X	X		X	X		
		Anxiety		X				X		
		Exhaustion				X			X	X
Influential Factors	Reduced/Absent Resources		X	X	X	X	X		X	X

In relation to the second subtheme, time pressure, most of the participants that reported an increased workload also experienced time pressure during the pandemic. These participants expressed that they had challenges in managing their time because of their workload. In particular, the participants had experienced challenges in finding time to complete the curriculum while trying to incorporate additional administrative work as well as COVID safety protocols into their practice:

> *"I think with teaching the admin increases and yeah. It never stops and it doesn't balance out. I think the admin is more and takes more. It demands more time instead of you just teaching."* (Participant D).

With regards to the third subtheme, learner behaviour, most participants expressed that they experienced problematic learner behaviour and this was demanding as well. Some participants had challenges with learners who displayed disruptive behaviour during classes. Other participants had expressed that they had challenges with learners following the COVID safety protocols that were put in place to ensure the wellbeing of everyone. Some participants had experienced challenges with learner absenteeism, with some

learners missing school for weeks at a time. Other participants had also experienced challenges with learners submitting their work on time. Overall, most of the participants had experienced challenges with learner behaviour, with some expressing that these created delays in their work, ultimately influencing their workload and time pressure:

> *"You find that the child is absent for the whole week and the next week is another group and the child still doesn't come. You write assessments until everyone is finished and the child is still not here. And when the child comes you must sit with that child alone and make sure that they complete the assessment."* (Participant A).

> *"So, if they had a task or something that they had to do, trying to get them to submit it wasn't easy…There's always some kind of excuse but we managed to get a hand on that by getting the parents a bit more involved. Uhm, it became very tedious because every time someone withheld, I'd have to message the parents as well."* (Participant F).

In relation to the fourth subtheme, role ambiguity, some participants found themselves taking on the roles of care takers whilst at school. In such cases, some of the participants had reported that this interfered with their ability to get work done. Additionally, some participants had additional roles at school other than teaching which influenced the level of demands they experienced.

In terms of the fifth subtheme, emotional distress, most participants experienced stress and/or anxiety in trying to meet their demands under adverse circumstances. In addition to work-related stress and anxiety, some of the participants experienced stress and anxiety towards their personal lives. Additionally, a few of the participants had also expressed that in following social distancing as part of the COVID safety protocols, they had also started to feel isolated and lonely.

> *"There were a lot of emotional demands because teachers were so scared of greeting each other and coming together that there were communication problems. There was no communication…We were very isolated."* (Participant B).

Factors Influencing Job Demands

Most of the participants also experienced indirect influences of their job demands. Some participants experienced their job resources as insufficient whilst others had experienced some job resources as completely absent. In either case, this appeared to influence the ability of participants to meet their job demands.

In summary, most of the participants appeared to grapple with job demands during the pandemic. These include workload, time pressure, learner behaviour, role ambiguity and emotional distress. Additionally, participants also experienced indirect influences of job demands such inadequate job resources.

4.4. Job Resources Experienced during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In investigating the overall job resources that were experienced by participants, the following themes were identified: technology, social support, teaching aids and wellbeing support. These themes are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Teachers' Experiences of Job Resources during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Themes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Technology	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Social Support	X	X	X		X		X	
Teaching Aids			X		X	X	X	X
Wellbeing Support	X		X				X	

Technology

In terms of technology, most of the participants had access to social media applications such as WhatsApp that allowed them to communicate with the parents of their learners. This allowed the participants to assist parents with work that needed to be completed by learners at home during lockdown and/or when rotational teaching was implemented. Additionally, some participants also had access to other online platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Some of these participants used these platforms to communicate with colleagues and parents during lockdown. Those participants that were fortunate enough to have Wi-Fi at school, such as Participant F, used such platforms to carry out their teaching duties through online teaching and/or rotational teaching:

> *"We have started doing a lot of dual medium. So, we have learners that are in class and learners that are at home."* (Participant F).

As reported previously, Participant F was employed at a private school which had access to resources such as Wi-Fi which catered for continuous online teaching, something that was not available to most of the participants employed in the public schools. In other

instances, these platforms were also used for the participants to network and attend teaching workshops. Some participants also referenced the use of other technological equipment in classrooms such as projectors and smart boards which allowed them to keep classes more engaging while limiting physical contact.

Social Support

Most participants had access to some forms of social support during the pandemic. These forms of social support included support from colleagues as well as support from parents. In terms of support from colleagues, some of the participants had mentioned that they had assistance from at least one colleague which helped them to cope with teaching under the pandemic. With regards to parental support, some participants described greater parental involvement which assisted their workload:

> *"Communication is better because now we have WhatsApp groups to communicate on our phones with the parents. Most of them are more cooperative compared to before."* (Participant A).

Despite having access to these forms of social support, some of these participants had experienced this support as insufficient. This is further addressed in the next section.

Teaching Aids

Some of the participants had access to basic teaching aids. While some of these participants had mentioned that they had access to teaching materials such as teacher guides, textbooks and annual teaching plans (ATPs) provided by the Department of Education, a few of them had expressed that these were insufficient. This is further addressed in the next section. Some of the participants also had access to learning materials such as learning aids for the classroom or electronic learning aids that could be sent to those learners at home. Lastly, some of the participants also mentioned that they had access to writing materials such as books and other instruments that were required for learners in completing day-to-day learning activities.

Wellbeing Support

With regards to wellbeing support, a few participants had described having access to safety materials such as disinfectant equipment and PPEs which allowed these participants to perform their teaching duties whilst adhering to COVID safety protocols. A few

participants had also described having access to psychological support such as counselling which helped them cope, to a certain extent, with teaching as well as personal concerns:

> *"I just know that when I went through emotional stuff, I did get from the government. They gave me a psychologist that I went to and spoke to and they paid for everything so financially it didn't hit me at all. They were very supportive."* (Participant C).

In summary, most of the participants seemed to have access to some job resources during the pandemic with some describing their available resources as insufficient. The job resources experienced by some participants during the pandemic include technology, social support, teaching aids and wellbeing support.

4.5. Teachers' Perceptions of Job Resources in Relation to their Job Demands

This section looks at participants' perception of their job resources in relation to their job demands, in particular, the level of support provided by job resources in meeting participants job demands. In analysing the data provided, two themes were identified: an insufficient level of perceived support and job resources that were experienced as insufficient. These themes are presented in Table 5.

Insufficient Level of Perceived Support

In investigating the level of support provided by job resources in meeting participants' job demands, mixed responses were provided. Consequently, two subthemes emerged: resources were either somewhat supportive or not supportive at all.

At least half of the participants perceived their job resources to be somewhat supportive of their job demands during the COVID-19 pandemic. These participants expressed that job resources were made available, but these were supportive to an extent as their job demands were greater:

> *"To some degree, I would say yes because they were providing us with the basics like sanitizer. And like there were resources. It's just that, uhm, there was a lot less resources that I could rely on, and yet there was a lot more job demands and what was required of me."* (Participant G).

Table 5

Teachers' Perceptions of Job Resources in Relation to their Job Demands

Themes	Subthemes	Codes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Insufficient Level of Support	Somewhat Supportive					X	X	X		X
	Not Supportive at All		X	X	X				X	
Insufficient Job Resources	Teaching Aids	Teaching Material	X	X	X		X	X	X	
		Learning Material	X	X	X		X			
		Writing Material		X						
	Social Support	Parents				X	X	X	X	X
		Colleagues			X		X	X	X	X
		Management						X	X	X
	Financial Aid	Fees		X						
		School Funding	X	X					X	
		DBE Funding			X		X			
	Tools for Professional Development	Workshops	X	X					X	
		Networking		X					X	X
		Performance Feedback			X				X	X
	Wellbeing Support	PPE & Disinfectant			X	X				
		Counselling				X			X	

Additionally, a few of the participants perceived their job resources as completely unsupportive of their job demands during the COVID-19 pandemic. In such instances, these participants not only mentioned that their experienced job resources were insufficient, but some participants had mentioned that some job resources were entirely absent.

> *"It's not even half the things we need. Even before the pandemic, there is no resources to cover the amount of work that the department wants us to do. There's nothing for us to use except if we sit and do our own."* (Participant B).

It should be noted that these viewpoints exclude Participant F who felt that his job resources were completely supportive. As reflected earlier, Participant F was employed at a private school and had access to resources that assisted him in meeting much of his job demands as opposed to most participants who were employed at public schools. Despite

having access to such resources, Participant F had also expressed some of these as insufficient.

Job Resources Experienced as Insufficient

Many participants reported that some of their experienced job resources were insufficient or entirely absent. The following sub-themes were identified when investigating the job resources that participants experienced as insufficient in meeting their job demands (Table 5): teaching aids, social support, financial resources, tools for professional development and wellbeing support.

In terms of the first subtheme, teaching aids, most participants described the teaching aids that were made available to them as insufficient. Some of the participants mentioned that their teaching materials were outdated or that they had not received the appropriate books or teachers' guides from their school. Some of the participants also spoke to the ATPs which were provided late in some instances, affecting their ability to perform their duties:

> *"We had to start from scratch. We were just given like ATPs…But they didn't come with any explanation of when and how to do it in the groups or anything else…And, we would like, get it late."* (Participant C).

Participants also found learning materials to be insufficient. Most of these participants felt that learning aids such as posters and models were not provided by the school and/or the Department of Education and had to be made in their personal time or bought at their own expense. In some instances, textbooks were insufficient, and participants had to permit sharing under social distancing as there were limited resources to make copies for each learner.

In relation to the second subtheme, social support, most participants also described the social support that they had received during the pandemic as inadequate. Some of the participants had expressed that they could not turn to colleagues for assistance with work or even emotional support either due to social distancing or having limited time. These participants reported feelings of isolation and loneliness. Additionally, some participants expressed that the level of support they had received from the parents of their learners was also insufficient. In some instances, parents were not involved which made it challenging for work to be completed by learners when they were at home during rotational teaching.

In other instances, parents weren't understanding and had placed extra pressure on some participants to assist their children. Lastly, some of the participants reported that their experienced managerial and/or departmental support was insufficient. These participants mentioned that their supervisors, HODs or those higher up in the Department were not understanding of their circumstances:

> *"Working those extra hours. Working overtime everyday was very tiring. And the management not actually recognizing your effort or valuing art as a subject. It all just took a personal knock. You don't feel appreciated, and this links back to satisfaction. It wasn't very satisfying."* (Participant G).

With regards to the third subtheme, financial aid, most participants also mentioned the lack of financial assistance they had during the pandemic. Most of the participants spoke about the insufficient funds that the school had or that the Department had provided which influenced the availability of resources to teach and carry out other work-related responsibilities:

> *"I'm teaching mathematics. I don't have these measuring scales, these things to teach for fractions and all that. Some of these things I make but there are things you cannot make on your own. The department needs to buy it."* (Participant E).

In terms of the fourth subtheme, tools for professional development were only experienced as scarce by some of the participants. Some participants had mentioned that opportunities to meet with colleagues within departments in schools were limited because of social distancing and time. These participants spoke of the challenges this raised in planning ahead for the year. Some participants reported that workshops to advance their skills were not held as frequently (or at all). For some, social distancing prevented workshops from taking place and for others, they did not have the means to access workshops that were held online:

> *"Before COVID we used to empower ourselves. We used to go to workshops, and we were learning a lot there. We were meeting with other facilitators and teachers from other schools and teaching each other on how to handle situations related to our jobs or work environment. But since COVID, we are using the online workshops and it's not working for us. Sometimes you'll find that the link is not opening…sometimes it's not clear. You can't hear what they're saying because of the connection."* (Participant A).

Despite having access to teaching assistants, some participants reported that such support was unhelpful. These participants felt that the assistants did not provide adequate support either because of inexperience in the teaching profession or because one assistant was allocated to too many teachers and could not fulfill all their duties. Lastly, some of the participants were not recipients of performance feedback and consequently, this left some of them feeling undervalued for the efforts they were making.

In terms of support for wellbeing, the fifth subtheme, some of the participants felt that the disinfectant equipment and PPEs provided for both teachers and learners were insufficient at times. Additionally, some participants expressed that psychological support was lacking and would have been useful in helping them cope:

> *"…there's psychologists, those resources for what's happening now, and we don't have that…I think it would have been useful to manage the emotional challenges that this year brought. Just to manage the psychological problems. It's been a lot."* (Participant D).

In summary, most participants had perceived their job resources as insufficient in assisting them meet their job demands. These resources include teaching resources, social support, financial resources, resources for professional development and wellbeing support.

4.6. Teachers' Perceptions of Wellbeing in Relation to Job Demands and Resources

This section addresses participants' perception of their wellbeing in relation to the level of support they experienced in meeting their job demands. In exploring such, two themes emerged: a decline in wellbeing and insufficient job resources. These themes are presented in Table 6.

Decline in Wellbeing

In reflecting on their wellbeing during the pandemic, it appears that most participants experienced a decline in their wellbeing. At least half of the participants explicitly described their wellbeing as negatively affected by the lack of job resources available:

> *"It makes you very negative. Because now you have to wear a mask and teaching is a difficult thing, and you don't have…the resources to show them exactly what you want to teach them."* (Participant B).

"Oh, negatively. Definitely negatively. Like I said, I always enjoyed teaching. I loved working with kids. But the lack of support and understanding in addition to the long hours and effort you're exerting that goes unnoticed, it takes a toll on you." (Participant H).

Table 6

Teachers' Perceptions of Wellbeing in Relation to Job Demands and Resources

Themes	Subthemes	Codes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Insufficient Job Resources			X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Decline in Wellbeing	Health	Mental Health Issues	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
		Physical Health Issues		X		X			X	
	Job Satisfaction	Poor Work Conditions	X	X			X			
		Undervalued							X	X
		Demotivated			X					X

In describing their challenges with wellbeing, two subthemes were identified: health and job satisfaction. In relation to the first subtheme, health, most of the participants had expressed that they had experienced stress, anxiety and exhaustion. Notably, these participants had linked their health challenges with their experienced job demands and resources which is further discussed in the next theme. In terms of the second subtheme, job satisfaction, it appears that some of the participants were dissatisfied with their jobs during the pandemic as some participants had reported feeling demotivated and undervalued. Additionally, some of these participants were also displeased with their work environment.

Insufficient Job Resources

Most of the participants had associated their decline in wellbeing with the lack of available job resources. This excludes Participant F who felt his job resources were supportive in meeting his job demands and hence, a non-contributing factor to wellbeing. In terms of health, most participants associated the inadequate support they experienced with the health challenges they experienced. Many of these participants expressed that the job resources made available to them during the pandemic were insufficient in meeting their job demands resulting in stress, anxiety and exhaustion:

"…if you want to teach something and you don't have the resources it can be very stressful." (Participant A).

"And then also, you get demands from the district and what they want and I'm not given resources, so that's even more stressful because you need to do what they ask you, but you don't have anything to really do it." (Participant C).

In terms of job satisfaction, some of the participants associated the inadequate support received with the dissatisfaction they experienced. These participants expressed that the job resources made available to them during the pandemic were insufficient in meeting their job demands, leaving them feeling undervalued and demotivated:

"But the lack of support and understanding in addition to the long hours and effort you're exerting that goes unnoticed, it takes a toll on you…I just don't see the point in trying…I mean my salary even got cut. Like I'm giving so much of myself but I'm not even getting anything in return…" (Participant H).

Some had even considered leaving because they feel undervalued, unsupported and are not satisfied:

"I feel like I have a lot to offer and I'm not really being valued here. There's just too much in terms of the demands and I am not really receiving the support for it. I feel like I could do better somewhere else and so I've been applying elsewhere for a position." (Participant G).

In summary, most participants perceived their wellbeing to have been negatively affected by the inadequate support they experienced in meeting their job demands as job resources were insufficient during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the themes identified in answering the research questions of this study. These themes are further addressed in Chapter Five which provides a discussion of the findings of this study – particularly the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the key findings of each of the following research questions:

1. How did teachers perceive their wellbeing during the pandemic?
2. What job demands did teachers experience during the pandemic?
3. What job resources did teachers experience during the pandemic?
4. How did teachers experience job resources in relation to job demands?
5. How did teachers perceive their wellbeing during the pandemic in relation to their experienced job demands and resources?

In doing so, the implications of these findings are discussed, and the limitations of this study are addressed. Recommendations for future research are provided thereafter.

5.2. Key Findings

5.2.1. Teachers' Perceptions of Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Overall, most participants perceived their wellbeing as compromised during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teacher wellbeing was investigated under two domains: health as well as job satisfaction and performance. These are addressed hereafter.

5.2.1.1. Health

Most participants perceived their health as challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of physical health, all participants with pre-existing health conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes tested positive for COVID-19. Research shows that such conditions increase not only the risk for COVID-19 but also the severity of symptoms experienced when infected with the virus (Sanyaolu et al., 2020). Additionally, some participants without prior health conditions had reported new health concerns. It is possible that these participants may have been exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, physiological manifestations of stress and anxiety or the side effects of long-term facemask usage. Research shows that many teachers experienced deteriorated wellbeing during the pandemic due to the physical effects of stress (Lim & Kim, 2021; Mosiakova et al., 2022) as well as headaches associated with long-term facemask usage (Jafari et al., 2021).

Most participants had also experienced mental health challenges during the pandemic, namely stress, anxiety, and exhaustion. This finding is consistent with literature showing a high prevalence of stress, anxiety and other mental health challenges amongst teachers during the pandemic (Billett et al., 2022; Hascher et al., 2021; Kush et al., 2022; Lim & Kim, 2021; Mosiakova et al., 2022; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021; Pöysä et al., 2021; Pressley et al., 2021). While some participants felt stress and anxiety regarding the wellbeing of themselves or loved ones, other participants experienced greater work-induced stress. In fact, some of these participants had reported pre-existing stress that increased along with their workload during the pandemic. These overall findings are consistent with research showing the role of personal health, familial health and increased workload as significant stressors of teachers during the pandemic (MacIntyre et al., 2020). Overall, it seems as though all the participants perceived their health as challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these participants reported similar health challenges regardless of age, gender, years of teaching experience, teaching level and geographical school location. This suggests that these factors may not be determining factors of teacher wellbeing but rather influential factors.

5.2.1.2. Job Satisfaction and Performance

Most participants experienced dissatisfaction with their jobs and work performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding is consistent with literature showing a decline in teacher job satisfaction during the pandemic (Alves et al., 2021; Billett et al., 2022; Gadermann et al., 2021; Minihan et al., 2022). Participants' experienced dissatisfaction was influenced by challenges with job demands, resources, motivation, and wellbeing during the pandemic. Many participants reported an increase in job demands and insufficient access to job resources. As job demands and job resources are predictors of job satisfaction (Martí-González et al., 2023), challenges with either could have reduced the level of job satisfaction experienced by participants. Some participants experienced challenges with motivation which has also been identified as a significant predictor of job satisfaction as well as work engagement (Kulikowski et al., 2021). Therefore, experienced challenges with motivation could have also influenced the level of satisfaction experienced by participants. A few participants also reported that their dissatisfaction potentially stemmed from challenges with health or wellbeing such as work-related stress. This is consistent with literature showing a negative relationship between work-related stress and

job dissatisfaction (Ahsan et al., 2009; Parveen & Bano, 2019; Sadeghi, K., & Sa'adatpourvahid, 2016).

While most participants were dissatisfied with their jobs and work performance, one participant did not experience such dissatisfaction or any of the influential factors mentioned. It is possible that this participant's employment at a private school may have played a role in his perceived level of satisfaction. In South Africa, most private schools tend to be better resourced as opposed to public schools (Amnesty International, 2020; Soudien et al., 2022). Access to greater resources can make job demands for teachers more manageable and create a more satisfactory work environment (Martí-González et al., 2023). It is therefore imperative to consider the sector within which teachers are employed as this can greatly influence their job demands, resources and overall wellbeing. Other influential factors that should be noted include personal resources. Another participant perceived his work performance as having increased despite a decline in job satisfaction. This could be explained by this participant's level of self-efficacy and resilience. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) describe the way in which personal resources such as self-efficacy and resilience enable one to overcome job demands and thrive in the workplace. Therefore, it is important to consider the personal resources of teachers and the way in which they influence teacher wellbeing.

In summary, it appears that most participants had perceived factors related to their health, job satisfaction and performance as challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The emphasis placed on the challenges experienced suggests that the participants may have perceived their wellbeing as being compromised.

5.2.2. Job Demands Experienced by Teachers during the Pandemic

Most participants had experienced five main job demands during the pandemic: workload, time pressure, learner behaviour, role ambiguity and emotional distress. It should be noted that these demands were experienced by most of the participants regardless of age, gender, years of teaching experience, teaching level, teaching sector and geographical school location.

During the pandemic, most participants experienced an increase in workload. Factors contributing to the increased workload include challenges with teaching load, preparation of assessments and additional administrative work. Additionally, many of these participants also experienced time pressure as they felt pressured to do more work in less time. These findings

are consistent with literature addressing the increased workload experienced by teachers during the pandemic (Chan et al., 2021; Gadermann et al., 2021; Petrakova et al., 2021; Phillips & Cain, 2020; Souto-Manning & Melvin, 2022). Some participants experienced challenges with learner behaviour both online and in the classroom. Some of the participants that taught online reported that learners were often disengaged, disruptive and refused to submit assessments whereas those teaching in classrooms reported that learners were frequently absent. Similar challenges have been noted by other teachers who taught remotely or implemented hybrid teaching during the pandemic (Mpungose & Khoza, 2023; Al-Maqbali & Raja Hussain, 2022). It should be noted that a few of these participants further emphasized the negative impact that such behaviours had on their workload and time pressure.

In terms of role ambiguity, some participants had taken on additional responsibilities to facilitate learners and parents during the pandemic. This includes creating extra resources for home use, assisting parents after hours as well as providing emotional support to both learners and parents. Not only could this influence the workload and time pressure experienced by participants, but their overall emotional state as well. A few participants have described their emotional distress as demanding in and of itself and taking on additional roles could have further influenced their emotional distress. In fact, research shows the way in which role ambiguity led to role stress and dissatisfaction amongst teachers during the pandemic (Pretorius et al., 2022). In addition to these five jobs demands; some participants had also described their experience of job resources as demanding, particularly because their resources were perceived as insufficient. These participants perceived the lack of resources to be just as demanding or stress-inducing as they grappled to meet their demands with limited resources. This is consistent with the health impairment process of the JD-R Theory. According to the JD-R Theory, job resources can serve as a buffer against the strain induced by job demands; however, if such resources are insufficient, the strain induced by the job demands remains (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This may explain why some participants described their job resources as demanding.

In summary, participants had experienced five main job demands during the pandemic: workload, time pressure, learner behaviour, role ambiguity and emotional distress. This excludes job resources which some participants found to be just as demanding as the job demands themselves.

5.2.3. Job Resources Experienced by Teachers during the Pandemic

There were four main job resources that were experienced by some participants during the pandemic. These include technological support, social support, wellbeing support and teaching aids. It should be noted that the level of access to each resource varied greatly across participants.

In terms of technological support, most participants had access to online platforms such as WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Google Meet. These platforms allowed participants to have better communication with learners, parents and other colleagues during the pandemic. Similar to findings in other research (Alameri et al., 2020; Budianto & Yudhi, 2021; Olugbade & Olurinola, 2021), a few participants reported that these platforms were useful in teaching online. These participants belonged to private or better resourced public schools with unlimited Wi-Fi or data access. This allowed these participants to make greater use of the online platforms mentioned. Some participants also had access to projectors or smartboards which were used to make classes more interactive whilst adhering to COVID safety protocols. With regards to social support, some participants had received emotional support from their colleagues whereas others had received greater parental involvement with their learners. Both forms of support enabled these participants to cope with their teaching demands during the pandemic. These findings are consistent with research showing the effectiveness of social support in maintaining teachers' mental wellbeing during the pandemic (Kim et al., 2022; Zhou & Yao, 2020). A few participants also received some forms of wellbeing support such as disinfectant, personal protective equipment (PPEs) as well as counselling services. Lastly, a few of participants had also mentioned basic teaching aids that were made available to them such as learning and teaching materials. These job resources assisted these participants in managing their mental and physical wellbeing to an extent.

Overall, the job resources experienced by some participants during the pandemic included technological, social and wellbeing support as well as teaching aids. It should be noted that these resources allowed some participants to meet some of their teaching demands. In doing so, their motivational potential can be seen as it has allowed some of these participants to achieve their teaching goals. Despite this, many participants also reported that these resources were insufficient or completely lacking during the pandemic. This is addressed in the next section.

5.2.4. Teachers' Perception of Job Resources in Relation to Job Demands

The participants of this research perceived their job resources as insufficient in supporting their job demands during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most participants described their job resources as supportive to an extent as the job resources they had access to were not sufficient in meeting their job demands. Other participants described their job resources as completely unsupportive as they had little to no access to job resources to support their demands. In either case, the job resources of participants were insufficient in meeting their job demands. The job resources perceived as insufficient include teaching aids, social support, financial aid, tools for professional development and wellbeing support.

Many participants reported having insufficient or outdated teaching aids. Consequently, they had to either make or buy supplementary teaching aids. The lack of teaching aids can be linked to the lack of financial assistance that some participants also experienced. Many South African schools have a shortage of teaching materials due to socio-economic circumstances (Bush et al, 2010). This is noticeable when comparing the level of access to resources across school sectors in South Africa. As private schools are privately funded, they tend to have greater access to quality teaching aids as opposed to public schools that are funded by the Department of Education (Amnesty International, 2020; Soudien et al., 2022). This may explain why most participants experienced limited teaching aids as most participants were employed at public schools. It is also important to consider the impact that insufficient teaching and/or financial aid can have on teacher wellbeing. As teachers already experience a heavy workload and time sensitive deadlines (Souto-Manning & Melvin, 2022), attaining additional resources can add onto the workload and time pressure they experience. This may explain why many of the participants also grappled with a heavy workload and time pressure during the pandemic.

Many participants reported that the social support they had received from parents, colleagues and management had declined during the pandemic. Some participants reported that their colleagues had become distant out of fear of infection or because their workload was too great. Additionally, some participants also reported that management and parents were not understanding of their circumstances. Consequently, some of the participants felt undervalued and expressed intentions to leave. Research shows a positive correlation between school support and job satisfaction and commitment (Sokal et al., 2021). Similar to other studies (Chan et al., 2021; Gadermann et al., 2021; Nagasawa & Tarrant, 2020; Walter & Fox, 2021), most participants experienced insufficient social support during the pandemic. Teaching is an

occupation based on constant interaction (Fiorilli et al., 2017). These interactions serve as a protective factor for teacher wellbeing (Kim et al., 2022). Without it, teachers can experience mental health challenges such as stress and exhaustion (Stang-Rabrig et al., 2022) as well as depression, irritability and loneliness (Grey et al., 2020). Therefore, these findings may also explain the mental health challenges that some participants experienced during the pandemic.

Some participants reported that the tools for professional development were also insufficient during the pandemic. Some participants did not have access to online workshops and training due to technical difficulties or a lack of access to technological devices and data. Additionally, some participants experienced a decline in meetings with management or the with Heads of Departments in which they would express their challenges and seek assistance. Such resources assist teachers in meeting their demands and aid in their professional growth. In doing so, they provide job satisfaction and self-efficacy to teachers in the classroom (Pozo-Rico et al., 2020; Talvio et al., 2016; Toropova et al., 2021). Therefore, the absence of these resources during the pandemic may have significantly influenced the wellbeing of teachers. This may explain why some of these participants perceived their wellbeing as being compromised during the pandemic. Lastly, some participants reported that they had received insufficient wellbeing support during the pandemic. Some participants received insufficient disinfectant and personal protective equipment (PPEs) which posed a direct threat to their wellbeing. This finding is similar to that of Mukuna and Aloka (2020) who reported a lack of PPEs in rural South African schools during the pandemic. A few participants also emphasized the lack of emotional support made available such as counselling services. According to Ferren (2021), the emotional needs of teachers have long been overlooked as teachers have experienced emotional challenges well before the pandemic. This may explain why many participants had experienced emotional distress and perceived their mental health as being compromised. Having greater access to these resources could have assisted these participants in managing their emotional demands.

Overall, it appears that many participants perceived their job resources as insufficient in supporting their job demands. These resources include teaching aids, social support, financial aid, tools for professional development and wellbeing support.

5.2.5. Teachers' Perception of Wellbeing in Relation to Job Demands and Resources

Most participants perceived their wellbeing as negatively affected by the insufficient job resources they experienced during the pandemic. This finding is consistent with literature

showing the negative impact of the pandemic on teacher wellbeing (Billett et al., 2022; Chan et al., 2021; Lau et al., 2022; Nagasawa & Tarrant, 2020; Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021; Souto-Manning & Melvin, 2022). This perception stemmed from the health challenges and dissatisfaction that participants experienced in meeting their job demands with limited job resources.

In terms of health challenges, many participants experienced stress and/or anxiety in trying to meet their job demands with insufficient job resources. This finding supports the JD-R Theory. When there is a balance between job demands and resources, the strain imposed by the demands is eased by the resources available (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). However, when the job demands outweigh the job resources available, the strain imposed by demands remains and can influence employee wellbeing (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Not only is this demonstrated with most participants in this study, but similar findings have been reported by other studies concerning teacher wellbeing during the pandemic (Sokal et al., 2020). Additionally, one participant did perceive their job resources as sufficient in supporting their job demands. This participant did not experience any related mental health challenges or job dissatisfaction, further supporting the JD-R Theory. With regards to dissatisfaction, some participants felt unsatisfied with their jobs because they had insufficient job resources to meet their job demands. Not only is this finding consistent with literature concerning teacher wellbeing during the pandemic (Alves et al., 2021; Billett et al., 2022; Gadermann et al., 2021; Minihan et al., 2022), but it further supports the JD-R Theory. Job resources, when high enough, hold a motivating potential that boosts motivation, engagement and satisfaction amongst employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). While the participants in the present study had access to some job resources, most participants experienced their job resources as insufficient in meeting their job demands. Therefore, the motivating potential of these resources may have been low. This may explain the demotivation and dissatisfaction experienced by some participants.

In summary, participants perceived their wellbeing as negatively affected by the limited job resources experienced in meeting their job demands during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.3. Implications of the Research Findings

Based on the findings, it is evident that most of the participants in this study perceived their wellbeing to be negatively affected by the lack of job resources supporting their job demands during the COVID-19 pandemic. As many participants reportedly experienced challenges

with health as well as a decline in job satisfaction and performance during the pandemic, it is possible that some of these experiences could have been exacerbated post-COVID, particularly if these challenges were not addressed. Prolonged exposure to stress and anxiety can bring about physiological health issues, burnout, or other mental health issues as well as affect work performance. Furthermore, work-induced stress and anxiety can bring about negative attitudes towards the workplace and influence teacher turnover. It is therefore crucial that the necessary steps be taken to support teachers throughout the different levels of the education system.

At the school level, interventions can be put in place to boost job resources and better manage teaching demands. The findings in this study suggest that social support is of great significance to the participants and the lack of this can bring about feelings of isolation. Previous studies have shown the importance of social support in boosting job satisfaction and occupational motivation (Gadermann et al., 2021; Nagasawa & Tarrant, 2020; Trinidad, 2021; Walter &Fox, 2021). Based on this, it may be in the best interest of teachers if schools incorporate more networking and teambuilding opportunities. This would allow for greater emotional support amongst colleagues. Additionally, management in schools can incorporate a more emotional leadership style. Emotional intelligence is considered an essential component for successful leadership in the workplace (Sadri, 2012). A sense of openness to teachers' emotional needs and school improvement goals can ease the job demands that teachers experience. The abovementioned findings also suggest that more teaching aids and professional development opportunities would be beneficial. At the school level, internal training can be used for teachers to observe the pedagogical practices of other teachers in the school. This can allow teachers to expand their pedagogical practices. Creating networking opportunities within professional communities such as other schools or organisations may also be useful. Such practice facilitates learning, skill development and resource sharing that is useful in managing the job demands of teachers (Muijs et al., 2010; Muijs et al., 2011). This may especially prove beneficial for teachers from lower-resourced schools such as those in this study.

Steps could also be taken at the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to help teachers boost their job resources and better manage their job demands. The findings of this study suggest that teachers' mental health is in decline and that there are insufficient resources in place to manage this. Teacher wellness programs may prove beneficial for teachers, particularly if they are tailored to the needs of individual schools. Such programs can assist teachers by

providing them with more appropriate strategies for the management of stress and other mental health-related concerns (Lever et al., 2017; Roos & Borkoski, 2021). A few participants also felt that mental health care providers were also lacking. As many South African schools do not have counsellors or psychologists, it may be useful for the DBE to consider allocating such professionals at schools to assist teachers with managing their emotional demands. Educational psychologists could be useful as they could also offer professional advice and problem-solving strategies in managing classroom behaviour and other learner-related job demands. As the findings suggest that teaching aids and professional development opportunities are scarce, the DBE could also implement professional development programs where external training is provided for teachers to enhance their pedagogical practices and expand their teaching resources.

As the study suggests that teacher health is in decline, it may be useful for policy makers to draw up policies regarding wellness programs at schools as such policies may assist the DBE in providing such services and professional bodies such as educational psychologists at schools. It may also be useful for policy makers to consider distance education plans should similar health crises arise in future as this may allow for less disruption in the completion of curriculum and may assist with teaching demands.

According to the Job Demands-Resources Theory (JDR Theory), an imbalance between job demands and job resources can lead to a decline in employee wellbeing, specifically when the demands drastically outweigh the resources made available to support employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Sokal et al., 2020). As most of the participants in this study associated their decline in wellbeing with insufficient job resources, it can be said that the JDR Theory was useful in guiding this research and providing insight into teacher wellbeing specifically. The theory allowed for a greater understanding of the way in which job demands can influence teacher health, job satisfaction and performance when greater than job resources. Although personal resources were not explored in this study, the theory also provided valuable insight on the role such resources play in influencing teacher wellbeing and the importance of taking them into consideration. This is further addressed in the limitations of this research. In improving this theory, it may be useful if demographic factors such as age, gender and years of work experience and so forth, could be incorporated as this may play a role in influencing wellbeing, particularly in certain professions such as teaching.

5.4. Strengths and Limitations of the Research

The following strengths were identified in this research study:

- The data used in this study was obtained solely through self-reporting measures. Such measures allow for the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of participants to be explored in detail. In this study, such measures allowed the researcher to gain a greater understanding of participants wellbeing and the way in which this was influenced by their demands and resources during the pandemic.
- The use of online interviews allowed the study to take place while keeping the health and safety of both the researcher and participants a priority. As most teachers have limited personal time, online interviews offered participants more convenience in that they could engage in the interviews at a time that was more suitable for them as opposed to conducting the interview during working hours.
- The sample in this study consisted of 8 participants which was relatively ideal for the qualitative approach adopted as such a sample size can better facilitate the detailed exploration of the points of interest. The sample also consisted of a diverse group of participants with differences in age, gender, years of teaching experience, teaching level, teaching sector and geographical school location. Incorporating such diversity into the study allowed for an in-depth understanding of participants experiences during the pandemic.

The following limitations were identified in this study:

- While the study adopted self-reporting measures, such measures can also bring about issues of validity as participants could provide data that is insufficient based on the level of rapport and trust they hold with the researcher.
- Engaging in data collection was also a challenging process as additional professional and personal demands during the pandemic made it very difficult for participants to find time for the interview session.
- In conducting the interviews online, there were challenges with access as some participants did not always have the data or technology to use online platforms. This brought about delays in the data collection process. Additionally, there were also challenges with connectivity which could have influenced the quality of the data collected as communication was interrupted at times.

- Human error and bias could have also influenced the data collection and interpretation process. While a reflective journal was used to record the thoughts and feelings of the researcher, objectivity is not always possible. Additionally, challenges with connectivity and interrupted communication could have influenced the data collected and interpreted.
- This study focused solely on job characteristics (demands and resources) and did not take into consideration the personal resources of participants. Personal resources such as self-efficacy and resilience can allow one to better manage their job demands, thereby having an influence on teacher wellbeing. Taking this into account could have could have further enriched the findings of the study.

5.5. Recommendations for Future Research

The following are recommendations for future research:

- As many participants had reported experiencing a lack of teaching resources such as teaching and learning materials, future research could explore the teaching resources available in government schools in Gauteng and the ways in which this could be improved.
- As the results indicate a decline in teacher wellbeing during the pandemic, it may be important to further investigate the wellbeing of teachers upon their return to schools. The pandemic posed many stressors and emotional demands for teachers, and it is possible that many of them have not had the opportunity to address these drawbacks. In investigating this, a larger quantitative study could be conducted on teacher wellbeing post COVID-19.
- Given the inadequate emotional support that participants experienced during the pandemic, future research could also explore the availability of teacher emotional support and the ways in which this could be enhanced.
- While the Job Demands-Resources Theory consists of many quantitative instruments, instruments measuring the job demands, resources and wellbeing of teachers specifically are lacking. Therefore, the development of more specific instruments for the teaching profession is recommended.

5.6. Chapter Summary

The findings of this study suggest that teachers held a negative perception of their wellbeing during the pandemic. Most participants found their job resources to be inadequate in meeting

their job demands. This brought about further challenges in addition to those imposed by their job demands. Most participants had associated their experience with health challenges and dissatisfaction with their job. The findings were supported by the JD-R Theory which show the way in which a negative imbalance between job demands and job resources impact health, job satisfaction, performance and hence, overall wellbeing. The implications of the study are addressed, limitations discussed and recommendations for future research are made.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Shenay Ganasen and I am a registered student for the degree of Masters in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of the requirements for my degree, I will be conducting a research project under the supervision of Professor Zaytoon Amod. The purpose of this research project is to gain a deeper understanding of teacher wellbeing in South Africa, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore teacher's perceptions of personal wellbeing and the way in which perceived job demands and job resources influence teachers' perceptions of personal wellbeing during the pandemic.

If you are currently a teacher in Gauteng, teaching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and have at least one year of teaching experience prior to the pandemic, I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Participation will involve an online interview that will be conducted by myself at a time and on a platform that is suitable for us both. The anticipated length of the interview is approximately an hour and will be recorded with your permission. Should you choose to participate in this research project, your participation will be voluntary and will not involve any direct benefits or foreseeable risks. You may also choose to answer or not answer any specific questions asked during the interview as well as withdraw from the study either during the interview process or post interview. There are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you choose to withdraw from the study. Data usage will be monitored during the interview and the data costs will be reimbursed upon request.

In participating in this research project, your identity will be confidential. Although I, as the interviewer, will know your identity, this information will not be disclosed to anyone else. In keeping with this, information that could be used to identify you will be removed from the interview transcript and a pseudonym (false name) will be used to represent your participation in my final research report. The recorded interview will be stored on a password protected laptop and only my research supervisor and I will have access to this recording. Once the interview has been transcribed and data analysis has been completed, the recording will be destroyed. The interview transcriptions will be kept for five years and data collected may be used for future publication in a journal article. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any time during the interview process, the interview will stop completely or resume at another time if you are comfortable doing so. If you need emotional support following the interview process, telephonic counselling and resources are provided free of charge by the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) (details provided on the next page).

If you have any questions concerning the research during or after the interview, feel free to contact me or my research supervisor (details provided on the next page). A feedback sheet in the form of a summarized study and findings can be provided to you upon request. Please note that the feedback sheet will only be available approximately eight months following the interview process. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) (details provided on the next page).

Thank you for considering participation in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Shenay Ganasen.

Contact Details		
Person/Organisation:	Contact Number:	Email Address:
Shenay Ganasen	072 449 1915	1135008@students.wits.ac.za
Professor Zaytoon Amod	011 717 8326	zaytoon.amod@wits.ac.za.
University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)	011 717 1408	hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.
South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)	0800 12 13 14 or 011 262 6396 or SMS 31393.	zane@sadag.org.

Appendix B: Consent to Participate Form

I, _____ (full name/s and surname of the participant)

do hereby consent to be interviewed by Shenay Ganasen for her study exploring teachers' perceptions of wellbeing and perceived job demands and job resources during the COVID-19 pandemic in the South African context.

I understand that (please tick each condition in the box provided to indicate agreement)

☐ My participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and I will not benefit or suffer any disadvantage as a result of my decision to participate or not.

☐ I may answer or not answer any specific questions asked during the interview as well as withdraw from the interview process if I wish to do so.

☐ I will be asked for permission to video-record my interview as per the conditions outlined in the separate consent for recording form.

☐ My identity will be kept confidential, and any information that may be used to identify me will be removed from the interview transcript. A pseudonym will be used to help hide my identity (for example Participant A).

By signing below, I do hereby consent to be interviewed for the research project.

Signed: _____ (signature of participant)

Date: _____

Appendix C: Consent for Recording Form

I, _____

(full name/s and surname of the potential participant)

do hereby consent for my interview conducted by Shenay Ganasen to be video recorded for her study exploring teachers' perceptions of personal wellbeing and the influence of perceived job demands and job recourses on teacher wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I understand that (please tick each condition in the box provided to indicate agreement):

☐ The recorded interview will be stored on a password protected computer that has limited access and only the research supervisor and the researcher will have access to this recording,

☐ The recording will be destroyed after five years however; information gained from the recording may be used in future publications such as a journal article.

☐ A pseudonym (for example, Participant A) will be used to represent myself and hide my identity. Direct quotes from my interview may be cited in the research report or other write-ups of the research using this pseudonym.

☐ Any information that can be used to directly identify me will be removed from the interview transcript.

By signing below, I do hereby consent to be interviewed for the research project.

Signed: _____ (signature of participant)

Date: _____

Appendix D: Brief Invitation

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Shenay Ganasen and I am a registered student for the degree of Masters in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of the requirements for my degree, I will be conducting a research project to gain a deeper understanding of teacher wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic for teachers in the Gauteng province, South Africa. The aim of this study is to explore teacher's perceptions of personal wellbeing as well as the perceived job demands and job resources influencing teacher wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you are currently a teacher in Gauteng, teaching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and have at least one year of teaching experience prior to the pandemic, I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Participation will involve an online semi-structured interview that will be conducted by myself at a time and on a platform that is suitable for us both. The anticipated length of the interview is approximately an hour and will be recorded with your permission. Participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and there are no disadvantages or penalties if you do not choose to participate or if you choose to withdraw from the study.

More details on the project are provided in the full participant information sheet attached in the link below - Participant Information Sheet.

If you are interested in participating in this research, follow the link below to register as a participant and schedule an interview - Participant Registration Form.

Thank you for considering participation in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Shenay Ganasen; 1135008@students.wits.ac.za; 073 327 3503.

Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below. These are for descriptive and analytic purposes only.

1. How old are you? _____

2. Please put a cross underneath the answer that best represents your gender.

Male	Female	Intersex/undetermined	Other (please specify):

3. How many years of experience do you have in teaching? _____

4. Is your school public or private? _____

5. Do you teach at a primary or secondary school? _____

6. Please put a cross underneath the answer that best represents the area within which your school is located.

Rural	Suburban	Inner City	Township	Other (please specify):

7. Please put a cross underneath the answer that best describes the socio-economic status of the area within which your school is located.

Low Income	Middle Income	High Income

Appendix F: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

Work Environment

1. How would you describe your work environment prior to COVID-19?
2. In what ways has your work environment changed since the start of the pandemic?

Teacher Wellbeing

3. As a teacher, how would you describe your health prior to COVID-19?
4. How would you describe your health during COVID-19?
5. How would you describe your level of job performance and satisfaction prior to COVID-19?
6. In what ways has your level of job performance and satisfaction changed during COVID-19?

Job Demands

"Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skill and are therefore associated with certain physical and/or psychological costs".

7. Prior to COVID-19, what job demands did you experience as a teacher?
8. In what ways have your job demands changed since the start of the pandemic?
9. Which job demand do you find the most challenging during the pandemic and why?

Job Resources

"Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: functional in achieving work goals; reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; stimulate personal growth, learning, and development".

10. Prior to COVID-19, what job resources were made available to you as a teacher?
11. In what ways have the resources made available to you changed since the start of the pandemic?

Job Demands-Resources Interaction

12. As a teacher, how would you describe your job resources in relation to your job demands, particularly during the pandemic?
13. How would you describe the influence that your job demands, and job resources has had on your wellbeing, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Appendix G: Semi-structured Interview Schedule (with prompts)

Work Environment

1. How would you describe your work environment prior to COVID-19?
   Probes: what was the work environment like? What did your job entail?
2. In what ways has your work environment changed since the start of the pandemic?
   Probes: Are there new aspects to your job – what are these? have some aspects of your job been removed – what are these?

Teacher Wellbeing

3. As a teacher, how would you describe your health prior to COVID-19?
   Probes: What was your mental/physical health like as a teacher prior to COVID-19? Was it good or bad? What do you think contributed to it?
4. How would you describe your health during COVID-19?
   Probes: What was your mental/physical health like as a teacher during COVID-19? Was it good or bad? What do you think contributed to it?
5. How would you describe your level of job performance and satisfaction prior to COVID-19?
   Probes: do you feel that you performed well or not well enough? Do you feel like you were more active and engaged or not? Were you more satisfied with your job or not?
6. In what ways has your level of job performance and satisfaction changed during COVID-19?
   Probes: do you feel that your level of performance, engagement and satisfaction with teaching has changed and if so, how?

Job Demands

"Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skill and are therefore associated with certain physical and/or psychological costs".

7. Prior to COVID-19, what job demands did you experience as a teacher?
   Probes: what challenges have you experienced? Examples: time pressure, workload, role ambiguity, emotionally demanding supervisors or parents, student-behaviour management etc.
8. In what ways have your job demands changed since the start of the pandemic?
   Probes: how have the challenges experienced prior to COVID-19 changed since the onset of the pandemic? Have they increased or decreased? Were there new demands? Examples: time pressure, workload, role ambiguity, emotionally demanding supervisors or parents, student-behaviour management etc.
9. Which job demand do you find the most challenging during the pandemic and why?
   Probes: based on the demands you have mentioned. Has this demand always been highly demanding or has its level of intensity increased since the pandemic?

Job Resources

"Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: functional in achieving work goals; reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; stimulate personal growth, learning, and development".

10. Prior to COVID-19, what job resources were made available to you as a teacher?
    Probes: what resources were provided to support you in your role as a teacher? Examples: social support (from management or colleagues), performance feedback, autonomy.
11. In what ways have the resources made available to you changed since the start of the pandemic?
    Probes: how did the resources provided to support you in your role as a teacher change since the onset of the pandemic? Have they increased or decreased? Were there new resources? Examples: social support (from management or colleagues), performance feedback, autonomy.

Job Demands-Resources Interaction

12. As a teacher, how would you describe your job resources in relation to your job demands, particularly during the pandemic?
    Probes: How supportive are your job resources in meeting your job demands? Which Job resources have been the most and least supportive in meeting your demands? Which job resources do you feel would support you more in terms of your demands?
13. How would you describe the influence that your job demands, and job resources has had on your wellbeing, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic?
    Probes: Would you say aspects of your wellbeing has increased or decreased? What are these aspects and in what ways have they changed?

Appendix H: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE:	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MEDPSYC/21/04**
PROJECT TITLE:	Teacher Perceptions of Personal Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Exploration of Job Demands and Job Resources.
INVESTIGATOR	Ganasen Shenay (1135008)
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	SHCD/Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	17 May 2021
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Low Risk
EXPIRY DATE	31 December 2023

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 11 June 2021 **CHAIRPERSON** *Z. AMOD*
(Prof. Zaytoon Amod)

Cc Prof. Zaytoon Amod (Supervisor)

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature **Date** 23 / 06 / 2021

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES