

4-13-2024

The Experience of Well-Being in Educators Who Transitioned From In-Person to Online Teaching

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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La Toya S. Glenn

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

The Experience of Well-Being in Educators Who Transitioned From

In-Person to Online Teaching

by

La Toya S. Glenn

MS, California State University-Northridge, 2014

BS, Clayton State University, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial-Organizational Psychology

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic created substantive stress and uncertainty for secondary educators, including responding to the shifts in delivering education from the traditional to the online classroom and back to the classroom. Improper training, increased work demands, increased responsibilities, and decreased autonomy took a toll on teachers' work and home life. To better understand how teachers deal with transitions in online, hybrid, and in-person education, this study explored secondary educators' experiences of psychological well-being during the transitions from in-person to online teaching. An interpretative phenomenological approach guided the research design. Lazarus and Folkman's transactional theory of stress and coping was used as the framework for exploring coping with stress during transitions. Demerouti et al.'s job demands-resources theory was used to explore the role of social support in responding to job demands. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven educators to explore the experience of well-being and social support during their transitions. The results revealed positive and negative thematic dimensions for well-being and social support. Future studies could explore administrators' perspectives and consider what interventions for well-being would contribute to reducing stress. The results may contribute to positive social change by emphasizing the consequences of such transitions and encouraging school administration to build opportunities for resources and social support that can facilitate well-being at work.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my supporting family (Mom, Niyati, A'sah, Makkah, and Damian). I thank them for their unconditional love and understanding throughout my academic career.

Acknowledgments

“Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love endures forever” (Psalms 106:1). First and foremost, I’d like to thank God for keeping me focused and determined through these past seven years. My many blessings and those to come on this journey are due to my faith in Him. Also, I’d like to acknowledge my Chair (Dr. Susan Marcus) and Committee Member (Dr. Jason Etchegaray) for their unconditional support in seeing that I successfully meet my goals. In addition, I’m thankful to Walden University for granting me the Don E. Ackerman Scholarship to fund my dissertation research. With this grant, I supported positive social change in education through research and provided a better understanding of the needs of the educational field.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study	1
Background of the Study	1
Problem Statement	2
Purpose of the Study	3
Research Questions	4
Theoretical Framework	4
Nature of the Study	5
Definitions	5
Assumptions	6
Scope and Delimitations	6
Limitations	7
Transferability	7
Dependability	8
Confirmability	8
Credibility	8
Significance	8
Summary	9
Chapter 2: Literature Review	10
Literature Search Strategy	11

Theoretical Foundation	11
Psychological Stress and Coping Theory	12
Fundamental Propositions and Assumptions	13
Measurements	13
Research on the Lazarus and Folkman Model	14
Contemporary research on educators	15
Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-RT)	16
Measurements	18
Research on Demerouti et al. JD-R model.....	19
Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts	20
Teachers as A Unique Employee Population.....	20
Studies on Educator's Stress	22
Quantitative Studies in Educator's Well-being	23
Qualitative Studies of Teacher Well-Being	25
Systematic Review Studies in Job Resources	27
Summary and Conclusions	31
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	32
Introduction.....	32
Research Design and Rationale	32
Rationale for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	32
Research Questions	33
Role of the Researcher	34

Methodology	35
Participant Selection Logic	35
Instrumentation	36
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection	37
Data Analysis Plan	38
Issues of Trustworthiness	39
Credibility	39
Ethical Procedures	41
Summary	42
Introduction	43
Setting	43
Demographics	43
Data Collection	45
Data Analysis	47
Well-Being as the Superordinate Theme	53
Discrepancies in Meanings or Cases	54
Evidence of Trustworthiness	54
Credibility	54
Transferability	55
Dependability	55
Confirmability	56
Results	56

Lived Experience of Well-Being	57
Lived Experience of Social Support	58
Summary	59
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	61
Introduction	61
Interpretation of the Findings.....	62
Relevance to Theoretical Frameworks.....	62
Relevance to the Literature	65
Social Support Theme.....	66
Limitations of the Study.....	67
Recommendations	68
Implications.....	69
Conclusion	70
References	72
Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in Educator Research Study	90
Appendix B: Interview Guide	91

List of Tables

Table 1. Participants' Experiential Statements Organized by Essence, Concept and Emotion.....	48
Table 2. Participant Well-being Types	50

List of Figures

Figure 1. Emotional-Transactional Model for Studying Stress and the Emotional.....	12
Figure 2. Two Different Underlying Psychological Processes Play a Role in the Development	17
Figure 3. Well-Being as the Superordinate Theme.....	53
Figure 4. Social Support as a Subordinate Theme	54

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This research study aimed to explore and provide an understanding of lived experiences of well-being in secondary educators who transitioned from in-person to online teaching. Secondary educators are professionals that may face issues from organizational demands. These demands may inhibit changes to their well-being, how they cope, and how they perceive social support to accomplish tasks in the work setting (Bilotta et al., 2021; Cahill et al., 2020; Fernández-Lasarte et al., 2020). This research study was conducted to help employers become aware of how changes in the workplace structure can contribute to an employee's overall well-being. Also, employers must understand the various ways to provide social support and employ coping strategies during those changes.

Background of the Study

Nearly 93% of school-aged children and educators worked in “distance learning” during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures (McElrath, 2020). Many educators were forced to quickly adapt to changes in their position with inequalities in educational access to instructional support, mental health support, technology, etc. (Haderlein et al., 2021). The changes in how education was delivered influenced the structure of the work environment. The transitions in the workplace have created increases in workloads, a lack of access to instructional support, and changes to an individual's overall well-being (Christopher, 2022; Karbowski, 2022).

Researchers have examined the psychological well-being of educators in various contexts (Jeon et al., 2018; Mari et al., 2021). However, more research on this topic is

called for as teachers deal with the contemporary stresses brought on by transitions between in-person and online teaching (Cahill et al., 2020). In-depth conversational and unstructured interviews can access the essence of the well-being phenomenon in this context (Quinney et al., 2016).

The researchers want to know more about the experiences of educators that lead to various challenges, including how social supports affect teacher's perception of smart-working (Mari et al., 2021) and how to support educators through labor-management collaborative programs in education (Landsbergis et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

The trends in secondary education teachers' exposure to stressors (workload, challenging students, decreased autonomy, increased responsibility) have been increasing (Landsbergis et al., 2020); and have been made worse by the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic (Jones, 2020). Educators often change work settings with the demand of the organization's needs, and the response to the pandemic has meant that many educators, during the unprecedented crisis, transitioned from in-person to online teaching (Kaden, 2020; Miller, 2021). This is consistent with recent findings in the I/O literature, documenting the relationship between employee well-being and organizational changes during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bilotta et al., 2021; de Fátima Nery, 2020).

Considerable research has been done to document the occupational consequences of job stress on secondary educators (Jeon et al., 2018; Mari et al., 2021). Often, these issues lead to burnout and high attrition rates in secondary education (Haberman, 2005; Pillay et al., 2005; Roberts et al., 2019; Smetackova et al., 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020). However, the recent challenges of the pandemic have created a more complex impact on well-being. For example, educators reported that secondary traumas resulted from addressing students' basic needs and parental stress (Bintiff, 2020). Further studies of secondary education teachers have shown that social support may be a factor that contributes to well-being (Chung & Chen, 2018) and that absence of social support contributes to burnout (Greenglass et al., 2020). Cahill et al. (2020) pointed out that little is known about how post-pandemic educators returning to in-person instruction manage their well-being. However, the authors provided suggestions that the districts can use to address the recovery of well-being, such as emergency preparedness education and social and emotional learning programs.

A more intensive study may provide insight into understanding educator well-being and coping during this modern time of transition. Therefore, my study aimed to explore secondary educator's lived experience of psychological well-being and social support in the transitions between in-person to online teaching.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study explored the experience of well-being and social support in secondary educators transitioning from in-person to online teaching. I explored how the social support experiences of educators may have contributed to their psychological well-

being during transition periods from face-to-face to online teaching and back again. The results of this study may contribute to a better understanding of educators' mental health during transitional periods in the work setting.

Research Questions

The research questions used to address the research problem are:

- What is the lived experience of well-being for secondary educators that transitioned between in-person and online teaching?
- How do secondary educators that transitioned between in-person and online teaching describe the contribution of social support in the transitions?

Theoretical Framework

The theories and concepts that ground this study include Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping and Demerouti et al. (2001) job demands-resources theory (JD-RT). The logical connections between the framework presented and the nature of my study include Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping is used as an empirical reference to understand the cognitive and behavioral constructs of well-being in the study. Stressors are the key concept in occupational and psychological well-being that can lead to burnout and high attrition rates in secondary education (Haberman, 2005; Klusmann et al., 2008; Pillay et al., 2005; Roberts et al., 2019; Smetackova et al., 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020).

Lazarus and Folkman explored the relationship between stress, coping, and social support (Dunkel-Schetter, 1987; Folkman & Lazarus, 1987). Recent research has

suggested that social support may benefit teachers' coping abilities (Chung & Chen, 2018). Also, Demerouti et al.'s (2001) JD-RT is used as a framework for an organization's social support initiatives towards job demands and resources to help prevent burnout (Bilotta et al., 2021; Szabo & Jagodics, 2019). Each theory was used to describe the phenomena and develop the approach to the study's methodology, data analysis, and findings.

Nature of the Study

The research questions in this qualitative study are addressed through an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research design. The IPA research study addresses a gap in current literature by exploring the meanings of lived experiences. This qualitative analysis focused on the subjective experiences of secondary educators' well-being after transitioning from in-person to online teaching. Furthermore, the analysis explored the lived experiences through experiential meanings of participants' feedback (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021).

Definitions

Coping: is defined as “contextual and influenced by an appraisal, it is a changing process as situations occur, and it is multidimensional in functions approach” (Folkman, 2001).

Work Stress: is defined as “the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when job requirements do not match an employee's capabilities, resources, or needs” (NIOSH, 2022).

Well-Being: “Well-being is a state in which an individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with normal stressors, and can productively and fruitfully contribute to their community” (WHO, 2004).

Social Support: Defined as “almost anything that infers a social interaction (Hupcey, 1998).

Lived Experience: “Synonymous with phenomenology in which meanings and essence of experience are explained through first-person” (Mapp, 2008).

Assumptions

During the interview process, it was assumed that the participants would be open to consent to the interview questions, provide thorough responses, and share their experiences. As a professional in this research, it was assumed that I would work within my competence to adhere to ethical considerations regarding research biases and ensure that methodological strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are implemented. Further explanation of how each strategy was used is specified in Ch. 3.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study is from research participants in the United States. The individual interviews were conducted via telephone as the participants were selected randomly via social media sites and professional networks. The recruitment of participants was within the secondary education profession. The delimitation of the study focused on educators with three years or more experience working in education and my role as a sole researcher. Selection based on the longevity of the educators' work

experiences helped with recruiting the necessary number of participants for data saturation. However, the lived experiences and feedback of educators with increased tenure were beneficial in understanding how well they cope during transitions.

Also, my role as a sole researcher may have imposed biases as I have considerable experience working in secondary schools. Therefore, I ensured to bracket my perceptions and remained fair and insightful to the participant's experiences.

Limitations

One potential barrier that may have caused limitations to the research is the possibility of participants self-reporting biased data and biases of my own. Althubaiti (2016) stated that self-reported data is often argued as unreliable and threatened by self-reporting bias. Also, the researcher's bias was possible by including data in the study that I feel is only relevant. To reduce the limitations in the study, I conducted an audit trail through record keeping and employ member checks to retain credibility while negating the biases throughout the study.

Transferability

Transferability was utilized by providing a thick, rich description of the lived experiences of the secondary educators as well as the research process. The sample size, strategy, demographics, and interview procedures are all included to ensure that the research can be carried out in other contexts.

Dependability

To reduce the limitations in dependability, in-depth descriptions of the methods and designs was provided. Also, member checks were performed by the participants. Interpretation of data ensured the reliability and consistency of the findings in the study.

Confirmability

To lessen the limitations of research biases, bracketing mitigated potential preconceptions from the study. The bracketing process separated my feelings and experiences, which creates biases. Implementing the audit trail throughout the process ensured that confirmability is being met in the research.

Credibility

Data credibility was assured through member checks, purposive sampling, and investigator credibility. Purposeful criterion sampling was used to obtain a specific representative sample for this qualitative study. Member checks were necessary to determine the accuracy of the participant's response to interview questions/ transcripts. Furthermore, performing investigator credibility allowed for truth value in research and the appropriate interpretation of the data.

Significance

This study is significant because the research aimed to fill the gap in the exploration of educators' lived experiences and perspectives of well-being from in-person to online. With this understanding, management and administration can get a full glimpse of how work transitions affect educators and how building opportunities for social

support can facilitate well-being at work. The information can be used to incorporate smart working and improve work management.

Summary

This chapter introduced an interpretative phenomenological analysis research study that explored the lived experiences of secondary educators during on-demand transitions from in-person to online teaching. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological stress and coping theory and Demerouti et al.'s (2001) JD-RT was utilized as the theoretical framework. The purposeful sampling strategies of criterion sampling and snowball sampling strategies for recruitment was used to recruit secondary educators and gain an understanding of their experiences of well-being and social support when transitioning from in-person to online teaching during the pandemic. Furthermore, data was analyzed to provide a descriptive and thematic pattern in the participant's lived experiences for this qualitative research study. The theoretical foundation, literature search strategy, key variables and concepts, and a thorough literature review were conducted in chapter 2. Chapter 3 introduced the study's research design, rationale, roles, methods, instrumentation, procedures, data analysis, and ethical implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The research explored the experience of well-being and social support in educators who transitioned from in-person to online teaching. Changes in workload, autonomy, responsibilities, and other unprecedented factors like the COVID-19 pandemic have created stressors that have consequences for the psychological well-being of educators (Landsbergis et al., 2020). Unfortunately, many studies have shown that job stress in secondary educators commonly leads to burnout and attrition in school systems (Roberts et al., 2019; Smetackova et al., 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020). Understanding what educators did to support their well-being and the well-being of their colleagues during these stressful times could contribute to improving support services for managing the continued uncertainties in the post-COVID era.

The recent pandemic presented the unique challenge of transitioning from in-person to online teaching (Kaden, 2020; Miller, 2021). Millions of children and educators in the United States ended up working remotely, and educators were compelled to make the learning environment successful (Weir, 2020). The lack of skills, appropriate homework space, additional childcare burdens, and concerns for the children's welfare combined to produce more significant attrition than in previous years (Doherty, 2020).

Two theoretical foundations were reviewed and was used to guide the data collection and analysis plan. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological stress and coping theory were used to conceptualize emotional well-being in individuals. Demerouti et al.'s (2001) JD-RT was used to understand the job demands and resources on employee well-being. In this Chapter, I present my literature search strategy, followed by and in-

depth analysis of the two frameworks. This is followed by the literature review of qualitative, quantitative, and systematic review studies.

Literature Search Strategy

This section provides the resources used to conduct literature research relevant to the topic. I used Walden University's Library to search the following databases: Emerald Insight, EBSCO, SAGE Journals, Science Direct, and ProQuest. Also, I used Google Scholar to research other peer-reviewed articles. Many of the articles were published within the last five years. The key terms used to search for relevant literature were lived experiences, perspectives, well-being, burnout, secondary education, employment transitioning, remote learning, face-to-face or in-person or traditional, educators or instructors or teachers. Boolean search commands such as "AND" and "OR" were used in the iterative search process to broaden the literature search process.

Theoretical Foundation

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological stress and coping theory and Demerouti et al.'s (2001) JD-RT were used as the theoretical frameworks for this study. Lazarus and Folkman's approach has been instrumental in conceptualizing stress and coping research for many years (Biggs et al., 2017). Demerouti et al.'s model is frequently used in research on job stress and its consequences and has been used frequently in studies of employee well-being and health. Both theories have relevance to understanding how job demands and resources can impact employee health and well-being (Bauer & Hammig, 2014). For secondary educators, the concepts of occupational

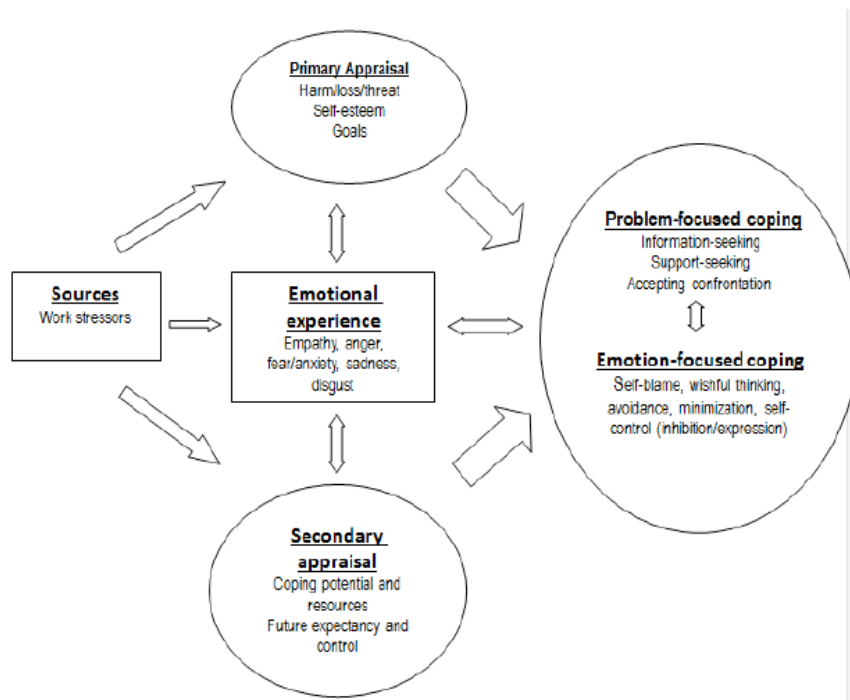
stressors can negatively impact psychological well-being and lead to burnout and high attrition rates (Roberts et al., 2019; Smetackova et al., 2019; Thorpe et al., 2020).

Psychological Stress and Coping Theory

Lazarus and Folkman's theory has been tested empirically to understand the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral consequences of stress. This theory proposed that in the presence of stress, the cognitive appraisal is the personal significance of an encounter for well-being and a proximal determinant of emotion (Lazarus & Smith, 1988). This is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Emotional-Transactional Model for Studying Stress and the Emotional



Note. Inspired by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and by Lazarus (1999).

Fundamental Propositions and Assumptions

The sources are the "stressors" in the model and relate to how individuals manage psychological strain. The emotional experience is the response triggered from the stressor, and the appraisals are the evaluative processes of the stressor. Primary and secondary appraisals are two forms of cognitive appraisal that categorize the stressors concerning well-being. The coping strategies (emotion-focused and problem-focused) contribute to an individual's well-being and impact the environment and health (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

A few propositions and assumptions about coping are the following: coping is contextual and influenced by an appraisal, it is a changing process as situations occur, and it is multidimensional in functions approach (Folkman, 2001). More assumptions in Lazarus and Folkman's research are the beliefs that an individual has the resources to respond to stressors; stress is a highly individual concept resulting from a person-environment transaction (Lazarus and Folkman, 1987).

Measurements

The constructs of stress and coping in Lazarus and Folkman's theory have been measured and tested with various instruments. The initial scale was developed in 1980 and revised in (1985) called the Ways of Coping (Carver et al., 1989). The questionnaire was developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1980) to investigate coping styles in individuals dealing with stress and the rationale of how people handle stress. Later, a need for how people respond to coping was developed. Carver et al. (1989) developed the COPE inventory scale to assess how people responded to stressors.

Carver (1997) lengthened the scale's version with the full version of the COPE inventory. The scale focused on the functional strategies of coping responses such as active coping, planning how to cope, suppression, restraint, and social support (Carver et al., 1989). Another conducive research tool focused on perceived confidence in coping. Chesney et al. (2006) developed the Coping Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES) to measure self-confidence in coping strategies. This scale measures self-perceived abilities to cope effectively with challenges in life. Furthermore, more scales and instruments were created to assess coping strategies.

Research on the Lazarus and Folkman Model

Lazarus and Folkman explored the relationship between stress, coping, and social support (Dunkel-Schetter, 1987), Folkman & Lazarus, 1987) and found that coping significantly correlates with social support received. The authors focused on social support by associating a person's predisposition and appraisal patterns with stress events. Coping strategies were assessed regarding these encounters. Coping is managing the internal and external demands that exceed the resources of an individual (Thoits, 1986). Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping suggests that the fit of appraisal moderates the impact of coping outcomes. The model is used to evaluate cognition to determine the potential stressor.

More current research suggests that social support may benefit teachers' ability to cope through self-awareness and understanding of their thoughts and emotions (National University, 2022). Jean-Baptiste et al. (2020) applied the transactional model to understand the appraisal of events in participants in a focus group. They found that half

of the group differed in emotion vs. problem-focused coping because of their appraisal of COVID 19 threat and challenges. Jarvis et al. (2021) used the model in content analysis to explore students' perceptions after returning to clinical practice during the pandemic. They found contextual influence on primary appraisal and reappraisal to facilitate positive perception with faculty support in the student's return to clinical practice after a pandemic. The transactional model in Schwanzer et al.'s (2021) study described the cognitive appraisal processes of stressors and the importance of preventive resources needed for an educational program. The authors found direct effects of stress prevention resources on perceived stress using the transactional model.

Contemporary research on educators

Several studies have applied this model in educational settings, and these studies consistently point out how educators cope and the strategies they use. For example, Agbaria and Mokh (2021) investigated Lazarus and Folkman's (1980) model by exploring the relationship between problem-focused coping, significant personality type, and social support. The authors found that emotion-focused coping negatively correlated with social support, and problem-focused coping positively correlated with social support. Afota et al. (2021) used Lazarus and Folkman's model (1984) to predict the appraisal of the psychological climate for working from home using "face time" will arise a secondary appraisal. The authors found that US employees are more likely than European workers to perceive the psychological climate for "face time" as more threatening. Poor work-from-home adjustments can result in a negative perceived workplace psychological climate.

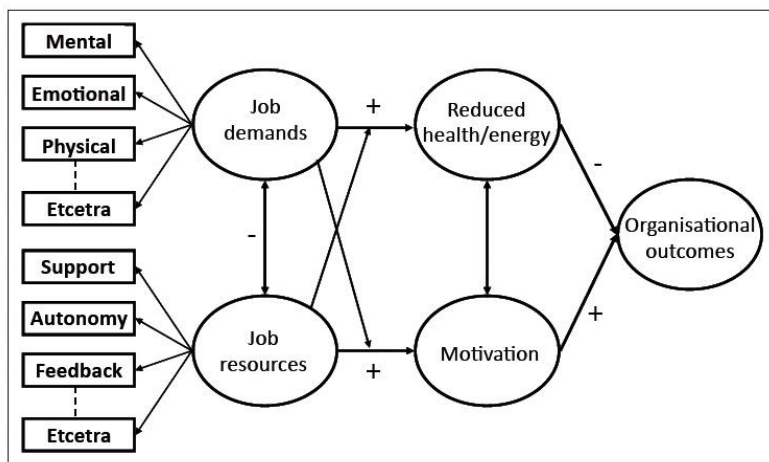
In sum, Lazarus and Folkman's emotional-focused coping models have been used in many studies to ground the analysis of coping and stress at work in various settings. These theories will be used as a theoretical lens to approach the research topic and content. Also, the theories are used to analyze and interpret the data in the research (Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research, 2018).

Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-RT)

Demerouti et al. (2001) JD-RT was proposed as a framework for organizations for social support of job demands and resources to prevent burnout (Bilotta et al., 2021; Szabo & Jagodics, 2019). JD-R theory is a combination of models derived from Herzberg's (1966) two factor theory, Karasek's (1979) job-control model, Hackman and Oldman's (1980) job characteristics model, and Siegrist's (1996) effort-reward imbalance model (Chen & Cooper, 2014). The central proposition of the JD-R theory is that employees from all workforce sectors can be classified as having working conditions in two categories: job demands and job resources (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). This is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Two Different Underlying Psychological Processes Play a Role in the Development of Job-Related Strain and Motivation



Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. (2011). The Job Demands–Resources model: Challenges for future research. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 37(2), 9 pages.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v37i2.974>

Job demands are aspects that require cognitive and emotional efforts to work and include time pressures, size of workload, the stress in the working environment, role ambiguity, and poor relationships. Job resources are aspects of the job at the macro and micro-level of an organization that acts as a function of work goal achievement, promote employee development, and include the physical, social or organizational factors to achieve goals and reduce stress. They have autonomy, strong work relationships, opportunities for advancement, coaching and mentoring, and learning and development. The model addresses the various physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

Demerouti et al.'s (2001) model is one of the leading job stress models for assessing work-health conditions (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The model analyzes and works towards improving employee well-being by identifying and addressing job demands and identifying and promoting organizational job resources (Mind Tools, 2022). The JD-R model is context neutral and is used in many domains, including education (Taris et al., 2017). Dorenkamp and Ruhle (2019) determined that the assumptions of stressors (work-to-life conflict and continuance commitment) can impact job satisfaction. Demerouti and Bakker (2011) stated that previous research assumptions of the model hold for self-reports and objective data needs to predict burnout and work engagement experiences.

Measurements

The construct of job demands and resources in Demerouti et al.'s theory is measured and tested with several scales. Jackson and Rothmann's (2005) questionnaire was developed as a valid and reliable instrument used to assess job demands and resources. This scale assesses physical and psychological health. The psychometric used to create the questionnaire are the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, and the Job Demands-Resources Scale. Maslach et al. (1996) Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey measures burnout. Schaufeli et al. (2002) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale measures participants' levels of engagement. Furthermore, these two assessments are presented in well-being and burnout research for educators.

Research on Demerouti et al. JD-R model

Current research on job demands suggested providing employees with supporting resources to overcome the challenges of job demands (Mind Tools, 2022). Hilger et al. (2021) used the JD-R model to investigate educators' work characteristics and well-being variables during the COVID-19 lockdown and found that both job demands, and job resources decreased overtime relating to a decrease in job satisfaction and strain.

da Silva Júnior et al. (2021) tested relationships between work demands, job outcome variables, and mediation of work engagement in educators, and their results indicated that student's misbehavior was negatively tied to work engagement. Higher work overload was negatively related to work engagement. This information confirmed the JD-R Theory that job demands lead to restraint in physical and psychological health in employee. In higher education, the JD-R was applied to examine the mediating effect of emotional regulation strategies with teachers' support, emotional job demands, and well-being (Han et al., 2020). This study found that emotional job demands and support for teachers had positive, significant effects on educator's well-being. Reappraisal was a more adaptive and effective strategy for educators to manage their emotions in the class setting.

Yin et al. (2018) provided a multilevel analysis of personal factors to assess teacher well-being in school settings. The model incorporated personal resources and demands to examine the relationships between teacher well-being and job-related factors. Yin's results revealed that when faced with high emotional job demands, teachers used

suppression strategies to cope. Also, the study's findings confirmed that there is a positive relationship between the personal resource, reappraisal, and teacher well-being.

Collie et al. (2018) investigated perceived autonomy-support and adaptability using the JD-R model to examine teachers' experiences during the pandemic, including autonomy-support, autonomy-thwarting leadership, and workplace buoyancy as a personal resource. The authors revealed that while working through the pandemic, autonomy-supportive leadership was associated with greater buoyancy, changes related to stress, and emotional exhaustion.

Both models of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Demerouti et al.'s (2001) was used to explore the experience of well-being and social support in educators who transitioned from in-person to online teaching. The theories are used to explore and understand the research's phenomena through clarifying epistemological dispositions, logics used in methodological choices, and as a framework for the research (Collins, 2018).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Teachers as A Unique Employee Population

The educational industry creates many challenges impacting teachers' work performance and job satisfaction. The high demands and changes in the work environment have led to work stress, which impedes employee well-being. Toropava et al. (2019) stated that teachers' job satisfaction merits concern as a dissatisfying work environment is a significant reason for burnout and turnover. As previously described,

occupational stress, social support, and employee well-being are some contemporary issues of job stress that impact educators as they handle work transitions.

The teaching profession is unique and encompasses various duties for students of multiple demographics, socioeconomic standing, and academic capability. Teachers plan lessons, assess students' learning abilities, and communicate with parents about interventions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). While the duties of secondary educators surpass the essential roles and responsibilities, educators are highly in demand as there is a national shortage. A few reasons for the shortages are turnover intentions, leave of absence and resignations. These challenges impact the next generation, as educating students are the means to developing employees for every work industry (TNTP, 2022).

Many researchers have documented the challenges of educators' psychological well-being, and the work stress demands that lead to burnout (Szabo & Jagodics, 2019; Roberts et al., 2019; Toropava et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2021). Many of the challenges during the pandemic showed the impact of educators' work stress challenges. A review of the literature revealed that there are many facets to the causes of educators' stress, the job demands that impact their well-being, educators' lived experiences/perceptions, and resources that can support the transitional demands (Bilotta et al., 2021; Cahill et al., 2020; Jeon et al., 2018; Landsbergis et al., 2020; Mari et al., 2021; Shelemy et al., 2019; and Tummers & Bakker, 2021).

Educators have now experienced stress on new levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many educators have transitioned to virtual instructions without support from unprepared districts. They are forced to learn new ways to perform their duties (Ferren,

2021), and at least 8% of teachers leave the profession each year (Loewus, 2021).

Mérida-López et al.'s (2020) research found a significant association between support from colleagues and supervisors and intentions to quit. The support provided in the workplace leads to positive job satisfaction, motivation, and a more productive work environment (Tuna & Aslan, 2018).

Studies on Educator's Stress

For, example Bălănescu's (2019) examined emotions, stress, and burnout among 132 secondary educators. and negative emotions among educators. The author's purpose of the study was to assess the association of emotions to teaching, levels of stress and burnout. The author's analysis was specific to content analysis to identify the stressor potentials. The results indicated low enjoyment in teaching for educators with less than five years of teaching experience and those with over 20 years of experience. The authors suggested that maintaining a good mood and physical well-being through proper life discipline in personal situations and the workplace to reduce stress.

Szabo and Jagodics (2019) studied the factors of burnout and its relationship with social support, job demands, and resources. The authors explained that burnout among educators is prevalent due to heavy workloads and that social support and perceived collective self-efficacy are important factors related to burnout. However, the findings reported low scores on burnout scales regarding social factors. They recommended regular communication of teachers' goals, roles, and values. Future research regarding the exploration of emotional intelligence and coping could indicate burnout prevention.

Landsbergis et al. (2020) examined the various work conditions, health, and

behaviors of secondary educators impacted by job stress. The authors purpose of this study is to understand how labor-management practices impact educators' stress and health. The research findings revealed that potential selection bias by gender, significantly higher rates of bullying and work stress, issues of respect by administrative officials, the statistically significant difference in age of AFT respondents and nonrespondents. The authors suggest further research on labor-management collaborative programs in education.

Russell et al. (2020) examined the processes associated with burnout and the relations between job characteristics, engagement, and turnover intentions in U.S. educators. The authors explained that burnout is at the forefront of global concerns for workplace stress in the teaching profession. The findings revealed several correlations, but job demands influenced all variables. The negative outcome in job demands leads to turnover intentions and a significant effect on work engagement. The authors stated the significant, direct, and positive effects between all variables. There were limitations, such as self-reflection bias.

Quantitative Studies in Educator's Well-being

The concept of well-being has been studied quantitatively in several studies. In most of these, well-being has been measured using various scales such as perceived stress scales and descriptive statistics, and linked to tenure and teaching experience, working conditions, and job satisfaction. Some of this research utilized the L& F's coping model and some use the J-D Resources model, and all were focused on understanding the correlates and predictors of educator's well-being.

For example, Jeon et al. (2018) explored the psychological well-being of early childhood educators based on the level of professional background, teaching efficacy, and perceived climate in their work environment. The results indicated negative associations between depressive symptoms, teacher's efficacy, and negative significant associations of well-being indicators to perceived working conditions, while demographics were not significantly associated. While the study was a weak cross-sectional design, these results were consistent with similar studies.

Mari et al. (2021) investigated the differences in psychological well-being among an Italian population of teachers, practitioners, managers, executives, and employees that transitioned to virtual work from home during the pandemic. The authors wanted to compare and determine the association of variables of coping strategies, perceived stress, time perspective, and evaluation of working from home to the psychological well-being of all professionals in the study. The results indicated that educators needed to learn new adaptation methods, new communication techniques and learn to work against challenges in using distance learning without prior preparation. In turn, educators were rated the highest among the other participants on the negative subscale of Perceived Self-Efficacy. Educators were perceived to have higher risk levels of stress. Also, they were noted to have a higher emotion-oriented coping strategy in supporting students' emotional burnout.

Some studies approached the examination of well-being in teachers by looking at its opposite. Roberts et al. (2019) and Yang et al (2021) examined the personal and workplace factors that impacted well-being and contributed to burnout and depression in

educators. Roberts et al. found that 86.3% of teachers experienced depressive symptoms. Yang et al indicated that receiving limited support during the transitioning negatively impacted online teaching self-efficacy and compassion fatigue and occupational well-being.

Intervention is necessary for minimizing the strain of job stress and emotional burnout. Zarate et al. (2019) meta-analyses of mindfulness training findings revealed positive effects across all domains. Teachers that used the training improved their overall mindfulness statistically more than those that did not participate in the intervention. However, Iancu et al. (2018) meta-analyses yielded an opposite review. The authors' study examined the effectiveness of interventions that reduce teacher burnout. The findings revealed that intervention results were generally small for emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment and effectiveness were almost null regarding depersonalization. Overall, continuous research is feasible to determine the appropriate interventions needed to improve employee work life.

Qualitative Studies of Teacher Well-Being

The concept of well-being has been studied qualitatively in a few studies. Well-being has been investigated using systematic reviews, methodological framework, and an individual's perceptions in the workplace. This information is linked to lived experiences, perceived readiness in work transitions, and themes of adaptability in various work conditions. Some of this research utilized the framework of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore the "lived experience" of individuals well-being in work settings.

Shelemy et al. (2019) investigated the lived experiences of secondary educators' mental health when supporting their students. The authors explored the emotional and cognitive processing of their experiences. A systematic approach and methodological framework of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) were conducted. The IPA captured an in-depth inquiry of the educators' lived experiences. The research findings were presented in five superordinate themes: perceived role of a teacher, nature of the relationship, barriers to helping the young person, amount of training and resource, and helplessness and satisfaction. The subordinate themes generated from the superordinated suggest that the experiences can design future mental health interventions for support.

Howard et al.'s (2021) study was aimed at teachers' perceptions of readiness relative to teaching transitions due to the pandemic. The authors explained that readiness is the perceptions of how they felt, preparedness for change, and how they perceived the organization's readiness. The research findings revealed varied responses of experiences in their transitions, however, the profiles of readiness and perceptions indicate a theoretically meaningful representation of teachers' perceptions. Future research is recommended to explore the interactions of readiness between individual and institutional readiness.

Symeonides and Childs' (2015) explored the personal experience of online learning through the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The authors explained that online learning used as a primary learning medium differs from a face-face learning environment that impacts coping and adaptability. This theory acknowledges learning through social interaction with others. The interpretive phenomenological

analysis (IPA) explored the themes and meaningful essence of the participants' experience in online learning. The findings identified four themes: social support, relationships, identity, and the impact of learning online. The research determined a need for methodologies to support psychological and emotional processes.

Systematic Review Studies in Job Resources

Job resources has been studied extensively in the literature, and this review includes five contemporary review articles that examined the causes of stressors that impeded employee's well-being. Also, the articles provide practical recommendations and interventions of job resources to reduce the strain of work stress in employees. The systematic reviews are useful as they help with giving an understanding to the research. Furthermore, systematic reviews establish a contribution to scholarly conversation through research credibility (Clark, 2016).

Bilotta et al. (2021) research focused on the use of the JD-R model for work transitions to telecommuting and employee well-being during the pandemic. The authors explained how the pandemic caused stressors in employees due to forced transitions to telework. For many employees, work-life balance was interrupted. The author's purpose of this study was to provide practical recommendations to maintain employee well-being and performance. Job demands and resources are studied to call attention to administration roles. Job resources focus on the physical, social, and psychological facets of an employee's work achievement and goals. Job demands focus on the physical, social, or organizational work characteristics.

The research findings are the practical recommendations given for: job resources (social support, autonomy, and feedback) and job demands (cognitive demands, emotional demands, and physical demands). Each component of the model and lists of suggestions increase motivation and reduce strain for optimal performance.

Cahill et al. (2020) examined approaches to support student and educator well-being during a crisis. The authors demonstrated how exposure to emergencies and school support can impact socio-emotional processes in learning. The systematic review was an investigative examination of the impacts of emergencies on children, contributions to emergency response, and trauma-informed approaches. Also, short-term interventions such as socio-emotional learning programs (SEL) were recommended to support post-traumatic situations. Furthermore, to help support teachers' learning and their well-being, professional development and specialized psychological services are necessary. Implications resulting from emergencies are the risk of family violence, poverty, mental health problems. A few recommendations suggested are

- the research of school post-emergency preparedness,
- reestablishing work routines, and
- connecting with families to ensure they are supported during the challenges.

Fernández-Lasarte et al. (2020) study examined a theoretical model used to test social support variables, school adjustment, and school engagement. The authors explained the high risk of school maladjustment and other failures due to social support. The author's purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of perceived social support on school adjustment variables of school engagement and academic performance. The

findings demonstrated that academic performance mediates social support and school engagement, with the most substantial effect being teacher support. Teacher support is essential for students' school adjustment through emotional and academic performance. Therefore, perceived social support is a necessity in the actions of school engagement and academic performance. The study's limitations were the need for longitudinal experiments that could determine causal relations between variables of perceived social support and school adjustment. Future studies should implement objective measures of self-supporting to strengthen the validity of the results.

Landsbergis et al. (2017) examined k-12 organizational interventions such as mentor programs that may reduce occupational stress in educators. The authors reviewed empirical studies that found evidence of mentor programs such as Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) that revealed increased support for educators and showed limited evidence in decreased stress in educators. A systematic review was conducted on empirical research articles dating from the 1990s- to 2015 and analyzed data from 743 research participants in a 2016 Oregon survey. The research findings indicated that intervention/support promotes educators' skill development, decision-making authority, and job security.

Pogore et al. (2019) analyzed the relationships between two job stressors (concern for students and work overload) and four types of coping strategies: (two problem-focused and two emotion-focused), emotional exhaustion as the core of burnout, and three autonomy-supportive/suppressive behaviors (choice, relevance, and control) in secondary educators. The research findings showed that work overload was a negative

stressor, the relationships between constructs (both job stressors and coping strategies) were positively correlated. Limitations of the study were the cultural factors, when compared with other countries, variance bias due to self-reported data collection, nonuse of longitudinal designs that are more effective for casual relationships, and limited assessment of relevant variables. Future research was suggested to assess other teacher stressors, coping strategies, longitudinal designs for causal relationships, and components of burnout and autonomy.

Tummers and Bakker (2021) analyzed the relationship between the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory and leadership. The authors explained that leadership impacts employees by influencing job demands-resources, well-being, and crafting and self-undermining. The study was a systematic review of 139 articles. The study's surveys, interviews, questionnaires, cross-sectional methods, and longitudinal designs were examined. Topics of leadership concepts, styles, and connections to the J-D R Theory were reviewed based on RQs. The findings suggest that employees are affected by leadership in ways of direct impact on job and personal resources and demands.

Leadership can moderate the connection between strain and influence follower crafting and self-undermining behavior. Future research suggests that researchers used methods other than cross-sectional research to determine causal inference. Also, there are future research suggestions regarding theory development, the use of theories to determine leadership/ JD-R theory and review the negative aspects of leadership.

Summary and Conclusions

The central themes of this literature review are the various research presented to explain how educators' well-being is impacted by organizational changes. Some variables demonstrated such as school leadership, support, and coping show how educators perceive well-being during the transitions. This study fills the gap in educators' experience and perspectives to understand how this impacts them from an individualistic standpoint. In the past few years, empirical research studies explored how educators' work-related stress could lead to teacher burnout (Bălănescu, 2019; Szabo & Jagodics, 2019; Pogere et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2020; and Yang, 2021).

This type of research is necessary for guiding the present qualitative study to understand the lived experiences of educators during challenges and changes in their work environment (Howard et al., 2021; Shelemy et al., 2019; Symeonides & Childs, 2015). This qualitative study seeks to contribute to the literature by providing a deeper understanding of work-related stress through the lens of educators' perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, this information is necessary for assisting organizations with information to make structural changes to protect educators' well-being.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of well-being and social support in secondary educators that transitioned from in-person to online teaching. I explored how the social support experiences of educators' may have contributed to their psychological well-being during transition periods from face-to-face to online teaching and back again. It is hoped that the results of this study contribute to a better understanding of educators' mental health during transitional periods in the work setting. This chapter covers the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness and participant ethics.

Research Design and Rationale

Rationale for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research design was chosen for this study. The approach was used to describe secondary educator's lived experience of the meaning of work stress and social support during transitioning periods of in-person to online teaching. According to Smith and Osborn (2015), IPA research studies how people make sense of their experiences, that is, how they interpret the people and events, actions, and reactions to a specific phenomenon of interest. Three characteristics are relevant to the conduct of an IPA study. First, IPA is closely aligned with the phenomenology philosophy, which the authors stated aims at identifying the uniqueness in experiences. My study used IPA as a guide to understand people's experiences and talk about the events that happened to them during transitional work changes.

Second, what is unique about IPA is that it employs a double hermeneutic analytic process, which is described as a dual interpretation because the participants express the meaning of their world. At the same time, the researcher decodes the meaning to make sense. This information is relevant as it helped to make sense of the participant's perspective regarding the experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This information is relevant to my study as it was used as a guide to decode the meaning and interpretation of an individual's experiences.

Third, IPA starts at the individual case level, which means each participant's data is thoroughly analyzed first, then the second, and perhaps third or fourth, before leaping to common themes across cases. This process was detailed in the data analysis section (Smith et al., 2009), and helped me explore each participant's lived experience thoroughly. Although other approaches were considered, IPA was the best fit for this study. The case study was not selected as the study's context is not focused on one school and is not boundary specific. The ground theory approach was not considered, as the job experience theories are already well-developed, and this study did not seek to create new theories (Patton, 2002).

Research Questions

As described above, the research questions are designed to understand the lived experience that is unique to each participant in a particular context (Smith & Fieldsend, 2021). The research questions for this study were:

RQ 1: What is the lived experience of well-being for secondary educators that transitioned between in-person and online teaching?

RQ 2: How do secondary educators that transitioned between in-person and online teaching describe the contribution of social support in the transitions?

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in IPA is to understand the meaning of lived experiences described by the participants and to interpret the meaning through the context of the research question. Smith and Fieldsend (2021) stated that the researchers must formulate research questions with phenomenological thinking to make sense of the meanings significant to their participant's experiences. The researchers use purposive homogenous sampling to investigate the similarities and differences in participants' meanings of experience and context. IPA researchers collect data using semi-structured interviews and perform analyses to reflect participants' meaning and experience.

As a novice qualitative researcher, I first reflected on my own experiences and biases that I bring to the conduct of this study. I worked in secondary education as an educational consultant that provided services to students in a traditional academic environment. I was a part of the team that had to transition to online work during the pandemic. I was aware of the challenges made to well-being and social support issues that were brought forth to educators during the demand of transitioning to working from home. As an observer in the role of research, I was open-minded, non-judgmental, and strive to understand each unique experience of the participants. I bracketed my perceptions from my own experiences, remained neutral, and open-minded about the participant's experiences.

Being the only researcher in this study, I oversaw recruiting and selection of participants to interview. For recruitment, I only used referrals from participants and Walden's Participant Pool as an alternate recruitment tool, which supported any conflict of interest or potential biases.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The criteria for inclusion for the target group for this study are educators who have worked in secondary public schools for at least three years during the COVID transitional periods of in-person to working from home during the pandemic. I used the purposeful sampling strategies of criterion sampling and snowball sampling. Criterion sampling was carried out by posting invitations (Appendix A) on LinkedIn, social media platforms, Walden's Participant Pool, and research professional networks. Also, I used snowball sampling (Patton, 2015), to ask participants to share the invitation to relevant persons in their personal network.

Sample Size and Saturation

According to Vasileio et al. (2018), the sample size in qualitative research tends to be small and purposive sampling provides richly textured information suitable to the phenomenon being researched. Dworkin (2012) stated that many articles, books, and other research suggest 5 to 50 participants as adequate for qualitative research. Smith (2011) stated that IPAs are typically small sample sizes and sufficient to be understood. Hennink and Kaiser's (2022) systematic review study identified over 23 articles with empirical data that reached saturation with a small range of interviews (9-17 participants)

or focus groups of 4-8 participants. I conducted a sample size of 7 participants to reach saturation, which is most beneficial to the research data analysis.

The recruitment process included a formal invitational letter (Appendix A). I provided the invitation to the distribution channels described above: LinkedIn, social media platforms, Walden's Participant Pool, and research professional networks. Interested people contacted me by phone or email. After describing the study and the criterion for inclusion, interested contacts were sent the Informed Consent form by email, and a time for the interview was scheduled. At the end of the interview, I asked participants to distribute the invitation to colleagues to continue the recruitment process.

Instrumentation

The most common method of collecting data through IPA is a semi-structured, one-on-one interview (Smith & Osburn, 2015). This allows the researcher to engage in dialogue in real-time, gain rapport with the participants, and build trust (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). I applied the IPA method to decode the meanings of lived participants' experiences of social support and well-being in the educational setting.

For the interview, an interview guide (Appendix B) was created to determine how participants perceived their lived experiences and the meanings of social support and well-being. The interview guide was an open-ended, written response questions designed to answer the research questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Data was collected from LinkedIn, social media platforms, Walden's Participant Pool, and research professional networks. I asked the administrators of each platform to post and/or distribute my invitations to potential participants (Appendix A). Participants were invited to contact me via telephone or email to start the process. I reviewed the criteria for inclusion with each participant. The Informed Consent form was sent by email after I reviewed the criteria for inclusion. Once I received the consent, I set up the time and date for the telephone interview and requested that the participant find a private, quiet location for the interview.

I conducted the interview by phone from my private home office and reminded the participants to be in a location that is quiet and private. Each interview lasted 45-60 minutes in one setting, was audio recorded, and field notes were taken. The interview was semi-structured, with the data being collected solely by one researcher (myself) via telephone. A transcript summary was created for data reduction and captured the essence of the interview. The interview process allowed for member checks and reiteration of questions such as asking, "Let's make sure I understand what you are saying and is this what you want to share..." to ensure trustworthiness. The protocols were in place for data protection and to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. At the end of the interview each participant was asked to share the invitation with friends within their personal network who might meet the criteria for inclusion.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan for the research was constructed based on Smith's IPA methods (Smith et al., 2009, 2011, Smith & Osburn, 2015; Smith & Fieldsend, 2021).

- Began by reviewing details of one interview transcript at a time before moving forward with the others.
- Read and reread the transcript for a free textual analysis. This part of the analysis looked for themes in the context. Transcripts were read and the left-hand margin was used for annotation. Notes on language used, similarities, differences, contradictions and more were added.
- Emergent themes were then extracted and noted in the right-hand margin. This was the second data analysis phase. Themes were connected in chronological order and clustered.
- Produced a table of rich evidence themes, with identifiers and page numbers.
- The last part of the analysis was to continue the analysis process with the other interviews one-by-one. Started from the beginning of each new interview and determined the repeated patterns and acknowledged emerging new issues in each one.
- Constructed a final table of superordinate themes and completed the final write up and statement that outlined the meanings of the participants' experiences (Smith & Osburn, 2015).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that trustworthiness is a component of four general criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Mason (2012) stated that researchers should demonstrate trustworthiness through carefulness, honesty, and data generation and analysis accuracy. The researcher should attempt to satisfy the participant and self by not inventing or misinterpreting data.

Credibility

Credibility is the congruency in the study's findings (Stahl & King, 2020). Credibility in qualitative research depends on elements of technique, methods, the credibility of the researcher, and the philosophical belief in the value of the qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2009). The research study employed credibility strategies through purposive sampling, member checks, and investigator credibility. Purposive criterion sampling and snowball sampling were used during the selection process. Purposive sampling was to get a representative sample and snowball sampling was used to obtain referrals from participants that were involved in the study. Also, performing member checks related to the accuracy of data in the study. Participants performed member checks throughout the summary of the data collection dialogues for the qualitative research study. During this process, the participants stated whether their words align with the information they intended to provide (Shenton, 2004). Investigator credibility was essential as (I), the researcher, was the instrument in qualitative inquiry. My training, perspectives, and experience were essential to the study as personal and professional

information could have affected the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the user's findings (Patton, 1999).

Transferability. Transferability is concerned with how one study's results can be applied to other situations or populations in other studies (Shenton, 2004). The strategy used for transferability was "thick description." Thick description allowed for readers to transport to settings, add validity to findings and give discussions to shared experiences (Creswell, 2014). Taking field notes during the interview helped to establish transferability (Patton, 2002). My qualitative inquiry established transferability by providing evidence that could be applicable to generalize evidence of shared experiences to other contexts, situations, and populations (Creswell 2014.)

Dependability. Dependability in qualitative research is the aspect of consistency (Creswell, 2014). The strategy used in dependability is an audit trail. An audit trail is record keeping. I kept records of my qualitative inquiry throughout the study, from the project's development to the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The following was implemented appropriately: strategic research design, operational detail of data gathering, and reflective appraisal of the study to determine consistency in a study (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability. Confirmability is the establishment of data-driven processes. Securing the inter-subjectivity allows the interpretation of results not to be based on the researcher's particular viewpoints or preferences—confirmability concerns the aspect of neutrality (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The strategy used was an audit trail. An audit trail traced the research from start to finish using data-orientated or theoretical approaches (Shenton, 2004). My processes conformed with in-depth methodical approaches such as

organizing and storing data by note-taking, interview processes, audio recordings, transcriptions interpretation, and summarization of data reports. Also, providing the limitations in the studies met confirmability as it allowed for recognizing shortcomings and potential effects (Shenton, 2004).

Ethical Procedures

This research adhered to Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. The IRB's ethical standards complied with U.S. federal regulations (Walden University, 2022). There were four steps in the research ethics approval process:

1. 1). Completed the Research Ethics Approval Form A.
2. 2). Provided documents that IRB requested and minimized the challenges of ethical issues in the study.
3. 3). Met with IRB and Chair to confirm updates and changes during URR and proposal defense phase.
4. 4). The IRB official review started; changes were completed and finalized. Then, I was able to commence recruitment and data collection processes (Walden University, 2022).

The treatment of human participants in the study was fair, confidential, and abided by all professional and ethical standards. Participants received informed consent documents before commencing to participate. The phenomenological study consisted of informed consent documents that explained the study's purpose, confidentiality and anonymity agreements, risks involved, and the participant's rights to the withdrawal of the study.

Also, the recruitment plan for the research participants was given to the IRB for approval. The recruitment plans provided a detailed description of the study, protected the participant's privacy, explained the participant's consent, and adhered to all ethical considerations to move forward with implementation.

The qualitative data was confidential, and techniques was used to remove all identifying details (name, geographic references) to protect participants' privacy. I stored the linked list of codes and identifiers separate from coded data. The hard copy of research data was secured in a lockbox, and the electronic copy was stored on an online backup cloud service such as Google Drive. The electronic documents have encrypted passwords. The stored data will be on record for a minimum of 5 years and disposed of adequately by shredding printed documents and permanently deleting electronic files.

Summary

An IPA study was conducted to explore the experiences of secondary educators' lived experience of the meaning of work stress and social support during transitioning periods of in-person- to online teaching. IPA was used to understand educators' mental health during transitional work. The purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants for semi-structured, and one-on-one interviews. Also, the criterion sampling and snowballing sampling was used to select specific participants for the study. The overall idea of the study was to capture the essence of the life experiences through interpretations and themes, all while practicing ethical procedures that ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collection process.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The study's purpose is to understand the experience and meaning of seven secondary educators' well-being and social support when transitioning to work from home during the pandemic. The research questions that guided the study are as follows:

- What is the lived experience of well-being for secondary educators who transitioned between in-person and online teaching?
- How do secondary educators who transitioned between in-person and online teaching describe the contribution of social support in the transitions?

IPA was used to explore and make sense of each participant's well-being and social support experiences in the workplace during the transitions. In this chapter, I cover the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and results.

Setting

As described in Chapter 3, I conducted interviews with 7 participants via telephone during a scheduled time most convenient for the participants. No changes or conditions potentially influenced the participants or their experiences. To the best I could surmise, interviews were conducted in a setting where participants had privacy and could talk freely.

Demographics

The six female and one male participant worked in education, ranging from 5-28 years. P1 has worked in education for five years. He holds a bachelor's degree in business and is passionate about impacting people's lives. His family has played a role in his joining education. His family legacy in education is what inspired him to teach.

P2 has been teaching for 18 years. She chose a nontraditional route (alternative pathways) as training to teach. She is a career and technical education teacher with a professional license in another industry. She feels she has been called to teach as a young child and wants to correct mistakes and teach job skills to the youth. She does not come from a family legacy but wants to give back through her love for humanity and community.

P3 has been teaching for seven years. Her first degree was not in education, but she later received a master's in elementary k-5th grade education. She stated initially that she never wanted to be a teacher but was recognized and encouraged to do so by her instructors when she was enrolled in undergraduate school. She does not have a family legacy of educators. She was inspired to teach secondary math, specifically 5th graders, as this is the foundation for what is to come with middle and high school.

P4 has been in education for 29 years. She has a bachelor's in another industry and received a master's degree in elementary education when changing fields to teach. P4 has several other degrees she obtained during her tenure. She is not a legacy teacher but entered education through a career change and started as a substitute teacher. P4 is a reading specialist, enjoys working with kids, and admires performance arts. She loves to learn and is passionate about being creative in her lessons.

P5 has been employed in the education sector for 23 years. She started in leadership roles for corporate organizations and later changed to teach secondary (middle to high school) education. She has a bachelor's degree in education and six other credentials (master's to Ph.D.). She is not a legacy, but she was interested in working with

students with learning curves. She loves to learn about how and why others learn and is a self-proclaimed problem “finder and solver”.

P6 is a legacy educator and has been in education for 25 years. Her parents are educators and significantly influenced her decision to teach. Initially, she started as a STEM major and joined education through a lateral program to receive teaching certification. She has a master's degree in education and is working on a Ph.D. in a closely related field. She enjoys teaching science to high school nontraditional students who have gaps and barriers to receiving an education.

P7 is a secondary educator with six years of experience. She has a bachelor's degree in education and was recruited by a family member to work in education. She enjoys teaching English, math, and first aid to 10th-grade students. P7 is inspired by the role models and support in the school system. She thoroughly enjoys her career and the fulfilling aspect of seeing children excel.

Data Collection

Purposeful criterion and snowball sampling were used to collect data for the seven secondary education participants. The process began in March 2023 once Walden University's IRB approved the study. The participant's semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone using an audio recording. One participant was recruited via snowball sampling, two via Walden University's Participants Pool, and four via LinkedIn/social media accounts. Data collection was conducted in March 2023 and concluded in July 2023.

I conducted each interview in my home office in a quiet and private setting. The participants ensured they were in the same space to follow through with the discussion. All participants were confirmed as secondary educators and have been employed in the field for over three years. The participants experienced challenges in work transitions due to the pandemic and discussed their experiences of well-being and social support during the transition process.

All interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 60 minutes, uninterrupted. All discussions were audio recorded and transcribed using the RecMyCalls application. Each interview ended with me asking if they had any further questions or concerns. I thanked each participant for contributing to my study, and immediately after that, I provided a \$20 e-gift card for each participant. There were no unusual circumstances or concerns during the interview process.

Each interviewee was given a transcript summary for voluntary review of the interview. They were asked to check for accuracy and provide any feedback if needed. All participants reviewed and provided validation of their answers. The transcript summary process allowed for member checks and clarity of questions to enhance trustworthiness. I stored all information and password-protected it to safeguard the confidentiality of each participant. As required per Walden University's IRB policies, all data will be kept on file for five years and then properly destroyed. There were no variations of data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

The transcripts were coded by hand using Excel. The participants were given an assigned number, and the identifiers were removed. For data analysis, I used Smith et al.'s (2009) IPA to capture the essence of lived experiences in the participants. Rather than using NVivo, as proposed in Chapter 3. I used MS Word and MS Excel to organize the data by participant and questions. The analysis process was performed as described in the data plan in Chapter 3, with a few added changes.

I started by listening to the transcript and reading and re-reading the first interview. The left-hand margin was used for notating annotations. Then, I began to identify potential themes at the level of the individual participant experience and extracted them in the right-hand margin with participant identifiers. This was the process for the first data analysis and second data phase for all seven interviews.

Table 1 summarizes the meaning of each participant's experience based on the potential themes. "Essence" refers to the emotional expression of their day-to-day experience filled with frustration, changing conditions, and other experiences. The "theme" is my attempt to consolidate extended narratives into shorter phrases. The "emotion" was an effort to locate participants' primary affective responses to changing and challenging circumstances using an affective coding method.

Table 1*Participants' Experiential Statements Organized by Essence, Concept and Emotion*

Participant	Essential Meaning with Representative Quotes	Potential Theme	Emotion
1	<i>Positive learning experience yet challenging.</i> “I think it was a positive experience because in life you have to keep on learning. And I, with the fact that I, I was being taught how to make use of zoom, I think it was also a learning experience for me also. And I took it as a very positive experience personally”.	Positive experience that allowed for learning opportunities.	optimism
2	<i>Frustration and disappointment.</i> “We're in rural areas that we only have one internet. You know, there's a conglomerate, we don't have one internet provider. So therefore, when the students can't get online, what do you do? And those were the frustrations”	Frustrations from accessibility issues; no training; and other issues in education.	Frustration, anxiety, disappointment
3	<i>Overwhelmed and feeling very responsible.</i> “then when you go home and you're screaming your head off and no one behind this, this computer you're literally teaching yourself and sometimes the parents interject because they think that's OK. So it, it was just more stressful overall.”	Overall bad experience for teaching and physical aspects of being home.	Overexertion
4	<i>Resilient and adaptable.</i> “OK. I actually, I actually enjoyed it. Actually, I know some teachers hated it, but I actually enjoyed it. Um because uh being a reading specialist, I wasn't uh responsible for a classroom. So may, you know, have felt different for teachers who are responsible for a classroom and had to teach a variety of subjects.”	Felt better working from home. Was able to pull away from the computer and actually take a break. Unable to do this face to face.	Optimism, contentment

Participant	Essential Meaning with Representative Quotes	Potential Theme	Emotion
5	<i>Challenging but conformed to changes.</i> “Uh Well, I mean, it was frustrating.” “Yeah. Able to figure out new ways to do things. Um You know, just to figure out how can I make this work so that these students will be successful”.	No proper training during transition but adapted to the challenges.	Frustration and Adaptation
6	<i>Agile and resilient.</i> “And so, and that was devastating because I had been at that school in Arizona for 3.5 years. Um, and so I was, I was, I didn't know what to do, you know, I just did not know what was going on. And so it kind of forced me to go and look for online teaching positions uh for secondary”.	Veteran educator was forced to leave school and find another position due to being immunocompromised. Now prefers to work from home.	Devastation; resilience; agile.
7	<i>Receptivity to Change</i> “I think everything is manageable. We only need to be receptive of changes status and you, you learn on the job most of these things. And I feel like every day is a learning day for me”.	Structured and managed to overcome the challenges.	Desire for Mastery, optimism

Three of the seven participants described positive emotions (optimism, resilience) regarding challenges and changes from transitioning from face-to-face to working from home during the pandemic. The other four participants described negative feelings, including devastation, frustration, overexertion, and anxiety. Thus, the shared experience of transitions between face-to-face and online learning was not unidimensional but rather variable, with some positive and some negative.

Then, as shown in Table 2, I re-immersed myself in the data using Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological stress and coping theory and Demerouti et al.'s (2001) framework, mainly looking for the essential meanings of "well-being" and "social support."

Table 2

Participant Well-Being Types

P	Well-Being	Quote	Social Support	Quote
1	Adapted	"I took care of myself. I started to adapt to the life change expected the fact that I, I'm now working from home".	Maintained connections through talking with colleagues	"I still maintain relationship with my colleagues and we kept um talking, we kept relating about uh information, we kept updating ourselves and knowing how each and every one of us we are coping".
2	Stressed	"And I can say that in all honesty because it was during the pandemic that my blood pressure was very high and I knew it was some stress".	Maintained connections through phone and Zoom calls	"So we talk often over the phone. So we talked a lot over the phone [and Zoom calls]".
3	Scared	"Wasn't taking care of myself due to being scared of catching COVID from the emergency room or even the doctor. Masks weren't available and we were often left unprotected. Also, since we couldn't go anywhere, I would just sit and not move around.".	Engrossed/Engaged in support with colleagues	"I'm well connected with my peers because I'm involved in a lot task within the building".

Table 2, con't.

P	Well-Being	Quote	Social Support	Quote
4	Content	"I actually felt like I was better for me, I guess because I'm not a classroom teacher. I actually feel like I was better able to take care of myself during that time".	Received support via Zoom.	"So I was starting a new school. So I really didn't know a lot of my colleagues. Uh OK, I met them via zoom".
5	Boredom	"Well, I'm a very, like, I like interactions. So, yeah, I did, I, I had stress of just being so bored. So, yeah, it was stressful".	Avoidance	"So I was just worried that, you know, some people, they lost their parents, they lost family members. Um, there were lots of sick people, you know, there was so much, um, you know, there were so many, we have a, at my school we have a couple of people who are conspiracy theorist. They express conspiracies by everything. I don't know how to deal with that personally. I just stay away now because it's ridiculous".
6	Devastated	"Fell apart initially and did not know how to take care of myself".	Well connected, spoke with colleagues everyday.	"my school is great because they make sure that we log on and we talk to each other every day".

Table 2, con't.

P	Well-Being	Quote	Social Support	Quote
7	Stressed	"I think when I would have a lot of stress working from home"	Had a support system in place for encouragement and motivation.	I think when I would have a lot of stress working from home, I would like call [a colleague]. [It was good to know that] you are not the [alone], the only one facing these challenges. Somehow it motivates you and you also encourage each other.

This approach revealed that the experience of “well-being” also revolves around positive and negative experiences. For four participants, well-being was experienced as “opposite” – high blood pressure, declines in self-care, and boredom. For the three others, well-being was expressed as an adaptation to working at home, focusing on self-care, and receptivity to change. For social support, there was more shared meaning across participants. The predominant concepts were “maintaining connections” and “support.” Only one participant described their social experience as avoidant because of worry of illness, loss, and the propagation of conspiracy theories. I moved from case-based analysis to cross-case thematic analysis, where I began to identify the supraordinate themes across participants and the distinctions within those themes. I listened for recurring words throughout the data and reviewed the essential meanings from participants. This process again revealed the two supraordinate themes of Well-Being and

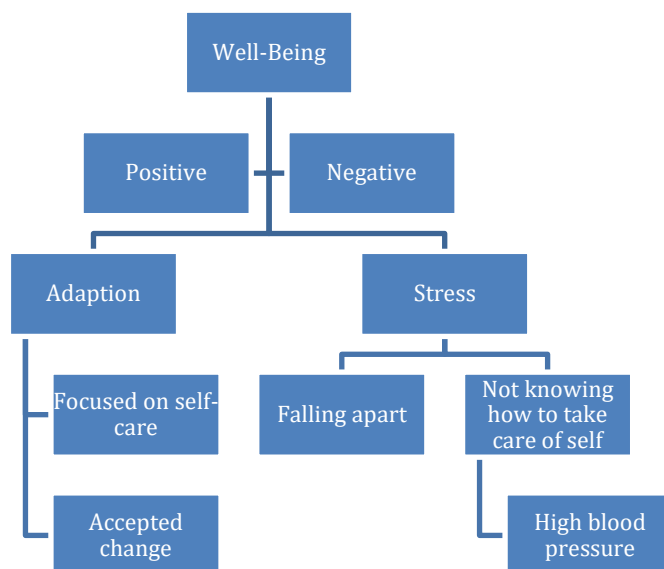
Social Support. In addition, each theme was represented by the sub-themes of Positive and Negative. These are illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Well-Being as the Superordinate Theme

Well-Being is the other thematic exploration that reflects participant's feedback on their well-being in the workplace. Figure 2 unveils the positive and negative facets contributing to participants' overall sense of well-being in the workplace during the pandemic transitions. Five of the seven participants demonstrated negative stressors, and two showed positive experiences by adapting and accepting change.

Figure 3

Well-Being as the Superordinate Theme



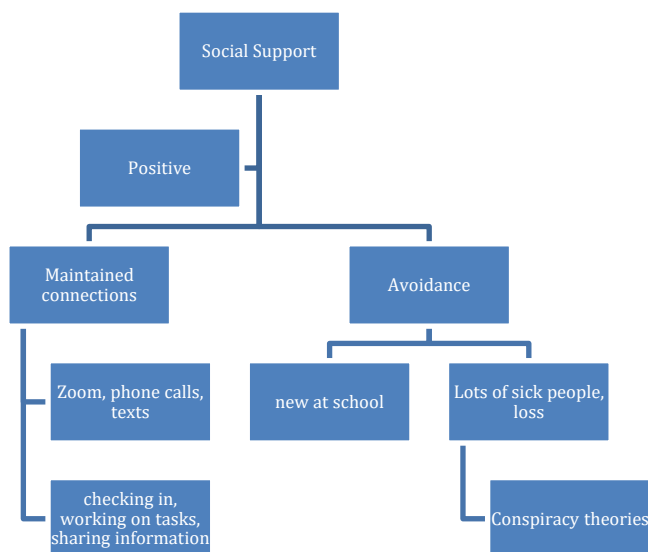
Social Support as the Superordinate Theme

Social Support is one of the thematic explorations reflecting participants' diverse perspectives on support in the workplace. Figure 1 shows a spectrum of positive and

negative experiences in how participants coped in the workplace during the pandemic transitions. Six participants demonstrated positive social support; only one showed a negative experience by avoiding peer contact and managing alone.

Figure 4

Social Support as a Subordinate Theme



Discrepancies in Meanings or Cases

The data consistently reflected each participant's shared positive and negative feedback meanings. The only discrepancies noted are the outliers presented in the category with social support. P5 was the only participant who attempted to refrain from receiving social support.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

As discussed in Chapter 3, credibility was used as one of the four general criteria to establish trustworthiness. I ensured that trustworthiness was demonstrated by carefully

considering not inventing or misinterpreting what information the participants disclosed during their interview (Mason, 2012). I employed credibility strategies by performing purposive criterion sampling and snowball sampling to specify the criteria needed for the selection process. Also, I performed member checks with all participants by reviewing their interview results for authenticity and appropriate interpretation of the information provided (Shenton, 2004). All 7 participants validated the data's accuracy. My training and expertise as an educational consultant were beneficial in not implying my own biases for the sake of not affecting data collection, analysis, and participant findings (Patton, 1999).

Transferability

The qualitative inquiry established transferability by understanding the well-being and social support of secondary educators transitioning from in-person to online teaching during the pandemic. The participant's experience in work stress, well-being, and social support could be applied to other contexts, situations, and populations. Thick descriptions were used to discuss shared experiences and add to the validity of participants' findings (Creswell, 2014). I attempted transferability by recording a detailed description of the IPA data collection and analysis process. Also, field notes were taken to record the conceptual interpretation of participants' quotes (Patton, 2002).

Dependability

All participants were given the same questions in subsequential order and validated by member checking to ensure consistency. An interview guide was used for structure and consistency in the interview process. I kept a record and appropriately

stored my qualitative inquiry (invitations, consent forms, notes, transcripts, etc.). Also, I implemented a strategic research design, detailed data collection process, and reflective appraisal to determine consistency throughout the study (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Confirmability was implemented by keeping an audit trail that traced the research from start to finish (Shenton, 2004). Note-taking, interviewing, audio recordings, transcriptions interpretation, and data summary reports were all performed to ensure an audit trail of the data processes. All participants received identifiers to protect their identities. Audio recordings were used to increase the quality of data collected from the phone interviews. MS Excel was used for data analysis and visualization. Lastly, a summarization of data reports was used to outline the theoretical framework for the research study.

Results

This study aimed to explore well-being and social support in secondary educators who transitioned from in-person to online teaching. The research questions are:

- What is the lived experience of well-being for secondary educators who transitioned between in-person and online teaching?
- How do secondary educators who transitioned between in-person and online teaching describe the contribution of social support in the transitions?

The results are presented in alignment with the research questions which perfectly align with the major themes of the study.

Lived Experience of Well-Being

The superordinate theme, well-being, was represented by subthemes of positive and negative experiences. For example, a few participants showed positive experiences of adaptation, and a couple of others showed a negative experience of stress when asked about self-care practices during the transition. P2, P3, P5, P6, and P7 discussed how stress was a factor in their well-being, and P1 and P4 explained their ability to be content and adapt to change. For example, P1 stated, "I took care of myself. I started to adapt to the life change expected that I, now working from home". In other words, P7 stated, "I think when I would have much stress working from home."

A lack of training and guidance was noted during the transition process of transitioning to work from home during the pandemic. All participants demonstrated "positive or negative" responses regarding other potential themes. For example, P1 mentioned that the experience "allowed for learning opportunities." P2 stated experiences of "frustrations from accessibility issues; no training; and other issues in education." P4 noted that they "felt better working from home. Was able to pull away from the computer and take a break; unable to do this face to face. P3 stated that they "had an overall bad experience for teaching and the physical aspects of being home." P5 stated, "No proper training during the transition but adapted to the challenges." P6 is a veteran educator who "was forced to leave school and find another position due to being immunocompromised. Now prefer to work from home". P7 felt that the transitions were "structured and managed to overcome the challenges."

Lived Experience of Social Support

The superordinate theme, social support, was represented by subthemes of positive and negative experiences. Six of the seven participants explained that they had received social support through connections with colleagues utilizing Zoom, phone calls, and other forms of communication. Only one participant avoided contact with peers and managed alone. For example, P1 stated positive support by the following “I still maintained relationships with my colleagues, and we kept talking, we kept relating about information, we kept updating ourselves and knowing how each and every one of us are coping. P2 discussed how well they have connected through social support: “So we talk often over the phone [and Zoom calls].” P3, P4, P6, and P7 also had positive experiences. P7 stated she kept connected for social support through “messages, just texting”. P3 mentioned:

... before the pandemic, you just took it for granted: I'm gonna see this person, I'm gonna go to her room after school and socialize, or we're gonna go for happy hour or whatever. So, text message, you always have your phone. That was one way we connected another way. [We] used to do like the, the fake Happy Hour online and then we have our, you know, our drinks and just talk about things, you know, just on Google or we would do and just talk about things or help each other out.

P4 stated a similar experience:

Prior to the pandemic, we would do things like, uh, you know, uh, go to the movies on a Friday afternoon, um, maybe need for, you know, dinner or uh, you

know, leaving school, having early dinner, uh things like that. Um And during the pandemic, like I said, I was in a new situation, I didn't really know a lot of the teachers. [Had] a virtual Christmas party, just all got on Zoom, we had our own snacks, play games, [played Christmas music. [It was fun and nice].

P5 had a different reaction regarding social support. They discussed how they did not want to interact as much due to various factors:

So I was just worried that, you know, some people, they lost their parents, they lost family members. Um, there were lots of sick people, you know, there was so much, um, you know, there were so many, we have a, at my school, we have a couple of people who are conspiracy theorists. They express conspiracies by everything. I do not know how to deal with that personally. I stay away now because it is ridiculous.

P6 explained the benefits of social support in her organization and stated:

I think that's where working on the team was very beneficial. Because truly, again, like we meet every day and we see each other, our team members, we see each other every day. And so we, we check in with each other a lot throughout the week[,] we're messaging each other all day, every day, about a student or something. And so we're constantly in contact with each other.

Summary

This study consisted of seven secondary educators: one male and six female who unprecedently transitioned from working face to face to working from home during the pandemic. Each participant was recruited via the Walden Participant Pool, professional

networks, social media, and referrals. Each participant met the criteria of working for at least three years in secondary education and transitioned to online learning during the pandemic. The participant's consent was obtained, and a semi-structured interview was conducted. Two themes emerged from the interviews: positive and negative well-being experiences and social support. Other potential themes revealed the participant's experiences.

The research questions were used as a guide to elicit rich, meaningful data exploring well-being and support. The IPA was used to understand the participants' experience of the meaning of work stress and social support during transitioning periods of in-person- to online teaching. Two theories were used to gain insight into participants' experiences of well-being and social support. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping was used to understand how the participants coped with stress during the transitions. Also, Demerouti et al. (2001) Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-RT) gave an understanding of participants' perception of social support in the workplace.

Chapter 5 reiterates the study's purpose and compares the findings and results to the literature review. Also, the findings are interpreted and analyzed with the theoretical framework. I will discuss the limitations to trustworthiness and recommendations for future research. Furthermore, implications and suggestions are provided for best practices for social change in secondary public education.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This IPA study aimed to understand secondary educators' experience regarding well-being and social support during the transition from in-person to working from home during the pandemic. This study addressed the gaps in research about the contemporary stresses brought on by transitions between in-person and online teaching (Cahill et al., 2020). Additionally, the study outlined how participants dealt with their social support and well-being initiatives while transitioning to working from home.

The seven participants identified as one male and six females with over three years of secondary education work experience and experience working from home during the pandemic. The data was assessed from case-based to cross-case thematic analyses and revealed two main themes: social support and well-being in secondary education. For each of the main themes, the results showed two significant superordinate themes: positive and negative. For the well-being theme, positive means experiencing changes, while negative means how the stressors in the situation made them feel. Similarly, for social support, the positive aspects included receiving support and managing the change. In contrast, the negative was represented by avoidance and isolating self from peers or support systems. In this Chapter, I interpret the results from the literature reviewed in the Chapter and the framework. I then discuss limitations, recommendations for further research, implications, and the conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

Relevance to Theoretical Frameworks

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) psychological stress and coping theory and Demerouti et al.'s (2001) JD-RT were the theoretical frameworks used to develop the interview guide and interpret the results. The Lazarus and Folkman model has been used extensively for conceptualizing stress and coping research (Biggs et al., 2017). As described in Chapter 2, this theory proposed that in the presence of stress, cognitive appraisal is the personal significance of an encounter for well-being and a proximal determinant of emotion (Lazarus & Smith, 1988). The consequences of this appraisal result in problem-focused and emotion-focused coping.

For well-being, emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies contributed to everyone's well-being. For example, when describing the participants' emotional experiences, many expressed frustration, devastation, boredom, and illness. According to the model, the emotion-focused coping responses were the participants managing change and learning to take care of themselves. For all except one, problem-focused coping included seeing the changes as learning opportunities, maintaining connections, and seeking support.

My findings were consistent with the findings of prior studies. Afota et al. (2021) used this model to predict the appraisal of the psychological climate for working from home. There were 532 employees from various occupations. They found that inadequate work-from-home arrangements can lead to a negative perception of the psychological environment in the workplace.

Participants responses to work-from home conditions described feelings of stress, being overwhelmed, and disappointment. These participants had challenges with accessibility issues, lack of training, and increased responsibility. However, a few participants were optimistic and described their feelings of inadequacy as a chance to learn a new skill, manage change, and even seek online positions to work from home permanently.

Jarvis et al. (2021) used the model to explore the perceptions of 25 student nurses (12 male and 13 female) after returning to clinical practice during the pandemic. They found feelings of uncertainty, stress, anxiety, etc., on primary appraisal and during reappraisal could adapt and show positive perceptions with faculty's support. The results aligned with these findings as the participants reported that they could cope and alleviate their stressors through peer support.

Jean-Baptiste et al. (2020) used the model with 15 U.S. residents from different professional occupations in their focus group. The researchers discovered that the group's response was split in half between those who used emotion-focused coping and those who used problem-focused coping due to their assessment of the threat and challenges posed by COVID-19. This information was partially consistent with the participants' responses in my research study; here there was more positive feedback in coping experiences.

Demerouti et al.'s (2001) JD-R was used to explore the social support of job demands encountered by secondary educators. The JD-R is a leading job stress model that assesses work-health conditions and aims to enhance employee well-being by

identifying and addressing job demands and promoting organizational job resources (Mind Tools, 2022; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

The framework consists of all employees having two categories of working conditions: job demands and job resources (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). Job demands require the mental, emotional, and physical efforts to work. Job resources are support, autonomy, and feedback to function.

For example, Bilotta et al. (2021) conducted research using the JD-R model to assess employee's work transition and well-being during the pandemic when working from home. Their findings explained how stressors (job demands) interfere with work-life balance. Most of the participants had to find ways to adapt during the transitions of the pandemic due to many job demands. These demands were a result of mental, emotional, and physical stress, such as being forced to leave one place of employment and find another or having high blood pressure due to stress. The participants relied on job resources such as engaging in support from colleagues and learning proper self-care routines.

Furthermore, one participant explained that she was stressed due to boredom during the pandemic. The research of Bilotta et al. (2021) recommended health-promoting programs and resilience training to cope with stress. Other participants in this study mentioned that they did not know how to care for themselves or perceived devastation during the pandemic. The authors recommended different interventions for employees' well-being and social support. These interventions are a part of job resources and were conducive to the needs of the participants in my research study.

Cahill et al.'s (2020) study was consistent with this concern of support (job resources) during a crisis. The researcher provided recommendations for short-term intervention strategies such as socio-emotional learning programs (SEL), reestablishing work routines, and maintaining connections for support during traumatic situations, all advantageous to the social support initiatives for my research study.

Additionally, Yin et al. (2018) examined the relationship between teacher well-being and job-related factors. The findings showed that when educators were presented with high emotional job demands, anxiety and depression were prevalent, and suppressive coping strategies were enacted. Also, a positive relationship existed between personal resources, reappraisal, and well-being. The results from the current study were consistent with these findings. These participants demonstrated emotions of devastation, fear, and boredom. Their initial coping with these behaviors resulted in a lack of self-care, overexertion, and avoidance. Moreover, the authors state that reappraisal as a personal resource plays a role in positive outcomes, and suppression as a personal demand leads to adverse outcomes (Yin et al., 2018).

Relevance to the Literature

Theme 1: Well-Being

Through my qualitative inquiry, I discovered that participants experienced mostly negative experiences in well-being. There was one exception with positive inquiry. For example, P1 stated, "I took care of myself. I started to adapt to the life change and accepted the fact that I'm now working from home". This feedback was a positive experience for this participant as he adapted to change.

Mari et al.'s (2021) study results were consistent with this participant's experience as the research found that educators required new adaptation methods, communication techniques, and strategies to overcome the challenges of distance learning without prior preparation. Clearly, this adaptive strategy is not true for all who experience this kind of work-related stress.

Roberts et al. (2019) and Yang et al.'s (2021) studies were consistent with the negative experiences in well-being regarding workplace factors for all other participants in my research study. In both of their studies, various concepts of stress impacted well-being. My research showed consistency in these findings. For example, P2 stated, "And I can say that in all honesty because it was during the pandemic that my blood pressure was very high, and I knew it was some stress." Also, P3 stated a negative experience as, "Wasn't taking care of myself due to fear of catching COVID from the emergency room or even the doctor. Masks weren't available, and we were often left unprotected. Also, since we couldn't go anywhere, I would sit and not move around".

Social Support Theme

For the social support theme, it was revealed that most participants received support from colleagues and administrators during the transition from being in person to working from home. All responses were positive except one. For example, P5's experience with social support was negative regarding their personality of wanting to be left alone. She stated, "They express conspiracies by everything. I do not know how to deal with that personally. I stay away now because it is ridiculous." P5 did not know how

to deal with the conspiracy theories of the pandemic and felt it was all too much to bear. Although P5 managed not to utilize the support given by her peers.

In contrast, social support in mentoring can be beneficial for an educator's work success. For example, Landsbergis et al.'s (2017) study explored social support with a K-12 mentoring program to reduce stress in educators. The findings revealed that mentoring programs can increase support, skill development, decision-making, and more for secondary educators.

All other participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6. And P7) gave positive feedback regarding their experiences. Each of them had similar experiences. For example, P1 stated, "I still maintained relationships with my colleagues, and we kept talking..." P2 said, "... We talk often over the phone...". P3 used text messages and online platforms to communicate. She stated, "...Talk about things, you know, just on Google, or we would do and just talk about things or help each other out".

This feedback aligns with Szabo and Jagodics's (2019) study of burnout and its relationship with social support, job demands, and resources. The results of this study revealed the significance of professional social support to burnout. The findings suggest the need for training programs to enhance social support among colleagues. The authors of this study recommended that regular communication of educators' objectives, responsibilities, and principles could help prevent burnout.

Limitations of the Study

This study provided valuable insight into the lived experiences of well-being and support in secondary educators during the transitions from in-person to work from home

during the pandemic. However, there were limitations, such as the potential for data saturation to meet the quality criteria in a study. There were 7 participants in this study. In order to maximize data saturation in an IPA study, it is suggested that 6-12 participants are adequate for small qualitative research (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Smith, 2011). Also, the work experience criteria were limited to a minimum of 3 years, which limited the input from educators new to the field. Most participants were female (6 out of 7) and may have had sources of stress different from those of male educators.

Regarding aspects of trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004), transferability was the only limitation of this study. This research focused on the transitions of work during the pandemic, which could be a limitation in the meaningfulness of how educators work post-pandemic. Otherwise, the data collection and analysis criteria were consistent with credibility, dependability, and confirmability. There were no limitations to the trustworthiness of these three criteria, as each qualitative inquiry was performed.

Recommendations

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of secondary educators' well-being and social support while working in person and from home. The study highlighted the relevance of well-being and social support in this context. Future research recruiting more male participants and those newer to the profession could enhance understanding of lived experiences of social support and coping and enhance data saturation and transferability.

The results of this study also found that each of these phenomena contained both positive and negative elements. This finding points out the need for more research

examining differences between educators who utilize social support resources to improve the quality of work life, and those that do not. Similarly, further research can also study how the experience of well-being varies across individuals and work contexts (remote vs. in-person vs. hybrid models).

The findings also revealed that a main stressor for educators was the challenge their students experienced in consistent access to the online curriculum, as well as the challenges students faced in managing their time at home. Given that education is now transitioning into a post-COVID curriculum delivery, further research is needed on the impact of Internet accessibility, student-teacher communication, fatigue, and student socialization on educators' experience of stress, well-being, and social support (Chen & Qin, 2023; Sultan et al., 2022; Thompson & Thompson, 2018).

This study focused on the experience of educators, who reported on the challenges they perceived regarding administrative decision-making. Future research on secondary administrators' experiences and perspectives on organizational transitions might give insight into how leaders perceive and manage change, and how they communicate with educators. These studies could focus on the interventions administrators use to support well-being and social support in the workplace.

Implications

This study's findings on the meanings of well-being and social support have several implications for positive social change. The findings may contribute to the current understanding of how well-being and social support are perceived in the workplace. The study addressed the contemporary stresses of transitions between in-person and online

teaching identified in qualitative literature. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping enabled the study to gain a more in-depth understanding of how participants perceived work stress and coped during their transition situations. These results have practical applications for organizations to work on overall employee job satisfaction, performance, and prevention of burnout.

Administrators and researchers in the workplace can be encouraged to acknowledge that stress is a common emotion experienced by those involved in unprecedented changes in education. Education, teaching, and learning continues to evolve, and educators are at the “frontline” of managing new technologies, new settings, and new students with never-before seen challenges (McDiarmid & Zhao, 2023; Venkatesh, 2020). The participants in this study highlighted the negative stressors that impeded their ability to perform their work duties optimally. Secondary educators need considerable support to help them navigate workplace challenges and changes. The results of this study suggest that providing employees with essential resources to cope and function during changes is necessary. In the future, I hope to present these results to local school districts and professional meetings that seek knowledge on educator’s wellbeing in the school system.

Conclusion

The contemporary research on stress and lived experiences in secondary education describing the transitions between in-person and online teaching has yet to be extensively explored. However, researchers have investigated the relationships between well-being and social support in other contexts (Jeon et al., 2018; Mari et al., 2021).

Through this research, I have identified that secondary educators have experienced stress during transitions in the workplace, such as frustration, being overwhelmed, being challenged, and having a desire to adapt to change.

The actions required for social change include effectively addressing well-being and social support through employee intervention and labor-management programs. This may help appropriately resolve the ongoing challenges identified in the workplace and reduce employee burnout (Shirmohammadi et al., 2022).

This research contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the lived experience of stress during unprecedented transitions and strains to cope with the changes during that time. The themes identified in the study were positive and negative experiences in well-being and social support. The participants' feedback offered valuable insight into the social and psychological aspects of well-being and social support experiences in the workplace that can be used to educate and inform future researchers and school administrators on managing effective change during workplace transformations. Furthermore, this research allowed me to understand each person's perspective of their work environment. Gaining a better understanding of the connection of the individual experience to the collective efforts that it takes to educate young people to prepare them for the challenges of an increasingly complex world reveals the continuing need for social change in education to create in-person and virtual workspaces that contribute to employee satisfaction, well-being, and support.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in Educator Research Study

Hello,

My name is La Toya Glenn, an industrial organizational psychology student with Walden University. The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a qualitative research study that explores well-being and social support in secondary education. Specifically, I'm seeking the lived experiences of well-being for secondary educators that transitioned between in person to online teaching during the pandemic. Also, I need participants to describe the contribution of social support given by their district during the transitions.

For those willing to participate, the structure of the study will be an audio-recorded, one-on-one interview via telephone that will last about 60-90 minutes in privacy. Identifying information of the participant will be securely stored. Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the research study at any time.

To get started, please contact me by email or at the phone number provided in the email correspondence. Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

La Toya Glenn

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Questions and Probes	Sources
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about how you first started working in secondary education? 2. How long have you worked in this field? 3. Tell me about your education and training for teaching? 	St. Norbet College (2022)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What called you to choose this type of work? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can you give me an example? b. What did that choice mean to you? c. Was there another reason you wanted to teach in secondary education? b) So tell me about your job, what do you do? 	Rampa (2012), St. Norbet College (n.d.)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What do you like about working in the school environment? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can you give me an example? b. What did that mean to you? c. Is there something else you liked about working in secondary education? 5. Describe your tasks and responsibilities of your job? 	Balyer & Ozcan (2014)

<p>6. What about the job fits your personality?</p> <p>a. Give me an example?</p>	
<p>7. Could you tell me about your most meaningful teaching preparation experience?</p> <p>a. When did this occur, pre-pandemic or post-pandemic?</p> <p>b. Explain why this stands out as the most meaningful?</p> <p>c. How much experience did you have in online teaching before this pandemic work experience?</p>	<p>Wiley et al. (2020)</p>
<p>8. Tell me about what happened when you were asked to transition to work from home?</p> <p>a. What was it like to have to use the online technology to teach?</p> <p>b. How familiar were you? How comfortable were you?</p> <p>c. Where did you work at home?</p> <p>d. What are your thoughts on the recent changes in how educators transitioned to online teaching during the pandemic?</p>	<p>St. Norbet College (n.d.)</p> <p>Parker et al. (2020)</p>

e. Describe your tasks and responsibilities of moving your classes online?	
<p>9. How did you take care of yourself during the transitioning from in-person to online teaching?</p> <p>a. Give an example.</p> <p>10. How connected were you to your colleagues before the pandemic?</p> <p>a. how did you feel when you didn't see them face-face anymore?</p>	Happy City Measurement and Policy Team (2016)
<p>11. How did you manage to connect with other teachers for social support?</p> <p>a. describe your social life in the school system when social distancing measures of the pandemic were enacted.</p> <p>b. how did you feel about the overall changes brought forth from the pandemic?</p>	McKinlay et al. (2021)